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THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PRACTICE EXPRESSION IN SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

Relevance of the topic. The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has garnered a lot of attention in both academic research and practical application during the past forty years. Over the past ten or so years, the use of socially conscious initiatives in sports has accelerated, and scholarly study on CSR is also picking up speed (Walzel, Robertson & Anagnostopoulos, 2018). The topic of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in sports has been a persistent concern for sports managers and researchers. It revolves around the financial, legal, social, and ethical issues that sports organizations should constantly address and strategically incorporate into their business operations. In the wake of crises, economic sustainability and legitimacy from multiple legal and ethical stakeholders are important, but sports organizations' inherent social nature mandates social activities and outreach programs (Anagnostopoulos & Kolyper 2016). In addition to introducing human resource management (HRM) efforts that promote employee welfare and solve their issues, socially responsible human resource management (SR-HRM) may also involve hiring CSR personnel and encouraging and rewarding worker engagement in CSR initiatives that are directed towards external stakeholders.

Keywords: social responsibility, human resource management, sports organizations.

Introductions

Moreover, organizations in the sport industry have a unique responsibility to promote sustainability and to minimize their impact on the environment. As such, we will also explore the role of HRM in promoting environmental sustainability in sport organizations, promoting local products, helping the community, and employee training programs (Brammer & Pavelin, 2016). Although sport organizations may use corporate social responsibility as a strategic tool to safeguard their reputation, cultivate favorable perceptions, and build brand loyalty, it is crucial for these entities to exhibit evidence of their genuine commitment to prioritizing CSR (Lee et al., 2021). **The problem of the research:** How is social responsibility manifested in human resource management and how to strengthen the application of this practice in human resource management of sports organizations? **The aim of this research** is to provide an examination and comprehensive understanding of the relationship between human resource management and social responsibility in sport organizations. **The objectives of the research:** Analyze the links between social responsibility and human resources; Discuss the application of social responsibility practices in sports organizations in relations with internal and external stakeholders. Assess expressions

the social responsibility of the leisure and sports club in the management of human resources.

The expression of social responsibility by external stakeholders

It is important to highlight how CSR in general and in professional team sport organizations (PTSOs) in particular have evolved conceptually. The idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has garnered a lot of attention over the past 40 years in both academia and practice). Sports have a strong sense of social responsibility and community integration, and their significance both inside and outside of the sporting world has increased (Trendafilova et al., 2017). Professional sports groups often under pressure from their host towns to become good neighbors. Some teams rely on home crowd support to generate revenue through ticket and merchandising sales. Consequently, engaging in strategic CSR may be to their financial advantage. There may also be a “quid pro quo” arrangement whereby the team and athletes are contractually required to take part in initiatives and activities that fall under a CSR portfolio in exchange for financial support for stadium construction (Trendafilova et al., 2017).

The literature on corporate social responsibility (CSR) has begun to provide a rich body of information on a wide variety of topics within the specific context of professional team sports organizations (PTSOs) (Walzel et al., 2018). There is a wide range of activities that might be classified as social responsibility in sports (SRS). How SRS initiatives are organized may be influenced by defining what

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social responsibility in sports entails and creating categories within SRS. There may be unanimity among professional sports organizations that SRS is about “doing the right thing”, but there is disagreement on its limitations and scope (Chung, J. 2018). Many sports leagues and teams feel a need to engage in a variety of initiatives with unique goals and constituencies to create meaningful social change. For instance, many leagues have a signature cancer-focused campaign. Leagues collaborate with advocacy and charitable groups to raise awareness through in-game promos, adverts during broadcasts, and ad readings by announcers during broadcasts, and internet presence in addition to fundraising (Chung, J. 2018).

SRS differs from and may even be more effective than CSR in other businesses for the following four reasons: passion, economic, transparency, and stakeholder. Sports have a degree of enthusiasm / passion that is unmatched in the industry.

