



School Governance Stakeholders' Perceptions of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives in Public Primary Schools in Ngorongoro District, Tanzania

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Abstract

Public primary schools in underserved settings often face shortages of educational resources that affect access to and quality of education. In Tanzania, although the government is the main provider of primary education, inadequate funding limits schools' capacity to meet essential resource needs. Consequently, organisations provide support through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This study examined school governance stakeholders' perceptions of CSR initiatives in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District, focusing on types of initiatives implemented, contributions to infrastructure, educational access, quality, and stakeholder influence on prioritisation and allocation of CSR Initiatives. Guided by Stakeholder Salience Theory, the study employed a descriptive qualitative design involving 32 stakeholders, comprised of head teachers, ward education officers, village leaders, and school committee members. Data were collected through 16 key informant interviews and two focus group discussions involving participants purposively selected from eight wards and 16 schools receiving CSR support. Data were analysed using inductive qualitative content analysis. Findings revealed that CSR initiatives focused on visible infrastructure and learning materials, improving infrastructure, access to, and education quality. However, support for ICT, sanitation and extracurricular support varied across schools. This pattern suggests that visible needs attracted greater attention and priority, particularly where claims were perceived to have greater power, legitimacy, and urgency. It concludes that CSR initiatives prioritise visible infrastructure and learning materials and were perceived to improve educational access and quality. However, ICT, sanitation, and extracurricular activities received limited attention. It recommends coordination, needs-based allocation, maintenance, monitoring, and community participation to ensure equitable, sustainable CSR support.

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Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has increasingly become an important mechanism through which organisations contribute to community well-being while complementing public sector efforts to address social needs, including education (Malechwanzi, 2025). The World Business Council for Business Development (WBCSD) defines CSR as the continuing commitment by business to 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 (Watts & Holme, 1999). Beyond profit-making, CSR encompass organisational commitments to social and environmental well-being and relationships with communities affected by organisational activities (Nakpodia et al., 2025). In education, CSR initiatives take diverse forms, including infrastructure improvements, provision of learning materials, digital resources, water and sanitation facilities, extracurricular activities and other forms of support to improve access to, and the quality of education, particularly in resource-constrained settings (Azhar, 2023).

However, CSR initiatives are not necessarily distributed equally across schools or aligned with all educational priorities. Organisations tend to prioritise initiatives according to their strategic interests, available resources, perceived community needs, and institutional relationships, potentially producing uneven patterns of CSR support (Rani et al., 2024). Thus, while CSR complement public efforts to address educational needs, the distribution and emphasis of CSR initiatives warrant attention to understand which needs are prioritised, which are less adequately addressed, and how such differences shape the benefits received by schools and communities (Cornico, 2025).

Evidence from developing countries and sub-Saharan Africa indicates that CSR and related private sector interventions contribute to educational infrastructure, learning materials, digital resources, sanitation facilities, scholarships, extracurricular activities, and other school-based resources, although their scope and effectiveness vary across contexts (Grunwald et al., 2024; Nkadamovs, 2025). Studies from Asia similarly report the role of CSR initiatives in supporting educational provision through investments in classrooms, learning materials and digital resources (Azhar, 2023; Jain et al., 2025). Other studies conducted in Africa, particularly in Nigeria and Zambia, also indicate that CSR contributes to educational infrastructure, sanitation facilities, scholarships, teaching and learning materials, and extracurricular activities (Lukonga & Musonda, 2024; Ebekozi et al., 2023). Thus, the presence of CSR initiatives does not necessarily indicate that educational needs are adequately or equitably addressed. Attention is therefore needed not only to what CSR initiatives provide but also to how their types, distribution, and contributions correspond with locally perceived priorities.

