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Responses to Professional Sports Teams CSR Initiatives Following Natural Disaster

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RESPONSES TO PROFESSIONAL SPORTS TEAMS CSR INITIATIVES FOLLOWING
NATURAL DISASTER

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables ................................................................................................................................ vii  
Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ viii 

## INTRODUCTION ...........................................................................................................................1  
1.1 Impact of Natural Disasters ........................................................................................................1  
1.2 Comparing the Results of Natural Disasters ..............................................................................2  
1.3 Impact on Professional Sport Teams ..........................................................................................4  
1.4 Relation between Professional Sports and Communities after the Disaster ............................6  
1.5 Current Trends in CSR ...........................................................................................................10  
1.6 Research Question and Purpose of Research ....................................................................10  
1.7 Significance of Research .......................................................................................................10  

## LITERATURE REVIEW ..............................................................................................................12  
2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) ...................................................................................12  
   2.1.1 Background of CSR ........................................................................................................12  
   2.1.2 Recent Interpretation of CSR .......................................................................................13  
   2.1.3 Organizational and Social Effects of CSR ......................................................................14  
   2.1.4 Consumer Attitudes toward CSR Activities .................................................................15  
   2.1.5 Strategic CSR ..............................................................................................................17  
   2.1.6 Framework of CSR .......................................................................................................17  
   2.1.7 Conclusion ..................................................................................................................17  
2.2 CSR and Sporting Organizations .............................................................................................19  
   2.2.1 CSR in the Sports Industry ............................................................................................19  
   2.2.2 Community and Sports .................................................................................................19  
   2.2.3 Four Unique Factors of Sports Related to CSR ............................................................21  
   2.2.4 Connection of CSR and Sports ...................................................................................23  
   2.2.5 Criticism and Negative Aspects of Sports CSR Initiatives ............................................24  
   2.2.6 Connection between Corporate Reputation and Sport CSR Activities ........................25  
   2.2.7 Examples of Sports CSR Activities .............................................................................26  
   2.2.8 Connection between Carroll’s Framework and Sports CSR Activities .......................28  
   2.2.9 Conclusion of Sport Organizations CSR Initiatives ....................................................28  
2.3 CSR Activities of Sports through Natural Disaster .................................................................29  
   2.3.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................................29
5.5 Conclusion ...........................................................................................................................................83
  5.5.1 Research Summary .........................................................................................................................83
  5.5.2 Limitations of Study and Future Implications .................................................................86
  5.5.3 Development of Research Question ..........................................................................................87

APPENDICES ...............................................................................................................................................91
A. APPROVAL MEMORANDUM FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE ...........................................91
B. IRB APPROVED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANT LETTER (ENGLISH) ............................................92
C. IRB APPROVED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANT LETTER (JAPANESE) ........................................93

REFERENCES .............................................................................................................................................95

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH .........................................................................................................................108
LIST OF TABLES

1  CSR Activities by NPB after Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami.................................31
2  CSR Activities by Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles after Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami.................................................................32
2  List of Questions to Interviewees ..............................................................................45
3  Profiles of Interviewees .............................................................................................48
4  List of Organizations Providing Relief Efforts ............................................................49
5  Obtaining Information about Relief Efforts by Sports Organizations ..........................54
6  Effect of Professional Sports’ Relief Efforts ..................................................................60
7  Attitudes toward Sports Organizations after Relief Efforts ........................................63
8  Features and Unique Aspects of Professional Sports Relief Efforts .............................65
ABSTRACT

On March 11, 2011, the Northeastern Area (Tohoku) of Japan experienced the largest earthquake and tsunami ever recorded in this area. Following the disasters, professional sports organizations conducted disaster relief efforts by hosting charity matches, visiting temporary housing areas (mentoring and listening to victims), creating awareness using different logos in/around the public areas, etc. These activities are considered corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. CSR has been a popular topic in the sports world, but little attention has been paid to CSR activities following natural disasters. The purpose of this research was to assess the community members’ responses to sport organizations based on CSR initiatives after a natural disaster.

The nature of this research was exploratory; interviews were conducted with individuals living in the geographic area directly impacted by the Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami in Japan in 2011. The interviewees were also involved with the relief efforts to some extent. Through this research I explored the degree to which the recipients were aware of the relief efforts, the effects, and their attitudes toward the sports organizations/players. Based on the interview responses, the relief efforts by the professional sports organizations were well known, and the activities not only enhanced the image and reputations of the organizations and players, but also improved the recipients’ psychological connections (i.e. familiarity, interest, and attachment) with the organizations and/or the players.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Impact of Natural Disasters

All over the world, people coexist with nature, and peoples’ lives are impacted by natural disasters. Recently, the impact of nature disasters has become more powerful than before. According to the Cabinet Office (2012) of the Government of Japan, natural disasters are increasing around the world, and every year, approximately 160 million people suffer from natural disasters. Examples of recent natural disasters include: Indian Ocean earthquake, which mainly effected Indonesia (2004); Hurricane Katrina in the US (2005); Sichuan earthquake in China (2008); and the Haiti earthquake (2010). One lethal natural disaster happened in Japan in 2011: the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

In March 2011, the Northeastern Area (Tohoku) of Japan was beset by the largest earthquake recorded in the area. The Japan Meteorological Agency reported that the magnitude of this earthquake was 9.0, the world’s fourth largest recorded earthquake (Sankei Shimbun, 2011). On the “heels” of the earthquake, the area was struck by a tsunami. More than 16,000 people died (The Japan National Police Agency, 2012). As a result of these natural disasters, 151,115 people lost their homes, and numerous infrastructures were destroyed (Hara & Hirata, 2011). Moreover, due to the tsunami, nuclear power plants were damaged in Fukushima (a prefecture in the Tohoku area), and those residing in the eastern area of Japan were concerned about a lack of energy (Tokyo Electric Power Company, 2011).

In the affected areas, there were both mental and physical negative health effects for victims. In a situation where many people have been forced to live in temporary housing, it has become necessary to cope with stress, fatigue, and anxiety about the future (Japanese Red Cross
Society, 2013). Furthermore, due to the lack of recreational spaces, the decline in physical strength of elementary school students has been a big concern (Kahoku Shimbun, 2013).

Okazaki, Suzuki, Sasaki and Sakamoto (2013) reported that the areas with more damage have had a lower amount of middle school student exercise. Additionally, according to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2013) in Japan, the earthquake evacuation has raised concerns about the elderly victims who have shown signs of decreased physical and mental functions. This has led to the development of so-called “inactive life disease” (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2013).

The individuals who suffered from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami need substantive support, support which tangibly and directly impacts recovery from the disasters such as money and reconstruction of roads and buildings. Individuals also require mental as well as physical support to foster healthier living conditions. Thus, following the disaster, companies (including sports organizations) contributed to relief efforts for these areas through various ways, which is explained in the following paragraphs.

1.2 Comparing the Results of Natural Disasters

When comparing natural disasters, the results from the earthquake and tsunami in Japan were similar to the results from Hurricane Katrina in the U.S., which also destroyed housing and infrastructure, and created approximately 400,000 evacuees (Kabuta, 2006). After both disasters, various companies played important roles in contributing to the recovery from the disasters. According to Thomas and Fritz (2006), these trends are present worldwide. After the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, retail and mobile phone companies quickly provided their products to the victims (e.g. food, drinks, and cellphones); and influential Japanese companies (e.g. Toyota, Honda, Sony, and Fujitsu) each donated more than US $100,000 respectively within one week.
of the disaster (Kishimoto, 2011). Following Hurricane Katrina, Wal-Mart contributed to relief efforts for New Orleans by donating their products (Barbaro & Gillis, 2005). Meanwhile, CVS (pharmacy chain) donated money and supplies such as water, ice and personal care items (total approximately US $1.2 million) to the victims in cooperation with Red Cross and other local organizations (cf. Thomas & Fritz, 2006). For example, After Hurricane Katrina, the leaders of those companies addressed why the relief efforts were important for their companies. For example, Lee Scott, former CEO of Wal-Mart mentioned that, “We feel a responsibility to make sure we take care of our customers and associates (Konig, 2005, para. 5).” Also, Molly White, former Director of U.S. Community Involvement at Nike, addressed, "Our [Nike] relief efforts are aimed at addressing the needs of our affected employees and their families, as well as supporting broader community needs focused on relief and rebuilding (Leonard, 2005, para. 3)."

In addition to the retail and other businesses, sports organizations also participated in disaster relief efforts. Following the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, professional sports organizations in Japan (e.g. Nippon [Japan] Professional Baseball Association (NPB) and Japan Professional Football [soccer] League (J. League)) contributed to the suffering areas through donations, providing supplies and other activities (e.g. Japan Professional Baseball Association [NPB], n.d.; Japan Professional Football League [J. League], 2011). After Hurricane Katrina, professional sports organizations (e.g. Major League Baseball (MLB), National Football [American Football] League (NFL), National Basketball Association (NBA), and National Hockey League (NHL) engaged in disaster relief efforts as well as in the case of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami (e.g. National basketball Association [NBA], 2008; Major League Baseball [MLB], 2013). In the damaged areas, the Tohoku district and Louisiana, professional sports teams (the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles and the Beg Alta Sendai in Japan, and the New
Orleans Saints and the New Orleans Hornets in the U.S.), and even professional sports leagues have become symbols of the recovery from the disaster (e.g. Totsuka, 2011; Matheson, 2012) through their contributions to the damaged areas and through various disaster relief efforts such as fundraising, sending supplies, and conducting charitable events (e.g. Pedull, 2005; Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles, n.d.).

### 1.3 Impact on Professional Sport Teams

According to Hara and Hirata (2011), the Japanese government calculated that the damage from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan (March 11th, 2011) was between US $20 to US $31 million. Some of these losses were directly associated with sporting activities. For example, the repair costs of the soccer facilities damaged in the disaster were approximately US $5 million (Hara & Hirata, 2011). Hara and Hirata (2011) mentioned the soccer J1 (Division 1) matches, originally scheduled from March to April, were postponed until June. Likewise, they explained that the opening of the professional baseball season was postponed from March 25th to April 12th. The Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles home games in Kleenex Stadium Miyagi (which was changed to Rakuten Kobo Stadium Miyagi in 2014) were moved to other stadiums in Western Japan, where they would continue to play until April 29th. Hara and Hirata (2011) concluded that one of the biggest losses from the disasters was lost revenue from professional sporting activities due to the decrease of spectators, sponsors’ income, and the cessation of broadcasts.

In March 2011, the beginning of the baseball season in Japan, organizing sporting events was a controversial issue due to the lack of electricity following the tsunami, which damaged nuclear power plants. The Japan Professional Baseball Players Association (JBPBA, 2011) addressed the difficulty asking, “In these situations, should the professional baseball teams hold
baseball league despite the lack of electricity?” There were also several ethical issues; at such a sensitive time after so many people had died, should baseball players as well as fans be enjoying sports?

Japanese professional baseball has two leagues: the Central League and the Pacific League. Usually each has different opening games. On March 21st, the JPBPA (2011) requested an official announcement from the Nippon Professional Baseball Organization to postpone the opening game of the season for the Central League, from March 25th to April 12th in 2011. April 12th was the day when the Pacific League would have its opening game in 2011.

Representatives of the Central League and the Nippon Professional Baseball Organization (NPB) sought to schedule the opening games on March 29, 2011 (JPBPA, 2011). Some authorities in the Central League, including general managers for some teams, believed that sports play an important role in encouraging suffering people, and helping off-set the economic slow-down resulting from the disasters (Murase, 2011). According to Fujiwara (2011) from the Nippon [Japan] Research Institute, due to the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, Japanese consumer spending for hobbies, fashion, and luxuries decreased, and they enhanced their social mindedness and started donating money and daily necessities to the suffering areas. However, the atmospheres of social festivals, concerts, and sporting events were dampened by the recent tragedy. In addition to lowered morale, the lack of electrical energy in these areas resulted in events being postponed or canceled.

There were two sides to the situation when considering the timing to resume sporting events following the natural disasters. In Japan, players seemed to have sympathy for the people who suffered from the natural disasters and showed a lack of motivation to play sports. On the other hand, some managers and administrators considered sports as a way to motivate citizens
and keep the economy in balance despite decreased access to energy. Despite the conflict between players and the administration, both parties were concerned with their relationship between themselves and the citizens of the community. The Nippon Professional Baseball Organization (NPB, 2011) did finally decide to schedule the opening game on April 12th, 2011.

1.4 Relation between Professional Sports and Communities after the Disaster

In general, it is important for professional sports organizations to connect with the communities because these communities and the members influence profitability-related factors such as spectators, sponsorship, and governmental funds (Babiak & Wolfe, 2006). Following the natural disasters, newspaper companies in both Japan and the U.S. reported on the connections between professional sports teams and the symbolism of recovery from the natural disasters in the local areas (e.g. Maske, 2010; Monkovic, 2010; Nikkan Sports, 2011).

After the opening baseball game in the 2011 season, Motohiro Shima (captain of the Rakuten Eagles) pointed out the following:

The people of Tohoku, let's get through this (disaster). We're going to beat this, no matter what. If we can get over this now and get to the other side, I'm sure we'll be greeted by even stronger versions of a much brighter future and ourselves. Let’s show everyone the potential power of sports. Let's show everyone how strong Tohoku is. (Nikkan Sports, 2011, para. 12)

A similar sentiment was raised following Hurricane Katrina. According to Matheson (2012), Ray Nagin, the previous mayor of New Orleans (2002-2010), pointed out the following:

The return of the NFL to the city in September 2006 is an important symbol to the rest of the country that the city was fully on the road to recovery from Hurricane Katrina, which had devastated the city the year previously. (p. 18)
In terms of the preceding quotes, it is obvious that professional sports teams had connections with their respective communities. Since Shima’s speech to the public following the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, professional sports organizations/teams organized community outreaches and philanthropic activities for the Tohoku districts in addition to their main business (i.e. playing games). Generally, these actions by companies are called Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

1.5 Current Trends in CSR

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is becoming a more important concern for companies (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009). According to information from a survey by Cone Communications LCC (2010) in 2010, 88% of Americans reported that it is admissible for companies to connect social issues to their marketing. That was a 33% increase from the research in 1993. Next, 85% of consumers reported feeling more positive about products or companies supporting a cause they themselves support. Also, 90% of consumers indicated that they want companies to tell them how they are helping causes. The results from the Cone’s survey led to the conclusion that many consumers are interested in the CSR activities in which companies may engage in.

Following these trends, companies are beginning to pay more attention to CSR initiatives; research regarding CSR activities is also being conducted (Athanasopoulou, Douvis & Kyriakis, 2011). Beginning in the 1980s, scholars started researching CSR, and have subsequently proposed ideas and theoretical frameworks to explain CSR (Carroll, 1979; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; McWilliams & Siegel, 2000). In the sports industry, numerous organizations ranging from sport manufacturing companies like Nike and Reebok, to professional sports organizations such as the NBA and NASCAR, have engaged in CSR
initiatives (Wallace, 2004). According to Robinson (2005), sports teams are gradually increasing their participation in socially responsible actions.

Athanasopoulou et al. (2011) concluded that professional sports teams offer the potential for research into CSR activities, since all organizations should make some effort to engage in socially responsible activities. Research to date has included the study of internal and external drivers of CSR activities in American professional sports organizations—NFL, MLB, NHL, and NBA (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009), the effect of CSR activities conducted by the NFL through the Super Bowl XL in Detroit in 2006 (Babiak & Wolfe, 2006), investigating environmental sustainability in the English Premier League Football Club (Jenkins, 2013), and the effects of CSR in the local community by a Japanese football club (Nakayama, 2010).

Regarding the previous research findings, while Levermore (2010) criticized that sport CSR initiatives are only conducted in urban areas and potential markets. Smith and Westerbeek (2007) reported that sports organizations have unique CSR initiatives compared to other industries, such as mass media distribution and communication power, youth appeal, positive health impacts/association, social interaction, and sustainability awareness. However, they also mentioned that through mass media distribution and communication power there is the potential risk that sports organizations/players spread out negative information to the public such as corruption and cheating. In this case, the uniqueness of sports might negatively impact society (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Levermore, 2010). On a positive note, Walker and Kent (2009) proposed that CSR activities by sports organizations and teams might help to foster a positive reputation for a team and consumers’ patronage intentions.

