



## Voices of Pupils on Educational Programme Under Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives in Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) educational programmes in elementary schools. The case study examines the Adopt-A-School (AASC) programme, a CSR educational programme that is organised throughout Malaysia. Most extant studies have focused on teachers, school and corporate views but rarely on children. Therefore, this study aimed to explore pupils' perceptions of CSR educational programmes in rural schools under the CSR initiative. The study employed a qualitative research case study design. Purposive sampling was conducted involving six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) among 12-year-old pupils. Each FGD contained six to eight pupils. A total of 43 pupils from three different schools in the northern region of Malaysia were involved in the FGDs. Thematic analysis was then used to consider the excitement of CSR educational programmes, the benefits of CSR educational programmes and pupils' preferred type of CSR educational programme in school. From the results, pupils' perceptions of CSR educational programmes were divided into three: emotional well-being, cognitive ability and motor coordination. The engagement of the corporate sector in pupils' education was also discussed to improve CSR educational programmes in future. The pupils agreed that while formal learning is important, a balance should be struck between study and play. Pupils requested that a CSR educational programme is conducted in school more often to make learning and attending school amusing. In conclusion, the pupils preferred to engage with more physical programmes in school but also acknowledged the importance of academic study as educational programmes bring them fun, friends, knowledge, experience and skills.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term Social Responsibility predates the rise and dominance of the corporate form of business organisations, while Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) began to take shape in the 1950s (Carroll, 2008). Carroll (2016) stated that "CSR as a management strategy has become commonplace, formalised, integrated, and deeply assimilated into organisational structures, policies and practices via business care" (p. 1). CSR constitutes the social obligation of business organisations towards the wider society and local community (Sinha & Chaudhari, 2018). Thus, most corporate companies engage in CSR by contributing to society such as by helping to meet basic needs, improving education or protecting the environment.

An organisation established in Malaysia in 2008 is currently partnered with 44 members comprising corporations, partner non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the government to enhance the motivation and success of students from underperforming schools through education. It aims to provide equitable access to quality education for all and ensure that schools and students receive adequate aid to attain the highest standards of education. The Adopt-A-School (AASC) programme covers mainly primary schools in rural or underserved areas throughout Malaysia. Guidance for the AASC programme is underpinned by four core modules, namely the Motivational and Team Building Programme (Leadership), Educational Support Programme, Capability and Capacity Building, and Reducing Vulnerabilities and Social Issues. The school adoption period lasts for three years and during their adoption, companies organise a variety of educational programmes based on the guidelines and the needs of the respective school. When the adoption ends, the company will leave and adopt another school. This practice has been in place for many years, meaning that many schools have benefitted

from the CSR educational programmes conducted by companies. Cooperation and collaboration between many stakeholders in Malaysia have ensured that the AASC programme continues to operate after so many years.

CSR can also contribute to educational programmes in schools as corporate ties should not focus solely on adults in the community but also on children, such as primary school pupils. This type of approach would enhance pupils' insight into what adults do at work, the corporate world, the nature of business, and vice versa. Corporate-school partnerships can help pupils set their own life goals and have a clear purpose for going to school. Themes within the resilience curriculum for vulnerable children include the development of self-determination that focuses on a sense of purpose and meaning in life, providing learners with the opportunity to think about global and situational meaning, and to reflect on their purposes in life (Cefai et al., 2015).

There is no doubt that basic needs are crucial for pupils at the early stage of school. Corporate sectors should thus work closely with the government to contribute back to society, especially at the elementary school level. While CSR educational programmes have been conducted in numerous elementary schools, the majority of the feedback to date has reflected an adult point of view, such as the perspectives of teachers (Ismail et al., 2014), schools (Azhar & Azman, 2021a), corporate companies (Azhar & Azman, 2021b) and the community (Ismail et al., 2015). Children, specifically pupils, have tended to be excluded as their feedback on the educational programmes has been taken for granted. Ismail et al. (2014), in a study on CSR educational programmes, suggested the need to also conduct research involving the participants in educational programmes, namely children. Ismail et al. (2014) additionally found that in Malaysia, the areas most represented in CSR practice were scholarships (50%), internships (24%) and schooling (12%). Understandably, some corporate sectors cannot engage in these types of educational programmes as they do not reflect their core businesses. However, they will most likely make financial contributions and authorise rural schools to organise the educational programmes that best suit them. However, the mutual involvement of corporate sector staff in the implementation of educational programmes in schools would generate significantly greater impact and exposure for pupils in addition to reinforcing the relationship between corporates and schools.

