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Abstract

This study examines how ski resorts can manage events that are sustainable, while also balancing the needs of consumers and local workers. Using a mixed-method approach, quantitative results (from 710 ski tourists) highlight the influence of community-centric Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Orientation towards Sporting Events (OSE) on the involvement and satisfaction of visitors in sponsorship-linked events within Iranian ski resorts. Qualitative results (from 38 local resort workers) suggest local resort workers desire community engagement, personal well-being, and rejuvenation. The implications this has for hospitality development are discussed alongside the theoretical implications for future research exploring community-based CSR and Event Social Responsibility (ESR).

Keywords

Snowsport Events, Corporate Social Responsibility, Consumer Orientation, Involvement, Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Recent hospitality research has suggested that CSR practice and policy can improve corporate financial performance (Franco et al., 2020; Wells et al., 2015), consumer preferences and attitudes (Jeon et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2016), and employee well-being (Kim et al., 2017) in various hotel, heritage sites, restaurant, and transport sectors. However, despite hospitality studies often finding the social community to be the most important aspect of CSR policy (Artal-Tur et al., 2019; Hatipoglu et al., 2019), scholars continue to be more concerned with environmental CSR than local community factors (Rhou and Singal, 2020).

To this end, there is significant interest in greater community-led social responsibility within local sport event hospitality management, leading us to the theorisation of Community CSR (Chilufya et al., 2019; Schulenkorf et al., 2019), which this study adopts as an overarching theoretical framework for the study in response to a gap in hospitality research. Community CSR theory proposes that communities can benefit as a whole both economically and socially from tourism and hospitality (Chilufya et al., 2019; Plewa et al., 2016). Therefore, this paper explores the potential for sustainable growth in Iranian ski resorts through Event Social Responsibility (ESR); offering implications for socially responsible sponsorship-linked events.

To date, there has been limited research investigating how sustainable development of events can be achieved on a societal level, among the various stakeholders involved at ski resorts (Kuščer and Dwyer, 2018). Further, current winter sports literature has focused on Western ski resorts as the context for investigation (Dickson and Huyton, 2008; Kuščer and Dwyer, 2018) and to this point, CSR research has largely neglected non-western and Islamic hospitality contexts (Farrington et al., 2017; John et al., 2017; Sinthupandaja et al., 2019). Therefore, in order to address these research gaps, this study collected data from Iranian ski resorts; an emerging hospitality market for the study of CSR within Middle-Eastern sport tourism communities.

Iran is home to twenty functioning ski resorts, offering long seasons and good snow conditions (Burke et al., 2012). Hence, skiing is providing a significant area of growth within Iran's hospitality industry, with ski resorts attracting half a million visitors annually (Vanat, 2017). Part of an evolving sector, Iran's resorts have a vibrant community with sponsored snowboarding, skiing, and social events taking place regularly. Though as events expand and grow, local communities are often left disempowered and feel little economic or social benefit from the industry (Xue and Kerstetter, 2018).

However, Community CSR suggests that tourists are driven by community needs and local involvement is central to mutually satisfactory experiences (Chilufya et al., 2019; Misener, 2015). Therefore, this study examines whether ski sponsorship-linked events can be socially and economically sustainable for both the consumer and local workers. In doing so, first, the investigation examines whether CSR and Orientation towards Sporting Events (OSE) can accentuate ski visitors' involvement and satisfaction within Iranian ski resort events (Pons et al., 2006; Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015; Scheinbaum et al., 2019). Second, utilising qualitative empirical data, the study examines local resort workers' perceptions of ski tourism and their desires for the future of event management.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1. Community CSR

Community CSR is a theorisation of socially responsible practice that is considerate of local people's values and emphasises the bringing together of communities for the benefit of the whole (Chilufya et al., 2019). In the hospitality contexts, community involvement is often the most important component of CSR practice (Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015; Schulenkorf et al., 2019) as socially conscious and charitable behaviour conveys an event's sensitivity to improving the welfare of local people (Misener, 2015; Scheinbaum and Lacey 2015).

Community CSR is applied as the overarching theoretical framework for this paper as it explains the hypothesized relationship between socially responsible practice and sport visitors' enthusiasm, immersion, and familiarity when attending sport events with others in their community – culminating in overall orientation towards sporting events (OSE) (Laing and Frost, 2010; Pons et al., 2006). Further, community CSR also explains how socially responsible events can bring people together to achieve mutually satisfactory experiences (Artal-Tur et al., 2019; Plewa et al., 2016). In other words, a Community CSR theorisation justifies how sport visitors take an active role in CSR by orientating towards events that are conscious of local community values, resulting in highly-involved and satisfactory experience (Chilufya et al., 2019).

A Community CSR theorisation underpins Event Social Responsibility (ESR) which has previously been examined in sport and hospitality literature (Rowe et al., 2019; Schienbaum et al., 2019). Indeed, Scheinbaum et al. (2019) define ESR as events' obligation to give back to local communities in a socially responsible manner. Sporting organisations and their sponsors need to identify social issues and align sporting sponsorship-linked events in a way that can alleviate the pressures and concerns of local people (Scheinbaum et al., 2019; Schulenkorf et al., 2019). By underpinning hospitality development with the principles of ESR, practitioners can ensure sporting events improve community engagement, empowerment, and inclusivity, which can enhance the CSR image of the organisation (Plewa et al., 2016; Scheinbaum et al., 2017; Schulenkorf et al., 2019). Here, sponsorship-linked events via CSR activities can be associated with the consumers' perception of intrinsic value, involvement, and intention behaviour (Scheinbaum et al., 2017).

The findings of this study are discussed using Community CSR as a theoretical grounding to examine how ESR may be central to sustainable sponsorship-linked sports event management within the hospitality sector (Artal-Tur et al., 2019; Chilufya et al., 2019; Hatipoglu et al., 2019; Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015; Scheinbaum et al., 2019). The following sections introduce the constructs of CSR, OSE, involvement, and satisfaction and discusses the hypothesized relationships based on a Community CSR theorisation.