Considering responses to natural disasters, NBA (National Basketball Association) Cares, which is the organization for “the league’s global community outreach initiative,” has reported
on support that has been provided to areas suffering from a natural disaster (NBA, 2013). For example, on February 15, 2008, utilizing the name, “NBA’s Day of Service,” the NBA sponsored an event which included rebuilding in New Orleans following the devastation from Hurricane Katrina in 2005 (NBA, 2008). Also, NBA Family (one of the activities on NBA Cares) has supported the area in Central Oklahoma following the tornado in May, 2013 which resulted in the loss of about 40 lives, destroyed two elementary schools, and left thousands homeless (NBA, 2013). Following the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, a MLB (Major League Baseball) player, Curtis Granderson (he played for the New York Yankees at that time, but he moved to New York Mets in 2014) visited the suffering areas in Tohoku as a representative of the MLB and presented US $1 million to Japanese officials to help with the recovery. Granderson also participated in community outreach through baseball academies and a restoration ceremony at Ishinomaki Stadium (Nikkan Sports, 2012). The professional Spanish football team, F.C. Barcelona, set up the F.C. Barcelona Foundation in order to collect donations to the support those suffering in Japan (Kondo, 2011).

Response to the earthquake and tsunami in Japan also came from the Japanese professional sport organizations. The J. League (n.d.) promoted the slogan, “Team as One,” and the representatives explained, “this slogan declares the solidarity and resolution of the J. League, 38 clubs, players, fans and supporters, and all who wish to help with reconstruction in the devastated areas to advance together as a united team” (Team as One, English, para. 1). The J. League (n.d.) responded to the suffering areas in Tohoku by participating in charitable sporting events to raise money for recovery, and by having players’ visit the suffering areas.
1.6 Research Question and Purpose of Research

The preceding examples are helpful to illustrate how professional sports organizations have been involved in natural disaster relief both nationally and internationally. The CSR activities undertaken by professional athletes, coaches, managers, and owners are a type of evidence that owners and members of sport organizations believe CSR activities are a proper response to natural disasters. There is a lack of research, however, assessing the impact of such relief/rebuilding efforts on consumers. Thus, three research questions were posed to direct the proposed research.

RQ1: Are community members aware of sport organizations CSR activities?
   a. How did individuals become aware of CSR activities?
   b. Did individuals have direct experience with CSR activities?
   c. Is awareness of CSR activities based on media representations, word-of-mouth, other?

RQ2: What is the individuals’ attitude toward the sport organizations?

RQ3: Are individuals in a better position today because of CSR activities by sport organizations?

The purpose of this research was to assess the community members’ responses to sport organizations based on CSR initiatives after a natural disaster.

1.7 Significance of Research

The significance of this research is that even though the impact of natural disasters have been significant and sports organizations have frequently engaged in CSR initiatives related to natural disasters, researchers have yet to study the connection between natural disasters and the CSR activities of sports organization. It is not too much to say that this is an academic blind spot
in the field of Sport Management. Thus, this research was the first effort to study the relationship between natural disasters and CSR initiatives from sports organizations. In Japan and the U.S., both countries have been significantly damaged by natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornados). Conducting an exploratory study with those living in the geographic area directly impacted by the earthquake/tsunami provided answers as to whether individuals were aware of the CSR initiatives by sport organizations, and if such efforts did have an impact on the lives of community members. The results should be beneficial for organizers in determining what relief efforts may effectively serve the local citizens who were affected by a natural disaster, and leave a positive impression of the sport organization. Participating in recovery efforts should facilitate recovery in impacted areas, and foster positive attitudes toward the sports organization, which over time should positive impact sport consumer behavior. Next, Chapter Two includes a review of the previous literature about CSR initiatives and some examples of CSR activities including disaster relief efforts.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is the outline of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the relations with CSR and sport world. This chapter is divided into three sections: Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR and Sport Organizations, and CSR Activities of Sports through Natural Disaster. The first section pertains to information about the general CSR issues such as background, interpretation by scholars, and effects both to organizations and society. The second section is presented to address the relations between sports organizations and CSR and the reasons why sports organization conduct CSR initiatives. The final section includes examples of CSR activities by sports organizations following natural disasters both in Japan and the U.S., where both countries have professional sports organizations.

2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

2.1.1 Background of CSR

Godfrey (2009) offered the following straightforward, if somewhat debatable contention: “the origins of CSR lie in philanthropy, the oldest social initiative among American private enterprises” (p. 700). According to Mitchell (1989), the beginning of CSR began in the 1920s when modern industries became larger and had a stronger impact on society. Kagata (2006) explained that this social impact built the connection between companies and their surroundings; it created a social concern and criticism of companies. Morimoto (1994) explains that social change affects companies’ and investors’ behaviors. Before the social movement, the companies and the investors only focused on profit maximization, but they quickly started to consider the social issues due to social pressures in their business operation (Morimoto, 1994). Furthermore, the development of mass media increased the interest, involvement, and demand toward social
issues by citizens after the 1950s (Kagata, 2006). Mass media development encouraged consumerism for various industries which had socially negative effects (e.g. defective car problems by General Motors). Also, the establishment of Social Responsible Investment (SRI), the idea that a company actively invested in caring about social concerns, had some effects on a company’s activities in the 1970s (Kagata, 2006).

Bowen (1953) studied social responsibilities of businessmen, and defined the term as “the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decision, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objective and values of our society” (p.6). Davis (1960) explained, “to the extent that businessmen or any other group have social power, the lessons of history suggest that their social responsibility should be equated with it” (p. 71). He mentioned the importance of social care as, “certainly, if social responsibilities could be avoided or kept to insignificant size in the total scheme of business, a weighty, difficult burden would be raised from businessmen's shoulders” (p. 74). Thus, Davis (1960) concluded that it is indispensable for companies to fulfill social responsibility if they seek to enlarge their business.

2.1.2 Recent Interpretation of CSR

CSR is still explained and interpreted by many scholars. This is because the concept of CSR reflects differently the sense of values of each era or the expectations of the role of the company (Kagata, 2006). Matsumura (2010) explained that through CSR activities companies not only give priority to generating profits, but also give priority to delivering benefits to the larger society. In other words, the idea of CSR is that companies are members of society, and they should voluntarily involve themselves in society, particularly in the context of making a positive impact on society (Kotler & Lee, 2005). As noted by Van Marrewijk (2003), CSR “…refers to company activities—voluntary by definition—demonstrating the inclusion of social
and environmental concerns in business operations and in interactions with stakeholders” (p.236). From another perspective, Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) defined CSR as “… a company’s commitment to minimizing or eliminating any harmful effects and maximizing its long-run beneficial impact on society” (p. 47). Similarly, scholars mention the connection to legal matters. McWilliams and Siegel (2000) explain that CSR activities are made up of business initiatives which further pursue some social benefit, beyond the specific financial interest and legal obligations of the company. Jonker (2005) provides a reasonable overview of the concept by explaining that CSR deals with a wide range of social matters, which relates the role, position, and function of a business.

2.1.3 Organizational and Social Effects of CSR

Scholars have been interested in CSR activities and whether such activities have positive effects on the financial and social benefits of an organization (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). On the other hand, Friedman (1962) addressed that there were no other benefits for direct shareholders besides direct business with them, and any other investments were mismanagements for companies. He also states businesses should only consider the profit maximization for to increase shareholder wealth under the legal obligation (Friedman, 1970).

Scholars, however, explain that CSR initiatives may have a positive effect on companies (Carroll, 1979; Alperson, 1995; Graham, 1994; Mullen, 1997; Stark, 1999). Examples of positive effects from CSR initiatives include: distinguishing one company from another; fostering a close and emotional relationship with customers; generating employee fulfillment and bonding; creating a cushion for greater customer acceptance of price increases; arousing favorable publicity and compensating for negative publicity; helping attract skeptical public officials (who might determine expansion/growth); and building corporate reputation and brand loyalty.
Additionally, scholars point out the connections between CSR actions and social impacts. Though Himmelstein (1997) argues companies take advantage of CSR as an excuse to not fix the negative/harmful effects of their processes’ byproducts, CSR activities encourage sustainability (e.g. introducing eco-friendly products, recycling, and reducing emission), harmless manufacturing processes, and developing social interactions and quality of life through company-oriented service to communities (McWilliams, Siegel & Wright, 2006). In fact, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (2012) in Japan posits the recommendation of CSR initiatives due to the fact that these actions can contribute to a sustainable society, eco-friendly lifestyle, and quality of life; awareness for these concepts can be promoted through the education system.

2.1.4 Consumer Attitudes toward CSR Activities

Scholars have explained that CSR actions relate to consumers’ affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions through perceived quality, price, and consumer attributions towards a firms’ motives (e.g., Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006; Brown & Dacin, 1997; Creyer & Ross, 1997; Ellen, Mohr, & Webb, 2000; Folkes & Kamins, 1999; Murray & Vogel, 1997). Some scholars support a definitive link between CSR activities and the increase in a company’s profits (cf. Margolis & Walsh, 2001; McGuire, Sundgren, & Schneeweis, 1988; Pava & Krausz, 1996; P. Stanwick, & S. Stanwick, 1998). Many researchers agree that CSR activities boost public support, leading to greater profits (cf. Margolis & Walsh, 2001; Pava & Krausz, 1996; Roman, Hayibor, & Agle, 1999; P. Stanwick & S. Stanwick, 1998).

Brown and Dacin (1997) found that firms which included CSR initiatives had positive consumers’ reactions to both products and overall corporate evaluations. Sen and Bhattachary (2001) suggest purchase intentions can be affected by CSR actions. Moreover, CSR directly
connects brand evaluations and purchase intention through consumers’ expectations (Klein & Dawar, 2004). Creyer and Ross (1997) speculate that CSR initiatives are relevant to whether the firm’s ethical actions surpass consumer expectations. As far as philanthropy and the environmental situation are concerned, CSR initiatives have been found to positively correlate with a customer’s evaluation of a firm, and a customer’s purchase intentions (Mohr & Webb, 2005). Similarly, Sen and Bhattachary (2001) concluded that the closer connected the CSR activities are to a firm’s industry, the more positively consumers assess the firm. They showed with their case study that it was more beneficial for a manufacturing company to support overseas trading practices rather than civil rights issues. Thus, it is obvious that consumers’ positive attitudes towards CSR actions should relate to purchase intentions and positive product, corporate, and brand evaluation (e.g. Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sen & Bhattachary, 2001; Klein & Dawar, 2004).

To sum up, scholars have suggested there may be potential positive effects on consumers’ intentions to purchase companies’ products from CSR initiatives. There are direct connections between purchase intentions and product, corporate, and brand evaluation (e.g. Brown & Dacin, 1997; Sen & Bhattachary, 2001; Klein & Dawar, 2004). However, Kitami (2008) suggests that it is important to connect a company’s reputation and CSR initiatives, otherwise a company’s CSR initiatives are ineffective. Walker and Kent (2009) explained that although media consumption and repeat purchasing were not noticeably affected by CSR initiatives, there were strong and positive relationships with word of mouth and merchandise consumption behaviors. Reputation is one of the most valuable assets available to a company (Hall, 1992). Cultivating relationships with consumers is an important objective of reputation-building activities for many companies (Rindova & Fombrun, 1998).
2.1.5 Strategic CSR

CEOs and those who are in charge of social affairs in companies have claimed that they tend to conduct CSR and social outreach activities strategically (File & Prince, 1998; Saiia, Carroll, & Buchholtz, 2003). These activities have been increasingly used as tools of marketing to enhance a company’s unique image (Matsumura, 2010). These ideas move away from the original viewpoint that considers CSR initiatives as only a charitable venture, to linking the activities to financial benefits to the companies (Aguilera, Rupp, Williams, & Ganapathi, 2007; Barnett, 2007; Waddock & Post, 1995). Embracing this dual standpoint (organizational and social aspects), many leading U.S. companies have been moving away from a traditional charity to a strategic CSR focus, which tries to combine corporate services and donations from the communities with the business process (Dean, 2003).

2.1.6 Framework of CSR

Carroll (1979) summarized previous research and proposed a framework to categorize CSR activities: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary. Godfrey (2009) supported his model through the comment: “Carroll’s four responsibility helped frame thinking about CSR and still resonate with both scholars and practitioners” (p. 704). Carroll’s model placed the most emphasis on economic concerns, followed by legal, ethical, and finally discretionary responsibilities.

Carroll (1979) also suggested that economic responsibility should be prioritized because companies have to make a profit in order to continue doing business, and generate benefits for society. He stated that legal responsibility specifies that all businesses must obey legal obligation though the first priority of businesses is to make profits. Additionally, Carroll (1979) defined ethical responsibilities as exceeding economic and legal responsibilities and following
“…additional behaviors and activities that are not necessarily codified into law but nevertheless are expected of business by society’s members” (p. 500). Finally, he stated discretionary responsibility is “…purely voluntary and the decision to assume them is guided only by a business’s desire to engage in social roles not mandated, not required by law, and not even generally expected of businesses in an ethical sense” (p. 500).

A comprehensive summarization of the variety of CSR actions is contained in *Socrates: The Corporate Social Ratings Monitor* (Kinder, Lydenberg, Domini & Co. Inc. 1999 as cited in Sen & Bhattachary, 2001), a database which categorizes 600 companies’ CSR actions into six generalized areas: Community support (e.g. arts and health campaigns and educational programs), Diversity (e.g., race-based diversity records and actions), Employee support (safety and job security), Environment (e.g., eco-friendly merchandises), Foreign operations (e.g. foreign countries’ labor practice), Product (e.g. product safety).

### 2.1.7 Conclusion

In sum, though there is no exact definition for CSR activities, CSR may be a principle that contributes to improving both companies and society through business practices. Himmelstein (1997) points out that companies take advantage of CSR to draw attention away from the negative/harmful effects of their processes’ byproducts. However, several scholars have suggested (cf. Carroll, 1979; Alperson, 1995; Graham, 1994; Mullen, 1997; Stark, 1999, McWilliams, at el., 2006), CSR activities have positive effects on both a company and society, such as building companies’ uniqueness and improving quality of life. Either way, it is clear that CSR initiatives have some influence on the society. In addition, as many researchers agree that CSR activities contribute to a positive public image for a company, and may lead to greater profits (cf. Margolis & Walsh, 2001; McGuire et al., 1988; Pava & Krausz, 1996; P. Stanwick &
Since reputation is such an intangible but important asset to a business organization (Hall, 1992), it makes sense to conduct CSR and social outreach activities strategically (File & Prince, 1998; Saiia et al., 2003). Considering these aspects, CSR activities in sports environment also have some possibility to influence the sports organization, stakeholders, and the local community. In the following section, I focus on the CSR initiatives by sports organizations.

2.2 CSR and Sporting Organizations

2.2.1 CSR in the Sports Industry

Compared to other business sectors, CSR initiatives by sport organizations were not considered important activities until about two decades ago (Kott, 2005; Robinson, 2005). Currently, most professional sport organizations have public (community) relations or public outreach branches, and they have set up foundations for social concerns in their regions (Robinson, 2005). Those working in professional team sport organizations realize that three key factors reflect a team’s reputation beyond the on-field or on-court results: business conduct, social conduct, and contributions (Filo, Funk, & O’Brien, 2010). Extejt (2004) argues that there are about 350 charities and foundations sponsored through professional teams and individual athletes in the US, and these charities generate more than $100 million dollars US annually, which are donated to community beneficiaries.

2.2.2 Community and Sports

Warner, Dixon, and Chalip (2012) point out that sports play an important role in the initiation of community building. Rak (2013) explains that sports can generate healthy life images among community members. In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2003) emphasizes that involvement in sports helps develop the quality of lives through healthy diets,
curbs the consumptions of tobacco, alcohol and drugs, reduces violence, enhances fitness, and promotes social interaction. Sports organizations realize these benefits are available for community members, and these community members positively react to the sports organizations (Ratten, 2011). Organizations that have CSR initiatives included in their marketing strategies often organize events (not only games but also community events) to achieve objectives of social responsibility and to build a positive reputation that will lead them to market superiority (Rak, 2013).

English Premier League (2008) surveyed their fans to gauge whether the teams conducted enough community-centered activities during 2007/08 seasons. As a result, Ninety-six percent of respondents answered either “strongly agree” or “agree” when asked “Do clubs have an important role in local communities?” Also, for the question “What kind of social outreach is important?” the top three answers were: positive relationship with local citizens; community-centered activities; and positive relations with local companies. In other research, Roy and Graeff (2003) reported that 90% of local residents had a positive image of community activities by professional sports players; 87% of them also reported having a positive image of community activities involving professional sports teams.

Such positive benefits of the team-fan relationship effect the way sports team managers conduct CSR activities. Rak (2013) suggested, “CSR is seen as an evidence of a sport club being a responsible member of a community focused not only on sport results” (p. 721). Rak also noted that CSR initiatives “…bring(s) benefits and positive effects for both sport organisation (better organisational image, loyalty and stronger relationship with community and fans) and the community (integration, support, awareness, health, patronage intentions of sport consumers,
emotional relationship with the sport organisation)” (Walker & Kent, 2009 as cited in Rak, 2013 p.723).

