

Enhancing Academic Achievement through School–Tutoring Collaboration: A Case Study from Rural Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of collaboration between a public elementary school (SD Negeri 1 Pokoh Kidul) and a local tutoring institution in improving academic achievement among third-grade students. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research collected data through semi-structured interviews with a third-grade teacher, non-participant observations, and document analysis over a three-day period. Data were validated using triangulation and member checking, and analyzed thematically with reference to Bronfenbrenner’s mesosystem theory. The results reveal that semi-formal collaboration characterized by curriculum alignment, joint evaluations, and consistent communication positively impacts students’ academic performance, with average score increases of 5–10 points in Mathematics and Indonesian. Students also exhibited greater confidence, participation, and engagement. Parental and community involvement further enhanced these outcomes. Nonetheless, challenges persist, including the absence of formal agreements, limited access for disadvantaged students, and risks of academic burnout due to extended study hours. The study underscores the potential of operationalizing mesosystem interactions in school policy to enhance student learning. Recommendations include formalizing school–tutoring agreements, integrating effective tutoring practices into mainstream curricula, and implementing equity measures such as subsidies and targeted outreach. This research contributes to the limited body of literature on structured school–tutoring collaboration at the elementary level in Indonesia. It offers practical and policy-oriented insights for building sustainable, inclusive educational partnerships that address both academic and holistic student development.

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1. Introduction

Elementary education forms the foundation for students' cognitive, emotional, and social development, shaping their readiness for higher levels of education and their ability to navigate future societal challenges. Academic achievement at this stage is a multifaceted outcome influenced by both intrinsic factors such as cognitive abilities, motivation, and learning strategies and extrinsic factors including socioeconomic background, parental involvement, and the broader educational environment. Among these, the influence of external conditions has gained increasing scholarly attention due to its significant correlation with learning outcomes (Abednego et al., 2023; Vitoria et al., 2024). Research consistently shows that children from households with higher parental engagement and supportive socio-economic conditions exhibit greater academic success, partly because these families are more likely to provide enriching learning experiences, consistent guidance, and emotional encouragement (Camarao, 2024; Werang et al., 2024).

Creating a conducive learning environment, however, requires more than individual family involvement; it often demands coordinated support from various actors in the child's microsystem and mesosystem. Collaboration between formal schooling and external educational stakeholders has emerged as a critical strategy to address individual learning gaps and promote equitable outcomes. Partnerships involving teachers, parents, and non-formal education providers, such as tutoring centers, enable the identification of specific academic challenges faced by students and the design of tailored interventions to address them (Muawanah, 2023; Sholihah et al., 2023). Integrating non-formal educational methods into the formal learning process diversifies pedagogical approaches, making learning more engaging and responsive to students' varied needs (Camarao, 2024). These synergies are not only instrumental in bridging achievement gaps but also in enhancing motivation, confidence, and resilience in learners.

In many developing countries, tutoring centers serve as an essential complement to the formal education system, particularly in contexts where resource constraints limit instructional quality. These centers often provide individualized attention, remedial instruction, and supplementary exercises, enabling students to consolidate their understanding of complex subjects (Wong et al., 2023). In doing so, they address systemic gaps such as high student-to-teacher ratios and limited classroom time (Hatzigianni et al., 2023). Tutoring services have been shown to significantly boost student confidence and performance, especially among learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who might otherwise lack access to targeted academic support.

The value of such partnerships can be further illuminated through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that a child's development is shaped by the dynamic interactions between multiple environmental systems. Within this framework, the mesosystem comprising the relationships between different microsystems such as family, school, and community plays a decisive role in shaping academic trajectories (Miri, 2024). Empirical evidence suggests that when schools and tutoring institutions engage in meaningful, reciprocal collaboration, they leverage complementary resources and expertise that foster stronger student engagement and higher achievement (Buser et al., 2020).

Despite these benefits, implementing multi-stakeholder collaboration in primary school contexts particularly in rural or low-resource environments presents notable challenges. Resource limitations often constrain communication, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms (Ahmed et al., 2023). Furthermore, divergent stakeholder priorities, coupled with a lack of trust or shared understanding, can result in misalignment and inefficiencies (Easter et al., 2022; Eikelenboom & Long, 2022). These structural and relational barriers can hinder the sustainability and effectiveness of collaborative programs, thereby limiting their impact on student learning outcomes.

