Determinants and Outcomes of CSR in Sport Organizations: The Case of a Developing Country

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Previous research on CSR in the sports domain has predominately focused on the professional sports industry within the U.S. and U.K. contexts (Slack, 2014; Walzel et al., 2018). Professional sport organizations in these countries participate in CSR activities to yield positive social values for both internal and external stakeholders (Rowe et al., 2018). While it is known that sport organizations’ CSR actions may add economic or social values for a wide variety of stakeholders, there is a dearth of research that explores this from the developing countries context. It was not too long ago that Slack (2014) reminded us that more work needs to be done on the concept of CSR in sport management, particularly in countries beyond North America and Europe. While it is true that the unique characteristics of sport play a central role to address individual development, health promotion, gender equality, social integration and facilitate social interaction and integration, there is a dearth of research that investigates these issues as it pertains to sport organization in developing countries. The purpose of this paper is to explore how sport organizations in developing countries engage in social responsibility activities.

O’Riordan and Fairbrass (2008) argued that the resource level, the sizes, success status, and governance of sport organizations are critical contextual features in which CSR may dependent upon. Such investigations would give insight about institutional capabilities of CSR across regional and cultural distinct areas, determining the antecedents for CSR, examining CSR purpose, evaluating the values of CSR, communication mechanism within stakeholders, and identifying CSR culture. Compared to Western economies, developing countries face a wide array of challenges including poverty, hunger, quality education, and peace (Barnett, 2016). Stimulating social and economic values to mitigate significant challenges around the world have been at the top agenda for many countries.

In order to answer this research question, we use an exploratory case study design (Yin, 2014) focusing on the Ethiopian Football Federation. Our data are being collected from two main sources: 1) unstructured interviews with key informants from each team, and 2) popular press news articles and other publicly available sources. The interviews are still in progress at the time of this abstract submission. We will collect interviews across 10 teams from August 2018 to November 2018. Interview will be transcribed and the analysis guided by iterative coding and generating themes with the aid of Atlas ti. software.

This paper highlights the novel insight for sport management scholar as to how and why sport organizations in developing countries employ social responsibility as an organizational tool. From a theoretical point of view, addressing these questions will enhance our understanding of various new forces that lead an organization to implement CSR. First, an understanding of antecedents, process, and outcomes of CSR in developing countries’ sport organizations might provide a rich and multi-faceted backdrop for extending and refining our knowledge. Moreover, this paper contributes to the ongoing discussion on the ways in how the institutions in developing countries play a role in achieving their development goals.