On the other hand, day-to-day operations of professional sports require a huge amount of energy consumption (Covello, 2008 as cited in Babiak & Trendafilova, 2011). Babiak and Trendafilova (2011) found out that sport organizations (NBA, NFL, NHL, and MLB) are aware of the fact that their business operations have negative effects on the environment, and these organizations felt pressure from the public to deal with these problems. Thus, they stated sports organizations introduce these CSR initiatives as strategic business practice. Accordingly, it might be necessary to consider the environmental issues for sports organizations, so that they can keep positive relations with local stakeholders, especially citizens and governments (Babiak & Trendafilova, 2014).

For these reasons, it is clear that sports may have a significant impact on communities (e.g. Warner, et al., 2012; Rak, 2013). Moreover, the professional organizations believe that local activities are important factors for their business, and the local communities also desire sports organizations to contribute to communities. Next, I include the content about the unique factors of professional sports organizations related to CSR that leads them to have such a positive impact in the communities.

### 2.2.3 Four Unique Factors of Sports Related to CSR

According to Kern (2000), professional sport leagues, corporations, teams, and athletes have some influence on people’s lives both economically and culturally. Babiak and Wolfe (2009) categorized the domains of CSR activities from professional sports teams into four factors: passion and interest, economics, transparency, and stakeholder management. Babiak and
Wolfe (2009) suggest that these four factors distinguish the professional sport from other industries to establish CSR design.

First, one differentiating attribute of the sport industry may have to do with “…the passion and interest the product (the team, the game) generates among fans/consumers” (Cashman, 2004 as cited in Babiak & Wolfe, 2009, p. 722). This is because, “enthusiasm, identification, and passion for sports create links between fans (supporters) and sport organisations, teams, players, and also other fans by building strong interpersonal relationships through experiencing different but strong emotions together” (Hunt, et al. 1999 as cited in Rak, 2013, p. 722). Babiak and Wolfe (2009) noted, “It is difficult to imagine such passion for any ‘traditional’ product (e.g. laundry, detergent, toothpaste, shampoo)” (p. 722). They also suggested that athletes’ promotion of healthful living has the potential to create a more aware audience than would similar actions by employees in other industries. From another angle, some researchers concluded that the non-sport-related companies may desire to be partners with sports organizations in CSR initiatives since the companies try to “bask in the reflected glory” through sport teams (cf. Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976).

Next, regarding economics, sports leagues and teams often receive public funds for their stadiums and other infrastructure (Swindell & Rosentraub, 1998). In fact, it is common to increase the taxes in areas that have stadiums so as to facilitate infrastructure development or improvement; it is almost impossible for a single team to budget the funds for public transportation and roads that lead people to their stadium (Matsumura, 2010). Swindell and Rosentraub (1998) state that these pressures from public entities may make some stakeholders perceive the role and responsibility of professional sports teams to be strongly connected to their
communities; thus, they also mention that sports leagues have a social responsibility for their communities and need to give back to their communities.

Also, the transparency of the sports world adds to the uniqueness of its CSR initiatives. Brown (2012) states that the sport industries have been influenced and grown due to the media coverage to them. For example, outside the field or court, the activities of players are often well-known to the public through the mass media (Armey, 2004). Also, teams publish the outcomes of games (e.g. wins versus losses, to whom the team lost/won against, and so on) to the public (Armey, 2004).

Finally, stakeholder management is indispensable to the inner-workings of the sports industry (Babiak and Wolfe, 2009). Management interacts with each of the previously discussed sections on varying levels. Without the stakeholders’ support, it is impossible for a team to be successful in the sports industry (Babiak and Wolfe, 2009). Through CSR, the relationships with stakeholders such as the media, players, various levels of government, sponsors, fans, and local community members can benefit from the team’s goals or initiatives (Wallace, 2004).

2.2.4 Connection of CSR and Sports

Compared to other industries, CSR initiatives through sport organizations have unique advantages, particularly the prestige of celebrity athletes and mass media coverage of events (Babiak & Wolfe, 2006). These unique assets help to distinguish sports organizations from other businesses and possibly provide initiation of related programs; for example, education and health care for children; health and exercise; interest for the environment; and social/cultural development (Headlee, 2006).

Levermore (2010) explains that CSR initiatives through sport organizations naturally relate to other businesses through their partnerships. First, despite the fact that business normally
struggle to have a connection with communities, sports naturally have a chance to connect with local communities through their activities (Levermore, 2010). Next, according to May and Phelan (2005), sports are regarded as valuable tools to improve partnerships in business because sports have a set of knowable values in society and provides people and organizations opportunities to work in the same field. They mention that these benefits contribute to improving wider networks and build sustainability in partner relations (e.g. community and business partners).

Roy and Graeff (2003) emphasize that it is important for professional sports teams to target young people through their CSR strategies. James (2001) mentions that children may start to commit to the teams after the age of five, and they start to develop their identity through the teams. Sutton, McDonald, Milne, and Cimperman (1997) suggest community based initiatives may lead to important effects such as creating fan identification with a team and the players because these actions may forge stronger unification between the teams and the fans and improve their reputation. Nakayama (2010) stated that CSR activities by Japanese professional sports clubs had positive effects on community building in a team’s hometown as well, consistent with the results reported by previous researchers that CSR initiatives might have positive effects leading to an increase in the number of spectators (Walter & Kent, 2009).

2.2.5 Criticism and Negative Aspects of Sports CSR Initiatives

As previously noted, Levermore (2010) mentions the positive aspects of CSR initiatives of sports (e.g. promoting health and social interaction). However, he also explains the negative aspects of CSR initiatives through sports. He advocates that the CSR initiatives through sports are mainly focused on urban areas or potential markets, which mean CSR activities are not equally provided to the disadvantaged groups in society. Levermore (2010) also mentions that
sport CSR activities reinforce the inequality between developed (Northern part of the world) and developing countries. Through CSR initiatives, especially international affairs in sports, the sports organizations in Northern areas force their values (e.g. top-down, Northern, competitive, heterosexual and masculinity traits) onto the developing South, or poor countries of the world (Levermore, 2010). Also, Smith and Westerbeek (2007) emphasize that sports have distributive power, but that does not mean that sports CSR initiatives always provide socially positive information to the public. If sports CSR initiatives are conducted poorly, the negative message will be spread out to the public and create negative effects such as cheating and corruption (Sheth & Babiak, 2010).

Even through there are criticisms of CSR initiatives, sports CSR initiatives do have the potential to make a strong impact on society. As noted by Sen and Bhattachary (2001), “consumers company evolutions are more sensitive to negative CSR information than positive CSR information… (p. 238).” Thus, the negative CSR information towards sports organizations might have some effect on their reputation. The next section includes how sports CSR activities connect to their corporate reputation.

2.2.6 Connection between Corporate Reputation and Sport CSR Activities

As well as other industry, reputation is a key concern for sports organizations (e.g. Rak, 2013). It is important for marketing strategies to lead to clear and positive reputations, because the reputation of a company influences its performance in the market through sales, advertising, and co-operation with other firms (Davies, Chun, & Kamins, 2010). It also affects the relationship of the company to its customers (Rak, 2013). Boros (2009) refers to organizational reputation as “…the actual perception an external stakeholder holds of an organization (p. 646),” and Brown, Dacin, Pratt and Whetten (2006) explain that reputation relies on stakeholders’
opinions (e.g. customers, consumer activists, suppliers, competitors, industry associations, industry opinion leaders, media, fans of an enemy team) as well as companies’ abilities. In the case of sport organizations, Rak (2013) explained, “sport organizations have to focus not only on sports results but also their general reputation. Good reputation may result with more fans attending games, more potential sponsors, support from local government and media attention (p. 724).” Additionally, two factors can be affected through organizational reputation; one is the employees’ behavior (e.g. their retention, attitudes to customers, service quality); another is consumer behavior (e.g. their satisfaction, loyalty, purchase decisions, willingness to recommend to others, game attendance) (Chun, 2005). Including the above ideas, Hu, Lee, Wong, and Kao (2012) point out that CSR activities by sports organizations have two specific objectives: an achievement of social benefits and creating positive reputation for their firm as perceived by fans and supporters in communities.

Due to the benefits of sports CSR initiatives to create positive reputations for sports organizations, Sheth and Babiak (2010) explain that scholars have already started to examine connections between sports CSR initiatives and strategic marketing (cause-related marketing and case branding), and they insist that these strategic marketing activities have the potential to improve team/brand image in communities. As Klein and Dawar (2004) explain, CSR initiatives, in areas other than sports organizations, directly connect brand evaluations and purchase intentions through consumers’ expectations.

2.2.7 Examples of Sports CSR Activities

There are several different examples of socially responsible behaviors through leagues, teams/franchises, individual athletes, and events themselves (Sheth & Babiak, 2010). “Those include volunteerism, educational initiatives, philanthropic/charitable donations, community
development and initiatives, fan appreciation, health-related initiatives, and community-based environmental programs” (Walter & Kent, 2009 as cited in Rak, 2013, p. 722). Babiak and Wolfe (2006) presented several examples. First, professional sport leagues including the NFL, NBA, NHL and MLB engage in league-oriented initiatives to address social issues (e.g., the NBA’s Read to Achieve program). Second, teams/franchises conduct team-centered activities, which grapple with social issues (e.g., Atlanta Braves’ “Grand Slam” and “Straight A” programs). Third, individual athletes are often involved in socially responsible activities, through some type of foundation (e.g., Peyton Manning’s PeyBack Foundation). Finally, Kott (2005) explains the managers of large events (e.g. the Olympics and the Super Bowl) also engage in socially responsible endeavors. These events may have the opportunity to produce social gain to host cities through a number of relative factors: infrastructure development, augmented private/public investment, boosted tax base, new jobs, and improved community’s image (Ahmed, 1991).

As for the above activities, each entity (leagues/franchises, individual athletes, and events) not only contribute individually but also work in collaboration with other entities, as far as CSR initiatives are concerned. For example, The Nippon (Japan) Professional Baseball Organization (League organization) created the Golden Spirit Awards, awarded to players who contribute to communities through charity and volunteer activities (Sports Hochi, 2013). As for leagues and teams/franchises aspects, MLB (League organization) set up the Commissioner’s Award for Philanthropic Excellence in order to annually recognize a charitable and philanthropic activity by a MLB Club (MLB, 2013).
2.2.8 Connection between Carroll's Framework and Sports CSR Activities

Matsumura (2010) suggested assigning the sports CSR activities into Carroll’s four categories: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary. The following ideas were composed on Carroll’s framework regarding CSR initiatives in professional sports. Ethical responsibility requires people to perform their duty in the right manner, whereas discretionary (philanthropic) responsibility contributes to the enhancement of quality of life in society (Carroll, 1991). One example of ethical responsibility is the J. League (2008) dealing with environmental issues through projects involved with pro-environment groups, companies, and autonomous organizations. The project introduces “My cup” and “Reused Cup” and is an attempt to “drive” people in the stadium to be environmentally friendly and not wasteful.

Matsumura (2010) also explains the concepts of discretional (philanthropic) responsibilities such as educational programs for youth through league-related sports. For example, he explains that the NBA sponsors a project called “Read to Achieve,” through which NBA players visit schools and facilities for children to encourage them to read. Matsumura (2010) concluded that most of the community’s activities in association with professional sports included discretional (philanthropic) responsibility. Also, there are some examples of activities such activities as: “cash or in-kind donations, inviting children to attend games for free, sponsorship events organized by community, and active employee voluntarism (meetings with team members and players at schools to promote healthy lifestyle and physical activities)” (Skinner, 2010 as cited in Rak, 2013, p. 724).

2.2.9 Conclusion of Sport Organizations CSR Initiatives

Sports teams and local communities have connections to each other, which are necessary for sports businesses to be successful. Contributions to the local communities through CSR
initiatives are important because these activities may be helpful not only to develop team business, but also to provide social benefits (e.g. positive health impacts/association and social interaction) (e.g. Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Levermore, 2010). While there are criticisms of sport CSR initiatives such as limited activities only for a potential market (e.g. Levermore, 2010), sport CSR initiatives have the potential to strengthen an organization’s reputation and their brand image. The next section includes information about the connection between sports CSR activities and natural disasters.

2.3 CSR Activities of Sports through Natural Disaster

2.3.1 Introduction

CSR initiatives, including those from sports organizations, have been conducted after natural disasters. In the following paragraphs, I include examples of CSR sporting activities following natural disasters. Some of the activities include fundraising, sending donations, conducting charitable events, and so on. As Babiak and Wolfe (2006) explained, CSR activities in the wake of natural disasters may often include organizational, team-based, and individual based activities.

2.3.2 CSR Activities in Japan

The Nippon Professional Baseball Organization (NPB) set up a special website for contributions to relief for the areas impacted by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami and promoted the slogan, “Ganbaro Nippon!” (do the best Japan) (http://fan.npb.or.jp/charity/). The activities by the NPB were intended to support the suffering areas both physically and mentally. Physical benefits for those in the affected regions included teams and organizations providing equipment such as balls, gloves, fences, and floodlights, so children could play baseball. Also, teams and organizations set up boxes at the stadiums to collect donations during games. In terms
of providing mental support, league members and baseball players went to temporary housing sites and visited the individuals who were affected by the disasters. Some players sent messages and autographed balls to sufferers in the Tohoku regions. See Table 2.1 for a listing of more detailed activities in 2013. In addition, the NPB set up a special website named “Ganbaro Nippon!” (NPB, n.d.) in order to inform people of the above activities, and to encourage the public to participate in the recovery efforts. This special website included 351 headline activities since the disaster happened on March 11th, 2011 (until October 3rd, 2013).

The NPB Former Players Associations collaborated with the Friends of United Nations Asia-Pacific —whose purpose is to contribute to solving the global problems pertaining to peaceful, environmental, and human rights issues— and conduct the project called “FOUN Sing for Smile Program” (Friends of the United Nations Asia-Pacific, 2012). These activities include speaking with those who lived in refuge shelters, spending quality time with them, and giving baseball lessons to people in the Tohoku districts.

