

## Corporate social responsibility in Italian sport organization: A multiple case study

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### Aim of paper and research questions

This study seeks to understand Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Italian sport organizations by analysing the CSR perception, programs and related activities. Specifically the research project aims to review social responsibility in four main Italian sports organizations, that already have CSR projects in place: two profit clubs (Football Padova and Basket Rome) and two no profit organizations (Italian Motorcycle Federation and Treviso Marathon Organizing Committee).

The concept of CSR has a long and varied history. We consider Epstein's (1987, p. 104) definition « *Corporate social responsibility* relates primarily to achieving outcomes from organizational decisions concerning specific issues or problems which (by some normative standard) have beneficial rather than adverse effects on pertinent corporate stakeholders. The normative correctness of the products of corporate action have been the main focus of corporate social responsibility ». Smith, and Westerbeek (2007) stressed the diversity of the discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, scientific statements, philosophical and moral propositions related to CSR conception and implementation.

This research considers two questions. How is seen CSR perception by Italian sport managers? Is there a gap between perception and implementation of CSR programs? If there is, which are the main reasons?

### Methods

The search strategy focused on multiple case study (Yin 2003). Theoretical proposition to guide the collection and analysis of data was built after an analysis of existing literature (Anagnostopoulos 2011, Babiak, Trendafilova 2011).

The investigation model (descriptive approach) is composed by seven main dimensions (purposes, stakeholders, resources, tools, actions, methods of assessment, influencing factors).

Analytic technique used has been pattern-matching (Campbell 1975) comparing if the initially predicated results have been found and alternative patterns were absent.

Data collection has made using multiple sources of evidence (triangulation) searching (for each dimension) converging findings from documents, archival records from one side and interviews to the main sport manager from another side. Vertical analysis was provided in relation to investigate the coherence between the seven dimensions in each organization while horizontal analysis compared the individual dimensions of the four organizations under the subject of the case study.

### Main results

Research has highlighted (question 1) the recent evolution of social responsibility in sport organizations examined and common modes of representation. It was an overall agreement on the purposes on social function of sport, transparent and ethical behaviour of sport organizations, stakeholder engagement, environmental protection, attention to the performance assessment (effectiveness and efficiency). Moreover results indicated that, in each organization examined, some of the seven categories are not very interrelated.

Research has also highlighted (question 2) that there is a clear gap between perception and implementation of social responsibility. The main influencing factors are a lack of available resources and dedicated structure for social responsibility; there's a requirement of a new managerial culture too.

### Conclusions

There is growing attention to social responsibility and this study represents an initial exploration of CSR in Italian sport organizations. The pattern used must be implemented in order to highlight some differences in the CSR perception and related activities even better. The strategic dimension of social responsibility must be further investigated by promoting the link between university research and the world of sport organizations.

### References

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to the efforts made by a company to improve society and contribute towards sustainable development. Also known as corporate conscience or corporate citizenship, CSR describes initiatives run by a business to evaluate and take responsibility for their impact on a number of issues ranging from human rights to the environment. Corporate social responsibility is a type of self-regulatory business plan, with initiatives focusing on achieving economic, social and environmental benefits for all stakeholders involved (employees, consumers, investors and oth Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has grown in importance to sport organizations as well as to the mega-events run by these organizations. This paper explores CSR initiatives related to Super Bowl XL in Detroit.Â Implicit in this perspective is the assumption that both sport and corporate influence on social trends must be considered from multiple angles. Such a viewpoint encourages an examination of the overlaps between the social responsibilities of the sport and corporate worlds. This paper explores the role that sport can play as a vehicle for deploying CSR. It exposes the social responsibilities implicit in sport as well as those found in the corporate world. CoMPARATJVE studies of corporate social responsibility (CSR) are relatively rare, certainly as contrasted with other related fields, such as comparative corporate governance or comparative corporate law. This is to be expected in a field, CSR, that is still et al., 2006).Â Other studies have used a 'most similar case' approach lo show differences in companies' approaches to CSR in countries with seemingly similar socio-political traditions with in these corporate governance systems. Comparisons between the United States and lhe UK are of particular note because they have implications for theories about corporate governance systems in addition to CSR, as discussed in below. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a type of international private business self-regulation that aims to contribute to societal goals of a philanthropic, activist, or charitable nature by engaging in or supporting volunteering or ethically-oriented practices. While once it was possible to describe CSR as an internal organisational policy or a corporate ethic strategy, that time has passed as various international laws have been developed and various organisations have used their authority to Principles and practices of CSR have been adopted by many sport organizations. There is a growing evidence of, and interest in, professional sports organizations engaging in CSR in different countries. Babiak and Wolfe (2009) examined the internal and external drivers of CSR activities by professional sport teams in the United States.Â A multiple case study design was utilized as the method for data collection. Data collection was conducted in two stages. During the first stage, we analysed the official websites of 20 Serie A clubs (during 2011-2012), and also official reports and videos.Â The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders. Business Horizons, 34(4), 39-48. Â Hamil, S. & Morrow, S. (2011).