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Research Article

## Getting To Know The Term Of Class Size Reduction (CSR) And Its Positive Impact In The World Of Education (Historical Review)

Mustofa Aji Prayitno

IAIN Ponorogo

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Corresponding Author: Email : [mustofaajiprayitno@gmail.com](mailto:mustofaajiprayitno@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** Class size reduction (CSR) program is a policy that has been implemented in the world of education to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This research aims to provide a historical review of CSR and its positive impact on education. Through library research, this study collects information on the CSR concept, evaluates CSR programs that have been implemented in various countries, and analyzes the positive impacts of those programs, such as increased teacher attention, improved social interaction, higher academic achievement, better teacher job satisfaction, enhanced equity, fewer discipline problems, more time for instruction, more time for individualization, and more varied instructional learning strategy. However, there are also criticisms of CSR, such as the high cost and the lack of consistent empirical evidence regarding its impact on student academic achievement. This study concludes that CSR is a promising policy for improving the quality of education, but its implementation requires careful consideration and evaluation. The findings of this study can provide

insights for policymakers and education practitioners in deciding to implement CSR in their schools.

**Keywords:** Class Size Reduction (CSR), Education Program, Historical Review

## INTRODUCTION

Class size reduction (CSR) has become an important topic in discussions about improving the quality of education in various countries around the world (Shin & Chung, 2009). CSR is an educational policy that aims to reduce the number of students in one class in the hopes of improving the quality of teaching and learning. Supporters of CSR argue that by reducing the number of students per class, teachers can give more attention to each student, facilitate better social interactions among students, and increase student participation in learning (Wang & Calvano, 2022). However, there are also criticisms of the CSR policy, such as the high cost and the lack of consistent empirical evidence regarding the positive impact of this policy on students' academic achievement (Blatchford et al., 2011). Therefore, research on CSR and its impact on the world of education becomes important.

Class Size Reduction (CSR) is a term that refers to the practice of limiting the number of students in a classroom. This is often done with the goal of improving student achievement, increasing teacher effectiveness, and enhancing the overall quality of education (Finn et al., 2003). There is ongoing debate about the effectiveness of CSR in achieving these goals, but it remains a popular and widely-used educational policy in many countries around the world.

Over the years, several programs and initiatives have been implemented to reduce class sizes and improve the quality of education (Brewer et al., 1999). These programs have been studied extensively by researchers, policymakers, and educators to determine their effectiveness and identify best practices for implementation. The findings from these studies have contributed to the ongoing discussion about the benefits and drawbacks of CSR, and have informed the development of new policies and programs.

Given the importance of CSR in the field of education, it is important to understand its history and impact. By conducting a historical review of the various programs and initiatives that have been implemented, we can gain a better understanding of the factors that have influenced the development of CSR policies, the challenges that have been faced in implementing these policies, and the outcomes that have been achieved. This review can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of CSR and inform the development of new policies and programs in the future.

This research aims to gather information about the concept of CSR, identify the CSR programs that have been implemented in various countries, and examine the evaluation results of these programs. Through a historical review, this study is expected to provide a better understanding of the concept of CSR and its positive

impact on the world of education, as well as provide insights for policymakers and educational practitioners in deciding to implement CSR in their schools.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a synthesis of various ideas obtained from previous research through a literature review approach (library research). Literature review is a series of activities related to the method of collecting library data, reading, recording and processing research material (Zed, 2014). Through literature review, researchers attempt to review relevant sources such as books, journals, and scientific articles related to class size reduction (CSR) and its positive impact in the world of education. Then, analyze the data collected from various sources such as program evaluation reports, case studies, and statistical data related to class size reduction programs in certain countries.

The data analysis of the research is carried out in several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data reduction stage of this research is carried out by focusing on the research results data and summarizing the main points of the research, the data presentation stage is in the form of narrative and explanation, and the conclusion drawing stage through drawing conclusions and research findings from the available data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **The History of Class Size Reduction**

Class Size Reduction (CSR) has become one of the most popular policies and the most heavily funded education policy in the United States. In 1996, the California state legislature dedicated one billion dollars per year to fund the CSR program. Then in 1999, the federal government allocated 12 billion dollars for the same purpose (Hoxby, 2000).