In terms of team activities, the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles (a team in the NPB) located in the Miyagi prefecture, came up with a slogan, “Ganbaro (do the best) Tohoku,” which brought the following socially responsible initiatives to those who suffered from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami (http://www.rakuteneagles.jp/company/support/ganbaro.php). See Table 2.2 for a listing of more detailed activities in 2013. The team created the special website based on the “Ganbaro Tohoku!” slogan which mirrored a similar website created by NPB. There were 75 headlines in 2011, 11 in 2012, and 14 in 2013 on Ganbaro Tohoku site, which included “22 reports of invitational initiatives in suffering areas ”and “26 Aozora (blue sky) baseball/softball initiatives” (Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles, n.d.). For example, the team reported inviting the citizens, especially children and youth baseball players, of the Tohoku districts to attend games
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organization/Teams</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29-Jan</td>
<td>Yomiuri Giants</td>
<td>Former Giants Player Donate JPY3,200,000 (USD32,000) through charitable auction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-Jan</td>
<td>Yomiuri Giants</td>
<td>Pitcher, Sugiuchi gifts wheelchairs to Hospital in Iwate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-Feb</td>
<td>Tokyo Yakult Swallows</td>
<td>Players Holding Charity Auction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Feb</td>
<td>Yomiuri Giants</td>
<td>Giants Academy taught T-ball to children in Fukushima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Mar</td>
<td>Yomiuri Giants</td>
<td>Giants invite handicapped children who live in juvenile welfare facility to ball game in Tokyo Dome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Mar</td>
<td>Tokyo Yakult Swallows</td>
<td>Players Association donates JPY2,814,985 (USD28,000) to the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Mar</td>
<td>Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles</td>
<td>Teams donate JPY50,000 (USD500) a homerun to disaster orphans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Mar</td>
<td>Saitama Seibu Lions</td>
<td>Outfielder, Kuriyama addresses additional support after his record of hits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Apr</td>
<td>Yomiuri Giants</td>
<td>Outfielder, Chono gifts play equipment to children in Iwaki in Fukushima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-Apr</td>
<td>Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles</td>
<td>Team announces on 15th &quot;Ganbaro Tohoku&quot; projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-May</td>
<td>Nippon Pro. Baseball Organization</td>
<td>Org. invites 4000 student players in Fukushima to All Star Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Jun</td>
<td>Nippon Pro. Baseball Organization</td>
<td>Org. decides to conduct baseball academy events and a presentation ceremony at Rikuzen-takata in Iwate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Jul</td>
<td>Yomiuri Giants</td>
<td>Team announces activities in Swallows game in Fukushima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-Aug</td>
<td>Nippon Pro. Baseball Organization</td>
<td>Org. conducts events of baseball academy and presentation ceremony at Rikuzen-takata in Iwate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Aug</td>
<td>Hiroshima Toyo Carp</td>
<td>Coach invites student players from Fukushima</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-Sep</td>
<td>Nippon Pro. Baseball Organization</td>
<td>Org. announces needs of victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-Sep</td>
<td>Hokkaido Nippon Ham Fighters</td>
<td>Outfielder, Inaba invites evacuees to game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Oct</td>
<td>Hanshin Tigers</td>
<td>Team to conduct charity auctions at festival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Information from the website of Nippon (Japan) Professional Baseball Organization: http://fan.npb.or.jp/charity/
Table 2.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data in 2013</th>
<th>Team Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15-Apr</td>
<td>Team invites 109 elementary school students to game to interact with players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-Apr</td>
<td>Cheerleaders visit the temporary housing and conduct exercise events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-May</td>
<td>Team invites 133 elementary school students to interact with players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-May</td>
<td>Kusano and cheerleaders visit temporary housing in Tomioka-machi to conduct events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-May</td>
<td>Kusano visits temporary housing in Yamamoto-cho to meet with survivors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Jun</td>
<td>Team invites 122 student baseball players from Miyako to game to meet players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Jun</td>
<td>Team invites 140 citizens in Kawauchi-mura to games to meet players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-Jun</td>
<td>Team invites 83 student baseball players from Minami-Sanriku and Watari-machi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Jul</td>
<td>Cheerleaders visit three city in Miyagi Prefecture to conduct events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-Jul</td>
<td>Cheerleaders and Softball coach participate in waking events in Kawauchi-mura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-Aug</td>
<td>Team invites 120 student baseball players from Rikuzen-takata to interact with players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-Aug</td>
<td>Team invites 158 student baseball players from Minamisanriku to interact with players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-Sep</td>
<td>Team invites 91 student baseball players from Natori to interact with players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-Sep</td>
<td>Team invites 120 student baseball players from Kamaishi to interact with players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Oct</td>
<td>Team conducts &quot;Ganbaro Tohoku Day&quot; ceremony</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Information from the website of Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles:
http://www.rakuteneagles.jp/company/support/ganbaro.php

free of charge (22 times until Sep. 13, 2013), and interacted with players. In 2011 through the Ganbaro Tohoku Project, Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles invited a total of 1076 people in three suffering prefectures, Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima to the stadium to watch the games and to interact with players. As for other initiatives, the team (including cheerleaders and administrators) engaged in various activities and collaborated with team sponsors: visiting temporary housing, selling the goods with logos of Ganbaro Tohoku (the profit is used as donation), conducting exercise events, reminding the public about the state of victims, and appealing to the public for donations since 2011 (Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles, n.d.).
In terms of activities of Japanese soccer organizations including the J. League, they have created two slogans: one is called “Team as One,” and another is called “Ganbaro Nippon! — Soccer family no Chikara wo Hitotsu ni! (Let’s unify the power of Soccer Family) (J. League, n.d.; Japan Football Association, 2011). Both are in continuing cooperation with soccer teams, players, and supporters. The point of these slogans is to help gain support to recover from the damage of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. The organizations have been engaged in CSR activities such as charity matches, drawing donations, inviting the sufferers to soccer games, and providing them opportunities to play soccer with professional players.

As for team activities, Fujimoto and Inukai (2012) researched Sanfrecce Hiroshima’s (a professional soccer team in Japan) socially responsible activities associated with the player’s association, which include events (e.g. conducting charity auctions, providing donations by players themselves, fund-raising, providing soccer shoes and clothes), and individual players (e.g. players from Tohoku district invited the local citizens who were affected by the disasters to soccer matches, conducting meet and greet with players). Also, Kawasaki Frontale (a professional soccer team in Japan) made a team-oriented slogan called “Mind-1 Nippon (Japan) Project” (http://www.frontale.co.jp/mind1_nippon/). They have sought to encourage long-term support to the Tohoku districts (e.g. holding soccer academies for the children in Rikuzen-takata in Iwate prefectures) (Kawasaki Frontale, 2011).

2.3.3 CSR Activities in the U.S.

Examples of sports teams, athletes, and members of sports organizations taking part in activities to support the local people who suffered from natural disasters are not limited to Japan. There have been several CSR initiatives in the U.S. following natural disasters. For example, when Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans and resulted in massive damage, sporting
organizations supported the relief efforts during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina through their CSR initiatives. In addition, there are several recent examples of natural disasters after which professional sports organizations/teams conducted CSR activities: Haiti Earthquake in 2010, the tornadoes in Central Oklahoma in 2013, and Hurricane Sandy in 2012. In the following paragraphs I include information about some CSR initiatives by sports organizations/teams (the NBA, the MLB, the NFL, and Atlanta Braves) in the U.S. after natural disasters.

On September 12, 2005, after Hurricane Katrina, the NBA held a charity game at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas and provided free tickets to approximately 5,000 evacuees to watch the game (ESPN, 2005). Before the game, players visited the George R. Brown Convention Center where approximately 1,100 evacuees lived. Celebrity athletes such as LeBron James interacted with survivors especially kids, by playing games and giving autographs (ESPN, 2005). James mentioned "Hopefully we can put some smiles on their faces and maybe for just that little moment they cannot think about what happened (ESPN, 2005, para. 5)." Each of the 30 players taking part in the activities donated at least $10,000 in funds or supplies to help the individuals recover from the disaster (ESPN, 2005).

On February 15, 2008 the NBA sponsored the “NBA’s Day of Service,” and over 2,500 members in NBA communities took part in the event, serving as a workforce and providing carpentry-related skills so members could contribute to the rebuilding of New Orleans (e.g. building playgrounds, schools, and houses) (NBA, 2008). In 2013 the MLB Urban Youth Academy started a project in cooperation with MLB and the City of New Orleans to help the city revive from Katrina (MLB, 2013). The Academy plans to conduct baseball/softball practices, and also to provide educational and vocational training to young people throughout southern part of Louisiana (MLB, 2013). Also, as a player’s initiative, Kevin Garnett donated total $1.2
million to build 24 new houses in cooperation with Oprah Winfrey's Angel Network as part of the Katrina relief effort. In 2006, Garnett invited the young children to his game and displayed a banner in honor of the NBA Cares support of Katrina survivors (Winfield, 2012).

In terms of team activities, the Atlanta Braves participated in a “Haiti Relief efforts” with the Red Cross and MedShare International, after a massive Earthquake in Haiti in 2010 (Bowman, 2010). The team also collaborated with Fashion Delivers (non-profit organization) and delivered more than 1,350 items of clothing (worth nearly $22,000) and abundant medical supplies to Haiti. The Braves also cooperated with the fans through the online charity auctions to donate the proceeds for Haiti disaster relief (Bowman, 2010).

More recently, ESPN (2013) reported that $4 million was donated to recovery efforts for the Northeast area of the U.S. by the NFL and its players’ union, and the NBA and its players’ union after Hurricane Sandy in 2012. After tornadoes ravaged Central Oklahoma in May 2013, the NBA Family program, part of the NBA Cares initiative, addressed the long-term assistance to the recovery (NBA, 2013). Then, as one of activities of NBA Cares, the official website of the Oklahoma City Thunder proclaimed that they would put on the commemorative uniforms during the summer season in 2013 so that the public would be reminded of the disaster and pay tribute to the survivors (Oklahoma City Thunder, 2013).

2.3.4 Conclusion

It is clear that professional sports organizations continue to consider their charitable and philanthropic activities after natural disasters to be important. It is also clear that both organizers/administrators and teams (e.g. Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles) consider it their social responsibility to help the communities recover from natural disasters. Through these aspects, professional sports teams are engaged in philanthropic activities such as: charity matches or
sporting events, providing exercise opportunities, visiting temporary housing areas (mentoring and listening to survivors), creating awareness using different logos in/around the public areas, fundraising activities (selling charity goods), extending invitations to the games etc. And these activities are popular not only in Japan but also in the U.S. The common understanding is that both the U.S. and Japan have professional sports markets in each country. However, even though there are many CSR initiatives from sports organizations following natural disasters both in the U.S., and Japan, publications reflect only on the perspective of sport organizations, teams or players, but not the perspective of the local citizens who were impacted by the natural disasters. There is little literature research focused on them. Since sport CSR activities may be helpful not only to develop team business, but also to provide social benefits (e.g. positive health impacts/association and social interaction) (e.g. Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Levermore, 2010), the relief efforts may also have benefit in the local communities in the areas which suffered from natural disaster. In addition, sport CSR initiatives have potential to improve an organization’s reputation and brand image. Therefore, it is important to find out whether the CSR initiatives after the natural disaster are helpful for actual sufferers, and to understand their perception of the effectiveness of CSR initiatives. Thus, the purpose of this research was to assess the community members’ responses to sport organizations based on CSR initiatives after a natural disaster. In the following chapter I include information about the method for the proposed research, including the plan for analysis.
CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

3.1 Overview

The purpose of this research was to assess the community members’ responses to sport organizations based on CSR initiatives after a natural disaster. In this chapter, I explain the research method of this study. A qualitative design was introduced, and the sample included the individuals that lived in the geographic area (e.g. Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures) directly impacted by the earthquake/tsunami. Semi-structured-interviews were introduced. After the interview data was collected, the inductive content analysis was adopted to analyze the data from the interviewees.

3.2 Qualitative Research

This research was exploratory in nature. Votaw (1972) mentioned that CSR “…means something, but not always the same to everybody” (p. 25). Since numerous professional sports organizations/teams engaged in CSR initiatives after natural disasters (e.g. Nippon Professional Sports Organization, Japan Football Association, Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles), the research introduced the qualitative and exploratory research about post-disaster CSR activities by sport organizations.

3.3 Participants

The sample included individuals who were living in the geographic area directly impacted by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011. Critical case sampling, selecting “…participants that exemplify the researcher’s point dramatically” (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 94), was introduced. Specifically, participants were those who still lived in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefecture in Tohoku district since these three prefectures were
influenced the most by the natural disasters. According to The Reconstruction Agency (2013) in Japan, there were still 234,023 evacuees, and 78% of these evacuees were from these three prefectures.

3.4 Sample Size and Recruiting Process

Patton (1980) emphasized that, rather than focusing on the number of participants, it was more important to select effective data, which can be easily observed. Since this research was exploratory by nature I defined the exact number of interviewees, but focused more on the content of the interviews. However, I followed the concept, which Eisenhardt (1989) explained as more than four interviewees have the possibility to obtain more in-depth information.

For the recruiting process I introduced the concept of snowball sampling. To snowball sample I started “…with a person well-situated to be interviewed about a special topic and then asking this person for more participants” (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 94). First, I reached out the people who directly suffered from the natural disasters in the Tohoku districts taking advantage of my network in Japan. I explained to them the importance of this study and other essential information. After the individuals agreed to participate, I asked them to introduce me to another person who had similar experiences.

3.5 Semi-Structured Interviews

This research utilized face-to-face and/or by telephone interviews to gather the information from the participants. Turner (2010) explained that, “…interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants’ experiences and viewpoints of a particular topic” (p.755). Numerous scholars utilized interviews to collect data (Markula & Silk, 2011). Interviews were appropriate because the research was focused on the interviewees’ perspectives about CSR activities after the natural disasters.
Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were utilized to obtain in-depth information about the interviewees’ perspectives of the professional sports organization’s CSR activities. The semi-structured interview “…allows the researchers to be an active participant in the interview situation and ‘probe’ further information or discuss issues that arise during the interview situation” (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 85).

In regards to preparation for the interviews, I contacted the interview participants prior to meeting or scheduling a conversation by phone and email. The initial contact included an introduction of the researcher and information about the importance of the project. Also, I obtained permission from them to record the interviews for later transcription and to facilitate analysis of the responses at the same time. Prior to the interviews, I explained to the participants that each interview was supposed to last approximately 60 minutes.

To facilitate the interviews, I followed McNamara’s (2009) suggestions: (1) choose a setting with little distraction; (2) explain the purpose of the interview; (3) address terms of confidentiality; (4) explain the format of the interview; (5) indicate how long the interview usually takes; (6) tell them how to get in touch with you later if they want to; (7) ask them if they have any questions before you both get started with the interview; and (8) do not count on your memory to recall their answers (Preparation for Interview section, para. 1). After the interviews were transcribed, the participants were contacted and asked to review the transcripts to provide an assessment for accuracy and clarity of the answers.

### 3.6 Interview Questions

The questions were created with open-ended questions to allow participants to provide in-depth responses. Open-ended questions enabled interviewees to choose their own terms while they answered questions (McNamara, 2009). McNamara (2009) also suggested that “…questions
should be neutral as possible (avoid wording that might influence answers, e.g., evocative, judgmental wording), questions should be asked one at a time, and questions should be word clearly” (Wording of Questions section, para.1).

3.7 Question Sequence

In order to specifically learn about regional relief efforts by sports organizations, I asked a representative of the professional sports’ organization, specifically Tohoku Rakuten Eagles (a team in the NPB), about their purposes and types of disaster relief efforts. At the same time, I utilized the newspaper, website information, and the regional public offices and local newspaper companies, so that I could obtain supplemental public information about their activities, purposes, and concepts.

For each interview I began by asking interviewees about the devastation from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. I asked them to explain what happened during this disaster. The first question was, “What did you experience during the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami?” This question enabled me to understand the degree of the interviewees’ damage and loss as a result of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Also this question was helpful for me to gather information about what kind of relief efforts are necessary to recover from the disaster.

Next, I asked about the actual relief efforts following the disaster, “What type of relief efforts did you experience?” During this interview process, I paid attention to whether the interviewees talked about the relief efforts involving sports organization. Before conducting any interviews, I needed to be aware of which kinds of relief efforts in the area were conducted by sports organizations (e.g. donation, conducting charity events, visiting temporary housing).

If the interviewees did not mention anything about relief efforts involving sport organizations, I directly asked about activities undertaken by the sport organizations to see
whether people remembered such activities, “Do you know some activities which <sports organizations> conducted as disaster relief efforts in the region?” If the interviewees mentioned relief efforts that involved professional sports organizations, I directly asked their opinions and attitudes toward these activities, “Did <sports organizations> relief efforts have an effect on your life? How?”

If the interviewees were aware of the activities by sports organization, I asked how the interviewees obtained the information about the activities, and/or if they were direct recipients of relief efforts sponsored by sport organizations. Questions to be asked included, “How did you get the information about relief efforts by <sports organizations>? ” and “Were you the direct recipients of relief efforts sponsored by <sports organizations>? ” This was because the local citizens in the Tohoku district, who received indirect support from sports organizations after the disasters, might not have been aware of their efforts due to intermediary agents (e.g. Red Cross). So, it was necessary to ask the interviewees what organizations they received support from to see whom they credited for the relief efforts.

After assessing whether interviewees had some memories of sports organizations and whether they mentioned sports organizations, I asked some questions to the interviewees, which directly focused on CSR initiatives in sports organizations; these questions are explained below. As for the interviewees who were not aware of any relief efforts in the region, it was clear that the interviewees had not obtained any feelings or thoughts toward CSR activities by sports organization. However, all of the interviewees mentioned that some kind of activities by sports organizations in this research (the details of the result are the following chapter).

First of all, I asked the question, “Are there some specific ways in which you are better off because of the disaster relief efforts by the sport organizations? Why or why not?” This
question enabled me understand whether the CSR initiatives by professional sports organizations provided benefits to the interviewees. It was helpful to understand which activities by professional sports organizations may have had positive effects on the individuals living in the geographic area directly impacted by the earthquake/tsunami. Moreover, this question helped me discover any gap or inconsistency between the purpose of sports organizations’ disaster relief efforts and the interviewees’ perceptions of the sports organizations and their relief efforts.

Next, in order to understand whether there was any change in the feelings or thoughts of the local citizens that suffered from the disasters towards sports organizations after the disaster relief efforts, I asked the question, “Have your feelings towards <sports organizations> changed through their relief efforts?” It was helpful to understand how the local citizens changed their feelings toward the sports organizations that conducted the disaster relief efforts.

Also, I asked a question about the difference between relief efforts by sports organization’s support and organizations from other industries, “How do you distinguish <sport organizations’ supports> from other industry after Tohoku earthquake and tsunami?” This question enabled me to explore the unique aspects of the sport organizations’ CSR initiatives in comparison with other industries. Similarly, I asked the difference between the organizations that supported the affected areas and those who did not, “What do you think about <sports organizations> that helps the community through the relief effort activities and organizations that do not help?” This question was helpful to understand the effect of the disaster relief efforts by the professional organizations.