Sports fans demonstrate a strong bond with their team “brands” and identify as members of the team community, if not the team itself. According to recent studies, sports have an impact on socialization and psychology at both the individual and societal levels. Sports have the capacity to affect everyone’s life within the community, even those who are vulnerable and underprivileged, because they are a key part of community and identity in a way that other sectors are not. This ability forms a cornerstone of sports’ social responsibility. Teams are frequently among the most prominent organizations in the cities they play in and serve as ambassadors for those communities.

Focus groups revealed that supporters’ devotion and donations are what determine a team’s success, thus organizations and athletes should give back to the community (Parent, 2018). Moving to the economic part, in addition to hosting paid public events like concerts and graduations, sports arenas may improve local economies by reviving them or by displacing existing homes and businesses. They can also serve as a safe haven from threats like terrorism and environmental disaster. This further ingrain professional sports into the culture of the host communities and endows them with civic responsibilities. As for the transparency, sports generate very high expectations for openness because of their popularity and exposure. There is easy access to information on many facets of the sports sector. Results for teams and athletes are continuously tracked and promoted. To create a stir and involve

the public, personnel decisions including player wages, moves, and use are frequently made public via news conferences and public pronouncements. Positive and poor off-the-court/field behavior of players and other high-level sports professionals attracts significantly more public attention than does employee conduct in other businesses. It is expected that social responsibility initiatives in sports will face more scrutiny from the public, the media, corporate partners, and public interest partners (Parent, B., 2018).

Leagues and sports organizations frequently rely on stakeholder management, for this reason, the collaboration of teams and athletes is essential to the success of many league-led social responsibility initiatives.

The bar for CSR efforts and standards has recently been raised across the board, but because professional sports teams and supporters have such a deep emotional connection, the bar is particularly high – and visible – in this industry. Sports teams integrate into their local communities and offer much more than simply entertainment. The influence of professional sports on local companies, politics, and socioeconomic variables is multifaceted. There are several examples of CSR-related conduct as well as variations in interpretation across firms, even those operating in the same sector. For instance, the NFL and NBA’s differing perspectives on social responsibility throughout time may be seen in player-related concerns and how such issues are addressed in those two main professional sports leagues. In the last five years, Goodell, commissioner of NFL, has been under heavy fire for failing to discipline players who engaged in dubious behavior and for failing to enforce personnel rules. This has angered the public, especially women, and seriously damaged both his and the NFL’s reputations. Moreover, NBA Commissioner David Stern took over a league whose reputation had been damaged by unfavorable press. In 1984, when he took over as commissioner, the league was rife with players who had drug or alcohol issues. He had to deal with a player strike, an owner lockout, and minimal viewership from the general public, and championship games broadcast on tape delay (Stewart et al., 2020).

Professional athletes have salaries that typically top millions of dollars, which are financed not just by fan spending but also by money made from television and cable news broadcasts. The debate over whether or not these high wages are justified has raged for decades, but with such great financial temptation around, not to mention on social media display,

the necessity for moral leadership and unambiguous CSR norms becomes even more critical. Without enforced business policies and sanctions, people are more inclined to stray into shady areas, whether they're working or not (Stewart et al., 2020).

Partnering with charitable organizations is one of the most significant ways that teams and leagues can participate in social responsibility. A team or league can support a nonprofit by providing brand recognition and financial resources, enabling it to reach new audiences or perform better. The club or league may then take advantage of its affiliation with the charity to enhance its reputation with stakeholders, fulfill its social obligation, increase fan loyalty, and perhaps even attract new supporters who are interested in the nonprofit's objective (Parent, B., 2018).

The expression of social responsibility by internal stakeholders

Internal social responsibility initiatives can have a significant impact. International attempts to safeguard young and amateur athletes have been sparked by health and safety research and improvements to professional-level regulations around concussions. An international survey that reveals the public thinks internal SRS initiatives should concentrate on athlete and employee education and health supports these changes (Chung, J. 2018). Cultural landmarks like the first openly homosexual male professional players in the NBA and MLS and rising minority and female involvement in NASCAR have been made possible by anti-discrimination campaigns. These occasions paved the way for inclusion at the amateur and young levels (Chung, J. 2018). Less ongoing investigations on how SRHRM affects employees' behavior has primarily concentrated on the link between SRHRM and employees' knowledge of and commitment to CSR (Shen & Benson, 2016).