In Tanzania, public primary schools serve large and diverse pupil populations under fee-free education policy but continue to experience resource constraints that affect equitable access to quality education (Kapinga, 2023). Although national policies, including the Education and Training Policy (2014, revised 2023), the Education Sector Development Plan (2025/26 – 2029/30), and Tanzania Development Vision 2050, emphasise equitable access to quality education (URT, 2025), public primary schools, particularly in remote rural areas, face shortages of resources due to insufficient government funding that affect access and quality of education (Chikowore, 2023). These challenges are evident in Ngorongoro District, where dispersed pastoralist communities, seasonal mobility, lack of educational resources, and long distances to schools constrain educational provision (Ndibalema, 2022). Schools consequently receive CSR support from organisations involved in conservation, tourism, and other private sector activities,



including the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA), Thompson Safaris, and Ortello Business Company (OBC) (Suluo et al., 2023).

Despite CSR support, the extent to which these initiatives address educational priorities remains unclear. Existing Tanzanian studies have largely examined CSR in relation to community development, organisational outcomes, higher education, health and water services (Gillo et al., 2025; Msambali & Mwonge, 2025; Mwandu et al., 2024), with limited attention to how stakeholders involved in public primary school governance perceive the types, distribution and educational contributions of CSR initiatives, particularly in Ngorongoro District. This gap is significant because CSR initiatives may be physically delivered yet remain insufficient, unevenly distributed, or poorly aligned with locally perceived educational needs. Moreover, findings from other developing contexts cannot be assumed to reflect the institutional, socioeconomic, and geographical realities of rural Tanzania.

This study therefore examined school governance stakeholders' perceptions of CSR initiatives in public primary schools in Ngorongoro District. Specifically, it examined: (i) the types of CSR initiatives implemented; (ii) their perceived contributions to school infrastructure; (iii) their perceived contributions to access to education; (iv) their perceived contributions to the quality of education, and (v) how stakeholder power, legitimacy and urgency influence the prioritisation and allocation of CSR initiatives. refers to the processes of decision-making, oversight, accountability, and management of public primary schools involving head teachers, school committee members, Ward Education Officers, and village leaders. Moreover, stakeholder perceptions refers to how school governance stakeholders understand, interpret, and assess CSR initiatives, particularly their relevance to school needs and their perceived contributions to education (Ajii, 2025). In the context of this study, CSR refers to the social and educational contributions made by organisations operating in or around Ngorongoro District to support public primary schools.

The study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it shifts attention from CSR outputs and organisational performance to the perspectives of educational stakeholders. Second, it examines perceived differences between visible CSR initiatives and less visible or recurrent educational needs. Third, it applies Stakeholder Salience Theory to rural and socio-politically distinctive educational contexts, highlighting initiative visibility as a contextual feature shaping the stakeholder priorities.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework: Stakeholder Salience Theory

Stakeholder Salience Theory, developed by Mitchell et al. (1997), explains how organisations pay attention to stakeholders based on three attributes: power, legitimacy, and urgency. The relevance of these attributes varies across stakeholders and contexts, influencing the degree of attention given to particular interests (Wood et al., 2021). In CSR-supported education, stakeholders include schools, pupils, parents, school committees, local communities, village leaders, and education authorities, whose influence over CSR priorities may differ. Education officers and school leaders may exercise institutional power, communities possess legitimacy as beneficiaries, while critical shortages of classrooms, desks, and learning materials may heighten the perceived urgency of a specific educational need.



In this study, Stakeholder Salience Theory provides a useful lens for interpreting participants' perceptions of why certain educational needs receive greater CSR attention than others. Highly visible and tangible initiatives, such as classrooms, desks, and learning materials, are easily recognised, demonstrated, and formally handed over to beneficiaries, potentially increasing their salience. Conversely, teacher development, facility maintenance, and ICT facilities may require sustained investment and produce less immediate visibility. The Ngorongoro context and initiative visibility are therefore considered contextual factors shaping perceived CSR priorities. Since CSR providers were not interviewed, the theory is used to interpret stakeholder responses rather than establish providers' actual motivations or intentions.