Finally, in order to explore the interviewees’ actual demands and future behavior for the organization, which conducted disaster relief efforts, I asked the next questions to the interviewees, “What do you believe <sports organizations> should do after a natural disaster?”
and “Were you appreciative of the support <sports organizations> provided? If so, in the future, will you show gratitude toward <sports organizations> that helped? How?” These questions enabled me to understand the actual demands for the individuals that lived in the area directly impacted by the earthquake/tsunami through the disaster relief efforts by sports organizations and benefit for the sports organization that conducted relief efforts.

Since the interviews were semi-structured, the order of the questions changed depending on the flow of the conversation, but were directed toward the purpose of this research. The main consideration was to pay attention to follow the narrative structures, which I described in the preceding paragraphs. See the Table 3.1 for a listing of the overall questions.

3.8 Data Analysis (Inductive Content Analysis)

The responses from the participants were coded into written texts after the interviews. The texts were analyzed through qualitative content analyses because it allowed me to “capture definitions, process, meanings, and type (Altheide, 1996, p. 27).” Also, Elo and Kyngäs (2007) mentioned, “content analysis allows the researcher to test theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data. Through content analysis, it is possible to distil words into content-related categories” (p. 108).

The inductive analysis was helpful when the former knowledge about the phenomenon was not fully developed or established (Lauri & Kyngäs, 2005). There was essentially little research that examined the impact of relief efforts by sport organizations in the wake of natural disasters. This exploratory study was the first of its kind, and necessitated the use of inductive content analysis.

The inductive content analysis included three steps (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007): open coding, the creation of categories, and abstraction to organize the qualitative data. First, through an open
Table 3

List of Questions to Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>List of questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What did you experience during the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What type of relief efforts did you experience?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you know some activities which &lt;sports organizations&gt; conducted as disaster relief efforts In the region?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Did &lt;sports organizations&gt; relief efforts have an effect on your life? How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How did you get the information about relief efforts by &lt;sports organizations&gt;?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Were you the direct recipients of relief efforts sponsored by &lt;sport organizations&gt;?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Are there some specific ways in which you are better off because of the disaster relief efforts by the sport organizations? Why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Have your feelings towards &lt;sports organizations&gt; changed through their relief efforts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>How do you distinguish &lt;sport organizations’ supports&gt; from other industry after Tohoku earthquake and tsunami?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>What do you think about &lt;sports organizations&gt; that helps the community by the relief effort activities and organizations that does not help?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>What do you believe &lt;sports organizations&gt; should do after a natural disaster?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Were you appreciative of the support &lt;sports organizations&gt; provided? If so, in the future, will you show gratitude toward &lt;sports organizations&gt; that helped? How?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

coding process, I prepared a text from the interview data. Next, the texts were repeatedly read and I created as many headings as possible so as to include all parts of the content as Burnard (1991) and Hsieh and Shannon (2005) suggested. At the same time, the categories were set without any restrictions as Burnard (1991) instructed. During the process of creating categories, I grouped the sets of similar or related topics and ranked them from highest to lowest (i.e. answers with the highest frequency are “high” and those with low frequencies are “low”) (Burnard, 1991). This process helped “…to provide a means of describing the phenomenon, to increase understanding and to generate knowledge (Cavanagh, 1997 as cited in Elo and Kyngäs, 2007, p. 111). Finally, I conducted the abstraction as the final step, which “…means formulating a general description of the research topic through generating categories (Robson, 1993; Burnard,

3.9 Language Translation

In regards to the language translation, I consulted two bilinguals (one was a native English speaker, and another was native Japanese speaker) in order to improve the quality of the translations. These processes were conducted both before and after collecting the data. Before the interviews, I translated the questions and the consent letters for the interviewees, and discussed the accuracy of my translation. After collecting the interview data, I translated the content from Japanese into English, and along with the pre-interviews, this data was also reviewed by the bilinguals. We shared ideas and discussed the word accuracy and communication of ideas, and some translations were corrected after the discussion.

After completing above processes, I came up with a result about how/what CSR activities by professional sports organizations influenced the local citizens after the disaster. Then, the result was compared with previous literature on sports CSR activities in the following chapters.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT

The purpose of this research was to assess the community members’ responses to sport organizations based on CSR initiatives after a natural disaster. A qualitative design was used to conduct the research. I introduced semi-structured-interviews with individuals who experienced the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011. This chapter includes a profile of the interviewees, information about their experiences after the disasters, and information about the extent of their awareness of the relief efforts by professional sports organizations.

The initial questions were included to elicit general information about the devastation from the disasters and experiences with the relief efforts (e.g., What type of relief efforts did you experience?). During the interviews special attention was given to whether the interviewees talked about the relief efforts involving sports organizations. If relief efforts from sports organizations were not mentioned specifically, I asked the respondents whether they were aware of the relief efforts by the professional sports organizations. The interviewees also talked about their feelings towards these organizations and/or the players. Finally, the interviewees talked about what distinguished the relief efforts of professional sports organizations from those of other organizations, future activities in regards to the organizations, and their opinions about what kind of relief is necessary after a disaster.

4.1 Interview Participants

The interviews were conducted in the Tohoku region in Japan, specifically in the Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures. There were eight interviewees; Sato and Suzuki in Fukushima; and Matsuda, Miura, Inoue, Ito, Kawasaki, and Yazawa in Miyagi. The pseudo-names were randomly chosen from Japanese-related names. The first capital letters (i.e. S, M, I,
K, and Y) identify that they live in the same cities in Fukushima and Miyagi; one expectation was that those living in the same cities would have somewhat similar experiences from the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. The average time of each interview was 54 minutes. Six interviews were conducted face-to-face (six interviewees: Sato, Suzuki, Matsuda, Miura, Inoue, and Ito) and two over the phone (two interviewees: Kawasaki and Yazawa). The following paragraphs convey the responses given during the interviews. The interviewees first answered general questions about their experiences and relief efforts during and after the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. Then, they answered the questions pertaining to the professional sport organizations.

4.2 Interviewees’ Background Information

Table 4.1 includes the basic profiles of the interviewees. Seven interviewees are male, with Yazawa being the sole female participant. All of the interviewees had some sort of involvement with relief efforts by professional sports organizations. They had involvement with relief efforts through their immediate family (Miura and Yazawa), relatives (Ito) and/or occupations (Sato, Suzuki, Matsuda, and Inoue). Kawasaki mentioned that his involvement was being a fan of the local professional soccer teams. In terms of the impact of the earthquake and tsunami on those interviewed, Table 4.1 highlights the information from responses to the question, “What did you experience during the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami?”

4.3 Awareness of Relief Efforts

In order to learn about awareness of relief efforts, the participants were asked the question, “What type of relief efforts did you experience?” Most interviewees mentioned receiving supplies, donations, and some sort of visit from a celebrity. Refer to Table 4.2
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relation with sports</th>
<th>Physical Damage</th>
<th>Damage to Home</th>
<th>Current Residence</th>
<th>Death of Family/Relatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sato</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Manager of elementary school baseball</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Completely destroyed</td>
<td>Alternative House</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzuki</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Director of elementary soccer club</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partially destroyed</td>
<td>Original House</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matsuda</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Coach of middle school baseball</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Completely destroyed</td>
<td>Makeshift Shelter</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miura</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Has a child who plays baseball</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Completely destroyed</td>
<td>Makeshift Shelter</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inoue</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Director of local soccer club</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Original House</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ito</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Used to play basketball</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Partially destroyed</td>
<td>Original House</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawasaki</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Soccer fan of local pro-team</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>Original Apartment</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yazawa</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Has a child who play baseball</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Completely destroyed</td>
<td>Makeshift Shelter</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2

*List of Organizations Providing Relief Efforts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of support</th>
<th>Name of organizations</th>
<th>Relief efforts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Amateur city hall baseball teams</td>
<td>Interactions through baseball activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City hall of Yonezawa-shi</td>
<td>Providing supplies (clothes, food, beddings and etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hard Rock Café</td>
<td>Fundraising and these awareness activities to their customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Organization in Okayama University</td>
<td>Interactions through baseball activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Religious group</td>
<td>Donating money to the local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional musicians</td>
<td>Organizing the events to sing their songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taiwanese Government</td>
<td>Donating money to the suffering areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sagawa Express Co., Ltd.</td>
<td>Providing food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handicapped Support Center</td>
<td>Consulting the people who has handicapped children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediary</td>
<td>Governmental Supports</td>
<td>Providing supplies (clothes, food, beddings and etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Municipal office</td>
<td>Providing gasoline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red Cross</td>
<td>Organizing Sporting events with Japanese professional soccer players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peace Boat (NGO/NPO)</td>
<td>Assisting general (miscellaneous) duties in the suffering areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JEN (NGO)</td>
<td>Assisting general (miscellaneous) duties in the suffering areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other NPOs (unknown)</td>
<td>Assisting general (miscellaneous) duties in the suffering areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Defense Forces</td>
<td>Assisting general (miscellaneous) duties in the suffering areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* NPO is the acronym of nonprofit organizations, and NGO stands for non-governmental organizations.

for information about relief efforts. Most of the interviewees answered they were aware that many people and organizations were supporting them in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami. I concluded however, the people interviewed were not necessarily aware of where the support came from. The point was made through the interviews with Sato, Matsuda, Inoue, and Kawasaki that there were too many suppliers to remember the specific organizations providing
resources. Sato and Inoue mentioned it was tough to distinguish one group from the others. Miura and Inoue pointed out that the people in the severely damaged areas were dealing with such basic thoughts of surviving and remaining positive about their situation that they were not focused on which organizations and companies provided relief efforts after the disasters. Some interviewees stated that local government and various organizations such as nonprofit organizations (NPO), non-governmental organizations (NGO), and the Red Cross served as intermediaries between the suppliers and the individuals who suffered from the disasters (Sato, Matsuda, Ito). Through additional probing, it was possible though, to learn what awareness the interviewees had in general, and of sport organizations specifically.

4.4 Awareness of Relief Efforts by Professional Sports Organizations/Players

4.4.1 Awareness of Sport-related Relief Efforts

Following the interview sequence, I checked whether the interviewees mentioned the relief efforts by professional sports organizations in regards to the question, “What type of relief efforts did you experience?” Sato, Suzuki, Miura, Inoue, and Kawasaki did mention relief efforts by professional sport organizations, teams, and players. Matsuda, Ito, and Yazawa did not mention any relief efforts from sports organizations or their affiliated members. Sato and Suzuki stated there were exercise opportunities provided through sports academies with professional teams’ players. Miura, Inoue, and Kawasaki mentioned that professional sports teams and their players visited the suffering areas to encourage the communities. The interviewees did not specify which teams supported them personally. They just mentioned that “professional baseball and soccer organizations” conducted the relief efforts. After checking their information, I explained the actual purpose of this research, which focused on the relief efforts by professional sports organizations.
To those who did mention the relief efforts by professional sports organizations (i.e. Sato, Suzuki, Miura, Inoue, and Kawasaki) I asked, “What relief efforts were you aware of?” To those who did not mention such relief efforts (i.e. Matsuda, Ito, and Yazawa), I asked the following question, “Do you know some activities, that <sports organizations> conducted as disaster relief efforts in the region?” As a result, all of the interviewees were aware of the relief efforts by sports organizations. The following provides information about the interviewees’ knowledge of specific relief efforts by professional sports organizations.

4.4.2 Knowledge of Specific Relief Efforts by Sports Organizations

All interviewees mentioned at least one disaster relief effort sponsored by professional sports organizations. Activities which the interviewees talked about during the interviews included providing exercise opportunities with professional teams’ players through sports academies (all of the interviewees), players’ visiting suffering areas to interact with the local citizens (all except Matsuda), providing sports-related supplies (all except Kawasaki and Yazawa), inviting the survivors to a stadium or field for sporting events (Sato, Matsuda, Miura, and Kawasaki), and fundraising and increasing awareness of fundraising opportunities (Suzuki, Matsuda, Miura and Kawasaki). Some interviewees mentioned relief efforts such as restoring a sports facility (Suzuki, Matsuda, and Yazawa), logo awareness (Matsuda, Miura, and Ito), providing general supplies (Matsuda), and providing the chance to view a game (Ito).

The following quotes illustrate what the interviewees had to say about the relief efforts by sport organizations. Sato pointed out that, “…the early moments after the disasters, professional sports organizations conducted donation activities. Then, the organizations conducted their sports-related activities (e.g. meeting, teaching, and exercise) gradually.” Miura said that, “there are no sufficient conditions to play baseball, but all baseball-related organizations, including
professional sports teams, sent supplies to play baseball for the areas—especially local baseball team.”

All the interviewees recognized that sport organizations were involved in the relief efforts. For example, even though the Red Cross led relief efforts, some of those interviewed recognized the assistance from sport organizations. Suzuki said, “Professional soccer league cooperated with Red Cross and collected donation for the suffering areas.”

The interviewees also placed a particular emphasis on the efforts by the local professional sports teams. All except Suzuki mentioned activities by the local professional baseball team, Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles, and four out of eight interviewees mentioned the relief efforts from the local professional soccer team, Vegalta Sendai (Suzuki, Miura, Inoue, and Kawasaki). In addition, five interviewees (Matsuda, Miura, Ito, Kawasaki, and Yazawa) answered that the local “professional baseball/soccer team” supports them, but they did not talk about relief efforts by leagues, or other non-local teams. One interviewee, Sato, mentioned the relief efforts by the Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) organization directly and Suzuki included the players’ association of Japan professional soccer. Matsuda said, “though diverse teams came here, I recognized the activities by Rakuten strongly.” Miura said, “…because I think Rakuten came here (his district) the most.” On the other hand, Matsuda answered the following:

I do not think there are relief supports in here that I do not know about, but there are other supports in other districts. I am not aware of all. People from that district should have more information. Also, not all of us are aware of every activity.

Inoue stated, “I do not think we could obtain all the information about the sports organizations’ relief efforts due to numerous support activities which I received...” and “…I am sure that there
is a possibility that some players came without any notification to the area as not to confuse the local areas.”

In sum, the interviewees were aware of diverse relief efforts by professional sports organizations and athletes. Mainly, the interviewees cited the activities with which they had direct involvement (e.g. sports academy and team/player visiting activities) and/or the activities with which the interviewees were indirectly connected (e.g. donation and logo awareness). The interviewees also pointed out the specific efforts by the local professional sports teams. The next section provides information as to how the interviewees became aware of the activities by the sport organizations.

4.4.3 Obtaining Information about Sport-related Relief Efforts

According to the answers from the interviewees, there are several ways information about relief efforts from sport organizations was obtained (see Table 4.3). In regards to the information before the relief efforts, five interviewees mentioned learning about relief efforts from sports organizations through word-of-mouth (e.g. interviewees’ network and local organizations, and rumors). Two mentioned receiving some type of paper message (e.g. letter and/or flyer). For word-of-mouth, Sato expressed that he directly obtained the pre-events’ information through the acquaintances who work for the regional baseball associations and others who are CEOs of companies before events. Suzuki also stated, “we got information from local government, personal networks (e.g. those who I passed the business cards before), and soccer-related networks before the events.”

In terms of the information after the relief efforts, five interviewees answered word-of-mouth, and four interviewees mentioned media representation (TV and newspaper). Inoue said, “I guess TV and newspapers are the main tools to get the information regarding post-activities
Table 4.3

**Obtaining Information about Relief Efforts by Sports Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewees</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sato</td>
<td>&quot;I directly obtained the pre-events’ information through those who work for the regional baseball associations and others who are CEOs of companies before the sporting events which professional sports organizations conducted as their relief efforts.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzuki</td>
<td>“Before the events which professional sports organizations conducted as their relief efforts, my soccer team and I got the information from the officers in the local government, from personal networks such as those to whom I passed the business cards before, and from my soccer-related networks.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matsuda</td>
<td>&quot;I heard a rumor that the activities were conducted in our district. I also heard that the teams and their players would come here through word-of-mouth. It was not related to the TV or newspaper.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miura</td>
<td>&quot;I directly received the information of the professional sports organization’s relief efforts through my relative who worked in the regional social welfare office. I heard from her that the professional sports teams contacted her directly. It was not broadcasted on TV and in the newspaper.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inoue</td>
<td>&quot;I believe that TV and newspaper functioned well to spread the information of the relief efforts by professional sports organizations. I also think the word-of-mouth, informative letters, and flyers were helpful to spread the information before the sporting events and relief efforts.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ito</td>
<td>“I heard the information about relief efforts, especially visiting activities by professional teams and players, through word-of-mouth communication more than other news outlets. For example, the rumor stating these players came here spread out around the town. I also received the information that sporting events would take place as part of the relief efforts through TV news after the events the sporting events which professional sports organizations conducted as their relief efforts.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kawasaki</td>
<td>&quot;I was away from my hometown, which suffered from the tsunami. After the disasters, TV news made it easier to get information about the relief efforts that the sports organizations were doing. However, when I went back home, word-of-mouth information was more effective in obtaining the help from the organizations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yazawa</td>
<td>&quot;Though my knowledge of the relief efforts is little, I received the information about the relief efforts by a professional baseball player through notification letters, flyers, and newspapers.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
by professional sports organizations.” Regarding word-of-mouth communication, Ito states, “I
heard that the information about relief efforts, especially visiting activities by professional teams
and players through word-of-mouth communication more than other tools. For example, the
rumor such as ‘these players came here’ spread out around the town.” In addition Kawasaki
states, “after the event, TV makes it easier to get [information about] the relief efforts by sports
organization when I am away from my hometown, which suffered from a tsunami. However,
when I went back there, word-of-mouth information has been stronger to obtain the relief efforts
by professional sports organizations.