Socially responsible Human Resource Management in Sports Organizations should also express their interest and include in their goals the concept of sustainable development. This concept of SSD (sport for sustainable development) has different levels on how it can have an impact on the society and benefit everyone included. Gadais et al., (2022), talk about the magical effect of sport, the notion that, by its inherent nature, sport has the capacity to address all issues pertaining to human development. Both practitioners and researchers need to use caution in this area. In practice, the use of sport for development and peace is founded on actors' recognition that sport, in its many forms, possesses qualities that make

it possible for it to add a special value to development and peace processes. They present the ways of how can sports be used as an intervention and concept towards developing a more sustainable society where everyone is benefiting.

According to a study done by Wohlfart et al., (2022), they developed a competence framework for sport managers at different levels which were social, actions, personal, digital, general management, and sport management competence through which they tested the levels of competence of current professionals in the field and students that are aiming to enroll after graduation and how they see the importance of different competences. The study showed that there is a potential for improvement in all the aspects at the different levels from industry professionals to upcoming graduates who will take roles.

As notes Kolar (2016), Sheptak, Menaker (2016), Nichols (2017), volunteers are an important human resource in sports organizations, making a significant contribution to achieving the goals of the organization. Kappelides and Spoor (2019) recommends that sports organizations take a formal and professional approach to volunteer management, and transfer traditional human resource management practices to this area. Human resource management, working with volunteers, should include various activities, such as targeted recruitment, relevant selection, guidance, training, evaluation of results, award, involvement of volunteers in important decisions, creation of a supportive work environment. CSR gained its attention and started the concept to be in practice in academia and practice particularly in the form of PTSOs. The reason for that is because they are pressured from their communities to be engaging in strategic CSR and create financial advantages. Social responsibility in sports includes campaigns and collaborations with charitable groups and fundraising efforts in order to shed light and give attention to specific topics. This is different from CSR of businesses because of the passion and enthusiasm created among supporters, economic impacts on local communities and importance of stakeholder management. It also holds an important role on how it demonstrated the reputation of leagues and commissioners as we can see from NFL and NBA.

Results

As it is shown in table 1, for the "Socially responsible human resource management" section, the results of the questionnaire show that majority of the respondents have a positive assessment for

the practices of the organization. Although the use of a 5 point Likert-scale gave the possibility for a range of responses, most of the participants showed a level of agreement with the statements regarding the practice of their organization. The responses that were less positive show that there is room for improvement and the organization should focus and examine their policies in order to align better with the best practices of socially responsible human resource management.

The results show that the respondents view the organization to have a positive relationship with the community where the majority rated it to be

“good” or “very good”. It also appears that, according to the results, majority of the respondents agree that the organization is engaging in philanthropic activities, organizing youth activities and promoting community engagement.

Moreover, the social responsibility of human resource management was rated as “good” or “very good” by most respondents, implying responsible and ethical management. Overall, it seems that the organization is practicing social responsibility and engaging in activities that benefit the society and the community as a whole.

Table 1

Socially responsible human resource management (n/percent)

