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A Study on Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development Goals: A Multidisciplinary Educational Approach

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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Abstract

This study explores the intricate relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a multidisciplinary educational lens, highlighting the role of academic frameworks in bridging corporate initiatives with sustainable development practices. CSR has evolved from voluntary philanthropy to a strategic necessity that aligns business objectives with global priorities, such as poverty eradication, quality education, gender equality, climate action, and responsible consumption. By incorporating multidisciplinary approaches from management, economics, environmental sciences, and social studies, this research emphasizes how educational institutions can cultivate a holistic understanding of CSR and SDGs among students, policymakers, and corporate stakeholders. The study underlines the importance of curriculum innovation, case-based learning, and experiential engagement in enabling learners to critically assess corporate contributions toward sustainable growth while addressing social and environmental challenges. It also discusses how CSR practices, when integrated with SDGs, foster long-term value creation, ethical business conduct, and community

empowerment. Furthermore, the paper highlights real-world case studies where corporations have embedded SDGs into their CSR strategies, generating measurable social impact while enhancing organizational legitimacy. The findings suggest that a multidisciplinary educational approach equips future leaders with the necessary skills and perspectives to align business goals with global development imperatives. Ultimately, this study underscores education as a transformative tool in fostering responsible corporate behavior and advancing sustainable development.

Key Words

Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development Goals, Multidisciplinary Education, Ethical Business, Community Empowerment, Strategic CSR.

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved from being a philanthropic add-on to a strategic imperative within contemporary business practices. This transformation reflects growing expectations that corporations contribute not only to economic growth but also to the resolution of social and environmental challenges. The adoption of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 has provided a concrete and universal framework for addressing critical issues such as poverty alleviation, gender equality, quality education, climate action, and responsible consumption (Morioka et al., 2020; KPMG, 2017). As a result, integrating CSR with the SDGs presents corporations with an opportunity to align their strategies with global development priorities, enhancing both societal impact and corporate legitimacy (Anbarasan & Sushil, 2018).

The strategic alignment of CSR and SDGs enables companies to address complex global challenges while fostering long-term value creation. For instance, firms investing in renewable energy reduce environmental footprints (SDG 13), and those promoting inclusive education and gender equality contribute to SDGs 4 and 5, respectively (Namira & Indriani, 2023). This integrated approach repositioned CSR from mere compliance or philanthropy toward becoming central to business models and stakeholder engagement (Swain & Ranganathan, 2021).

Such complexity demands a multidisciplinary perspective. Insights from management, economics, environmental sciences, and social studies clarify the interconnections among business operations, societal needs, and ecological sustainability. Management research emphasizes organizational strategies and leadership, economics explores resource allocation and developmental trade-offs, environmental science highlights the urgency of climate and ecological concerns, and social sciences offer critical lenses on justice and equity (Fonseca & Carvalho, 2019; Purvis et al., 2019). Together, these disciplines enrich our understanding of CSR-SDG synergies and challenges.

Educational institutions have a vital role in this context by preparing future leaders to navigate and operationalize these complexities. Embedded within curricula, case-based learning, design thinking, and experiential engagement foster the skills necessary to critically evaluate corporate impacts on sustainable development (Agusdinata et al., 2022). Universities that adopt interdisciplinary approaches and connect theoretical knowledge with community and industry projects effectively cultivate sustainability-minded graduates capable of bridging corporate goals with societal imperatives (Wiek et al., 2015).

Moreover, real-world CSR practices demonstrate tangible benefits of SDG integration. For example, PT Kimia Farma Tbk's CSR programs in Indonesia not only address social challenges aligned with the SDGs but also create shared business and community value through sustainable empowerment (Maheshwari & Vijay Kumar, 2025). Such case studies highlight how corporations can operationalize sustainability frameworks to achieve measurable social impact while reinforcing legitimacy and trust among stakeholders.

This study hence explores the intricate relationship between CSR and the SDGs through a multidisciplinary educational lens. It investigates how academic frameworks and innovations in teaching can effectively prepare students, policymakers, and corporate leaders to integrate CSR strategies with sustainable development goals. Ultimately, the research reaffirms the transformative power of education in promoting responsible corporate behavior and advancing global sustainability.

Objectives

1. To explore how multidisciplinary education integrates CSR with the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. To evaluate the effectiveness of innovative teaching methods in promoting understanding of CSR and SDGs.
3. To examine corporate examples of CSR aligned with SDGs and their implications for education.