Responses to the questions lead me to conclude that word-of-mouth communication
produced greater awareness among the interviewees of the activities both before and after the
disasters. Also, I gathered from the research that the media representations on TV and through
newspapers helped to spread the information about the relief efforts in the public and the areas
that had less damage than directly devastated areas. Additionally, the interviewees also learned
the information about relief efforts through some type of letter or flyer. In the following sections,
I include information about the effects of relief efforts by professional sports organizations on
the interviewees.

4.4.4 Effects of Relief Efforts by Professional Sports

Those interviewed were asked, “Did <sports organizations> relief efforts have an effect
on your life? How?” They were also asked, “Are there some specific ways in which you are
better off because of the disaster relief efforts by the sport organizations? Why or why not?”
Responses to the preceding questions generally included one/some of three types of responses,
interviewees talked about (1) the effects of the disaster relief efforts on the interviewees, (2)
effects of the relief efforts on families and occupations, and (3) the effects of the disaster relief
efforts on the region. One of my conclusions after completing the interviews was that depending on their social positions (e.g. family status and occupation), the answers on the effects of relief efforts by professional sports organizations differed from person to person. For example, when I asked the questions about personal effects on the interviewee Miura mentioned he did not receive direct effects from the relief efforts by sports organizations, but he believed they had positive effects on his son and the baseball team. In terms of the overall evaluation towards the effects of the relief efforts, two interviewees mentioned that these efforts affected both them and their surroundings and their regions, especially their regions. However, six interviewees are not sure whether the relief efforts by professional sports organizations had a direct personal effect on their lives. Following are explanations of the three types of responses: effects of the relief efforts on (1) the individual interviewed, (2) on families and their occupation, and (3) on the regions.

First, the interviewees talked about the personal effect of the disaster relief efforts. Two of the interviewees stated the relief efforts by the professional sports organizations facilitated social interactions and had a positive effect on their mental state. (Suzuki and Inoue). Five of the interviewees answered that they experienced no direct influence from the relief efforts (Sato, Matsuda, Miura, Ito, and Kawasaki). Similarly, the remaining interviewee, Yazawa, answered by saying that the effects of the relief efforts were unclear to her. The interviewees who answered that they received no direct influence from the relief efforts provided several reasons as to why they did not feel the effects of the relief efforts. Four of the interviewees mentioned that they had not directly benefited from the relief efforts such as the activities for children (Matsuda, Miura, Ito and Yazawa). Sato and Miura argued that the sports organizations’ activities only affected them on a short-term basis. Miura elaborated, “I have not felt any tangible effects from the activities…or the activities themselves have intangible shapes…these activities look like
fireworks, that is, even though the activities may have some effects, there is no effect from the next day.” Additionally, Matsude noted, “there are no changes in my life through their activities...there are too many things, which haven’t changed yet regardless of the relief efforts by sports organizations.”

On the other hand, Suzuki discussed direct effect noting that the relief efforts were helpful because it gave him opportunities to interact with others including players. Inoue stated that these relief efforts made him positive and active. Also, Miura, who mentioned the relief efforts do not have direct effect on him, pointed out:

Though the relief efforts do not affect my life directly, these encouraged me to step forward. Since my children got their efforts, at least I never felt negatively. Moreover, these activities made me forget the disaster. Due to their assistance, I could only focus on their relief (baseball academy) without post-disaster concerns. In that point, I think that the activities have positively influenced me.

Next, the interviewees mentioned the effects of relief efforts by professional sports organizations with regards to their surroundings (e.g. immediate families, relatives, and occupations). The interviewees, except for Kawasaki, have some connection with sports organizations; for example, Miura and Yazawa have sons joining baseball teams (see Table 4.1 for the more detailed information). Sato (the manager of a baseball team for elementary school students) and Suzuki (director of kids’ soccer club) said the relief efforts by sport organizations influenced them to restart the respective sports teams which had been stopped because of the disaster. Also, their activities stopped the team from dissolving (Sato). Other answers included, providing a chance for their children to play sports (Sato, Suzuki, and Inoue), to help their children (Matsuda and Miura), to help their children be happy (Miura, Inoue and Yazawa), to let
kids have dreams of becoming professional baseball or soccer players (Matsuda and Inoue), and
to provide opportunities for their children to be active (Suzuki and Miura). Also, there was a
ripple effect from the children becoming positive, active, and happy. As a result, parents (Suzuki
and Yazawa) mentioned that their children’s’ improved attitudes made them happy and relieved.
Suzuki further mentioned that these changes encouraged the adults to “hang in there.” In other
words, the attitudes of the children switched either parents’ or coaches’ moods (Sato and Miura).
Also, Miura and Inoue mentioned that these activities made them (children and people
surrounding them like parents and club managers) focus on sports activities and forget the disaster
crisis temporarily.

Yazawa, who has one son playing baseball answered that, “I just end up to feel that
players and teams came, which was not very significant to me, but it had a huge impact on
children.” Also, Miura said that, “baseball tools are not necessary for our substantial life
activities, but if there are the tools, these enable us to play catch with children. These relief
efforts made children happy. So, that point, I think it is positively helpful.” Inoue said that, “the
most important thing through sports relief efforts is that the players always continue to say
‘don’t give up your dream’ towards children.” Also Inoue mentions the importance of sports
activities through the fact that “since the existence of players relief efforts, we could justify
maintaining the filed” (it was popular to create makeshift housing units on the playgrounds and
sports fields at that time). Suzuki insists that, “since the soccer fields are reconstructed through
soccer organizations [JFA (Japan Football Association) and FIFA (International Federation of
Association Football)], it gave children stimulus and motive to play sports.”

Finally, regarding the effect on a region, Sato, Miura, and Ito mentioned that there was no
effect on the region. Suzuki, Miura, and Yazawa answered that they do not know the regional
effects. Miura answered that, “first I am not sure whether teams conduct their relief efforts for the region or just only for teams. But in my perception, I do not feel that these activities attempt to involve the region itself.” On the other hand, I found that some interviewees focused on the positive effects on the specific individuals who received relief efforts in the suffering areas to some degree (Sato, Miura, and Matsuda). Sato and Miura pointed out that the effects should be only for the people of organizations, or teams who were supported by professional sports teams. Matsuda said that, “As long as the children in the region have some positive effects, we might be able to say that these activities have influence on the regions.”

From a different perspective, Inoue stated, “simply, visiting by professional players from other districts made region well. We at least can feel joyful even though these moments are very short. That action makes the regions forget the disaster too.” Also, Sato argued that these attitudes depended on the regions or which relief efforts the region received from sports organizations. For example, the regions that have an All Star Baseball game and the regions which do not have baseball stadiums have totally different perceptions towards the impacts of relief efforts. In addition, Suzuki mentions that these depend on the popularity of players. For example, he said, “due to one famous soccer player, the regions established one soccer team. Thus, players may be able to motivate the regions enough to found soccer teams.”

To sum up, there were three patterns of interviewees’ attitudes: interviewees themselves, their surroundings (e.g. families and occupations), and the regions. In terms of the effects on the interviewees themselves, more than half of them explained that the relief efforts by the sports organizations did not necessarily have a direct effect on the interviewees themselves because of specific reasons (e.g. intangible and temporary effects). However, all interviewees mentioned that the relief efforts were helpful and effective in their surroundings and/or regions, especially
for the local children, to some degree, because the efforts had positive impacts on their mental condition (pacing/switching moods and escapism, encouragement, and enjoyment), provided chances to connect with sports, and created social interaction (see Table 4.4 for a listing of the effect through the relief efforts). The following section includes information about the interviewees’ attitude toward the organizations in terms of how these activities affected the perceptions of the interviewees in regards to the organizations and/or their players who were involved.

Table 4.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Category</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Comment toward relief efforts by professional sports organizations and players</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental condition</td>
<td>Pace/Switch mood, Escapism</td>
<td>Letting me to focus on (sports) active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Letting me forget disaster temporarily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Make parents relieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Providing change of our pace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Encourage kids to have dream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage old adult (parents, sports coach) to hang in there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Making children positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Making children active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoyment</td>
<td>Make us (parents, managers, etc.) happy through kids behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Making children active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Making children happy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Having an enjoyable time with players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Providing chance of sports</td>
<td>Pushing to restart kids' baseball team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preventing team from dissolving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chance to start sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chance to play catch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field preservation</td>
<td>Preservation of fields/stadium not to create shelters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encouraging restore playing field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>Providing chance of meeting</td>
<td>Providing us (team) to connect with players/others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pushing to restart kids' baseball team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preventing team from dissolving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.5 Attitudes toward Sports Organizations after Relief Efforts

The interviewees were asked questions about how the relief efforts affected their attitude toward the sports organizations conducting the relief activities. Six out of eight people mentioned that they came to support the teams and/or players more than before they received relief efforts (Sato, Suzuki, Miura, Ito, Kawasaki, and Yazawa). Ito answered, “though I don’t know what the team did in the local areas well, I came to be more of a fan to the team through only the rumors of which the local professional sports team (Rakuten) visited the elementary schools in the areas.” Yazawa pointed out:

Though I might get some support from several teams and players, the important factor is whether the local professional team conducts the relief efforts in the local communities. This factor may influence me to support the team (Rakuten) after the disaster. I think this is because the local people have some attachments to the team.

In terms of other answers, some said before the relief efforts there was not much interest in the teams, and they came to be more interested in the teams after the relief efforts (Sato, Miura, and Ito). Three interviewees stated they felt a greater attachment to the team conducting relief efforts than what they felt before the activities (Inoue, Ito, and Kawasaki). The sense of distance to the team is shorter than before (Inoue); Suzuki and Inoue expressed that the relief efforts fostered more familiarity with the teams and players than before the activities. Yazawa mentioned that, “through seeing players directly, I could interact and feel their actual character without mass communication tools. These things made us closer to the players.” Likewise, Suzuki said, “After meeting players, the children can feel the professional players are the same human being as well as them.” Kawasaki mentioned the following:
I did not have interest in the team, but I became interested in the team. After that, I changed my image of the team into a more positive one. Therefore, this change of my attitude may lead me to support the team more.

Miura answered that, “the number of attendance in the stadium increased after the team (Rakuten) supported us.” In terms of some appreciation to the teams, Miura and Yazawa mentioned that the attitude of teams who tried to care about them made them happy. Additionally, through their activities Inoue said, “I and other local citizens could reconfirm the team’s mission that states ‘community-based team’.”

On the other hand, Matsuda thought about his experience with the baseball academy and mentioned that, “even though the baseball academy gives children lifelong memories, there is so much less possibility to be a fan to the teams for adult people.”

Next, in terms of the difference between the sport organizations who supported the affected areas and those who did not, the interviewees were asked, “What do you think about <sports organizations> that helps the community through the relief effort activities and organizations that do not help?” Most interviewees did not distinguish between the two types of sport organizations; however, Inoue and Ito did show closer attachment toward the teams and players who supported them.

Five of the interviewees explained that there is not any specific difference between the two organizations (Sato, Matsuda, Miura, Ito, and Yazawa). Some answered that they have never considered it (Sato, Miura, Ito, Kawasaki, and Yazawa). Matsuda, Miura and Kawasaki do not seem to be concerned at all. Kawasaki only focused on the organizations and players conducting relief efforts. Matsuda said that, “I just have appreciation for the organizations that support the areas.” Kawasaki also said that, “I am not in the position to criticize the organizations which do
Table 4.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Response about attitude to sports organizations/players</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive support</td>
<td>Support for team more</td>
<td>Sato, Suzuki, Ito, Kawasaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support for team players more</td>
<td>Suzuki, Miura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>Change no interest to teams into support</td>
<td>Miura, Ito, Yazawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increase the level of Interest to team</td>
<td>Sato, Ito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>More familiar than before</td>
<td>Suzuki, Inoue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closer sense than before</td>
<td>Miura, Kawasaki, Yazawa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment</td>
<td>Have attachment to teams</td>
<td>Inoue, Ito, Kawasaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No-effect</td>
<td>No effect to the team in other areas</td>
<td>Sato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No effect to teams supporting the areas</td>
<td>Matsuda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

not have relief efforts, because we, the people in suffering areas, are the side of people received got the support.” On the other hand, Inoue has closer feelings and stronger attachment toward the teams and players. Ito also said that “I basically don’t think there are any difference between the teams who supports us or not, but during this interview, I realize that I may have more appreciation to the teams who support our district.”

To sum up, I conclude that though there is not a big difference between the interviewees who support the sports team and those who do not, the relief efforts guided the interviewee’s attitudes and evaluation toward the teams and/or their players (see Table. 4.5 for information pertaining to the interviewees’ attitude). The interviewees expressed they would support the team more than before the relief efforts. Also, interviewees talked about a greater level of their interest, familiarity (shorter sense of distance to the team), and attachment toward the organizations and/or their players. The next section includes the interviewees’ answers about the unique nature of the relief efforts of professional sports organizations.
4.4.6 Features of Relief Efforts by Sport Organizations

The interviewees were asked, “How do you distinguish <sport organizations’ support> from other industry after Tohoku earthquake and tsunami?” This question enabled me to explore the features and unique aspects of the sports organizations’ relief efforts in comparison with other industries and organizations (see Table. 4.6). According to three interviewees (Suzuki, Ito, and Kawasaki), the nature of professional sports media exposure and accessibility of their activities to the public allows their relief efforts to be more impactful. Also, Matsuda and Inoue stated that the characteristics of relief efforts by sports organizations inspire children to pursue their dreams of becoming professional athletes. They also mentioned that the sport organizations have more influence on letting the children have dreams and hope for their future than other industries and organization. Additionally, Sato did not regard professional sports’ relief efforts as substantially helpful (i.e. the support which tangibly and directly impact the recovery from the disasters) in the recovery from the natural disasters. On the other hand, Matsuda and Miura emphasized that the relief efforts by sports organization had more positive affects on their mental state than other industries. The following illustrates what the interviewees pointed out as the uniqueness of the relief efforts by professional sports organizations.

First, Suzuki, Ito, and Kawasaki mentioned media exposure about relief efforts by professional sports organizations. Ito said that, “conducting relief efforts by the professional players are largely influential. I could feel happier when well-known people and organizations come and support our district. The reason why I perceive a huge impact may be attributes to their media power.” Suzuki said that, “you know the famous sports players have large influences in the suffering areas because they direct a spotlight on the suffering areas as well as other celebrities.” Kawasaki stated the following:
Media exposure is the strong point of professional sports. I only focus on the supplies of the organizations, whom I do not know well, but professional sports organizations are well-known agents, therefore I think it is more impactful for the public and the suffering areas who receive support.

Next, Matsuda and Inoue explained that relief efforts inspire the children in suffering areas to have a hope for their future and dream to be professional sports athletes or other noteworthy professions. Matsuda believed that the children in suffering areas lost hope for their future, but through professional sports organizations the children might be able to learn and rediscover the importance of having hope for their future and becoming a professional sports athlete, etc. Inoue mentioned the importance of players telling children not to lose hope and not give up their dreams for their future. Matsuda states that, “well, this is a tough question. Recently, I think it is unclear whether children can have a dream. But, I believe these sports activities stimulate the children to have some kind of dreams.”

In terms of the interviewees’ answers about effects of the relief efforts, Sato mentioned that, “I do not have any special feeling towards the relief efforts by professional sports organizations. This is because these activities are only conducted to the sport-related people and are temporary after all. I do not think sports can create some substantial change for our life.”