Recent developments in educational technology offer promising avenues for overcoming some of these barriers. The integration of digital tools into school-tutoring partnerships facilitates continuous communication, individualized feedback, and adaptive instructional design. For instance, online platforms and mobile applications allow tutors to track students' progress, share learning resources, and adjust teaching strategies in real time (Hamdani et al., 2021). Blended learning models have further enhanced accessibility, enabling students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to participate in

supplemental learning without being constrained by geographical or temporal barriers (Agbodzakey et al., 2020). Evidence indicates that such technology-enhanced collaboration not only improves instructional efficiency but also advances educational equity by ensuring that targeted support reaches those most in need (Lloyd et al., 2021).

Within this broader discourse, the present study investigates the role of collaboration between SD Negeri 1 Pokoh Kidul and a local tutoring institution in improving academic achievement among third-grade students. This collaboration represents a semi-formal partnership characterized by coordinated curriculum planning, shared evaluations, and continuous communication between school teachers and tutoring staff. While preliminary evidence points to positive impacts on student performance particularly in Mathematics and Indonesian there are persistent challenges, including the absence of formal agreements, inequitable access for economically disadvantaged students, and potential risks of student fatigue due to extended learning hours.

Addressing these issues is essential for ensuring that school–tutoring partnerships can deliver sustainable and equitable benefits. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive account of the partnership’s implementation, outcomes, and challenges, contributing both to theoretical understandings of mesosystem interactions in education and to practical models for improving elementary-level academic achievement through structured, multi-stakeholder collaboration.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the role of collaboration between SD Negeri 1 Pokoh Kidul and a local tutoring institution in enhancing the academic achievement of third-grade students. The case study approach was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of complex educational phenomena within their natural context, capturing the lived experiences, institutional practices, and relational dynamics between stakeholders (Chun et al., 2023; Lumapas et al., 2021). This depth of inquiry is particularly valuable in rural or low-resourced educational environments, where contextual factors play a pivotal role in shaping learning outcomes. However, as with other qualitative case studies, the design carries inherent limitations, including challenges in generalizing results beyond the studied context and potential interpretative biases arising from the subjective nature of qualitative data (Nizamidou, 2022; Steckhan et al., 2023). To address these limitations, rigorous data collection and validation strategies were implemented throughout the research process.

2.2 Research Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Pokoh Kidul, an elementary school located in a rural area of Wonogiri, Indonesia, between 12 and 14 May 2025. The school was selected purposively due to its ongoing semi-formal partnership with a local tutoring institution. The primary participant was a third-grade teacher directly involved in coordinating and implementing the collaboration. This purposive sampling strategy was chosen to ensure that the participant possessed comprehensive, first-hand knowledge of the school–tutoring interaction. While focusing on a single key informant limits the breadth of perspectives, it allows for the extraction of detailed, context-specific insights into the mechanisms, challenges, and impacts of the partnership.

2.3 Data Collection

Data were collected over three consecutive days using semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis.

- 2.3.1 **Interviews:** Three interview sessions, each lasting 60–90 minutes, were conducted with the third-grade teacher. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to probe specific aspects of the collaboration such as curriculum alignment, evaluation practices, and parental engagement while allowing flexibility to explore emerging themes. Interviews were audio-recorded and supplemented by detailed field notes to ensure completeness and accuracy.
- 2.3.2 **Observations:** Non-participant observations were carried out in the classroom and during coordination meetings between the teacher and the tutoring staff. These observations provided

contextual data on the interaction patterns, communication dynamics, and alignment of teaching materials between the school and the tutoring center.

- 2.3.3 **Document Analysis:** Supplementary materials, including lesson syllabi, daily learning logs, student grade reports, and practice materials from the tutoring center, were reviewed to corroborate verbal accounts and observed practices.

This multi-pronged approach was designed to capture the phenomenon from multiple angles, enabling a comprehensive understanding of both formal and informal aspects of the collaboration.

2.4 Data Validation and Triangulation

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was employed by cross-referencing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation (Azam et al., 2022; Valashiya & Luke, 2022). Triangulation mitigates the risk of bias by validating emerging patterns against multiple independent sources, thereby increasing the credibility of interpretations (Merza & Macalma, 2023; Vivek, 2023). Furthermore, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with the participant to verify accuracy and ensure that interpretations faithfully reflected the intended meanings. The integration of these strategies demonstrates adherence to qualitative rigor standards and strengthens the validity of the conclusions (Franata & Pradana, 2022; Gutierrez & Ayars, 2024).