2.2. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR refers to 'a company-wide commitment to improving the societal and environmental conditions upon which the business relies to sustain itself, motivated not by financial profit or legal obligations, but as an end in itself' (Farrington et al., 2017, p. 39). Research has advocated CSR initiatives due to their ability to generate

brand advocacy behaviours and improve consumer attitudes (Dumitrescu et al., 2018; Jeon et al., 2020). Moreover, CSR can positively influence employees' pride in their work (John et al., 2017) and organisational relationships and trust (Kim et al., 2020), which Broadstock et al. (2020) – in a study of 320 Japanese firms – suggests can be positive for innovation and firm performance.

Accordingly, increasing pressure has been placed on ski resorts to implement CSR practices to ensure local communities remain supportive of snowsport activities (Dickson and Huyton, 2008; Kuščer and Dwyer, 2018). Therefore, ski tourism providers must convey their sensitivity to the welfare of the local community by adopting socially conscious business practices (Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015). Although there are calls for CSR research to focus on social responsibility, rather than financial returns (Farrington et al., 2017), if CSR is attractive to all stakeholders, it can become a mutually beneficial corporate strategy that fosters cohesive development (Kim et al., 2020; Rhou and Singal, 2020).

2.3. Consumer Orientation towards Sporting Events (OSE)

Pons et al. (2006) focus on motivations and values as the basis for their development of the OSE construct. They propose that an individual's OSE is expressed through three dimensions: socialisation, sensation seeking, and cognition seeking, as consumers are motivated by the desire to interact with others, as well as by opportunities to immerse themselves and engage with sporting events. Individuals attribute value to their sporting experiences when these social needs are met (Pons et al., 2006), and thus, if perceptions of CSR can foster OSE this could indicate that socially responsible hospitality provision can be valuable for visitors' experiences at ski resorts.

Scholars have noted that consumers orientate themselves toward events with CSR schemes that they perceive to be environmentally conscious and sustainable (Laing and Frost, 2010). Su and Swanson (2017) assert that consumers often identify on a personal level with positive CSR schemes, which can elicit positive emotions. The affective responses from consumers suggest that positive perceptions of CSR can help to meet the social, sensational, and cognitive needs of sport consumers (Pons et al., 2006; Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015). Thus:

H1: Consumers' perception of CSR has a positive influence on their degree of OSE.

2.4. Consumer involvement

Community CSR explains that tourists' involvement in activities has the opportunity to build shared understanding and ensure communities sustainably benefit from economic development (Chilufya, 2019; Plewa et al., 2016). Indeed, Artal-Tur et al. (2019) state that the involvement and participation of both local people and consumers is mutually beneficial for hospitality development and community empowerment. For ski resorts, this requires individuals to be active and engaged members of the community, by participating in social activities and events (Filo et al., 2014).

Consumer involvement in sporting activities and events is positively influenced by the CSR practice of the sport provider (Inoue et al., 2017). Indeed, if

visitors are made aware of CSR schemes at ski resorts, this may increase future participation and involvement (Needham and Little, 2013). Thus:

H2: Consumers' perception of CSR has a positive effect on their level of involvement.

When individuals strongly identify with a sporting activity, they may become involved to acquire the relevant knowledge to master the activity, demonstrating the cognitive seeking element of OSE (Pons et al., 2006). Indeed, skiers who have psychological, sensational, and emotional attachments to the sport often seek to overcome financial and time-related constraints to become more involved in skiing (Alexandris et al., 2016). Therefore, it is suggested that the social, sensory, and cognitive elements of OSE can holistically generate increased levels of consumer involvement:

H3: Consumers' degree of OSE has a positive influence on their level of involvement.

2.5. Consumer satisfaction

Satisfaction is the key determinant of customers' perceived quality of a service and, as such, customer satisfaction is essential for the hospitality sector to ensure consistent income, growth, and sustainability (Pizam et al., 2016). Indeed, consumers' positive perception of CSR practice is likely to result in satisfactory experiences, which may lead to more positive evaluations from consumers (Dumitrescu et al., 2018). Particularly within the hospitality industry, scholars have suggested that when customer service is good, awareness of CSR initiatives can accentuate customer satisfaction (e.g., Gao and Mattila, 2014). Thus:

H4: Perceived CSR has a positive influence on consumers' level of satisfaction.

Pan and Ryan (2007) suggest individuals who frequently orientate towards a specific place, have opportunity to acquire the cognitive and practical skills required to appreciate the destination and are therefore more likely to have a positive experience. Indeed, Altinay et al. (2019) suggest that the hospitality industry can improve consumer satisfaction by creating spaces where individuals can communicate and socialise. A sport events' ability to satisfy the cognitive, social, and sensational needs of individuals comprises the motivational element of OSE (Pons et al., 2006). Therefore, consistent with existing literature on OSE, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Consumers' degree of OSE has a positive impact on their level of satisfaction.

Finally, existing literature suggests that high levels of consumer involvement and participation at events can lead to better experiences, generating positive evaluations and overall satisfaction (Lu et al., 2015). The hospitality sector's ability to generate consumer involvement has positive implications for consumers' overall experience and satisfaction with service quality (Han and Hyun, 2018). Further, involvement in mass sporting events allows participants to detach themselves from

their working domain and become truly immersed in sport, providing greater levels of satisfaction (Brown et al., 2016). Thus:

H6: Consumers' involvement has a positive influence on their level of satisfaction.

Figure 1 shows graphical demonstration of conceptual framework and research hypotheses.