On the other hand, Matsuda and Miura answered that the relief efforts by professional sports organizations are more influential on their positive mental state than other industries’ and
organizations’ support, particularly their emphasis on encouragement and escapism, which was mainly discussed in section 4.4.4. Miura said that, “though the relief effort by the sports organizations is just hobby or entertainment, I think it is more useful to encourage the survivors when it comes to the mental state of the people than other types of relief efforts.”

In sum, as for the features and unique aspects of relief efforts by professional sports organizations in comparison with other industries and organizations, the interviewees stated four types of characteristics about sports organizations’ relief efforts. First, the power of media exposure differentiated their relief efforts from other industries or organizations. Next, providing the importance of having a dream (e.g. professional athletes) and hope for their future is also a unique feature. Also, I conclude that while sports organizations’ relief efforts were not directly and tangibly helpful to recover from the natural disaster, such as efforts toward infrastructure and building repairs, these relief efforts have had more positive effects on their mental state (encouragement and escapism) than other industries and organizations. The following section provides information about the interviewees’ future actions toward the sports organizations that supported them, and their ideas as to what sports organizations should do regarding their relief efforts post-disaster.

4.4.7 Post-disaster Action and Considerations

Next, the interviewees were asked about the future actions toward the organizations and/or their players who/which conducted the relief efforts. Several interviewees mentioned that though they appreciate the teams, realistically they cannot afford to tangibly express their gratitude (e.g. going to games and buying team merchandise), so they have never considered it (Sato, Matsuda and Ito). Four interviewees (Sato, Suzuki, Ito, and Yazawa) said that the only thing they can do is just to support the teams and players. Sato stated, “it is important for me to
do our best to make a living. I believe these attitudes leads to repayment to the sports teams and players who conduct disaster relief efforts.”

In terms of the purchase intention, which directly relates the profits, two interviewees gave answers. While Miura mentions that all they can do is just to go to the stadium and field to watch the games, Sato said, “I have not thought of a way to pay the ticket and the transportation costs to watch any sports match yet.

Next, the interviewees responded to the question about what sports organizations should do after the disasters. Suzuki answered that relief efforts depend on the time: short-term, middle-term, and long-term. After the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, Sato, Suzuki, and Ito felt the mismatch of the communication between the sports organizations and suffering areas. For example, Sato stated, “the tools which the suffering areas needs do not arrive (e.g. children baseball gloves), but the tools which are unnecessary to their needs were received instead (e.g. adult baseball gloves).” Thus, Suzuki mentioned the necessity of these systems to arrange these methods of supplying the areas.

Also, Ito mentioned the limitation of direct relief efforts (visiting activities, invitation to the stadiums, and sports academy). He mentioned that the local citizens were not able to really appreciate or enjoy the above activities early on the disasters. Thus, Ito suggested that the first steps of the relief efforts should include providing physically beneficial or indirect relief efforts such as fundraising and awareness activities. Then, they gradually should start mental supports as time passes. This is because the direct supports may be impossible as the local people’s mental state is unstable.

Next, some interviewees stated the necessity of long-term support from professional sports organizations (Sato, Suzuki, Matsuda, Miura, and Yazawa). Suzuki and Miura mentioned
the necessity to create the environment which enables the teams and players to support
continuously, not only in one-shot sports events. For example, Suzuki hopes the professional
sports organizations help to create soccer schools, facilities, and to organize soccer
championships. He also mentioned that now, almost three years after the disaster, he would like
sports organizations to help to reconstruct or reform the sports facilities more than give out
supplies. Matsuda wanted professional players to provide any stimulus and opportunities to the
local areas. Likewise, Yazawa mentioned, “Any activities are fine, but I feel happy that
professional sports teams continue them as a long-term.” Miura mentioned the following:

We do not hope that sports teams conduct largely influential actions to the local areas but
just visit us and care about us, then say ‘hang in there,’ that is enough. These actions
make children and parents happy. This is because professional players are objects of
adoration. Again, we can feel happy only seeing or meeting them.

In other aspects, Matsuda recommends that relief efforts by professional sports
organizations should be more public. He said that, they “…should not be afraid of the effects of a
publicity stunt because if the sports teams make their relief efforts public, people might have
positive attitudes towards the teams, since sports have such power.” Additionally, Miura
mentioned that “now, I would like to see the players playing sports closer such as at the game,
because these things make children happy and encourage me to hang in there.” Inoue also
mentioned that he would like to see the best performance of the players and feel the skills of the
players. Also, Matsuda mentioned that monetary support is important to the local areas. Yazawa
just mentioned the importance of playing sports and doing their best because sports teams only
can do sports academies and reconstructions of sports facilities. Also, Inoue mentioned that
depending on the interactions of the local communities, the role and responsibility after the natural disaster would change.

In sum, I conclude that although the interviewees have the attitude to support the organizations and their players that conducted the relief efforts, the interviewees merely end up feeling appreciation for the teams, except for Miura. Miura possesses a positive attitude towards professional sports-related activities, such as purchasing tickets. Moreover, the interviewees stated that they need well-developed communication between both suppliers of relief efforts and the local citizens who suffered from the natural disasters, so that they can obtain the appropriate tools for such relief efforts to succeed, following the disasters. Also, the interviewees mentioned the importance of long-term and continuous supports toward the suffering areas from professional sports organizations.

To close, this chapter includes the findings from the eight interviews that were conducted and in particular from the responses to my interview questions based on my research. The information that I derived from these results includes the degree of the interviewees’ awareness of the relief efforts by professional sports organizations and, additionally, the effects that these efforts had upon them. Also, the interviewees revealed their feeling towards these organizations and/or their players. Finally, I asked them what distinguishes the relief efforts of professional sports organizations from that of other organizations, and about future actions toward the organizations and their opinions about what kind of relief is necessary after the disaster. Chapter Five includes discussion based on the results and previous literature, and also provides the conclusion for this study.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

In this chapter I discuss community members’ responses to the CSR initiatives by sport organizations after the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, in conjunction with the research findings and previous literature. The chapter includes two major sections. The first section is the discussion of the primary findings from the interviews, including interviewee awareness of CSR initiatives by professional sports organizations, effects of CSR initiatives on those interviewed, and attitude to sports organizations after CSR initiatives. The second section is the conclusion of this study: a summary of the research, limitations of the work and future implications, and development of research questions.

5.2 Awareness of CSR Initiatives by Professional Sports Organizations

I found that all the interviewees were aware of relief efforts by professional sports organizations. In terms of the methods used in obtaining information about relief efforts from sports organizations, interviewees indicated that media representations (e.g. TV and newspapers) may be helpful in spreading information to the masses, but people in the severely damaged areas seem to have greater awareness of relief efforts through direct communications (e.g. word-of-mouth) between the individuals who suffered from the natural disasters. This finding is consistent with previous research, which also included the finding that CSR activities had significant influence on word-of-mouth communication (Walker & Kent, 2009). I think the reason why all of the interviewees were aware of the relief efforts is that they had a chance to be exposed to information about the relief efforts by sports organizations through several ways: media, word-of-mouth, letters, and flyers. Armey (2004) noted that professional sports activities
are open knowledge in the public, and media cover their activities (e.g. Babiak & Wolfe, 2006; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007). I believe these features differentiated the sports organizations’ relief efforts from activities by other organizations, especially in terms of the process that lead to awareness.

It also became clear that there was a difference between those who actively spoke about the relief efforts and those who only did so after some prompting. First, those who mentioned the relief efforts in their conversation were more closely involved with the relief efforts (Sato, Suzuki, Miura, Inoue, and Kawasaki). Also, those who believed the relief efforts by sports organizations had a direct influence on them (Suzuki and Inoue) included the sports activities in their conversations. Suzuki and Inoue mentioned the relief efforts directly impacted them. Those who talked about the relief efforts after prompting (Matsuda, Ito, and Yazawa) appeared to be less interested in the activities than those who mentioned the relief efforts without prompting. It may be these individuals do not believe the relief efforts by professional sports organizations made a difference. For example, even though Matsuda was involved with the relief efforts as a baseball coach in the middle school baseball team, he said he experienced no direct influence or benefits from the relief efforts by sports organizations. As a result, awareness of CSR relief efforts by sports organizations might change depending on their perception toward the activities and level of interaction in such relief efforts.

Next, it is interesting to note that while interviewees were aware of the sports organizations’ relief efforts, most regarded themselves as bystanders instead of direct beneficiaries. This means that even though the interviewees knew about or were involved with CSR initiatives, most did not consider that they directly received the relief efforts. Instead, the interviewees talked about being indirectly benefitting from the relief efforts through family
members and occupations. Despite the fact that many did not regard themselves as direct recipients, the interviewees recognized that the relief efforts by the sports organizations did stimulate their surroundings (e.g., students of the sports manager and coaches, daughters and sons, and relatives) and their region, especially for the children, at large (i.e. the interviewees’ cities and Tohoku district itself).

Though not all the interviewees were direct recipients of the relief efforts from sports organizations, they were still involved in the activities either directly or indirectly. For instance, Yazawa has two sons. Even though she did not participate in the activities herself, she identified that she was impacted by the relief efforts through her son’s participation. Likewise, Kawasaki was exposed to the relief efforts when he went to see the soccer games (J. League) where teams invited the kids from suffering areas.

Trail and James (2012) mention that, “awareness involves being exposed to and recognizing stimuli” (p. 209). Unless an individual is exposed to the information, that information is not processed and the individual does not form a perception (Trail & James, 2012). In reference to these notes by Trail and James (2012), the interviewees received some stimuli about sports organizations, and they were involved with the relief efforts either directly or indirectly. Scholars have explained the relation with CSR actions and consumers’ cognitive, affective, and behavioral reaction (e.g. Brown & Dacin, 1997). The following sections include information about how the CSR initiatives influenced the lives of the interviewees, and how they are believed to have stimulated the interviewee’s affective and behavioral actions and their evaluations of the relief efforts by professional sports organizations.
5.3 CSR Initiatives’ Effect on Individuals

This section includes the effects of the CSR initiatives on the local citizens following the natural disasters. As noted in the previous chapter, the interviewees were aware of several types of relief efforts by the sports organizations (e.g., conducting sports academies, players’ visiting suffering areas, inviting the survivors to a stadium or field, logo awareness, fundraising, and etc.). I explain how these activities influence the individuals after the natural disasters. Throughout the remainder of this section I discuss information about the effects of the relief efforts on those interviewed.

First, most interviewees did not consider the relief efforts by professional sports organizations and/or players substantially helpful. In other words, the lack of perceived impact may have to do with the idea that the activities (e.g., player visits and sports academies) were intangible and temporary. However, the effects of the relief efforts were mainly effective on the interviewees’ mental conditions. According to their responses, sport-related CSR initiatives encouraged the interviewees who suffered from the disasters. Also, they were helpful in switching their moods, and let the interviewees forget the moment of the crisis.

On the other hand, even though some interviewees were aware of the sports organizations’ direct relief efforts (e.g. fundraising and increasing awareness of fundraising opportunities), that may have influenced the interviewee’s lives positively, no one knew the detailed information or the outcome of the activities. For example, Miura answered that, “I know those activities, but I do not know where the money went to and how the money was used.” Matsuda mentioned that, “I do not know these activities well… these activities should be provided to the public in more detail.” Thus, the interviewees could not judge the effects of the efforts to create awareness of fundraising activities, and whether the fundraising did result in
some particular outcome or impact. The lack of knowledge about whether the efforts to bolster fundraising did have an impact may be explained in part by the presence of other organizations engaged in relief efforts. There were local government, nonprofit organizations (NPO), and non-governmental organizations (NGO) that served as intermediaries between the suppliers and the individuals who were affected by the disasters. This is because some interviewees mentioned that the general supplies (maybe sport-related supplies too) may be managed by some other organizations, and then the interviewees received these supplies. As such, there was not a direct reporting of how the sport organization’s efforts to create awareness of fundraising efforts had an impact on the affected people and areas.

Onishi and Harada (2008) insist that organizations conducting CSR activities should disclose the philanthropic activities to those who might be positively influenced by the activities. They also emphasized that this is because after perceiving these activities, the receptors are able to associate the image and attitude toward the suppliers. As a result, since no one could feel the actual effects from the awareness activities, interviewees seemed unsure about the effects of these activities. On the other hand, it was easier for the interviewees to be aware of actual sporting activities even though there are no effects toward the relief efforts.

I also think that the impact of physiological and psychological needs affected impressions of the relief efforts by professional sports organizations, as well as the effects of the fundraising toward the interviewees. Gordon (1975) mentioned that needs are composed of two types: physiological (e.g. needs for food, shelter, sex and etc.) and psychological (e.g. social interaction and group welfare and survival). Maslow (1943) proposed the five hierarchies of needs in personal lives: physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. He explained that physiological needs are the most important to make a living, then continue from safety,
belongingness, and esteem, to self-actualization. I believe that both physiological and psychological needs were lacking for most interviewees right after the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. The interviewees likely considered their priority needs such as housing, food, and family safety, rather than sport-related activities right after the disaster. As a result, the interviewees answered that the relief efforts by professional sports organizations had no tangible and direct effect on their lives. After the disaster, as the interviewees argue, they were lacking fulfillment of physiological (e.g. foods and housing) and safety conditions. The shortage of these factors constrained their ability to enjoy leisure time and sports.

It is interesting to note that while the interviewees said the relief efforts had no tangible and direct impact on their lives, they did accept the relief efforts by professional sports organizations; for example, exercise opportunities with professional teams’ players through sports academies, and players’ visiting suffering areas to interact with the local citizens. It seems as if the interviewees had to take in the idea of “recreation” in their minds. At that time, they received temporary effects from the relief efforts by sports organizations, which is beneficial for interviewees’ mental status (e.g. pacing/switching moods, escapism, encouragement, and enjoyment). Further, these relief efforts were useful for them to have opportunities to interact with other people through sporting activities. Therefore, the interviewees did perceive the support of professional sports organizations in a positive manner. These results coincide with Smith and Westerbeek’s study (2007). They argued that sports organizations have unique CSR initiatives compared to other industries; for example, mass media distribution and communication power, youth appeal, positive health impacts/association, social interaction, and sustainability awareness. In this study, the interviewees were either directly or indirectly
involved with the relief efforts of professional sports organizations which stimulated positive health, social interaction, and youth appeal.

I believe it makes sense that people cannot enjoy their lives after a natural disaster. Professional sports are an entertainment product, but the local people who suffer from natural disasters cannot wrap their mind around the idea of recreation due to their physiological and psychological needs. Though the physiological wounds gradually recover, as the interviewees considered their future lives they still had some psychological anxiety. Miura mentioned that his “…mental conditions did not move forward after the disaster though I got some relief such as house and food from others. Firstly, I could not think about starting a job at all.” After this conversation, Miura also mentioned that he received the energy to start working after seeing his son playing happily with professional baseball players. For Miura, relief efforts from sports organizations did encourage him even though the activities were limited in duration and frequency. While food relief, for example, has longer duration and effect, the one-day games were also helpful.

To sum up, following the natural disasters, the relief efforts by professional sports organizations were not harmful to the local citizens in the suffering areas, and they may have been helpful for improving their mental states. A key concern following a natural disaster is that the sports organizations consider the physiological and psychological needs and the uniqueness of sports CSR initiatives. In the early days after a disaster, professional sports activities, such as game invitations and sports academy participation, would be ineffective. Rather, early response efforts should include donations and use of the powerful media exposure sports organizations can foster to increase awareness of the disaster and needed relief efforts (e.g. Babiak & Wolfe, 2006; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007). As the physical needs are met, as the mental conditions of the
local citizens in suffering areas improve, direct relief efforts have some increasingly positive effects on them. As most interviewees mentioned, the relief efforts of professional sports organizations are psychologically helpful for not only themselves but also their surroundings. For these reasons, the interviewees mentioned that continuous support from professional sports team is in demand so that they can receive mental support and so the public cannot forget the disaster of actual situations of the suffering areas.

5.4 Attitude toward Sport Organizations after CSR Initiatives

This section includes an explanation of the interviewees’ attitudes toward sports organizations after the relief efforts. First, the interviewees began with positive attitudes towards the organizations. Second, interviewees’ familiarity with, interest in, and attachment to the sport organizations and their players increased after receiving support. Finally, their acts of support seemed to stimulate fan socialization.

