The Impact of Sport-Based Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Sustainable Development in Indonesia

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Abstract

Sport-based corporate social responsibility (S-CSR) is increasingly relied on to fund sport in Indonesia, yet little is known about what it changes for beneficiaries. This qualitative study examined how S-CSR programs are driven, managed and measured. We interviewed six key informants from two clubs, a competition operator, two federations and a government agency, and analyzed public documents from 12 organizations. Data were coded with a 70-code codebook and triangulated across four actor groups: funding companies, program-managing clubs, federations and government. Branding was the main driver, and the funder decided what was measured according to its own interests. No source held primary data on beneficiary impact. Substantive outcomes were recorded only when indicators were tied to athletes. Authority over indicators, rather than the number of actors involved, appears to determine what gets measured.

Keywords: sport-based CSR; governance; impact measurement; triangulation; Indonesia.

Introduction

Sport participation in Indonesia remains low, with a participation index of about 26.3% (Kemenpora, 2024), and public sport budgets are limited. Sport-based CSR is therefore seen as an alternative funding route and a vehicle for sustainable development. Research on CSR in sport has largely framed it in terms of returns to the organization (Walzel et al., 2018).

Impact claims, however, tend to describe the company more than the people a program serves. A literature review of 82 international sources (2020–2025) in the first phase of this study found beneficiary-level impact in only 10 (12%), none from Indonesia. Who decides what is measured has not been examined.

Accordingly, this study investigated (1) what drives S-CSR programs, (2) how they are managed, (3) what impacts they produce and how these are measured, (4) which barriers arise, (5) how they relate to the SDGs, and (6) how they should develop.

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Research Method

We used a qualitative multiple-case design (Yin, 2018) covering four actor groups: funding companies; sport clubs that manage programs (Club A, Club D owned by Company D, and Operator F); federations (Federations B and C); and government (Agency P). Public documents from 12 organizations, including two funding companies (D and E), complemented the interviews.

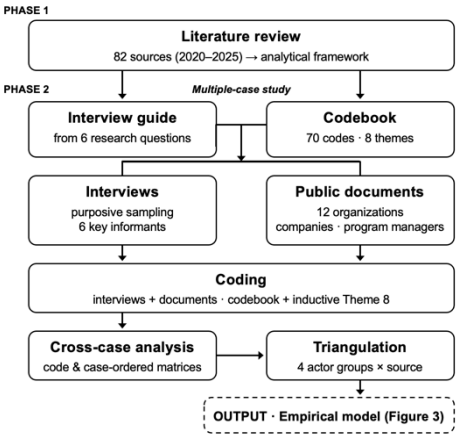


Figure 1. Two-phase research workflow

All data were coded with a 70-code codebook organized in eight themes derived from the literature review and the six research questions, plus an inductive theme for findings outside the framework (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Analysis moved from within-case to cross-case comparison using code meta-matrices and case-ordered matrices (Miles et al., 2020).

Interviews were triangulated with documents (Natow, 2020) using the protocol of Farmer et al. (2006). Fifteen topics were rated as agreement, partial agreement, silence or dissonance across the four groups, with interview and document evidence kept separate. All organizations and informants are anonymized.

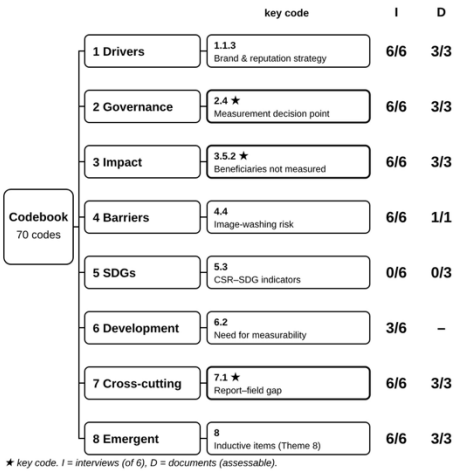


Figure 2. Key code per theme and its spread across sources

Results & Discussion

Triangulation of 15 topics produced 5 agreements, 7 partial agreements, 1 silence and 2 dissonances, with the strongest agreement on core topics. Every group named branding as the main driver. Regulation played no role because no sport-specific CSR rule exists.

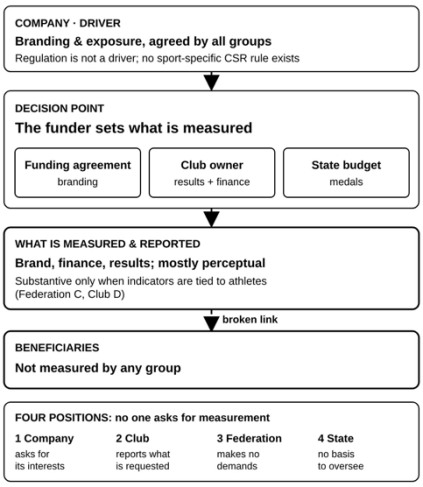


Figure 3. Empirical model: impact is filtered out before it reaches beneficiaries

The decision on what to measure sits with the funder: the club owner (Club A), the funding agreement (Federation B), the state budget (Federation C) or funder response (Operator F). Government sets no CSR impact indicators.

No group held primary data on beneficiary impact. Substantive outcomes appeared only where indicators were tied to athletes (Federation C, Club D). Club D described its aim as raising "champions in life" (education, character, alumni careers), yet it monitored only competitive results. Operator F treated beneficiaries as a prospective market, and the impact it called significant was ticket sales.

Dissonance emerged between federations and government. Federations pointed to limited funding, whereas government pointed to staff capacity. None of the three program managers cited funding, and two were open to being measured. These patterns come from a small purposive sample and may transfer best to similar funder-led settings.

Conclusion

S-CSR impact measurement stalls because no group asks for it. Companies ask for what serves them, clubs report what is requested, federations make no demands, and the state has no basis to require it. The constraint lies less in available methods than in who holds authority over indicators.

Beneficiary indicators should be written into partnership agreements from the start, and cross-agency guidelines for sport CSR are needed.