[Figure 1 here]

3. Methods

Data were collected from visitors and local staff in two ski resorts in Iran over a four-month period during skiing events in the winter of 2015. A parallel mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative survey responses and semi-structured interviews (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). This allowed the collection of diverse views from the stakeholders in two Iranian ski resorts: Payam (northern foothills of Mishodaghi) and Sahand (northern slopes of Mount Sahand). Combining methods offered insight into sustainable events, allowing greater depth and detail than either method taken in isolation, providing a stage for the integration of quantitative precision with narrative complexity (Gannon et al., 2019). While the quantitative part of the study investigated interplay between consumers' CSR, OSE, involvement, and satisfaction (**Figure 1**), the qualitative part of the study assessed the ski resort's employees and volunteers view on sponsorship-linked events and potential CSR changes based on sustainable event management.

4. Quantitative phase

To ensure appropriateness of the sample, non-probability purposive sampling was employed to sample individuals who were visitors to the ski resort, as it was their insight that was central to understanding consumer perceptions and satisfaction. The questionnaire via paper-and-pencil intercept was distributed during face-to-face conversations with tourists at Sahand and Payam ski resorts in winter 2015. There were multiple sponsorships-linked snowsport events for tourists to attend, spectate, or get involved with over the period of data collection. The sponsors had an area, where they provide sustainability related information and wellness education about their company and the ski resort. Such sponsorship-linked events can help sponsors to build CSR image and motivate consumers with their CSR initiatives (Pappu and Cronwell, 2014; Plewa et al., 2016) as a powerful means for "publicizing and highlighting a transparent, consistent and social responsible corporate image" (Jahdi and Acikdilli, 2009, p.111). Following Gerbing and Anderson (1988) suggestion, the questionnaire was developed based on conversational interviews and an extensive literature review. 50 randomly chosen customers per ski resort were interviewed employing semi-structured interviews in order to identify factors influencing consumer satisfaction within the ski resorts, which in turn will help to check the effectiveness of the questionnaire and minimise common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes on average to complete and was collected by either a team member or trained volunteers from the local communities. To appreciate respondents' time, they received incentives (e.g., energy

bar, reusable water bottles) for their participation. A total of 723 questionnaire responses were collected, and after the removal of incomplete questionnaires, 710 were used for final analysis. The original questionnaire was developed in English, and then translated into Farsi using a back-translation approach. The majority (56.6%) of respondents were male and the largest age group was 18-35 (53.8%). Most respondents had a bachelors or postgraduate degree (61.4%). 43.7% of the consumers were surveyed at Payam ski resort and the rest in Sahand ski resort (56.3%).

4.1. Measures

Three community-related items were borrowed from Scheinbaum and Lacey (2015) and CSR scales from Lichtenstein et al. (2004) were used to assess consumers' perceptions of local communities, local companies, and charities. Three items assessing consumer involvement came from Lu et al. (2015). Consumer satisfaction was measured using three items adapted from Bettencourt (1997). OSE is conceptualised as a higher order multidimensional construct, comprised of three sub-scales. The dimensions include socialization (five-items), sensation seeking (five-items) and cognition seeking (five-items), taken from Pons et al. (2006). All items were measured using seven-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

4.2. Common method variance (CMV)

CMV should be tested when data are collected via self-reported questionnaires (Podsakoff et al., 2003). During this study, consumers were told about the purpose of the research, and questionnaires were only given to those who were willing to participate. The questionnaire was comprised of existing, validated constructs. These constructs were also checked via local and non-local experts in order to reduce item ambiguity. Harman's single factor was tested (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The eigenvalue exploratory factor analysis (EFA) solution detected seven factors with the highest portion of variance explained by a single factor being 32.2% (< 50%). Further, following Min et al. (2016), the unmeasured method factor approach was used. Average variance of indicators and method factor was tested. The average variance explained by indicators was 56%, while the average method-based variance was 1.4% (40:1). Thus, CMV is not a concern for this study.

4.3. Analytical technique

Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used as the method of analysis for this study for various reasons. First, PLS-SEM does not require the data to be normally distributed (Hair et al., 2017). It was tested for multivariate normality inspection by assessing kurtosis and skewness for all items. The results indicated that some items have the skewness and kurtoses above the obligatory cut-off point of -3 and +3 (Hair et al., 2010). Second, PLS-SEM can be employed in reflective, formative, and higher-order modes (Hair et al., 2017). This study employed both higher-order and reflective constructs in this research. Both the measurement and structural model were examined within Smart PLS 3.2 software (5,000 bootstraps) (Ringle et al., 2014).

5. Quantitative results and analysis

5.1. Measurement model for the full data

At the first stage of the measurement model, reliability and validity reflective constructs were assessed using composite reliability (CR), factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). The factor loadings ($p < 0.01$) and CR indicated values above the obligatory thresholds of 0.7. The AVE exceeded the recommended value of 0.5 for all constructs (**Table 1**) (Hair et al., 2010). The Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion was used to test discriminant validity, which requires a construct's AVE to be higher than the square root of its highest correlation with any construct in the correlation matrix (**Table 2**). Heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations approach for testing discriminant validity (Hensler et al., 2015) was also used. The HTMT values ranged between 0.382 and 0.704, below the recommended value of 0.85. Hence, the findings were supported by reliability and validity of reflective constructs.

[Table 1 & 2]

In stage two, this study operationalizes OSE as a second-order construct stemming from latent scores (Becker et al., 2012; Gannon et al., 2020). Socialization, sensation seeking and cognition seeking components are uncorrelated and individually capture a different aspect ratio. The formative OSE higher-order construct was validated through the weights of the first-order constructs, the significance of weights, and multicollinearity (Becker et al., 2012). The weights of each underlying dimensions to its respective higher-order construct were significant (Weight_{Socialization} = 0.31; Weight_{Sensation seeking} = 0.44; Weight_{Cognition seeking} = 0.36). The lack of collinearity was confirmed using the variance inflation factor (VIF) with values below 5 (VIF_{Socialization} = 2.11; VIF_{Sensation seeking} = 2.03; VIF_{Cognition seeking} = 1.92) (Hair et al., 2017), thus supporting evidence of no multicollinearity. Finally, the three first order constructs presented CR and AVE values exceeding the required threshold values (**Table 1**).

