

FRAMING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ITALIAN SPORT SECTOR

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Aim

There are four features that make professional sport organizations unique with respect to CSR, these being: passion, economics elements of the sport industry, transparency and stakeholder management (Babiak and Wolfe, 2009). The aim of this study is to investigate social responsibility (SR) initiatives in Italian sport sector.

Context

The concept of SR in sport sector remains contested, anyway there is strong belief that strategic SR management enhances organisations' competitiveness, for example due to improved reputation and trusting relationships with key stakeholders such as consumers and communities (European Commission, 2011). SR actions are generally based on moral obligation, sustainability, license to operate and reputation justifications (Porter and Kramer, 2006). Often responding to pressures external to the organization is important for businesses success (Hess and Warren, 2008). Pressures related to SR could emanate from various stakeholders: e.g., customers, activist groups, legislators, or local communities. Internal drivers such as the values, ethics, and moral priorities of top management, owners, employees, and athletes, and other internal variables (e.g., knowledge, skills, expertise) are also important determinants of SR adoption and implementation (Babiak and Wolfe 2009). While most academic work has yet addressed SR in mega events and professional sports we decide to investigate organizations funded by public money.

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 sport managers from various organizations, including Italian NOC, National Sport Federations (NSFs), local administrations and Italian National Paralympic Committee. Interviews ranged between 20 and 30 minutes. Interviewees were asked about their whole sport policy and their strategic objectives in using SR. They were asked to reflect over the advantages of SR initiatives on internal and external environmental impacts. Last dimension was to understand who the background of SR manager.

Results

Preliminary results shows a widespread ignorance about social responsibility and related tools. Many organizations see SR as a new trend for non professional and non financial market but there are not clear strategies. Sustainability and reputation are the main goals of SR initiatives. The role and background of SR manager are not identified. All results and conclusions will be presented at the conference.

References

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