This case study aims to explore pupils' perceptions of the educational programmes in which they have participated at school as part of CSR initiatives.

Significantly, human beings always like to be motivated by someone or something in their study; this motivation can be intrinsic (enjoyment and satisfaction) or extrinsic (complement and awards). It is hoped that the findings of this study will encourage more corporate companies to conduct CSR educational programmes for children, specifically in rural primary schools.

### CSR IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Coombs and Holladay (2012) shared how, when CSR has become part of a corporation's culture and ownership, it will eventually be "everyone's responsibility", which in turn reinforces its importance to the organisation. Furthermore, Hansen et al. (2011) asserted that a socially responsible employer would constitute a reason for employees to remain with the company. CSR-related benefits for employees include "improved productivity, higher employer reputation, better quality personnel; and for the community, the benefits were such as strong corporate branding, favourable media coverage; and positive managerial signal" (Malik, 2014). Companies that focus exclusively on their business, without considering the benefits for their staff and stakeholders, are not considered to be fulfilling their responsibilities holistically. Businesses can allocate some of their budgets to the natural environment, philanthropy or towards social work that benefits the most vulnerable in society (Camilleri, 2016). This includes pupils in elementary schools. The poor quality of rural schools and limited opportunities for children to contribute to the household economy means that families often prefer children to work at home learning skills specific to local subsistence that will be more useful and relevant to their future well-being (Hedges et al., 2016). This presents a challenge for companies in terms of educating and spreading awareness to rural communities about the importance of school. Corporate companies have stated that schools with CSR programmes have progressively improved in academic performance while also expressing that such programmes have helped pupils with reading difficulties to read (Azhar & Azman, 2021b).

For the sustainability of the company, it is preferable to invest in a long-term company-stakeholder relationship from which both parties will benefit (Nodoushani et al., 2014; Pelozo et al., 2012), especially when the investment is in education (Nodoushani et al., 2014). It is highly encouraging for corporates to become

involved in elementary schools in order to instil curiosity among pupils. This constitutes a key experience for pupils, enabling them to learn how to satisfy their curiosity with sustained and thoughtful efforts (Engel, 2011).

Singh and Chopra (2019), in their study on children with disabilities in inclusive education, found that while participation in activities accounted for most of the children's time and that they had social interactions with their peers, they also continued to harbour a fear of exclusion or exploitation due to their impairment. This was evident in the way their teachers maintained a very close presence with them because they were different (Singh & Chopra, 2019). Exposing these children to the work that takes place in industry and enabling them to meet working adults would help to build their self-confidence. Moreover, they would have the same experience in educational programmes as other children in school.

### CHILDREN'S VOICES ABOUT SCHOOL

Te One et al. (2014) highlighted that many children and young people have spoken about how the impacts of poverty and their mental and emotional well-being result in them experiencing social exclusion and isolation, adding that a "lack of economic resources, food uncertainty, lack of affordability to pay school costs and fees; could not afford school uniforms, stationery, books and computers; and failure to take part in sports and other activities that often caused a sense of shame and further alienated them from their peers." (p.1063). Children's culture varies hugely from that of adults; children always want to play, have fun and socialise with their friends. Komolova and Wainryb (2011) stated that children tend to consider not just personal choices and autonomy but also friendships. It has also been shown that children wish to be involved in decision-making around education in school (Nthontho, 2016). While children are not currently involved in decision-making in education, it is important to consider whether this is illogical and reflective of how children are seen as immature and unable to make decisions. McTavish et al. (2012), in their research, found that children wished to share knowledge with their teacher about gaming in school; however, the teacher was disinterested due to a perception that this was an inappropriate topic for journal writing. Children also lack a public voice and are rarely given a say in how communities make decisions, even when they relate to issues such as schools and playgrounds (UNICEF, 2014).