2.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis process followed the principles of qualitative thematic analysis. First, interview transcripts were produced verbatim and reviewed alongside observational notes and relevant documents. Data were then subjected to data reduction, wherein only information relevant to the research questions was retained. Next, coding was applied to categorize data into thematic clusters such as “curriculum alignment,” “evaluation and feedback,” “parental involvement,” “student performance outcomes,” and “collaboration challenges.” These thematic codes were iteratively refined to capture nuanced relationships between concepts. Finally, interpretation involved synthesizing the thematic patterns with theoretical frameworks, particularly Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory and cooperative learning models, to draw connections between the observed collaboration processes and student academic outcomes.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research practices, including obtaining informed consent from the participant and ensuring confidentiality through anonymization of identifying details. Given the involvement of educational stakeholders, particular attention was paid to maintaining professional respect, avoiding disruption to regular teaching activities, and ensuring that the findings would be used constructively to improve practice within the school and tutoring institution.

By combining in-depth qualitative inquiry with systematic triangulation and ethical rigor, this methodological framework provided a robust basis for analyzing how school–tutoring partnerships function in practice and the extent to which they contribute to enhancing academic achievement in a primary school context.

3 Results

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, organized according to the major thematic dimensions emerging from the data: curriculum alignment and cooperation models, academic performance impacts, parental and community involvement, barriers to equity and sustainability, student well-being, feedback mechanisms, technology integration, instructional variation, and strategic formalization of partnerships.

3.1 Curriculum Alignment and Cooperation Models

Material synchronization between the school and the tutoring center emerged as a critical factor for ensuring learning coherence. When curricula were aligned, tutoring activities reinforced classroom learning objectives, enabling students to deepen their understanding and improve retention (Ventura et al., 2023). The provision of the school’s syllabus and core competencies to tutoring staff ensured that lesson content and assessment practices complemented rather than conflicted. Conversely, misalignment

in content delivery risked generating confusion among students, as noted in cases where divergent methods or pacing occurred (Hao, 2023).

The observed collaboration reflected an informal to semi-formal model, characterized by routine communication via WhatsApp and periodic evaluation meetings. This arrangement resembled other effective cooperative structures identified in literature such as peer tutoring, co-curricular initiatives, and community engagement where collaborative learning environments promote mutual support and reduce misconceptions (Banegas, 2021; Poornima & Tadi, 2023).

3.2 Academic Performance and Psychosocial Gains

Quantitative evidence from teacher records indicated an average improvement of 5–10 points in students' Mathematics and Indonesian language scores across one semester for those regularly attending tutoring sessions. These findings are consistent with broader research linking tutoring participation to statistically significant gains in standardized assessment performance (Pari-Orihuela et al., 2024).

Beyond academic scores, tutoring participation was associated with notable psychosocial benefits. Students demonstrated increased self-confidence, greater willingness to answer questions in class, and heightened readiness to tackle challenging problems. These outcomes align with prior studies showing that tutoring fosters self-efficacy and active engagement through personalized attention and emotional support (An & Koo, 2022; Bainbridge et al., 2025).

3.3 Parental and Community Involvement

Parental engagement played a pivotal role in maximizing tutoring benefits. Actively involved parents not only facilitated attendance but also reinforced learning at home, contributing to sustained academic gains (Kobakhidze & Šťastný, 2023; Mahmud, 2021). Moreover, community-based tutoring initiatives where local stakeholders offered resources or volunteer tutoring were found to enhance student motivation and performance by fostering a sense of belonging and shared responsibility (Li et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2021).

3.4 Barriers to Equity and Sustainability

Despite the positive outcomes, the partnership faced persistent equity challenges. Financial constraints prevented some families from accessing paid tutoring, while limited service availability in rural areas restricted participation for others (Adhikari, 2022; Mahmud, 2021). Cultural perceptions such as stigmatization of supplemental instruction further discouraged participation in certain households (Šťastný et al., 2021).

Sustainability was also affected by the absence of formal agreements between the school and the tutoring provider. Without clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and performance metrics, the partnership was vulnerable to discontinuity, particularly if key personnel left (Ciuchi, 2023; Mikkelsen & Gravesen, 2021).

3.5 Student Well-being and Burnout Prevention

The teacher reported that some students exhibited signs of academic fatigue, including reduced enthusiasm, irritability, and slower cognitive engagement during lessons consistent with burnout indicators in young learners (Rock & Curry, 2021). This finding underscores the importance of integrating well-being measures into academic support programs, such as balanced scheduling, inclusion of recreational learning activities, and mental health support services. School counselors, though not directly involved in this partnership, are well-placed to mitigate such risks through stress-management interventions and advocacy for healthy learning environments (Crumb et al., 2021; Mehr et al., 2024).

3.6 Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Continuous feedback loops between teachers and tutors were integral to the collaboration's success. Regular sharing of student progress, strengths, and areas for improvement facilitated adaptive instruction and encouraged a growth mindset among learners (Guo et al., 2024; Saban et al., 2025). Best practices observed included setting clear feedback protocols, using structured communication tools, and fostering reflective dialogue between educators (Beltrán-Véliz et al., 2024; Oduro et al., 2022).