Empirical Review

Empirical evidence indicates that CSR initiatives can support educational development through improvements in school infrastructure, learning materials, digital learning, and access to education. Ebekozen et al. (2023) highlight the potential of CSR initiatives to support educational infrastructure, while report contributions to teaching and learning. Similarly, Jain et al. (2025) identify CSR contributions to infrastructure, digital learning and educational access in India. However, physical infrastructure alone may not sufficiently improve educational quality, which also depends on teacher capacity, instructional resources, institutional leadership and learner participation (Al Sakka et al., 2023; Oubibi et al., 2024). This raises the question of whether CSR initiatives address broader educational needs or focus on visible and measurable investments.

The distribution of CSR benefits is also an important because resource allocation may reflect organisational priorities, stakeholder relationships, and perceived stakeholder importance of particular stakeholder claims, resulting in unequal benefits across schools (Malechwanzi, 2025; Omidvar et al., 2025). Stakeholder Salience Theory provides a useful explanation, suggesting that stakeholders whose claims demonstrate greater power, legitimacy, and urgency are more likely to receive organisational attention. Consequently, visible and strongly communicated needs, such as classrooms, teachers' houses and offices, desks, and learning materials, may receive greater CSR attention than less visible needs such as sanitation, ICT, and extracurricular activities. This issue is particularly relevant in geographically dispersed rural settings, where schools differ in accessibility, infrastructure needs, and relationships with CSR providers (Artyukhova et al., 2026; Bello, 2025; Towne et al., 2024)

In Tanzania, existing studies have examined CSR in relation to community well-being, organisational performance and sector-specific outcomes (Gillo et al., 2025; Msambali & Mwonge, 2025; Mwandu et al., 2024). However, limited empirical attention has examined how stakeholder power, legitimacy, and urgency influence CSR prioritisation and allocation in public primary schools. This study therefore addresses this gap by examining stakeholder perceptions of CSR contributions to infrastructure, access, and education quality, while examining stakeholder influence shapes the prioritisation and distribution of CSR initiatives in Ngorongoro District.

Methodology

The study employed a qualitative descriptive design to capture stakeholders' current perceptions of CSR initiatives (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025; Lim, 2025; Sandelowski, 2010), their relevance to school needs, and their perceived contributions to education in Ngorongoro District, Arusha Region, northern Tanzania.



The district was purposively selected because of its dispersed settlements, seasonal livestock mobility, long distances between homes and schools, and presence of organisations implementing CSR activities (Ndibalema, 2022; Suluo et al., 2023). Eight wards with active CSR support were purposively selected. These included Arash, Enduleni, Nainokanoka, Ngorongoro, Oloipiri, Ololosokwan, Orgosorok, and Soitsambu, followed by two two public primary schools with active CSR initiatives from each ward. A total of 32 participants were purposively selected based on their knowledge of school governance and CSR-supported educational activities. They comprised head teachers, school committee members, Ward Education Officers (WEOs), and eight village leaders. Data were collected through 15 semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) with head teachers and WEOs, and two focus group discussions (FGDs), each comprising eight village leaders and school committee members. Semi-structured interview guides and FGD checklists were used to ensure consistency while allowing participants to elaborate on their experience (Adley et al., 2024; Aitsidou et al., 2024; Beckman et al., 2024).

Interviews and FGDs lasted approximately 35-70 minutes and were conducted in Kiswahili and English. With informed consent, sessions were audio-recorded and supplemented with field notes. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, while Kiswahili transcripts were translated into English and checked against the original recordings. A pilot study conducted in two public primary schools assessed the clarity and relevance of research instruments, and pilot data were excluded from the final analysis. Data were analysed using inductive qualitative content analysis involving repeated reading, identification of meaningful statements, manual descriptive coding, and grouping related codes into categories (Nicmanis, 2024; Vears & Gillam, 2022). Twenty-seven initial codes were generated, resulting in eight sub-themes and two overarching themes, as shown in Table 1. Stakeholder Salience Theory guided interpretation rather than predetermined coding. Trustworthiness was enhanced through triangulation, participant checking, detailed contextual description, systematic documentation, and reflexive analysis, also highlighted by Chakma and Li (2025) and Haq et al. (2023). Ethical approval was obtained from Moshi Co-operative University (Ref. No. MoCU/UGS/3/41), with permission from relevant regional and district authorities. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and participants could withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were protected through role-based codes and removal of identification, while data were securely handled and used solely for research purposes.