Research Methodology

This study employs a secondary data research method, using existing information collected by others to examine the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through a multidisciplinary educational perspective. Secondary data offers a valuable resource for analyzing trends, evaluating frameworks, and assessing real-world corporate practices without needing new data collection. Data sources will include academic journals, books, government publications, reports from non-governmental organizations, corporate sustainability disclosures, and reputable online databases. This approach allows comprehensive access to diverse and reliable information related to CSR strategies, SDG implementation, and educational practices. Using secondary data is time-efficient and cost-effective, enabling the research to leverage existing knowledge while focusing on synthesis and critical analysis. The methodology involves systematically identifying, selecting, and evaluating relevant secondary sources based on credibility, relevance, and recency. The data will be organized thematically to explore how multidisciplinary education can aid in understanding and promoting CSR in line with the SDGs. Additionally, corporate case studies found in secondary literature will be reviewed to showcase practical examples of sustainability integration. Data analysis will primarily be qualitative, emphasizing content analysis and comparison of findings from various studies to gain insights into best practices and educational implications. Limitations related to secondary data, such as potential biases or data gaps, will be acknowledged and addressed through careful source triangulation. Overall, this method supports a thorough exploration of the research topic by building on established data and highlighting opportunities for educational innovation and corporate responsibility toward sustainable development.

Review and Discussion

Integration of Multidisciplinary Education in CSR and SDGs

The study found that multidisciplinary educational frameworks effectively enhance understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By combining perspectives from management, economics, environmental science, and social studies, academic programs cultivate a holistic view among students and stakeholders. Literature and case analyses reveal that such integrated curricula improve critical thinking and enable learners to appreciate the interconnectedness of business practices and global sustainability challenges. This supports prior findings that multidisciplinary approaches foster deeper engagement with sustainability issues (Wiek et al., 2015; Agusdinata et al., 2022).

Effectiveness of Innovative Teaching Methods

Innovations in curriculum design, including case-based learning and experiential engagement, were observed to significantly promote learners' ability to critically assess corporate sustainability contributions. These pedagogical approaches empower students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world problems, deepening their grasp of CSR-SDG linkages. Studies indicate that these methods enhance students' ethical reasoning and preparedness for sustainability leadership roles (Morioka et al., 2020; Berchin et al., 2021). This affirms the value of active, practice-focused learning in bridging academic knowledge and practical application.

Corporate Embedding of SDGs into CSR

Analyses of secondary data case studies reveal that corporations embedding SDGs into their CSR strategies generate measurable social impact while enhancing brand reputation and stakeholder trust. Examples highlight companies addressing specific goals such as quality education, gender equality, and climate action through targeted initiatives. Challenges include navigating regulatory environments and ensuring effective community engagement, but opportunities arise from cross-sector collaboration and transparent sustainability reporting (Delta Corporation case, 2025; KPMG, 2017). These findings underline the necessity for education systems to prepare future leaders capable of aligning business goals with global development priorities effectively.

Research Gap

Despite growing interest in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there remains a notable gap in understanding how multidisciplinary education effectively bridges corporate sustainability initiatives with global development objectives. While numerous studies have examined CSR strategies and SDG implementation separately, limited research explores their integration through educational frameworks that prepare future leaders and policymakers.

Moreover, there is insufficient empirical evidence on the pedagogical approaches—such as curriculum innovation and experiential learning—that best enhance learners' critical assessment skills regarding corporate contributions to sustainable development. Existing literature often emphasizes corporate practices or policy implications without fully addressing how education can act as a transformative mechanism to align business goals with SDGs.

Additionally, while corporate case studies document SDG embedding in CSR, few studies systematically analyze how these real-world examples are incorporated into academic curricula or influence stakeholder perspectives. Therefore, this research aims to fill these gaps by investigating the role of multidisciplinary education in connecting CSR and SDGs, evaluating effective educational methodologies, and examining how corporate SDG integration can be leveraged as a learning tool within academic contexts.

Conclusion

This study emphasizes that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are closely interconnected, representing a strategic avenue for businesses to contribute meaningfully to global sustainability. The integration of CSR with the SDGs shifts corporate responsibility from voluntary philanthropy to an essential component of business strategy that addresses economic, social, and environmental challenges. Multidisciplinary education plays a crucial role in equipping future leaders and stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed to critically engage with these concepts and translate them into practice. Innovative educational approaches such as curriculum innovation, case-based learning, and experiential engagement significantly enhance understanding and application of CSR aligned with SDGs. Furthermore, real-world corporate examples demonstrate how embedding SDGs within CSR initiatives leads to measurable social impact and improved corporate legitimacy. Thus, education emerges as an indispensable tool in fostering responsible corporate behavior and advancing sustainable development goals.

Suggestions

1. Integrate CSR and SDG concepts across academic disciplines to promote holistic learning.
2. Use case studies and hands-on projects to connect theory with real-world sustainability challenges.
3. Strengthen collaboration between educational institutions, businesses, and policymakers for relevant learning.
4. Support continuous sustainability training for professionals and future leaders.
5. Encourage transparent corporate reporting aligned with SDGs to increase accountability and learning resources.

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