3.7 Technology Integration in Coordination and Instruction

The use of WhatsApp as a coordination tool streamlined communication between the school and the tutoring provider, enabling timely sharing of lesson materials, schedules, and test results. Literature

corroborates the effectiveness of such platforms in enhancing engagement and collaborative learning (Annese et al., 2022; Maimunah & Haque, 2021). Additionally, mobile learning applications offered opportunities for personalized support, extending learning beyond physical classrooms (Panesi et al., 2020).

3.8 Instructional Variation and Pedagogical Adaptation

Tutors employed varied instructional strategies, including flashcards for retrieval practice and problem-posing techniques to enhance mathematical reasoning (Asriadi et al., 2023; Tezcan & Temel, 2023). Differentiated instruction allowed adaptation to individual student needs, thereby increasing engagement, motivation, and skill mastery (Kado et al., 2021; Magableh & Abdullah, 2020).

3.9 Effectiveness of Private Tutoring: Meta-Analytical Insights

Findings from meta-analyses on private tutoring's impact offer a nuanced perspective. While several reviews report moderate to strong positive effects particularly for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Nickow et al., 2023) others indicate limited gains when controlling for background variables (Li et al., 2023). Factors influencing these outcomes include tutor expertise, instructional quality, and student engagement levels (Dietrichson et al., 2021; Romero et al., 2025).

3.10 Strategic Formalization of School-Tutoring Partnerships

The literature highlights frameworks for formalizing collaborations, emphasizing stakeholder engagement, resource sharing, and integrated policy implementation (Genovesi et al., 2022; Kartono et al., 2024; Kenny et al., 2023). Policy recommendations stress the importance of professional development for educators, inclusive education strategies, and robust communication channels to strengthen collaborative structures (BASTIDA & GONZALES, 2024; Jeremy et al., 2025; Yu, 2024).

4 Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the relevance of Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem framework in understanding and enhancing student learning outcomes through structured collaboration between schools, tutoring institutions, families, and community stakeholders. The mesosystem emphasizes the interconnectedness of various microsystems in a child's life, such as the family and the school, and how their reciprocal interactions influence development and academic achievement (Zhong et al., 2025). In this study, the semi-formal coordination between SD Negeri 1 Pokoh Kidul and a local tutoring provider facilitated through curriculum alignment, joint evaluations, and open communication serves as a practical manifestation of mesosystemic synergy.

4.1 Operationalizing the Mesosystem in Educational Policy

The results indicate that sustained collaboration between families, schools, and community organizations creates a more cohesive and supportive learning environment. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that formalized engagement initiatives, such as family workshops, co-curricular programs, and community-based events, strengthen the integration of educational support systems (Hill & Ducasse, 2022). Policies that institutionalize these practices through regular teacher-parent meetings, structured feedback mechanisms, and community participation can reinforce positive educational experiences and ensure consistent reinforcement of learning objectives at home and in the community (Erlendsdóttir et al., 2022).

For optimal impact, professional development programs should train educators to leverage community resources and integrate family participation into school activities (Hawes & Nelson, 2021). Such capacity-building efforts can help educators address diverse learner needs more effectively, particularly in rural or resource-limited settings. By aligning these strategies with national education policy, schools can strengthen the operationalization of the mesosystem framework and make collaborative structures more sustainable.

4.2 School-Tutoring Partnerships as a Mechanism for Inclusive Education

The study's findings support the view that school tutoring collaborations can be an effective vehicle for advancing inclusive education principles. Through individualized academic support, these partnerships provide targeted interventions for students who struggle in traditional classroom settings, thereby addressing a core tenet of inclusivity: meeting diverse learner needs (Tahili et al., 2022). Evidence

from this case shows that tutoring not only enhanced students' mastery of Mathematics and Indonesian but also improved self-confidence and participation factors that contribute to greater social integration and a stronger sense of belonging (Bainbridge et al., 2025).

When parents and community members are actively engaged in the partnership, the benefits extend beyond academics to foster an inclusive culture that values diversity and collective responsibility (Ciuchi, 2023). This collaborative ethos is particularly critical for supporting marginalized students and narrowing achievement gaps, as it integrates academic, emotional, and social dimensions of learning into a unified framework.