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In *Motivation and Personality*, Maslow (1970) defined "motivation as constant, never-ending, fluctuating, and something that was complex" (p. 24). Motivation has also been described as forward-looking exploration, investigation and foraging to check on new things and new possibilities (Reeve, 2016) as well as the feeling of wanting (Baumeister, 2016). Motivation theory was previously developed by Clark L. Hull from reinforcement theory (Cofer & Appley, 1964). In his learning construct, Hull stated that reinforcement was critical for the learning habit to occur (Arkes & Garske, 1977, p. 122). The influence of situational, social, cultural and other external factors on motivation presents a further challenge and opportunity in developing motivation theory (Baumeister, 2016). Reeve (2016) stated that needs are part of motivation, whether biological, physical or implicit. This can be seen in Figure 1 on the aspects of motivation.

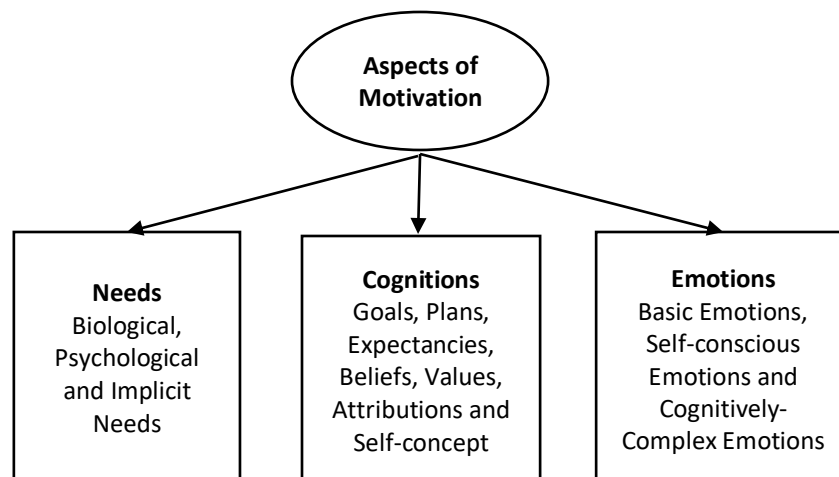


Figure 1: Aspects of motivation (Reeve, 2016)

Children will learn best from adults who are creative, casual and supportive, who convey meanings rather than just facts, and who have high self-esteem and freedom in their jobs (Maslow, 1987, p. 254). Sipos et al. (2008) stated that Transformative Sustainable Learning among high school students comprised a combination of head (trans-disciplinary study), hands (skills and practice) and heart (passion and values). Three aspects contribute to the motivation to study: (i) the importance that a student places on accomplishing a particular task, (ii) intrinsic motivation – personal enjoyment and satisfaction, and (iii) extrinsic motivation, which refers to being interested in certain things for the purpose of awards, marks or complements (Reeve, 2016). Baumeister (2016) added that while motivation is a feeling of wanting, it is presumably sustained by liking. Elsewhere, Trifunovic et al. (2019), in a study examining colours for preschool and primary school children, found that children understood and memorised things better when they were presented in yellow as opposed to other colours. This demonstrates that colours also play an important role in educating children in school.

The relevance of motivation theory to this study lies in the clear implication that children require continual motivation from adults. As explained above, the aspects of children’s motivation derived from Sipos et al. (2008) and Reeve (2016) comprise emotional well-being, cognitive ability and motor coordination. In this context, children prefer adults to be supportive and to always communicate with them.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

Darlington and Scott (2020) described one of the qualitative methods available as the “in-depth interviewing of individuals and small groups” (p. 2). This research combines the qualitative method of small-group interviews with a case study on the AASC programme conducted throughout Malaysia. The AASC programme involves corporations, partner NGOs and the government working together to adopt schools in rural areas. This is an exploratory study that aims to give voices to pupils on educational programmes under CSR initiatives that they have attended. In the AASC programme, a school is adopted for three years. Over those three years, companies will conduct educational programmes targeted predominantly at pupils. Additionally, there are programmes for teachers, headmaster/headmistress (HM) and the surrounding community. Thematic analysis was chosen as the means of presenting the data for this study. This is an appropriate method of analysis when seeking to understand experiences, thoughts or behaviours across a data set (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The themes on pupils’ perceptions comprise what they like about the educational programmes they have attended, the benefits of the educational programmes, and their preferred types of educational programmes in school.