The purpose of the CSR program is to improve educational achievement by reducing class size and increasing the number of teachers in each school. It is no doubt that this program is one of the programs with the largest funding in the United States. To achieve the goal of class size reduction (CSR), the US government has sought to fund the recruitment of 100,000 qualified teachers to teach in kindergarten to third-grade classes within seven years. The allocation was \$1.2 billion in 1999, \$1.3 billion in 2000, and \$1.623 billion in 2001. In the first two years, 37,000 teachers were hired.

Class Size Reduction (CSR) is based on assumptions about the role of teachers and the classroom environment in students' learning outcomes. Smaller classes are considered to provide opportunities for more positive teacher-student interactions, with fewer disciplinary disruptions and more efforts in the learning process (M. C. Wang, 2000). With more time to work on assignments, conduct assessments, refine instruction, and improve personal relationships with students and their families, teachers are expected to be able to develop teaching that is appropriate for each student's individual needs (Achilles et al., 2002). Through CSR, it is hoped that students will be able to develop closer affiliations with their schools. Close

relationships can help students better understand the school's rules and culture. This is expected to improve their learning outcomes in the classroom (Finn et al., 2003).

### **CSR Programs That have Been Implemented in The History of Education**

Over the years, several programs and initiatives have been implemented to reduce class sizes and improve the quality of education (Brewer et al., 1999). These programs have been studied extensively by researchers, policymakers, and educators. The following are some of the CSR programs in the history of education:

1. Indiana's Project Prime Time

Indiana's Project Prime Time is a program that aims to reduce class sizes in elementary schools in Indiana, United States. The program was started in 1981 and initially focused on reducing class sizes in grades K-3. The goal of the program was to have no more than 18 students in each class. The program was implemented in 24 schools across the state and provided additional funding to hire more teachers and create more classroom space. The program was evaluated after its first year and found to be successful in reducing class sizes and improving student achievement (McGiverin et al., 1989).

2. The Tennessee STAR Project

The Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) Project was a rigorous, large-scale study conducted in the United States to examine the effects of class size reduction on student achievement. The project was initiated in the late 1980s and was conducted in Tennessee across 79 schools, involving over 11,000 students and 1,300 teachers (Hanushek, 1999).

The study randomly assigned students and teachers to three different class size categories: small (13-17 students per class), regular (22-25 students per class), and regular with a teacher aide. The study lasted for four years and measured the academic achievement, attendance, and behavior of the students across the three different categories (Word, 1990).

The study found that students in smaller classes outperformed their peers in both regular and regular with teacher aide classes in terms of academic achievement, attendance, and behavior. The effect sizes were found to be substantial and significant, especially for minority and low-income students. In addition, the positive effects of class size reduction were found to be long-lasting, with students who were in smaller classes more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.

The findings of the Tennessee STAR Project had a significant impact on education policy in the United States, with many states adopting class size reduction programs based on its findings. However, the implementation of class size reduction programs also faced challenges, such as the cost of hiring and training more teachers, and the need for more classroom space and resources.

3. Wisconsin's SAGE Program

The Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program is a class size reduction initiative that was launched in Wisconsin, United States, in 1996.

The program focuses on reducing class sizes in kindergarten through grade 3 to no more than 15 students per class. The SAGE program was implemented in over 500 schools across Wisconsin, and it provided additional funding to schools to hire more teachers and create more classroom space. The program was evaluated after its first year and found to have a positive impact on student achievement in reading, language arts, and math (Molnar et al., 1999).

The program has been found to be particularly effective for low-income students and the minority (Hruz, 2000). In addition to improving academic achievement, the SAGE program has been found to have a positive impact on student attendance, behavior, and engagement. The SAGE program continues to be implemented in Wisconsin, and it serves as an example of how class size reduction can be an effective policy intervention to improve student outcomes, especially for students from historically disadvantaged backgrounds.

#### 4. The California Class Size Reduction Program

The California Class Size Reduction (CSR) Program is a statewide initiative that was launched in 1996 to reduce class sizes in grades K-3 to a maximum of 20 students per class. The program aimed to improve student achievement by increasing individual attention and support for students. The CSR program provided \$650 pupil for all primary schools which would reduce class sizes in California, and it was found to have a positive impact on student achievement in reading and math (Yeh, 2009).