Table 1: Analytical Progression from Initial Codes to Categories and Overarching Themes

Illustrative initial codes	Sub-theme	Main theme	Stakeholder Salience dimension	Analytical interpretation
Constructed/renovated classrooms, dormitories, teachers' houses/offices, fence	Physical infrastructure initiative	Visible infrastructure as dominant CSR priority	Legitimacy/urgency; conditioned by visibility	Infrastructure addresses widely recognised/immediate school needs while highly visible evidence of corporate responsiveness/legitimacy
Toilets, water/hand-washing facilities	Water/sanitation support	Visible infrastructure as dominant CSR priority	Legitimacy/urgency	Sanitation needs are perceived as legitimate/immediate, although uneven provision suggests that salience does not translate uniformly into CSR allocation



Desks, pupils' uniforms, textbooks, exercise books, teaching aids	Teaching/learning materials	Materials support for learning environment	Legitimacy/urgency	Learning materials shortages represent legitimate/immediate educational claims that attract CSR support because their benefits are readily observable
Computers, projectors, digital resources	ICT provision	Uneven support for broader educational needs	Legitimacy, but comparatively weaker perceived urgency/visibility	ICT is recognised as an educational need but receives comparatively limited support, suggesting that legitimate stakeholder claim may remain peripheral where benefits are less immediately visible or require sustained complementary resources
Sports facilities, playgrounds, school meals	Wider pupil support initiatives	Uneven support for broader educational needs	Legitimacy with comparatively lower salience	Wider pupil support needs are recognised as legitimate but appear less prioritised than tangible infrastructure, indicating differentiated salience among competing educational needs
Increased enrolment/improved attendance/retention, reduced absenteeism	Participation/continuity	Perceived improvement in educational access	Legitimacy/urgency	Participation associated with CSR initiatives addressing urgent and legitimate barriers to school participation and continuity
Better learning environment, greater pupil participation, teacher motivation	Teaching and learning conditions	Perceived improvement in quality of education	Legitimacy/urgency	Participants perceive CSR initiatives as responding to legitimate educational needs and improving conditions for teaching and learning
Better examination results/perceived academic improvements	Perceived learning outcomes	Perceived enhancement of educational quality	Legitimacy	Participants associate CSR initiatives with improved learning outcomes; however, these remain perceived contributions rather than objectively verified effects
Unequal provision across schools, unmet ICT needs, inadequate sanitation, limited extracurricular support	Uneven distribution/unmet priorities	Misalignment between CSR visibility and wider community needs	Differentiated salience, possible power asymmetry	Some legitimate community needs remain insufficiently supported, suggesting that CSR allocation may privilege highly visible and demonstrate claims rather than reflecting educational needs alone
Corporate preference for projects that can be formally handed over, visible evidence of corporate support	Public demonstrability of CSR initiatives	Visibility as a conditioning mechanism of stakeholder salience	Legitimacy mediated by visibility	The findings suggest that visibility and public demonstrability may condition how legitimate and urgent stakeholder claims are translated into initiatives priorities



Results

The findings indicate that CSR allocation in the study area prioritised visible educational needs, particularly classrooms, teachers' houses, offices, desks, and learning materials. Participants perceived these initiatives as contributing improvements in infrastructure, access, and education quality. However, support for less visible needs, including sanitation, ICT, and extracurricular activities, was perceived to be less consistent. The findings further indicate that differences in stakeholder influence and the perceived legitimacy and urgency of educational needs contributed to prioritisation of particular CSR initiatives. The findings are presented under the following subheadings: types of CSR initiative implemented, perceived contributions to school infrastructure, access to education, quality of education, and stakeholder influence on prioritisation and allocation of CSR initiatives.