### PARTICIPANTS

More than 500,000 children throughout Malaysia have benefitted from the AASC programme. A total of 43 pupils participated in this study. The researcher first identified rural primary schools in the northern region that had participated in the AASC programme. Then, with a teacher’s assistance, the researcher requested that the selected participants were pupils from the age of 12 that had participated in CSR educational programmes in school for at least one year.

### INSTRUMENTS

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with the pupils as the method is highly suited to collecting data from children (Adler et al., 2019; Rahardjo, 2019). The FGD participant criteria were passed to the schoolteachers to assist with selection. The researcher asked the teachers to select between six and eight pupils from the upper class, and six to eight pupils from the lower class. The criteria for participation in an FGD were as follows:

- i. pupils are from standard six in elementary school,
- ii. pupils have participated in an educational programme under a CSR initiative for at least one year.

Separate FGDs were conducted for pupils from the upper and lower classes, reflecting the concern that if pupils from different classes were grouped together, they might be reluctant to talk. Krueger and Casey (2000) added that FGDs are characterised by homogeneity when they have something in common, such as to evaluate an educational programme. The researcher chose to include only six to eight pupils in each group to ensure an in-depth interview; this also reflected how six to eight participants is the ideal size of an FGD for most non-commercial topics (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The FGD was chosen as it was hoped that it would encourage other children to talk when they saw their friends talking and sharing ideas. Gibson (2012) suggested four strategies

for focus groups containing children: building trust, understanding and obtaining informed consent, encouraging and responsive, and promoting enjoyment and creative expression. The FGD format ensured a slightly informal atmosphere, with the presence of the children's friends helping to reduce nervousness compared to a one-to-one interview in which pupils would likely feel nervous and be less talkative as the researcher was new to them.

Two FGDs were conducted from each school, giving a total of six groups. A total of 43 children participated and while the sample size may have been limited, the researcher also had to consider the cost and time implications. Table 1 contains a breakdown of the FGD participants.

Table 1. Focus group participants

School	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Number of Participants
School A	FGD 1	8
	FGD 2	8
School B	FGD 3	8
	FGD 4	7
School C	FGD 5	6
	FGD 6	6

### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics were considered as the FGDs involved pupils in elementary school. Letters were sent to the Malaysia Ministry of Education and State Education requesting approval to interview pupils in elementary schools. After both ministries had granted their approval, the researcher sent a letter to the respective schools seeking consent from the school principal to conduct FGDs with their pupils on educational programmes in school. The FGD questions were also shared with the relevant school HM. Before each FGD was conducted, the pupils were briefed about the aim of the study. It was also explained that the FGD would be recorded and that their names would not be disclosed but used only for the researcher's reference. Moreover, the researcher disclosed no pupil, school or company names in the findings, only the number of pupils that participated in the study. This reflects how the study's main purpose is to improve CSR educational programmes in the future. Jedynek (2014) stated that an important obligation is to keep confidential information that has been obtained in the course of professional activities. Butler (2002) highlighted "respect for autonomy", which refers to the moral obligation to respect the autonomy of each individual by respecting the autonomy of others.

### 3. DATA COLLECTION

The researcher began by asking all six groups whether they enjoyed participating in educational programmes in school. Some pupils said yes, while some nodded and others smiled while nodding their heads. The pupils stated that the educational programmes that had been held in their schools and in which they had participated included leadership programmes, outdoor activities, academic programmes and school-parent programmes. The pupils' perceptions were found to include elation regarding the CSR educational programmes, the benefits of a CSR educational programme, and their preferred type of CSR educational programme in school.

### PUPILS' ELATION ABOUT CSR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

The pupils were delighted to have been able to explore further knowledge that was not taught in the classroom. The CSR educational programmes, which were typically conducted in after-school sessions or during school holidays, provided them with new insights and experiences. Moreover, the pupils commented that the CSR educational programmes were beneficial as they explored knowledge while having fun. The pupils stated that they preferred to be surrounded by many friends and that the programmes conducted met their social needs and gratification. Separately, they were delighted to have received free food and drinks during the programmes. Most of the interviewees were from poor families, and some of them did not even receive pocket money. As a result, the free food and drinks during the programme made them happy. One pupil also stated that the educational programmes had helped them to excel in their studies. Various pupil statements when asked about the things they liked most in the educational programmes are presented below.