5.2. The structural model for the full data

For the PLS-SEM model, the non-parametric bootstrapping technique to test 710 cases with a resample of 5,000 was used (Hair et al., 2017). However, prior to testing hypotheses, the predictive relevance (Q^2), the effect size (f^2), GoF index, and Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) model fit were assessed. Following Khalilzadeh and Tasci (2017)'s suggestion, Cohen's effect sizes (f^2) indicates 0.01 for small, 0.06 for medium, and 0.14 for large effects within structural equation modelling approach. Here, f^2 values signify large effects. Q^2 values were greater than 0 ($Q^2_{CSR} = 0.152$; $Q^2_{Involvement} = 0.220$; and $Q^2_{Satisfaction} = 0.139$). SRMR value was 0.067 which is less than recommended value of 0.08 (Henseler et al., 2015). GoF is 0.441 (small ≥ 0.1 , medium ≥ 0.25 , large ≥ 0.36). The model explains 28% of OSE, 40% of involvement, and 34% of consumer satisfaction, which are larger than 0.26, suggesting a substantial model.

CSR positively influences OSE ($\beta = 0.517$, $t = 14.358$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, **H1** is supported. CSR positively effects involvement ($\beta = 0.355$, $t = 10.259$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, **H2** is supported. OSE positively impacts on involvement (**H3**: $\beta = 0.388$, $t = 9.012$, $p < 0.001$). CSR does not have any significant impact on consumer satisfaction (**H4**: $\beta = -0.010$, $t = 1.357$). OSE positively influences consumer

satisfaction ($\beta = 0.188$, $t = 4.029$, $p < 0.001$), supporting **H5**. Involvement positively affects consumer satisfaction (**H6**: $\beta = 0.362$, $t = 7.034$, $p < 0.001$). Finally, age, gender, and education control variables do not impact significantly on consumer satisfaction.

5.3. Post-hoc analysis of the indirect effects for the full data

The results proposed the potential existence of mediating relationships for the study. Following Williams and MacKinnon (2008) recommendations, bootstrapping analysis for the significance of the indirect effects using the confidence interval (CI) was employed. The results showed that CSR indirectly influences consumer satisfaction through involvement (indirect effect = 0.211, $t = 5.327$; 95% CI: [0.181-0.233]). Since direct impact was not significant, the results revealed that involvement fully mediates the influence of CSR on consumer satisfaction. Similarly, OSE indirectly influences consumer satisfaction through involvement (indirect effect = 0.228, $t = 7.681$; 95% CI: [0.178-0.267]). Since the direct influence was significant, the results revealed that involvement partially mediates the influence of OSE on consumer satisfaction.

5.4. Assessment of multi-group analysis: Payam vs. Sahand

Table 3 represents the findings of reliability and validity as well as multi-group analysis (MGA) PLS-SEM to test if there are differences between Payam and Sahand ski resorts. As per **Table 3**, CR, AVE, and factor loadings are above the recommended thresholds (Hair et al., 2010). The HTMT values ranged between 0.157 and 0.646 for Payam group and ranged between 0.133 and 0.659 for Sahand group, which are below the threshold value of 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015). **Table 3** confirms discriminant validity for both ski resorts.

[Table 3 here]

Henseler et al. (2016) suggested the use of Measurement Invariance of Composite Models (MICOM) three-step procedure prior to test MGA: 1) Configural invariance, 2) Compositional invariance, and 3) Scalar invariance (equality of composite means and variances). As shown in **Table 4**, full measurement invariance of two ski resorts was established. **Table 5** shows two different PLS-SEM MGA methods employed to evaluate differences between the path coefficients of the two ski resorts namely: Hensler's bootstrap-based MGA and Permutation test (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019). Both techniques use a p value of differences between path coefficients lower than 0.05 which indicates significant differences between path coefficients across two ski resorts. The results of the two different MGA techniques confirmed that there are not significant differences between Payam and Sahand ski resorts for the hypothesised relationships. **Table 6** indicates the results of R^2 and Q^2 for both ski resorts.

[Table 4, 5 & 6 here]

6. Qualitative phase

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews, conducted face-to-face with employees and volunteers at the Payam and Sahand ski resorts (**Table 7**). Participants were approached purposively to ensure a balanced sample demographic of staff and local volunteers (Wells et al., 2016). All workers and volunteers lived locally to the ski resorts and were either involved or had a thorough knowledge of the ski activities and events taking place. The interview questions were influenced to a large extent by literature on sustainable event management in order to allow for open discussion of local workers' perceptions of the sponsorship-linked event ski events and to probe participants about what they valued and what they wanted to see change with the events (Scheinbaum et al., 2019).

[Table 7 here]

6.1. Qualitative analysis

Interviews were audio recorded with respondents' permission and confidentiality was assured. The data analysis was carried out by the primary researcher abductively, identifying raw codes driven by extant literature, while also analysing prominent issues raised by participants that lay outside of theory (Gannon et al., 2019). During the initial round of coding all significant moments and heterogeneous comments were coded but during the second and third rounds only those comments that appeared significant across numerous participants and told the story of the sample were considered thematically relevant (Boyatzis, 1998). The findings from coded interviews were shared and agreed upon by the research team to ensure no issues arose at this stage of the study while also increasing the validity of the analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). The analysis of the interview data generated three prominent themes: the role of community engagement, the well-being of workers, and rejuvenation of the ski resorts.

6.1.1. Community engagement

Findings revealed that participants were motivated to work at ski events due to an intrinsic need to engage with the local community. Participants defined community engagement as a sense of attachment to a place and a desire to ensure the community was sustainable for the future:

'I came here three and a half years ago as a seasonal worker and found it very nice and got a positive feeling about the place. I like giving something nice to my community and our younger generation ... I love the area as well' (P8).

Participants expressed their desire to do valuable work that would make a difference for others in the ski resort community:

'The positive impact which we're known to have and which I found out they have got. It's just a really good place to work with my community' (P11).