4.3 Leveraging Tutoring Practices in Mainstream Education

The results also highlight opportunities to integrate evidence-based tutoring practices such as differentiated instruction, problem-posing, and retrieval-based learning into mainstream classroom pedagogy. Embedding these strategies into regular curricula ensures that all students, regardless of their participation in external tutoring, gain access to instructional methods that have demonstrated efficacy in enhancing learning outcomes. This approach is consistent with recommendations in the literature advocating for the diffusion of high-impact supplemental education practices into broader school systems to improve equity (Liang et al., 2022).

However, while these integrations are promising, the literature also warns of potential unintended consequences. For example, the institutional expectation for all students to engage in tutoring can inadvertently create academic pressure, and if access to tutoring remains unequal, such expectations risk widening rather than narrowing the achievement gap (Zhang et al., 2023). This duality underscores the importance of implementing tutoring partnerships alongside equity-oriented policies, such as financial subsidies, inclusive scheduling, and targeted outreach for disadvantaged students.

4.4 Addressing Barriers to Sustainability and Equity

One critical barrier identified in this study is the absence of formal agreements between the school and the tutoring provider. Without written memoranda of understanding (MoUs) that specify roles, accountability structures, and shared goals, partnerships remain vulnerable to discontinuity particularly when reliant on individual actors rather than institutional commitment (Mikkelsen & Gravesen, 2021). Formalizing these agreements not only clarifies expectations but also provides a framework for resource sharing, performance monitoring, and strategic alignment with educational policy.

Equally important is addressing structural inequities in access to tutoring services. Financial constraints, geographical isolation, and cultural stigmas continue to limit participation among disadvantaged students (Adhikari, 2022; Mahmud, 2021). Tackling these barriers requires a multi-pronged policy approach that may include subsidized tutoring programs, mobile tutoring units for remote areas, and community sensitization campaigns to destigmatize supplemental education.

4.5 Integrating Student Well-being into Collaborative Models

The study also highlights the need to safeguard student well-being within high-intensity academic environments. Some students in this case exhibited early signs of academic burnout—reduced enthusiasm, irritability, and fatigue consistent with the stress-related symptoms documented in the literature (Rock & Curry, 2021). To prevent such outcomes, collaborative models must integrate mental health support mechanisms, including proactive involvement of school counselors, balanced scheduling of academic activities, and incorporation of social-emotional learning. These interventions not only protect student well-being but also enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of learning partnerships (Mehr et al., 2024).

4.6 Implications for Policy and Practice

Taken together, these findings suggest that school–tutoring partnerships represent a viable model for operationalizing the mesosystem framework in practice, while also advancing inclusive education objectives. However, their long-term success hinges on deliberate policy support, structural formalization, equitable access mechanisms, and integrated attention to student well-being.

From a policy perspective, ministries of education could consider developing guidelines for formalizing collaborations between schools and non-formal education providers, incorporating quality assurance mechanisms, and ensuring resource allocation to promote inclusivity. From a practice

standpoint, educators and community stakeholders should focus on fostering trust, maintaining open communication, and co-designing programs that balance academic rigor with holistic student development.

By embedding these principles into school policy and operational frameworks, school-tutoring partnerships can evolve from ad-hoc arrangements into sustainable, equity-driven ecosystems that contribute meaningfully to both academic achievement and the broader goals of inclusive education.

5 Conclusion

This study demonstrates that strategic collaboration between SD Negeri 1 Pokoh Kidul and a local tutoring institution significantly contributes to improving third-grade students' academic performance, particularly in Mathematics and Indonesian language. The partnership's success lies in curriculum alignment, coordinated evaluations, active parental and community involvement, and adaptive pedagogical practices. Students not only experienced measurable academic gains but also exhibited enhanced self-confidence, participation, and motivation.

However, the absence of formal agreements and the unequal access to tutoring for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds remain pressing challenges. Without formalized frameworks, the sustainability of such partnerships is vulnerable to changes in personnel and resource allocation. Moreover, financial, geographic, and cultural barriers continue to limit the inclusivity of tutoring benefits, risking the reinforcement of existing educational inequalities.

The findings affirm the applicability of Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem framework in designing education policies that foster interconnections between families, schools, and communities. Integrating evidence-based tutoring practices into mainstream curricula, formalizing partnership agreements, and implementing equity-oriented measures such as subsidies, outreach, and mental health support are essential for scaling and sustaining the benefits of such collaborations.

Future research should expand the participant base to include students, parents, and tutors, and extend the observation period to capture longitudinal impacts. This broader scope would yield a more comprehensive understanding of how school-tutoring partnerships influence academic and psychosocial development over time.

By embedding these collaborative principles into school policy, such partnerships can evolve into sustainable, inclusive ecosystems that not only enhance academic achievement but also nurture the holistic development of every learner.

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