*"...because it is the best, we want to excel, get knowledge"*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 1)

*“Eat free, get better and more knowledge..and get to know my friends better. We can get free drinks...get more friends..get to play with friends...chat with friends”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 2)

*“Have fun, gain more knowledge..and get to know my friend from other class better”*

(girl, 12 years old, FGD 6)

### **CSR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME BENEFITS**

The pupils contended that CSR educational programmes helped them feel motivated, self-confident, disciplined and independent, with better social skills and a better understanding of the learning process. The educational programmes included play and group activities to comprehend and answer exam questions. Three groups mentioned that CSR educational programmes had enabled them to explore new knowledge. Moreover, they felt that they had uncovered their hidden talents. The pupils were eager to learn but through creative learning, guidance, motivation and inspiration from the adults. In this sense, CSR educational programmes could lead to better learning experiences and highlight good values to pupils. Pupils from all groups agreed that the CSR educational programmes held mostly during the school holidays should be continued. The following are from the pupils' reactions when asked about the benefit of CSR educational programmes.

*“Being independent for example if we go for study trip we can take care of ourselves. Can attend leadership camp out from school.. improve our academic grade. For example, we did water rocket.. and helped each other. Firstly, we make a rocket and we make the rocket move. When started the adult help us then the rest we make our own.”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 1)

*“Get to know new friends.. get to know new things.. new ideas.. motivated.. brave.. the importance of friendship.. share knowledge.”*

(girl, 12 years old, FGD 6)

### **PUPILS' PREFERRED CSR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME IN SCHOOLS**

The pupils chose to learn outside the classroom in natural surroundings. They liked to play and definitely preferred being physically active. They also stated that CSR educational programmes must be fun and engaging. According to the pupils, they could easily grasp the knowledge if it was associated with fun and play elements, in addition to being physically active outdoors. Indeed, the pupils were interested in exploring knowledge which they stated about motivational and inspirational talk; which will encouraged them to study and obtain better grades in their examinations. They preferred to work with other members in groups during knowledge exploration as they could help each other understand the topics being learnt. Additionally, while the pupils truly wanted to learn to think creatively, they also had the chance to express themselves and make mistakes. They felt that learning would be more enjoyable if the school was well equipped with updated facilities. In addition, they mentioned the need to update books in the school library; limited and out-of-date books discouraged their interest to read and learn. They also considered that libraries should organise further programmes to encourage pupils to read more books. Separately, the pupils were also concerned about health and suggested a programme on nutrition. The following excerpts are from pupils when asked about the types of CSR educational programmes they wished to have in school.

*“Play while learn programme.. they put us in groups then give a task and we work with our group. Encourage us to think.. sports. Programmes that requires a lot of play, big programmes like a school open day or cleaning up the school compound together. During National Sports Day we have aerobics, marathons. We can also have traditional games such as gasing, guli, congkak and batu Seremban.”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 1)

*“Motivational talk.. eat healthy food.. a programme for better toilet.. programme to take care of our environment, adventure care and create games.”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 3)

*“Motivational talk, birthday celebration, how to answer exam questions and quiz.”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 6)

When asked whether the CSR educational programmes had helped them in their study, the participants in all six FGDs agreed that they had asked for CSR educational programmes to be organised frequently and for them to be continued in their school. They added that they had experienced positive changes after they participated in the programmes, such as increased self-confidence, focus, more knowledge, feeling motivated, good grades and a better attitude. These are referred to in the following excerpts from pupils.

*“We are much more confident.. the programmes inspire us.. we understand what they taught us and have more focus.”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 1)

*“So that we can perform better in academic [subjects], gain knowledge, new knowledge. At first we didn't know but after we participated we do know, [and it] motivates us to study.”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 8)

*“Better grades in exams, gain more knowledge, experience, feel motivated.”*

(girl, 12 years old, FGD 2)

*“Attitude”*

(girl, 12 years old, FGD 5)

Pupils in all the FGDs stated that CSR educational programmes were usually held at weekends and during holidays, with only one group stating that a programme was conducted during school hours. The pupils were also asked about their activities at weekends or during holidays when there were no programmes in schools. Almost all of them stated that they would do homework at home during the weekends and holidays. While this was no doubt intended to further develop students' understanding, having too much homework would probably make attending school a burden. Aside from homework, the pupils would spend their time with their family members and friends, making traps for birds, chatting, walking, playing football, cycling and fishing, all of which are referred to below.