‘I wanted to do something that I knew how to do and something that is making a difference to other people and our community as well and I saw the skiing community job advertised so I thought yes I found my dream job’ (P2).

The return of an intangible social reward, such as happiness or satisfaction, served as a motivator for individuals getting involved in sponsorship-linked sport events. Therefore, participants’ sense of responsibility and attachment to the ski resorts illustrated their shared value of place, which led to community engagement (McLeay et al., 2019; Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015).

6.2.2. Workers’ well-being

For many participants, working at ski resort events provided opportunities to break from a routine, be active, and socialise with others, which demonstrated the potential impact work could have on their personal well-being. For example, older workers acknowledged how becoming retired had meant they needed to pursue alternative activities to maintain their personal well-being:

‘Having retired and always worked with the public in the past; I wished to continue to keep myself alive’ (P6).

Participants stated that working at the ski resort offered variation in their lifestyle, and an interesting and dynamic work-life:

‘It gives you much more variety and positive feeling on your job I think, you know there’s certain elements to it that you wouldn’t get working for a random ordinary job’ (P4).

‘I like the opportunities and freedom and that sort of stuff within your role ... and there’s flexibility to walk around the lovely Payam Mountains’ (P15).

Further, workers noted that the events provided opportunities to engage in physical activities, which was beneficial to their health and provided a non-financial incentive to work at the ski resorts:

‘The money is ok, but I am more into my own health and positive feeling I get from here. You know I can do ski here as well, so it is not about the job, it is about doing some good and healthy activities’ (P10).

Participating in social or exciting activities can result in feelings of satisfaction and personal well-being (Altinay et al., 2019; Filo et al., 2014). Therefore, the findings demonstrate how Sahand and Payam ski resorts facilitate employee and volunteer well-being opportunities, which are important for workers’ motivation and satisfaction.

6.2.3. Rejuvenation of the ski resorts

Many participants discussed the rejuvenation of the Payam and Sahand ski resorts. Workers and volunteers discussed the potential involvement of third-party organisations in order to develop and marketize the resorts:

‘There are some charities, advertisement companies, local sponsors around these ski places. But, we need to see more business involvement here ... We need more support from government and perhaps private sector. We are doing fine but we need to engage our visitors more’ (P7).

There were notable differences in participants’ feelings towards the ski resorts dependent on their age bracket. Those aged 20-35 were far more likely to voice concerns about the future of the events, and were eager for development, investment, and commercialisation. Extant literature suggests that it is common for younger participants to seek change, as often rejuvenation is a pre-requisite for feeling a sense of attachment to a location, and that stagnation leads to disenchantment with a place (Gu and Ryan, 2008). This was echoed by a younger participant in the study, who saw potential for improved marketing:

‘We should be more creative. Skiing can be a big source of income for the area. For example, people outside of Iran do not even know we have snow. We need to advertise better for the outside world’ (P12).

Further, over half of those aged 20-35 who worked or volunteered at the resort called for increased commercialisation of the ski resorts:

‘Some charities have a lot of money. We should find a way to involve them more. I am not the expert but I am sure there is a way. Local business and even bringing business from other places in Iran can be beneficial here’ (P29).

Examples of successful rejuvenation and commercial development in consumer locations suggest that the key to public-private investment is a sustainable collaborative community approach, which empowers local people and avoids the degradation of social life (Artal-Tur et al., 2019). The following section outlines the contribution of this study and its implications for theory and practice.

7. Concluding discussion

Using parallel mixed methods, this paper assessed whether socially responsible events can improve sustainable hospitality management from a community stakeholder perspective based on Community CSR and ESR principals. From the quantitative approach, this paper has assessed the interplay between CSR, OSE, involvement, and satisfaction from consumers’ point of view in sponsorship-linked sport events. The paper has also qualitatively explored workers’ perceptions of ski resort events. By testing the conceptual model, findings indicate significant support for **H1**, **H2**, and **H3**; CSR practices have a positive impact on consumer’s OSE, and that OSE and CSR positively impact consumers’ involvement and participation in activities. This echoes suggestions that consumers are likely to

become involved in sporting experiences they perceive as socially responsible (Inoue et al., 2017; Needham and Little, 2013). Particularly, the positive affect of CSR activities on OSE suggests sustainable and charitable events appeal to the values and motivations held by consumers, and satisfy the needs that encourage a consumer's orientation towards a sporting event (Pons et al., 2006). Further, CSR and OSE's positive relationship with involvement suggests that engaging with sustainable sport activities is a matter of personal relevance to consumers and meets their intrinsic needs, leading to increased participation (Lyons and Dionigi, 2007).

Contrary to expectation, there was no support for **H4**, that CSR practices directly improve customer satisfaction. Gao and Mattila (2014) found that environmentally sustainable hotels can accentuate consumer satisfaction and Dumitrescu et al. (2018) suggest satisfactory CSR policy could improve consumer attitudes and make up for product failure. Thus, this finding differs from previous studies. However, data indicate significant support for **H5** and **H6**; through OSE and involvement, consumers are more likely to be satisfied with ski events. This supports the suggestion that engaging with sport at a social, cognitive, and sensory level leads to increased overall satisfaction (Pons et al., 2006) while also supporting Han and Hyun's (2018) suggestion that involvement at events should be prioritised to generate positive consumer evaluations and satisfaction within the hospitality sector. OSE had an indirect effect on satisfaction that is partially mediated by involvement, suggesting it is the entire experience of engaging with sport events and through direct participation that produces consumer satisfaction. While there was no support for **H4**, this study found that the relationship between CSR congruence and consumer satisfaction is fully mediated by involvement, highlighting that while CSR does not automatically produce satisfied consumers, their participation in socially responsible events elicits satisfaction. Finally, MGA revealed that there were no significant differences between Sahand and Payam ski resorts (**Table 5**). The direct paths were positive and significant for both locations.