However, the program also faced several challenges, including the need for more classroom space and resources, the cost of hiring and training additional teachers, and concerns about maintaining teacher quality. Despite these challenges, the CSR program has been credited with helping to raise academic standards and student achievement in California, and it has served as a model for other states that have implemented similar class size reduction initiatives. The program continues to be supported and debated by educators, policymakers, and researchers as a key policy intervention to improve educational outcomes for students.

In addition to the four aforementioned class size reduction programs, some other examples of class size reduction programs implemented in several countries include:

**Florida's Class Size Reduction Amendment:** In 2002, Florida adopted a constitutional change that required public school classes to be limited to 18-25 students depending on the grade level. The program has been implemented and evaluated with varying results (Sutton et al., 2008).

**North Carolina's Class Size Reduction Initiative:** In 1995, North Carolina initiated the Class Size Reduction Initiative (CSRI) aimed at reducing the number of students per class at the elementary school level. Program evaluations showed a positive impact on students' reading and math abilities (Thompson & Cunningham, 2001).

**The Ontario Class Size Initiative:** Ontario in Canada launched a class size reduction program in 2003 aimed at reducing the number of students in grades 1-3 to

a maximum of 20 students per class. Program evaluations showed a positive impact on students' achievement (Bascia, 2010).

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006: In 2006, the Scottish government launched The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act, which included a policy that provided additional funding to reduce class sizes in schools in areas with high social difficulty (Scottish Executive, 2006).

These programs show variation in the way they are implemented and the evaluation results achieved, but all aim to reduce the number of students per class and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

### **Positive Impacts of Class Size Reduction (CSR)**

Class Size Reduction (CSR) has been implemented in various countries with the aim of improving the quality of education. CSR policies aim to reduce the number of students in a classroom to increase the quality of teaching and learning. The following are some of the positive impacts of Class Size Reduction:

#### **1. Increased Teacher Attention**

With a smaller class size, teachers can give more attention to individual students. This allows teachers to provide more personalized instruction, which can lead to better academic performance and increased student engagement. With fewer students in the classroom, teachers have more time to observe and understand the learning needs of each student, and to tailor their instruction and support accordingly. This can include providing more individualized feedback on assignments, more opportunities for one-on-one instruction or small group work, and more personalized attention to students who may be struggling with certain concepts or skills. Increased teacher attention can lead to greater student engagement and participation, and can also help to improve academic outcomes for students.

#### **2. Improved Social Interaction**

With fewer students in a class, students can interact more with their peers, leading to improved social skills and emotional well-being. When class sizes are smaller, students have more opportunities to engage in group discussions, work on collaborative projects, and participate in class activities. This fosters a more positive and interactive learning environment, where students can build stronger relationships with their peers and feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas.

Moreover, smaller class sizes can also help to reduce social anxiety and the fear of speaking up in class, which can be common in larger classes. This can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment, where all students feel valued and encouraged to participate. In turn, this can lead to better academic and social outcomes for students, as they are more likely to develop positive attitudes towards learning and feel a sense of belonging in the classroom.

#### **3. Higher Academic Achievement**

Research has shown that smaller class sizes are associated with higher academic achievement. A study conducted by the Tennessee STAR project found that students in smaller classes performed better on standardized tests, particularly in math and reading. With fewer students to manage, teachers can spend more time on instruction and less time on classroom management, leading to more effective teaching practices. Additionally, students in smaller classes are more likely to receive feedback from their teachers, which can help them to improve their performance and understanding of the material.

Overall, the evidence suggests that class size reduction can lead to higher academic achievement, especially in the early grades. However, it is important to note that the effects of CSR can vary depending on other factors, such as teacher quality and classroom resources.

#### 4. Better Teacher Job Satisfaction

Class size reduction (CSR) can also lead to better job satisfaction for teachers. With smaller class sizes, teachers can have more opportunities to connect with their students and provide individualized attention, leading to a more rewarding teaching experience. Teachers may also experience less stress and burnout, as they are not required to manage as many students at once, and can focus more on teaching and supporting their students. Additionally, with fewer disciplinary issues to manage, teachers may feel more supported by their school administration and experience a greater sense of teamwork and collaboration. Overall, class size reduction can have a positive impact on teacher job satisfaction, which can lead to improved retention rates and a more stable teaching workforce.