Types of CSR Initiatives Implemented

The findings revealed that CSR support covered several areas of school development, although the extent of support varied across schools. Participants identified CSR initiatives as concentrating on tangible and visible school infrastructure and learning materials. Results presented in Table 2 shows that construction and renovation of classrooms, dormitories, teachers' houses and offices, and toilets, as well as donation of desks, exercise books and textbooks as major areas of CSR support in the study area. These initiatives were considered important because schools faced shortage of physical facilities that affected teaching and learning.

Table 2: Type of CSR Initiatives Implemented

Type of Initiatives	Number of Schools Benefited
Construction/renovation of classrooms	13
Construction of teachers houses/offices	8
Construction of dormitories	6
Construction of school fence	4
Construction of toilets	9
Donation of learning materials (desks, textbooks, exercise books, stationaries, uniforms)	12
Donation of sanitation facilities	6
Mid - day school meals	5
Sports facilities	5
ICT facilities	4

One head teacher explained:

'...companies prefer building classrooms, donating desks, teaching aids and exercise books because these initiatives address immediate needs, produce visible results, and can be easily demonstrated and formally handed over to communities and beneficiaries...(HT3, W3)'

Similarly, one participant reported:

'...CSR initiatives have helped address shortages of classrooms, teachers' houses and offices, desks, textbooks and other learning materials thereby improving school infrastructure and learning environment... (WEO2, W2)'



The findings indicate that visible infrastructure development and donation of learning materials constituted a major component of CSR initiatives in the supported schools because are perceived as addressing immediate shortages of resources required for effective teaching and learning.

In contrast, participants reported less consistent CSR support for sanitation, ICT facilities and extracurricular activities. While some schools had received support in these areas, respondents indicated that such initiatives were less common than infrastructure and learning materials related initiatives. Moderate support was reported for sanitation facilities including toilet construction, water supply, and hand-washing facilities. These initiatives were perceived to improve school hygiene and create healthier learning environments. It was stated:

'...construction of toilets is sometimes supported, but maintenance is left to the school, which becomes a challenge due to limited funds and lack of water supply...(HT1, W1)'

ICT facilities were described as among the least supported CSR initiatives. Participants mentioned occasional donations of computers, laptops, printers, and other digital learning resources but indicated that such support reached relatively few schools. Participants also reported support for sports facilities, playgrounds and school meals, but these initiatives were perceived to be less common than infrastructure and learning materials. A KI participant explained:

'... ICT facilities are very rare because they require electricity, maintenance, trained teachers and sometimes internet access...also sports facilities and meals are not continuous... (WEO2, W2)'

One FGD participant also noted:

'... disparities between schools exist, with some benefiting from CSR support while others remain underserved... (VL7, W7)'

These findings highlight two related patterns in CSR support: a concentration of CSR on visible infrastructure and learning materials, and uneven distribution of support across schools. Consistent with Nguyen et al. (2026) and Onuoha et al. (2025), CSR initiatives in developing countries tend to prioritise visible infrastructure and learning materials because it provides immediate and observable evidence of corporate commitment. Similarly, Malechwani (2025) and Omidvar et al. (2025) identified inadequate ICT investment as a barrier to improving education in rural schools, while Towne et al. (2024) reported uneven CSR initiatives distribution can leave some schools underserved. Idiabana and Somieri-Pepple (2025) further emphasise the contribution of extracurricular activities to pupil engagement and well-being.

Perceived Contributions of CSR Initiatives to Educational Development

Participants generally perceived CSR initiatives as contributing positively to educational development, particularly by improving school infrastructure, access to, and quality of education. However, they also emphasised that these contributions were uneven and insufficient to address all educational needs.