The qualitative analysis illustrated how staff and volunteers have an attachment and a sense of responsibility to ensure skiing events run for the benefit of the local community, and their active participation in activities improved their personal well-being, showing the ability to co-create cohesive communities in ski resorts (McLeay et al., 2019). This culminated in two themes of community engagement and well-being. The final theme examined how workers (particularly those aged 35 and younger) were dissatisfied with the current level of development and perceived value in potential expansion and commercial marketing of events, producing the final qualitative theme of rejuvenation. Though this finding was surprising given other participants' prioritisation for community and well-being, Gu and Ryan (2008) suggest investment and rejuvenation is often a prerequisite for younger people getting involved and feeling a sense of attachment to their community.

7.1. Theoretical implications

This study applied Community CSR as the overarching theory to reflexively examine Iranian snowsports' approach to ESR (Plewa et al., 2016; Scheinbaum et al., 2019; Schulenkorf et al., 2019). While hospitality literature has illustrated how organisational CSR can improve consumer attitudes, brand preferences, and revisit intentions (Jeon et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2016), this study took a more community-based CSR perspective, showing that if consumers perceived skiing events to be

beneficial to local people, they would be more likely to participate in activities, which subsequently was found to improve their overall satisfaction. Thus, particularly within fragile ecosystems such as ski resorts CSR scholars should not restrict their theoretical lens to analysis of environmental initiatives and should make due consideration for societal and community policies (Rhou and Singal, 2020). We also contribute to understanding of how involvement in CSR-related activities is an important mediating factor to ensure consumers are satisfied with events. Thus, CSR initiatives should not be superficially employed and instead, there needs to be clear engagement with the consumer in the CSR process in order to generate satisfaction.

Further, despite OSE receiving limited academic attention, the higher-order construct had a significant effect on generating consumer involvement and overall satisfaction, suggesting that those involved in events were enthusiastic about local activities. Therefore, as customer satisfaction is essential for hospitality growth (Pizam et al., 2016), it is significant that consumers' satisfaction is improved when they are involved in events they perceive to be socially responsible. As a result, underpinning event management with principles of ESR appears pertinent in order to generate satisfied consumers within the hospitality sector (Scheinbaum et al., 2019).

In the qualitative results, workers' altruistic attitude towards giving back to their local environment illustrates the theme of community engagement. Further, workers noted how their motivations for becoming involved in events were linked to concerns for personal well-being. Workers' desire to fulfil their psychological and physical needs by being involved in altruistic, active, and social activities is analogous to ski visitors' experiential satisfaction with socially responsible events (Lichtenstein et al., 2004; Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015) and their desire to satisfy the social and sensory elements of OSE (Pons et al., 2006). These findings reveal that workers and consumers have shared concerns and values, and wish to ensure events are sustainable and lead to an empowered and inclusive community (Scheinbaum et al., 2019; Schulenkorf et al., 2019) showing that ESR principles can be sustainable and economically beneficial to ski resort communities.

Finally, the theme of rejuvenation illustrates younger workers' predilection for commercial investment in ski events. The consolidation of Community CSR with commercialisation interests is a novel perspective from this study, as previous ESR literature has advocated altruistic and charitable activities (Rowe et al., 2019; Scheinbaum et al., 2019; Schulenkorf et al., 2019) and CSR research has focussed on the empowerment and well-being of people (Artal-Tur et al., 2019; Hatipoglu et al., 2019). However, commercialisation of the tourism and hospitality sector can have conflicting results, with some residents and consumers thriving, while others are isolated and feel distrustful and powerless under the economic conditions (Xue and Kerstetter, 2018). Yet, given that economic benefits to local communities is an underpinning principle of socially responsible event management (Plewa et al., 2016; Rowe et al., 2019), the potential for sustainable expansion and growth should be explored within future studies looking at sustainable hospitality event management.

7.2. Practical implications

The confirmed conceptual model offers managers with further insight into how positive perceived CSR, socialisation, sensation seeking, cognition orientations, and involvement among consumers results in high levels of satisfaction within sponsored sport events. As such, snowsport events should consider integrating local hospitality services such as food and drink providers and ski instructors into their overall service

offering as well as donating revenue from their events to local charities. This may require additional resources and expenditure but, our results show this can be offset by improved customer satisfaction, which is a key driver of consumer behavioural outcomes (Pizam et al., 2016) as sport visitors seek to be involved in events that benefit the local community. Such an approach may also send moral signals to individuals who live in the local communities and their respected consumers. Furthermore, sport providers may offer immersive social areas or stalls where spectators can socialise and discuss their knowledge of snowsports, as our results show visitors who feel they have been cognitively, sensationally, and socially engaged are likely to have more satisfactory experiences. The results from post-hoc analysis also establish how involvement mediates the relationship between CSR, OSE and satisfaction. Therefore, hospitality and tourism marketing should offer a variety of accessible activities for all age groups and abilities but, also, encourage and promote the availability of these activities for everyone with proactive friendly invitations to participate; converting passive spectators into engaged and satisfied attendees.

Moreover, this study establishes how sponsored events can generate CSR benefits as well as consumer orientation and involvement through a community-based ESR lens. The positive satisfying experience generated by sponsored sport events and hospitality services can be conveyed to the sport sponsor. As such, marketing managers should devote a greater portion of time and budgets to evaluating the impact of ESR and related underlying concepts on their marketing strategies and perhaps increase their sponsorship of events that are socially responsible and have highly engaged and involved visitors. Marketers of snowsport events should also increase efforts to market their sustainable and community-based efforts on their leaflets and advertisements. This will lead to positive perceptions from sport visitors but also may encourage increased sponsorship and revenue from organisations eager to be affiliated to socially responsible sporting events.