No	Claim	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	The organization prioritizes ethical and socially responsible practices in its HR policies and operations	0 (0%)	2 (6.7%)	6 (20%)	19 (63.3%)	3 (10%)
2	The organization regularly assesses the impact of its HR practices on the wider community	2 (6.7%)	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	20 (66.7%)	2 (6.7%)
3	The organization has policies in place to promote diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace	0 (0%)	4 (13.3%)	8 (26.7%)	14 (46.7%)	4 (13.3%)
4	The organization prioritizes the well-being and development of its employees	1 (3.3%)	1 (3.3%)	7 (23.3%)	19 (63.3%)	2 (6.7%)
5	The organization provides opportunities for employees to participate in community service activities	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	1 (3.3%)	16 (53.3%)	10 (33.3%)
6	The organization incorporates environmentally friendly practices into its HR policies and operations	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	15 (50%)	6 (20%)
7	The organization values the opinions and suggestions of its employees regarding HR policies and practices	0 (0%)	2 (6.7%)	6 (20%)	14 (46.7%)	8 (26.7%)
8	The organization is transparent about its HR practices and policies	0 (0%)	2 (6.7%)	6 (20%)	18 (60%)	4 (13.3%)
9	The organization fosters a positive and supportive work environment for its employees	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	22 (73.3%)	4 (13.3%)
10	Organization takes part in altruistic activities and encourages its employees to participate in such activities	0 (0%)	3 (10%)	7 (23.3%)	18 (60%)	2 (6.7%)
11	Organizations supports social welfare programs and creation of employment opportunities	1 (3.3%)	0 (0%)	6 (20%)	21 (70%)	2 (6.7%)

Table 2

Level social responsibility of sports club in relations with stakeholders

Claim	Very bad (1)	Badly (2)	Average (3)	Good (4)	Very Good (5)	Average
1 Mutual relations of sports club with the community	0	4	9	60	50	4.1
2 Organization of youth activities	0	0	12	60	55	4.2
3 Promoting community engagement	1	0	12	76	30	3,9
4 Sports club philanthropic activities	0	2	30	54	25	3,6
5 Social responsibility of human resources management	0	2	21	76	15	3,8
Average						3.9

Conclusions

As a management function, HRM is one that involves the use of human resource to achieve the organizational goals. An essential practice, HRM is aimed at policy development and implementation to promote the effective use of human resources in the organization. In order to form interpersonal relationships within the organization, CSR is considered a managerial practice within an organization and the principles are applied to establish an HRM system that is socially responsible. Performance assessment, transparent education, non-discriminatory hiring process and promoting favorable working conditions that create value for

the society, organization and individuals can result in a socially responsible HRM. Analyzing the aspects of HRM in sports organization revealed that work-life balance and personal development of employees on different levels is supported in the organization. The relationship between human resource management and social responsibility was proven to be interlinked and the organization puts a priority in having a socially responsible human resource management. The outcomes of the research also prove that the organization is engaging in community and charitable activities, and strives to keep its employees satisfied and motivated which shows social responsibility practices with all stakeholders.

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ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ ПРАКТИКИ СОЦІАЛЬНОЇ ВІДПОВІДАЛЬНОСТІ В СПОРТИВНИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЯХ

Анотація

Концепція корпоративної соціальної відповідальності (КСВ) привернула велику увагу як в академічних дослідженнях, так і в практичному застосуванні протягом останніх сорока років. За останні десять років використання соціально свідомих ініціатив у спорті прискорилося, і наукові дослідження з КСВ також набирають обертів (Walzel, S., Robertson, J., & Anagnostopoulos, C., 2018). Тема корпоративної соціальної відповідальності (КСВ) у спорті постійно хвилює спортивних менеджерів та дослідників. Вона обертається навколо фінансових, правових, соціальних та етичних питань, які спортивні організації повинні постійно вирішувати та стратегічно включати у свої бізнес-операції. Після криз економічна стійкість та легітимність багатьох юридичних та етичних зацікавлених сторін є важливими, але притаманна спортивним організаціям соціальна природа вимагає соціальної діяльності та інформаційно-просвітницьких програм (Anagnostopoulos, C., & Kolyperas, D., 2016). На додаток до впровадження зусиль з управління людськими ресурсами (HRM), які сприяють добробуту співробітників та вирішенню їхніх проблем, соціально відповідальне управління людськими ресурсами (SR-HRM) може також включати найм персоналу з КСВ та заохочення та винагороду залучення працівників до ініціатив КСВ, які спрямовані на зовнішні зацікавлені сторони (Newman, A., Miao, Q., Hofman, P.S., & Zhu, C.J., 2016).

Ключові слова: соціальна відповідальність, управління людськими ресурсами, спортивні організації.

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