Improved School Infrastructure

School infrastructure comprises physical facilities and resources that support teaching and learning (Udeze, 2024). In this study, it includes classrooms, teachers' houses and offices, toilets, dormitories, water facilities, electricity, desks and ICT facilities. The findings indicate that CSR support contributed



to improved and expansion of school infrastructure in several schools, particularly through construction or improvements of classrooms, toilets, dormitories, teachers' houses and offices, thereby addressing resource shortages and improving learning environment and address educational resources shortages. One KI explained:

"...before the CSR initiatives, we had an acute shortage, leaking roofs, and dilapidated classrooms, some classes were conducted under the tree...the newly constructed classrooms and donated desks have created a better and safe learning environment...(WEO2, W2)"

Participants associated improved facilities with learner comfort, safety, teacher working conditions and school attractiveness. However, some participants emphasised that infrastructure improvements remained insufficient where maintenance and other educational inputs were neglected. One participant during interview noted:

"...infrastructure alone is not enough...to improve education quality, CSR initiatives should also support teacher training, learning materials, and ICT facilities...(HT5, W5)"

The finding suggests that infrastructure-related CSR initiatives were perceived as particularly important because their outcomes were visible and directly observable within schools. These findings align with Dash and Dash (2025) and Oubibi et al. (2024), who emphasise the importance of integrated investments in educational improvements.

Contributions to Improved Access to Education

Access to education entails the opportunity for all school-age to children enrol, attend, participate in, and complete quality basic education without barriers (UNESCO, 2020). In this study, it refers to stakeholders' perceptions of whether CSR-supported facilities and resources reduce barriers to enrolment, attendance, and participation. Participants perceived that CSR initiatives helped create conditions that supported children's participation in schooling. Improved infrastructure, learning materials, ICT facilities, sanitation facilities, clean water, and accessible facilities, were perceived to create conducive school environments, reducing walking distances, improve resource availability, and encourage enrolment, attendance, and parental support for schooling. A key informants noted:

"...CSR initiatives have complemented government efforts through construction and renovation of accessible infrastructure, donation of learning materials, sanitation facilities...this has enhanced pupils' access to educational resources and encouraged more parents to enrol their children...(HT3, W3)"

Similarly, FGD participants associated better facilities with parental confidence in schools. One participant stated:

"...parents are more willing to enrol their children because schools supported through CSR provide better learning environments, reduced walking distances, and are safe for every learner...previously, classrooms lacked furniture and other learning materials...(VL4, W4)"

The findings therefore suggest that CSR initiatives were perceived to contribute to educational access primarily through improvements in the physical and material conditions supporting school

Participation. These findings align with Al Sakka et al. (2023) who found contributions of CSR initiatives to educational access, while Jain et al. (2025) highlight that CSR initiatives alone cannot fully address



systemic barriers to educational access. From a Stakeholder Salience Theory perspective, the prioritisation of visible, legitimate, and urgent needs may enable CSR providers to demonstrate responsiveness and strengthen corporate legitimacy.

Contributions to Improved Quality of Education

Quality of education is multidimensional, encompassing effective teaching, qualified teachers, appropriate resources, supportive learning environments, relevant curricula, effective leadership and equitable learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2024). This study focused on perceived improvements in teaching and learning conditions, learner participation, teacher working conditions and perceived academic performance rather than independently measured learning outcomes. Participants associated CSR initiatives with improvements in the teaching and learning environment. Support for construction and renovation of classrooms, dormitories, staff houses and offices, toilets, donation of exercise books, stationery, and textbooks, was perceived to facilitated teaching and learning by creating more appropriate conditions for teachers and pupils. One KI reported:

'...before CSR interventions, we had dilapidated classrooms and inadequate facilities ... the construction of new classrooms, toilets and provision of stationery have improved learning conditions and improved academic performance ... (WEO4, W4)'

Additionally, it was stated:

'...the availability of teaching resources enhanced lesson delivery...inclusive facilities increased enrolment and participation among children with special needs in school... (VL7, W7)'

However, participants also noted that limitations in ICT, sanitation and other educational resources continued to affect the broader quality of the school environment. The findings therefore indicate that CSR initiatives were perceived to make positive contributions to education quality, although the contribution was uneven across different dimensions of school provision.