In addition, the qualitative data show that workers at ski resorts wish to maintain a sense of community and preserve their personal well-being. Therefore, given workers' affection for the resorts, managers should ensure they are given free time to explore the snowsport events free from working expectations, so they can maintain work-life balance even if events become increasingly popular. However, younger staff and volunteers (aged 20-35) were eager for local authority, government, and private investment to improve growth and marketization of ski events. Therefore, any development or commercial investment in ski events should commit to the principles of ESR by inviting local people onto committees and surveying workers about their perceptions of events, so they feel involved in the decision-making process. This can promote personal well-being and quality of life for locals and ensure a sustainable community model for hospitality development (Schulenkorf et al., 2019). Managers may also wish to expand their external sponsorship of skiing events with the condition that local people maintain control over the running of activities while sponsors accrue benefits from connecting with a socially responsible event.

Collectively, our qualitative and quantitative data show that service providers and local authorities should promote and raise awareness of their CSR-led sustainability practices while being transparent about the precise benefits local communities derive from these initiatives. But importantly, our findings illustrate the importance of getting prospective consumers involved and participating in CSR related events in order to generate satisfaction. This has implications for event, sport,

and hospitality marketers, as consumers often seek to repeat visits to sporting events that elicit feelings of community (McLeay et al., 2019; Scheinbaum and Lacey, 2015). Moreover, stakeholders often commit to helping out in sporting settings that provide them a sense of social belonging (Lyons and Dionigi, 2007). It follows therefore that community-driven ski events could help recruit workers and volunteers in a seasonal winter sport industry that struggles to attract long-term employees (Dickson and Huyton, 2008).

7.3. Limitations and further research

Potential limitations of this study include the purely quantitative approach taken when researching consumers to the ski resort. Future research may wish to employ a more exploratory qualitative approach, as the results of the qualitative study with workers highlighted variations in perceptions and the appeal of commercial hospitality development. Secondly, while the fieldwork location of Iran answered calls for CSR research in Islamic contexts (Farrington et al., 2017), Iran is also a geographically specific context that potentially limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the underpinning principles of ESR should be applied and tested in future research in order to develop a community-centric understanding of how growth and rejuvenation should develop with consideration for local empowerment and inclusivity. Given that commercial investment was a shared goal among younger residents in Iranian ski resorts, future research should further explore stakeholders' perceptions of commercial investment, to find common ground and aid the development of a cohesive and desegregated community.

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Table 1. Validity and reliability of the constructs for full data

Construct/item	Loading***	CR	AVE
OSE			
Socialisation dimension (1)		0.800	0.549
I am often involved in conversations about sporting events	0.717		
I like talking about sporting events with people I know	0.703		
Watching a sporting event on TV is a good opportunity to socialize with one's friends	0.756		
I generally share my thoughts and feelings about sporting events with others	0.728		
Attending sporting events is a good opportunity to socialize	0.719		
Sensation seeking dimension (2)		0.874	0.581
For me, attending sporting events is a real pleasure	0.724		
I am always excited when I am going to a sporting event	0.762		
I am always enthusiastic when I think about attending a sporting event	0.765		
When I attend a sporting event, I sometimes feel like I am part of the event	0.788		
I feel really happy when I can attend a sporting event	0.771		
Cognition seeking dimension (3)		0.790	0.570
Watching sporting events give me greater familiarity with the stars of the game	0.712		
I consider myself as a sports expert	0.757		
I can talk about sports tactics and strategies as well as professional sports reports	0.785		
I know very little about sports	0.747		
I am really interested in any information regarding sports (records, scores and contracts)	0.770		
CSR		0.802	0.575
The event involved with the local communities	0.735		
Local companies benefit from the event	0.784		
The event puts charities into its event activities	0.754		
Involvement		0.790	0.557
There are variety of activities for you to participate	0.717		
The activities that you can participate are interesting	0.792		
You can freely participate in various consumer activities	0.727		
Consumer satisfaction		0.827	0.617
All in all I am very satisfied with this event	0.824		
The visit to this event meet my expectations of an ideal visit to this type of events	0.842		
The performance of this event has fulfilled my expectations	0.781		

Note: ***3.29 ($p < .001$); **2.58 ($p < .01$); *1.96 ($p < .05$).

Table 2. Discriminant validity for full data

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
(1)CSR	0.758						
(2)Cognition seeking	0.487	0.754					
(3)Involvement	0.536	0.507	0.746				
(4)OSE	0.517	0.586	0.561	n/a			
(5)Satisfaction	0.284	0.329	0.466	0.390	0.786		
(6)Sensation seeking	0.378	0.555	0.469	0.592	0.354	0.762	
(7)Socialisation	0.442	0.442	0.422	0.592	0.275	0.567	0.740

Table 3. Assessment findings of the measurement model for the Payam and Sahand ski resorts

Construct	Rang of loadings				CR		AVE	
	Payam***	Sahand***		Payam	Sahand	Payam	Sahand	
Socialisation	[0.689,0.725]	[0.709,0.847]		0.777	0.744	0.537	0.597	
Sensation seeking	[0.667,0.789]	[0.678,0.878]		0.872	0.801	0.532	0.579	
Cognition seeking	[0.708,0.801]	[0.723,0.823]		0.844	0.901	0.550	0.670	
Involvement	[0.689,0.823]	[0.666,0.789]		0.805	0.840	0.549	0.527	
CSR	[0.779,0.789]	[0.723, 0.798]		0.791	0.823	0.533	0.530	
Satisfaction	[0.723,0.847]	[0.789,0.889]		0.767	0.834	0.555	0.589	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Sahand								
(1)CSR	0.728							
(2)Cognition seeking	0.461	0.818						
(3)Involvement	0.632	0.54	0.725					
(4)OSE	0.290	0.46	0.523	n/a				
(5)Satisfaction	0.541	0.34	0.472	0.42	0.767			
(6)Sensation seeking	0.413	0.19	0.403	0.37	0.102	0.760		
(7)Socialisation	0.321	0.59	0.145	0.42	0.147	0.193	0.772	
Payam								
(1)CSR	0.730							
(2)Cognition seeking	0.423	0.741						
(3)Involvement	0.332	0.36	0.740					
(4)OSE	0.352	0.29	0.342	n/a				
(5)Satisfaction	0.172	0.36	0.321	0.15	0.744			
(6)Sensation seeking	0.302	0.22	0.111	0.21	0.232	0.729		
(7)Socialisation	0.469	0.25	0.283	0.13	0.270	0.147	0.732	

Note: ***3.29 ($p < 0.001$).