*Do homework, cycling, play computer games, make trap for birds.”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 1)

*“Read books for Nilam project, chat with friends.”*

(girl, 12 years old, FGD 1)

*“Revision for Mathematics, do homework that the teacher gave to us, read books, help mother at home to sweep floor and throw rubbish.”*

(boy, 12 years old, FGD 2)

*“Do revision, homework, go out for a walk with friends.”*

"Help my mother to plant, play, watch television."	(girl, 12 years old, FGD 3)
"Do homework, play football, cycling, fishing."	(boy, 12 years old, FGD 3)
"Visit grandfather's house."	(boy, 12 years old, FGD 6)
	(girl, 12 years old, FGD 3)

#### 4. DISCUSSION

##### PUPILS' PERCEPTIONS OF CSR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

The pupils' perceptions are explained further in line with three components, namely emotional well-being, cognitive ability and motor coordination. This aligns with the aspects of motivation highlighted by Reeve (2016), namely needs, cognitions and emotions. Sipos et al. (2008) suggested Transformative Sustainable Learning, which features a combination of head (trans-disciplinary study), hands (skills and practice) and heart (passion and values) among high school students. According to the author, when the learning process combines all three of these aspects, students can easily grasp the knowledge and remember what they have learnt.

##### a) Emotional Well-being

Some of the words that the pupils mentioned repeatedly concerning CSR educational programmes were *having fun, the best and play*. Evidently, CSR educational programmes have brought joy to learning for these pupils in rural elementary schools. In contrast, formal learning and one-way teaching in the classroom would bore them. Indeed, while formal learning in the classroom is important, a balance must be achieved with practical learning, which includes CSR educational programmes. UNICEF (2014) stated that long-term benefits for children and a sustainable approach are attained by involving them in the planning, implementing and monitoring of programmes. In turn, this would help corporates in their social investments (UNICEF, 2014). The pupils were overjoyed and stated that the CSR educational programmes were *good programmes, from which they gained experience, more friends, free food and drinks and explored knowledge*. When pupils' emotional well-being is provided for, it becomes easy for them to learn as they can acknowledge the purposes of learning and coming to school. Meanwhile, companies have stated that pupils were motivated, thrilled and excited to go to school after hearing that CSR educational programmes were being organised (Azhar & Azman, 2021b). Indirectly, this can reduce the number of dropouts in rural schools. CSR educational programmes thus have a positive impact on the participating pupils, which consequently makes their parents happy (Azhar & Azman, 2021b). Adults should follow a pupil's ways of learning, which are fun and full of colour. A colourful environment is also a factor that motivates and gives energy to pupils to learn. Trifunovic et al. (2019) stated that the colour yellow has a positive impact on memorisation. Therefore, yellow or red can be used to attract pupils' attention while green and blue are suitable for an environment that requires less attention (Trifunovic et al., 2019). Indeed, pupils' emotional well-being is crucial to create a positive, pleasant and colourful learning environment in school and requires cooperation from many parties.

##### b) Cognitive Ability

Pupils understand the importance of acquiring knowledge that can be related to cognitive ability. They stated that CSR educational programmes have given them *more knowledge, enabled them to excel in studies, become better academics, develop a better attitude and learn something new*. They also recounted how schools were opened during the holidays and some of them chose to go to school to surf the learning portals online. Azhar and Azman (2021a) stated that schools fully utilised the resources that they had for their pupils as the community depended solely on the school to educate their children. Compared with the urban pupils, "time are spent more on the television and the gaming devices which are absent in the rural living environment" (Walhain et al., 2016). Learning in school should not focus exclusively on Mathematics, Science, Geography, History or other so-called core subjects but should also cover general knowledge. Pupils in rural schools are aware of the importance of education for their future; however, they are discouraged from studying by the school environment and the school system. Unfortunately, some parents perceived that attending school would not yield any benefit; hence, they felt the pupils were better off helping them in agriculture or other work to support the family. Hedges et al. (2016) stated that for the pupils' future, it is preferable to work at home to fulfil the need for local skills. This is where the different parties come together to assist and educate parents in rural areas



about the importance of education. Pupils are overjoyed to be in school participating in CSR educational programmes as they can see and feel that they have improved in their academic studies. Parents, teachers and schools expressed their gratitude for CSR educational programmes as they have enabled their children to make great achievements in academic performance (Azhar & Azman, 2021b).