Stakeholder Influence on the Prioritisation and Allocation of CSR Initiatives

The findings indicate that CSR allocation was shaped not only by educational needs but also by stakeholders' ability to communicate and influence decisions and by the perceived legitimacy and urgency of particular needs. School leaders, government officials, village leaders, and school committees played important roles in identifying and communicating pressing school needs to relevant leaders and organisations for considerations. As FGD participants explained:

'...we identify and prioritise the schools' most pressing needs before presenting them to relevant leaders and potential CSR providers...(SCM, W4)'

Classrooms, teachers' houses and offices, toilets, desks, and other learning materials were recognised as legitimate priorities because of their direct relevance to school functioning.

The findings further indicate that power, legitimate, and urgency interacted in shaping CSR priorities. Needs that were strongly communicated, recognised, urgent, and visible were more likely to attract support. A head teacher noted:

'...when a need is clearly seen and affects many pupils, it is easier to explain its importance and request support from organisations...(HT5, W5)'



Consequently, infrastructure and learning materials received greater attention, while less visible needs such as sanitation, ICT, and extracurricular activities received less consistent support.

Discussions

Types of CSR Initiatives Implemented

The findings indicate that CSR in the sampled schools was perceived to concentrate on classrooms, desks, learning materials and other tangible infrastructure. This pattern is consistent with evidence that CSR commonly prioritises visible educational infrastructure and learning materials (Jain et al., 2025). However, the present study extends this by highlighting important stakeholders' perspectives of these initiatives. Participants did not simply describe what CSR providers supplied; they interpreted the pattern of support as reflecting immediate and visible educational needs. Infrastructure and learning materials such as classrooms, staff houses and offices, toilets, desks and textbooks were perceived as particularly suitable CSR initiatives because their effects could be readily observed by schools and communities. Participants suggest that school infrastructure and learning materials such as classrooms, staff houses and offices, dormitory, desks and exercise books as responses to urgent, legitimate needs and highly visible educational needs.

From Stakeholder Salience Theory perspectives, stakeholder claims are likely to attract organisational attention when demonstrating power, legitimacy or urgency (Mitchell et al., 1997; Wood et al., 2021). However, because CSR providers were not interviewed about investment decisions, the findings cannot establish that visibility directly influenced project selection. Rather, visibility may have enhanced the observability of CSR responsiveness. Thus, the findings reflect the perceived pattern of CSR responsiveness rather than the actual decision-making criteria used by CSR providers.

Perceived Contributions of CSR Initiatives to Educational Development

Improved School Infrastructure

Participants valued infrastructure improvements and associated with conducive teaching and learning environments. This is consistent with studies emphasising the importance of educational infrastructure (Ebekozen et al., 2023; Udeze, 2024). Also, participants stated that infrastructure alone was insufficient. They identified teacher capacity building, ICT, learning materials and maintenance as additional requirements. This finding supports the argument that educational quality is multidimensional and depends on the interaction between physical infrastructure, teacher capacity, teaching and learning materials, and school conditions. This implies that CSR can make an important contribution to the conditions for quality education without necessarily demonstrating improved learning outcomes.

Contributions to Improved Access to Education

Participants perceived CSR as improving access by making schools more attractive, increasing the availability of learning materials and improving sanitation facilities. These findings are consistent with previous studies linking CSR with educational access (Jain et al., 2025; Ebekozen et al., 2023). However, the findings also indicate that CSR may be more effective in addressing school-level supply-side constraints than broader structural barriers. Construction of classrooms and provision of desks can address shortages within schools, but they do not necessarily resolve geographical distances, pastoral mobility, household economic constraints or other barriers affecting school attendance. This distinction



is particularly important in Ngorongoro because the educational context involves dispersed settlements and pastoralist livelihoods (Ndibalema, 2022). Consequently, CSR that focuses predominantly on infrastructure may improve school conditions without fully addressing the reasons why children remain unable to attend consistently.

Contributions to Improved Quality of Education

Participants associated the construction and renovation of classrooms, sanitation facilities, and other school infrastructure, together with the provision of teaching and learning materials, with improved quality of education, including improved learning conditions, learner participation, and academic performance. This finding is consistent with Bello (2025), who highlights CSR contributions to educational quality.