Table 4. MICOM results

Composite	c-Value (0=1)	95% CI	Permutation p-value	Compositional invariance?
CSR	0.999	[0.997;1.000]		Yes
Socialization	0.999	[0.999;1.000]		Yes
Sensation seeking	0.998	[0.998;1.000]		Yes
Cognition seeking	0.999	[0.999;1.000]		Yes
Involvement	0.974	[0.936;1.000]		Yes
Satisfaction	0.997	[0.995;1.000]		Yes
Composite	Variance difference	95% CI	Permutation p-value	Equal variance?
CSR	-0.132	[-0.392;0.400]		Yes
Socialization	-0.352	[-0.482;0.481]		Yes
Sensation seeking	-0.371	[-0.400;0.411]		Yes
Cognition seeking	-0.085	[-0.241; 0.241]		Yes
Involvement	-0.097	[-0.170; 0.177]		Yes
Satisfaction	-0.055	[-0.188; 0.192]		Yes

Composite	Mean difference	95% CI	Permutation p-value	Equal mean value?
CSR	-0.17	[-0.255;0.266]		Yes
Socialization	0.312	[-0.240;0.240]		Yes
Sensation seeking	0.152	[-0.240;0.250]		Yes
Cognition seeking	0.072	[-0.240;0.260]		Yes
Involvement	0.048	[-0.023;0.216]		Yes
Satisfaction	0.078	[0.134;0.134]		Yes

Note: CI = Confidence Interval.

Table 5. Results of MGA testing

Relationships	β Sahand	β Payam	β differences	P-value Henseler	P-value Premutation	Supported
CSR → OBE	0.433***	0.478***	0.045	0.129	0.211	No/No
CSR → Involvement	0.278***	0.331***	0.053	0.201	0.107	No/No
OBE → Involvement	0.301***	0.321***	0.020	0.222	0.201	No/No
CSR → Customer satisfaction	0.088	0.101**	0.013	0.123	0.238	No/No
OBE → Customer satisfaction	0.157*	0.179*	0.022	0.218	0.401	No/No
Involvement → Customer satisfaction	0.345***	0.371***	0.026	0.401	0.337	No/No

Note: ***3.29 ($p < .001$); **2.58 ($p < .01$); *1.96 ($p < .05$).

Table 6. Evaluation of the estimated models

Construct	Sahand		Payam	
	R ²	Q ²	R ²	Q ²
OSE	0.221	0.223	0.278	0.228
Involvement	0.372	0.391	0.389	0.321
Satisfaction	0.282	0.228	0.321	0.201

Table 7. Interview informants' profile.

Participants*	Age	Marital status	Gender
P1	28	Single	Female
P2	60	Married	Male
P3	38	Married	Male
P4	51	Married	Male
P5	57	Married	Female
P6	64	Single	Male
P7	32	Married	Male
P8	58	Married	Male
P9	29	Single	Male
P10	38	Divorce	Male
P11	42	Married	Female
P12	23	Single	Male

P13	58	Married	Male
P14	62	Married	Female
P15	38	Married	Female
P16	29	Single	Male
P17	22	Single	Male
P18	52	Married	Female
P19	47	Married	Female
P20	61	Married	Male
P21	57	Divorce	Male
P22	48	Married	Male
P23	25	Single	Male
P24	51	Married	Male
P25	26	Single	Male
P26	42	Divorce	Male
P27	24	Single	Male
P28	38	Divorce	Male
P29	31	Single	Male
P30	52	Married	Male
P31	47	Married	Male
P32	41	Married	Male
P33	22	Single	Female
P34	29	Single	Male
P35	53	Married	Male
P36	61	Divorce	Male
P37	26	Single	Male
P38	38	Single	Male

*Anonymised.

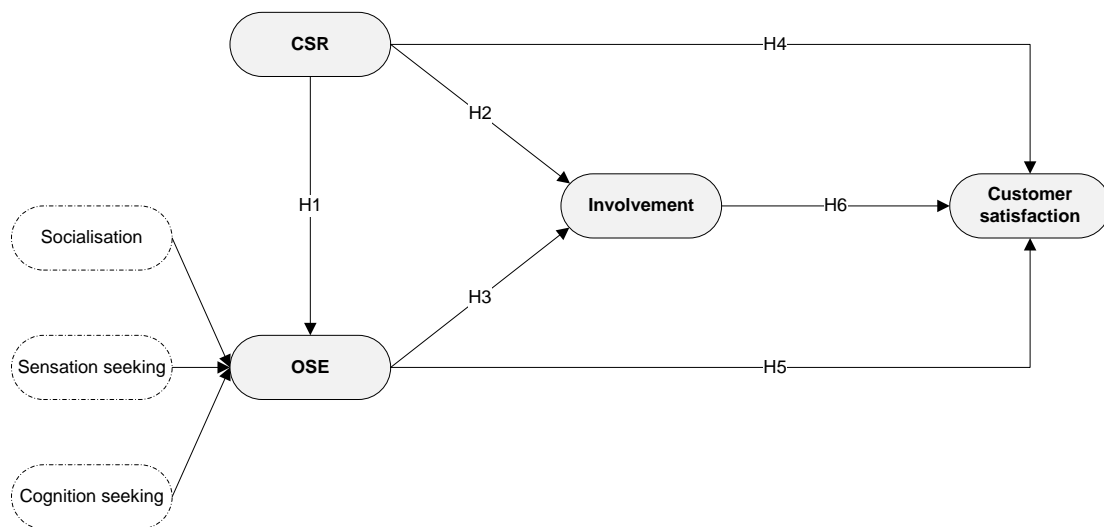


Figure 1. Conceptual framework