#### 5. Enhanced Equity

Enhanced equity refers to the idea that class size reduction can create a more equitable learning environment for all students. In larger classes, teachers may struggle to provide individualized attention and support to every student, resulting in some students being left behind or not receiving the same opportunities as their peers. By reducing class size, teachers can better address the needs and learning styles of each student, leading to a more equitable learning environment. Additionally, smaller class sizes can help bridge the achievement gap between students from different socio-economic backgrounds.

#### 6. Less discipline problems

When class sizes are smaller, teachers are better able to manage their classrooms and give more individual attention to each student. With fewer students to manage, it becomes easier to address discipline problems as they arise and prevent them from escalating. This leads to a more orderly and productive learning environment, which benefits both students and teachers.

#### 7. More time for instruction

Class size reduction allows teachers to have more time for instruction because they are able to manage their classes more efficiently with fewer students. With fewer students to monitor and manage, teachers can focus on delivering quality

instruction and providing individual attention to students. They also have more time to address questions and concerns, engage in meaningful discussions with students, and provide feedback on student work. This increased instructional time can lead to improved academic performance and better preparation for college and career success.

**8. More time for individualization**

In smaller classes, allows teachers to have more time for individualization, which is the process of tailoring instruction to meet the unique needs and abilities of each student. With fewer students to manage and teach, teachers can spend more time working with individual students to identify their strengths and weaknesses and adjust their teaching accordingly. This can lead to greater academic success and a more personalized learning experience for each student. Additionally, teachers can provide more feedback to students and engage in one-on-one discussions about their progress, which can help motivate and inspire students to achieve their full potential.

**9. More varied instructional learning strategy**

Reducing class size allows teachers to use a wider range of instructional strategies and activities to engage students in the learning process. With fewer students to manage, teachers can spend more time on lesson planning, preparing materials, and incorporating diverse teaching methods to cater to the individual needs of each student.

For example, teachers can use small group activities, hands-on experiments, and interactive technology tools to encourage students to participate actively in the classroom. This can lead to a more personalized learning experience that promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. In addition, smaller class sizes provide teachers with more opportunities to provide timely and constructive feedback to students. This allows them to address individual student needs and help students achieve their full potential.

**Disadvantages of Class Size Reduction**

Class size reduction (CSR) has been a popular policy in education for its potential positive impact on teaching and learning. However, like any policy, CSR also has its limitations and drawbacks. One of the main concerns is the cost of implementing CSR. Reducing class sizes means hiring more teachers, building more classrooms, and providing more resources, which can be costly for schools and governments. This cost may be particularly challenging for low-income schools and districts with limited resources.

Another concern is the lack of consistent empirical evidence on the positive impact of CSR on student achievement. While some studies have shown positive effects of CSR, others have found no significant differences in academic performance between students in smaller and larger classes. Therefore, it remains unclear whether CSR is an effective policy to improve academic achievement.

Moreover, reducing class sizes may not always lead to better teaching and



learning. The effectiveness of CSR depends not only on class size but also on teacher quality, curriculum, teaching strategies, and other factors. Simply reducing class sizes may not address these underlying issues and may not necessarily improve the quality of education.

Based on this, while class size reduction has the potential to improve teaching and learning, it also has its limitations and drawbacks. Policymakers and educators need to carefully consider the costs and benefits of CSR and weigh them against other factors that affect education quality. It is essential to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively to provide the best possible education for all students.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, class size reduction (CSR) has been a popular policy in the world of education as it aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning by reducing the number of students in each class. This policy has several positive impacts, such as increased teacher attention, improved social interaction, higher academic achievement, better teacher job satisfaction, enhanced equity, fewer discipline problems, more time for instruction, more time for individualization, and more varied instructional learning strategy.

However, there are also criticisms of CSR, such as the high cost and the lack of consistent empirical evidence regarding its positive impact on student academic achievement. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research on CSR and its impact on education.

Through historical review, this research aims to collect information about the CSR concept, identify CSR programs that have been implemented in various countries, and evaluate the results of those programs. It is hoped that this study can provide a better understanding of the CSR concept and its positive impact on education and offer insights for policymakers and education practitioners in deciding to implement CSR in their schools. Overall, CSR is a promising policy that can contribute to improving the quality of education, but its implementation requires careful consideration and evaluation.

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