Findings further suggest that infrastructure and learning materials alone cannot ensure sustained improvements in education quality. Participants emphasised the complementary importance of teacher capacity building, ICT facilities, instructional materials, maintenance aligning with Al Sakkaf et al. (2023). From a Stakeholder Salience Theory perspective, CSR initiatives that responded to legitimate and urgent educational needs enhanced the learning environment while strengthening corporate legitimacy. Therefore, CSR contributions to quality of education are more likely to be more sustainable when physical investments are combined with initiatives that strengthen teaching capacity, instructional resources, inclusion, and institutional support.

Stakeholder Influence on the Prioritisation and Allocation of CSR Initiatives

The findings suggest that CSR allocation in the study area was influenced by stakeholder power, legitimacy, and urgency, consistent to Stakeholder Salience Theory. Stakeholders with greater capacity to communicate and influence CSR decisions appeared better positioned to draw attention to particular educational needs, while classrooms, teachers' houses and offices, desks, and learning materials were perceived as legitimate and urgent priorities because of their direct relevance to school functioning. The emphasis on visible and immediate needs may explain why sanitation, ICT, and extracurricular activities received less consistent support. The findings suggest that stakeholder salience shaped which educational claims received greater organisational attention, potentially creating a mismatch between highly visible CSR priorities and less visible but essential educational needs.

Conclusion

The study concludes that CSR allocation in Ngorongoro District was influenced by stakeholder salience and the visibility of educational needs. In line with Stakeholder Salience Theory, differences in stakeholder power, legitimacy, and urgency appeared to shape which educational claims received greater attention. CSR initiatives focused mainly on visible initiatives, particularly classrooms, teachers' houses, offices, desks, and learning materials, while sanitation, ICT, and extracurricular activities were perceived to receive less consistent support. Although stakeholders perceived CSR initiatives as contributing to infrastructure, educational access and quality, the emphasis on prioritising visible initiatives may have limited attention to less visible but essential recurrent needs, revealing a persistent mismatch between educational priorities and CSR allocation in the area.

The study therefore recommends that PO-RALG and education authorities strengthen CSR coordination through systemic needs assessments, documentation, and identification of underserved schools. CSR



providers should align their support with district and national education priorities, while school leaders, committees, and communities should participate in needs identification, monitoring, and maintenance to promote equitable and sustainable investments.

The study extends the application of Stakeholder Salience Theory to CSR-supported public primary schools in rural Tanzania. The findings suggest that power, legitimacy, and urgency shaped the prioritisation of educational needs, while visibility appeared to make stakeholder needs and organisational responses more observable rather than constituting an additional salience attribute. Practically, CSR providers should address needs beyond infrastructure and learning materials, including ICT, teacher development, sanitation, inclusive education, extracurricular activities, and maintenance through longer-term and sustainable support. The study contributes empirical evidence on beneficiary perceptions of CSR contributions and distribution in rural Tanzania. At policy level, District education authorities under the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) should strengthen CSR coordination through systematic needs assessments, documentation, identification of underserved schools, sustainability, monitoring, and alignment with district priorities and the Tanzania Development Vision 2050, which emphasises equitable access to quality education, public-private partnerships, and human capital development.

The study was limited to public primary schools in Ngorongoro District, limiting generalisability to contexts with different geographical, educational, and CSR conditions. Its cross-sectional design could not assess the long-term contributions of CSR initiatives, while reliance on stakeholder perceptions may have introduced professional or social desirability bias. The exclusion of pupils and parents also limited the range of perspectives, and perceived improvements in enrolment and attendance were not triangulated against school or district records. Future studies should employ longitudinal and comparative designs to examine CSR sustainability and educational outcomes across districts, while mixed-methods approaches should combine stakeholder perceptions with enrolment, attendance, examination results, and school inventories. Further studies should also examine CSR providers' perspectives to strengthen understanding of stakeholder prioritisation and test the explanatory relevance of Stakeholder Salience Theory.

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