### c) Motor Coordination

Pupils in both rural and urban areas of Malaysia are physically active. However, the difference is that less money is spent on activities in rural areas. Pupils in elementary school should not be burdened with a lot of homework, as stated in the findings, whereby their weekends and holidays are fully taken up by homework set by their teachers. Pupils should be physically active during both school hours and the holidays. Azizan (2017) stated that in Finland, pupils under the age of eight are required to be physically active for at least three hours per day, and at least one to two hours per day for pupils aged between seven and 18. In the findings, the pupils expressed their satisfaction with programmes that *involve a lot of play, aerobics and traditional games*. Corporate companies should thus consider organising more educational physical programmes in future to engage pupils in physical activities.

## CORPORATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT IN PUPILS' EDUCATION

While parents play the most important role, the involvement and contributions of other adults, such as those in the corporate sector, would support pupils' intellectual growth. Contributions in terms of CSR educational programmes could thus be made in schools. Camilleri (2016) stated that the involvement of corporate companies in CSR could reconnect the businesses' economic success with societal progress. Corporations' involvement in the setting of relevant course programmes may also help to improve the effectiveness of education systems in many contexts (Camilleri, 2016). Additionally, Cefai et al. (2015) stated that a resilience curriculum that incorporates a whole-school approach, that is, the school community, parents and the local community, can help to reduce absenteeism, early school leaving, failure at school, social exclusion and, most importantly, mental health problems. Corporate companies have perceived that pupils participating in CSR educational programmes have improved their academic performance while teachers have attended more training and workshops (Azhar & Azman, 2021b). This requires collaboration from many parties, especially in rural and underserved areas. Meanwhile, factors such as poverty can negatively impact a child's learning and development as well as the family's resiliency and well-being (Alverson et al., 2019). Additionally, corporate sector engagement could be extended to special schools. This would assist children in school with "internal limitations such as cognitive incompetence, low self-concept, lack of motivation, lack of self-efficacy, anxiety and fear of college life" (Gunarhadi et al., 2021, p. 40).

Businesses of all sizes should work together to fulfil the unmet needs of pupils in education. When corporate companies are involved in CSR initiatives, specifically educational programmes, it can serve as a guide to understanding the educational needs of pupils in rural schools. Companies can also help to prepare pupils practically to work in industry in the future. Collins (2014) stated that businesses can positively influence pupils by providing access to education, rest and play, as well as by supporting parents. This is in line with one of the Children's Rights and Business Principles, which is to reinforce community and government efforts to protect and fulfil children's rights (UNICEF, 2014). Furthermore, CSR has been "macro-shifted" to CSR 2.0, with a focus on becoming collaborative, integrated, diversified and global (Visser, 2011).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The pupils interviewed in this study agreed that while formal learning is important, there must also be a balance between play and study. This is where holistic learning becomes involved, which includes emotional well-being, cognitive ability and motor coordination, as discussed in the findings. Unfortunately, schools currently tend to overly emphasise pupils' cognitive ability. This reflects how the integration of emotional well-being, cognitive ability and motor coordination requires significant levels of resource, collaboration and cooperation from corporate companies and surrounding individuals.

From the CSR educational programmes conducted, the pupils stated that they had learnt to be independent, self-confident, disciplined and creative thinkers. There is scope to implement four-hour formal learning and two-hour CSR educational programmes in current school sessions. For instance, instead of focusing solely on academic study for almost six hours from 8 am until 2 pm, it would be appropriate to introduce a variety

of academic and fun educational activities. The two-hour session would focus on collaborative learning from all parties alongside transformative learning that would help to transform the school into a perfect place for everyone, with adults and pupils helping to educate and bring awareness to each other. CSR educational programmes have been shown to positively impact pupils and schools in rural areas; as such, they should progress from being a responsibility to an activity that is sustained (Azhar & Azman, 2021b). Schools should thus have the authority to decide what is best for their pupils. In conclusion, pupils prefer to engage with more physical programmes in school but also acknowledge the importance of academic study within an educational programme that brings them fun, friends, knowledge, experience and skills.

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