5.4.1 Positive Attitudes toward Sports Organizations

While most interviewees did not consider the relief efforts by professional sports organizations as tangibly and directly helpful, all interviewees perceived the effectiveness of the relief efforts such as improving mental states and social interactions. As a result, they received some stimulation from their activities both directly and indirectly. As previously noted, some researchers state that CSR initiatives are related with consumers’ cognition, affectation, and behavioral actions pertaining to perceived quality, price, and consumer attributions about an organizations’ motives (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Brown & Dacin, 1997; Creyer & Ross, 1997; Ellen et al., 2000; Folkes & Kamins, 1999; Murray & Vogel, 1997). After awareness of and involvement with the relief efforts, the interviewees reported positive impressions of the team and their players (all interviewees mentioned the local professional teams, Tohoku Rakuten
Golden Eagles and Vegalta Sendai). Some showed their appreciation during the interviews, while others mentioned that they came to support the teams. As a result, the relief efforts by professional sports organizations had a positive effect in relation to reputation building.

Scholars mention that positive impressions from local community members are huge assets for professional sports organizations. Sutton et al. (1997) suggest community-based initiatives may lead to creating identification with a team and players because these actions may forge stronger identification between the team and the fans and improve the teams’ reputation. Brown and Dacin (1997) emphasize that positive consumers’ reactions are associated with both products and overall corporate evaluations. Rak (2013) mentioned that reputation is a key concern for sports organizations as well as other industries. Rak (2013) argues that “good reputation may result with more fans attending games, more potential sponsors, support from local government and media attention” (p. 724). Also, the support from local communities are valuable when the team requests the public to arrange the social funds for public transportation and roads that lead people to their stadium (Matsumura, 2010). Thus, the relief efforts may stimulate a positive reaction to the team, and their positive intentions through relief efforts may also be helpful to the team themselves.

Some interviewees mentioned that the relief efforts by professional sports organizations were open to media scrutiny, so I believe their initiatives spread through media exposure. This result corresponds with other researchers’ opinions, such as Babiak and Wolfe (2006) and Smith and Westerbeek (2007). Also, as noted before, TV and newspapers are also helpful to spread information about the relief efforts, and people who received this information paid attention to the teams. Thus, the information about relief efforts positively spread out to the other regional areas. Even people who did not experience huge damage from the disaster also seemed to have a
more positive image of the local sports teams. These people may increase consumption and attachment to the teams, and the teams are able to directly benefit from fans attending games, potential sponsors, support from local government, and further media attention (Rak, 2013).

I believe, however, researchers still need to consider that the relief efforts directly connect to purchase intentions, though Miura specifically mentioned his amount of participation with the game has increased compared to pre-disaster levels. In terms of their life condition, some mentioned that all that can be done is just to support the team now. Trail and James (2012) argue the relation between the intention and actual behavior fluctuates largely depending on the situation and possible constraints. Additionally, as noted in earlier content regarding the level of personal needs with Gordon (1975) and Maslow (1943), researchers also consider the personal needs of the individuals who were impacted by natural disasters. If their living conditions have not yet returned to original pre-disaster state, it is tough to consume sports products such as games and merchandise. Also, Roy and Graeff (2003) and Onishi and Harada (2008) found that, while local people expect the local teams to support the areas, the local citizens have lower purchase intention toward the sports organization than toward other business entities. As a result, they suggest that the charitable and philanthropic activities by sports organizations do not have a positive relation to the increase of ticket and merchandise sales.

Though the above topic is debatable it is reasonable to expect that CSR actions fostered positive attitudes in the interviewees and positively impacted the sports organizations. The positive attitudes are important for sports organizations because they have a responsibility and a desire to connect to the local communities. I believe the support from the local community is a tremendous asset for the sports teams. Therefore, the disaster relief efforts for the local areas may have a positive influence on improving the team’s image.
5.4.2 Increase of Familiarity, Interest, and Attachment to Teams and Players

Most interviewees mentioned an increase in familiarity with, interest in, and attachment to the team and/or the players. According to Trail and James (2012), those who have strong psychological connection to a sport team may devote more time, money, and emotional resources than individuals who have the weak or moderate connection to a sport team. Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) suggest that attitudes may change depending on the individual’s sense of attachment. Some interviewees mentioned feeling a stronger attachment with and positive emotions toward the teams and their players after their relief efforts. Also the level of familiarity with the team and players was enhanced after the activities. According to Trail and James (2012), consumers’ familiarity with a product might have a positive impact on their perception towards that product. They also mention that,

If a consumer is familiar with a particular product, and that familiarity is associated with a positive evaluation – e.g., I have previously watched a particular team and I enjoyed the experience – it is highly likely that the consumer will direct his or her attention to the stimuli. (p. 217)

Due to their familiarity with local areas through physical location and media exposure, interviewees mainly discussed the activities of the local sports teams. It seems likely that the power of local exposure might overshadow the relief efforts of non-local sports organizations.

Additionally, some interviewees mentioned that their levels of interest toward the teams and their players increased. This concept is also important in regards to consumption behavior. Trail and James (2012) state that regardless of consumer interest, product involvement will increase due to exposure to product stimuli, such as advertisements. Therefore, if consumers
already show interest in the product, their subsequent exposure will increase their likelihood of involvement (Trail & James, 2012).

In conclusion, relief efforts may increase consumer knowledge about and interest in the teams and players. Although these relief efforts may have no direct effect on consumers’ purchase intention, I assume these activities may have an indirect impact on their psychological connection (i.e. familiarity, interest, and attachments) and further purchase intention toward the team and players.

5.4.3 Fan Socialization

An important point to recognize from this research is the relationship between the relief efforts by professional sports organizations and fan socialization. Regarding socialization in a sport context, Kolbe and James (2000) mentioned that, “…socialization involves learning and internalizing the attitudes, values, knowledge and behaviors that are associated with fans of a team. This process results in individual-level internalizations and an appreciation of the importance of being a fan of the team” (p. 25). Some interviewees explained that children might experience a greater impact from relief efforts by professional sports organizations. These interviewee’s answers coincide with previous findings. Roy and Graeff (2003) emphasize that it is important for professional sports teams to target young people through their CSR strategies. James (2001) mentioned that children may start to commit to the teams after the age of five, and they may start to develop their identity in relation to a sports team. Some interviewees mentioned that these sports organizations inspired the children in suffering areas to have hope for their future and dream of becoming professional sports athletes or other noteworthy professionals. Another mentioned that a children’s team was established due to visit of a famous soccer player.
Relief efforts by sport organizations may also impact the fan socialization of older adults. Through a review of previous literature (c.f. Kenyon & McPherson, 1973; McPherson, 1976), James (2001) indicates that the idea of fan socialization can be adaptable throughout the individuals’ lifecycle. One interviewee mentioned that his friend became a fan of Vegalta Sendai and started supporting the team due to the relief efforts. He/she was not fan before the disaster, but the relief efforts have influenced him/her to start supporting the team. Likewise, as previously noted, some interviewees also came to be interested in the team after the relief efforts. In contrast, some interviewees mentioned that even though their children benefited from the relief efforts by sports organizations, they were not impacted by the efforts. While some interviewed may not have recognized a direct benefit from relief efforts by sports organizations, there may have been an indirect effort in relation to the general process of rebuilding lives in the aftermath of the disasters. In the study by Kolbe and James (2000), “someone becomes a fan of a sports team as a result of the separate and combined influences of an individual’s personal characteristics, significant others and social setting” (p. 32). The stimuli through the relief efforts from sports organizations may be an indirect part of the process of establishing new lives including finding homes and hobbies. The natural disaster and its relief efforts may become agents to stimulate fan socialization among adults as well as children.

To sum up, it is clear that the interviewees’ attitude toward the sports organizations that conducted the CSR initiatives were affected. First, they have positive attitudes towards the organizations which conducted the CSR initiatives after the activities. Second, interviewees became familiar with, interested in, and attached to the teams and/or players following the relief efforts. These factors may affect their psychological connections to the teams and/or players, and also influence their fan socialization.
5.5 Conclusion

5.5.1 Research Summary

Overall, I provided initial insights into local citizens’ responses to CSR initiatives by professional sports organizations following the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011. Sports organizations, as well as other industries (e.g. retail, electric, and vehicle companies) conducted relief efforts after the natural disasters. A variety of companies conducted relief efforts. For example, there were relief efforts by the NBA to aid in the recovery from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and efforts by the Atlanta Braves (a Major League Baseball team) to aid in the recovery from the Haiti earthquake in 2010 (e.g. ESPN, 2005; NBA, 2008; Bowman, 2010).

Relief effort after a natural disaster is a type of social responsibility activity. Social responsibility initiatives seem to be increasing among sports businesses as well as other industries (e.g. Babiak & Wolfe, 2006; Walker & Kent, 2009). Although there are still controversial discussion in academia suggesting that the CSR initiatives are predominantly a public relations or marketing strategy rather than socially responsible actions (Becker-Olsen et al., 2006; Chahal & Sharma, 2006), most professional sports organizations have initiated community related-activities and/or have departments related to community outreach. For example, Robinson (2005) states foundations to help the social concerns in the communities through their CSR initiatives. As one of the examples of the positive impact of CSR initiatives, Jenkins (2011) explains that CSR initiatives by sports organizations have positive effects on improving physical and psychological health, reduction of the crime rate, community interactions, and education. Studies on CSR initiatives in relation to sports are gradually prevailing in both consumer and organizational behavior literature (e.g. Babiak & Wolfe, 2006; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Walker & Kent, 2009). At the same time, there is little research on
the responses of local citizens to the CSR initiatives by sports organizations, specifically following a natural disaster. For these reasons, the purpose of this study was to assess the community members’ responses to sport organizations based on CSR initiatives after a natural disaster.

This exploratory research was conducted to better understand the community members’ awareness of the relief efforts by the professional sports organizations, the effects of such efforts on their lives and surroundings, and attitudes toward the sports organizations that conducted the relief efforts. First, based on the responses, all of the interviewees were aware of diverse relief efforts by professional sports organizations and/or players. They mentioned the activities with which they had direct involvement (e.g. sports academy and team/player visiting activities) and the activities with which the interviewees were indirectly connected (e.g. donation and logo awareness). This is important because some scholars suggest that favorable perceptions will occur after the recipients obtained information about CSR initiatives (e.g. Mohr & Webb, 2005; Walter & Kent, 2009); which means that if they do not obtain the information, they have no perception or knowledge of CSR activities. Further, the information was acquired through word-of-mouth communication, media representation (e.g. TV and newspaper), and paper-based communication (e.g. letter and flyers).

Second, in terms of the effect of CSR initiatives on the lives of those interviewed, there were three patterns: the interviewees themselves, their surroundings (e.g. families and occupations), and the regions. More than half of the interviewees explained the relief efforts by the sports organizations were not directly effective due to specific reasons (e.g. intangible and temporary effects); therefore, most of the interviewees were not sure whether these activities were effective for them as individuals. However, all of the interviewees maintained that the relief
efforts were helpful and effective in regards to their surroundings, and/or regions to some extent, because the activities had positive impacts on their mental condition (e.g. pacing/switching moods and escapism, encouragement, and enjoyment), provided chances to connect with sports, and created social interaction.

Third, the interviewees, as a result of the relief efforts, ended up appreciating the sports organizations and came to support the teams and/or players, more than before the relief efforts. Additionally, the interviewees talked about having a greater familiarity with, interest in, and attachment to the teams and/or players following the relief efforts. While consumers of team sports often derive their knowledge of teams through only the core brand and/or product such as the games (Kolbe & James, 2000), the outcome of my research is in line with the quote by Walker and Kent (2009); “It seems important now to note that the respondents’ knowledge of the organization extends beyond wins and losses, and is an important factor in formulating an overall reputational assessment of the organization” (p. 758). In this research, the CSR initiatives seemed to have positive effects on the reputations of the sports teams and their players that conducted these activities. The interviewees who received the relief efforts soon came to support the teams and their players. However, since other essential factors in their lives such as housing had not yet improved, the only thing they can do is verbally express appreciation to the team and the players. The interviewees were not in a position to show their appreciation in tangible ways such as purchasing tickets and merchandise.

The results of this research may be used to forge a conversation about CSR initiatives by professional sports following a natural disaster. In addition, I believe that these findings provide useful information for organizers in determining what relief efforts may effectively serve those who live in suffering areas, and leave a positive impression of the sport organization. My
suggestion for sport organization managers after some type of natural disaster is to engage first in some type of indirect support, such as fundraising, donations, and use of their powerful media exposure to increase awareness of disaster and relief efforts (noted in 5.3). After the mental conditions of the community members in suffering areas have recovered enough to participate in recreational activities, direct relief efforts such as game invitations and sports academy participation, should be introduced to have positive influences on the citizens. Though the damage of the disasters will be on a case-by-case basis, I believe the above process is the best practice to both the local citizens who suffered from the disasters and the sports organizations if the case is the similar to the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami.

5.5.2 Limitations of Study and Future Implications

Throughout this study, several limitations and future implications are identified in order to improve future relevant studies. One limitation for me is the issue of generalizability. In this study, I succeeded in collecting in-depth information through eight interviews. However, many more interviews would have to be completed before applying the findings to other individuals that suffer from natural disasters. My personal belief is that being able to provide more generalizable information can be important to society. Further, research with a representative sample would be helpful in regards to managerial implications in order to improve the generalizability of this research. Future research could include an effort to capture information from a representative sample so the results may be considered for a larger population.

Next, it is also important to note that this work deals with two specific types of natural disasters, a tsunami and an earthquake. Additional work should be considered in relation to relief efforts with other types of disasters, to ascertain if the same pattern of results may be found. Since the data was collected in Japan, it is important for researchers to conduct a similar study
with individuals in other countries where professional sports are widely recognized such as European countries (e.g. soccer) and the U.S. (e.g. football). These researches may supplement to obtain the further information about the relation between a natural disaster and CSR initiatives in professional sports organizations.

In addition, owing to the time constraint of collecting data, I did not narrow the focus based on the degree of which the interviewees like sports teams and/or players, which conducted the relief efforts. It is debatable that the degree of fondness towards sports teams and/or players by those interviewed may alter the results of this research. Furthermore, the local citizens’ perception of the relief efforts by professional sports organizations may vary depending on how adversely their cities were affected by natural disasters. Each interviewee has had a different experience following the disaster; some of them lost their house, immediate family and/or relatives. Finally, the imbalance of the gender ratio is a limitation of this research. While there were seven male interviewees, there was only one female participant. In the future, the gender ratio should be more balanced.

5.5.3 Development of Research Questions

Moreover, the findings of this study raise a number of important questions. First, why do sports organizations conduct the CSR initiatives following natural disasters? This question is from the view of organizational behavior on Sport Management. Sheth and Babiak (2009) uncovered the determinants of the CSR initiatives in professional sport in the US; they uncovered that:

…external drivers of CSR, in particular key constituents, the interconnectedness of the field, and pressures from the league were more important determinants of CSR initiatives than the internal resources available to deliver CSR efforts (i.e., attention, media access,
Research directed toward the above question might improve the knowledge about not only the motives of sports organizations’ relief efforts after the disasters, but also the gaps between sport organizations’ supports and local citizens’ recognition of the CSR initiatives. Also, the question that arises from this study is how do the consumers perceive the initiatives of sports organizations after other negative events, not just natural disasters? For instance, the Boston bombing occurred in the U.S. on April 2013. At that time, the Boston Red Sox (a team of the MLB) attempted to encourage the local communities in association with the iconic slogan “Boston Strong” in honor of the victims of Boston Marathon tragedy (Duquette, 2013). The next question to consider is which entities were the recipients influenced by the most after the CSR initiatives? Are recipients influenced more by relief efforts from individual players or what may be thought of as a “team effort?” Further, what factors influence perceptions (e.g. players reputations, team strength, and sport popularity)? I think the effectiveness of the CSR initiatives will fluctuate depending on variables such as teams’ and players’ popularities, since professional sports activities have visible entitle due to coverage of mass media distribution (e.g. Babiak & Wolfe, 2006; Armey, 2004), I assume the more popular players and teams are, the stronger the impact they can have on the recipient of CSR initiatives. During Suzuki’s interview, he mentioned that one famous Japanese soccer player, who belonged to English Premier League inspired the local citizens to play soccer, and they, in fact, established a local soccer club for the kids. Finally, regardless of whether there are professional sports or not, this work should be adaptable to amateur sports organizations. For example, how do amateur sports organizations conduct relief efforts after a natural disaster? Do they care about the relief efforts following natural disasters? If so, what do the local citizens think about these kinds of the relief efforts?
These questions may enable scholars in Sport Management to compare the role of the relief efforts between amateur sports and professional sports organizations.

Overall, these questions may help scholars better understand the consumer and organizational behavior following CSR initiatives by sports organizations. I recommend scholars continue to study the role of sports in association with social events (e.g. natural disaster, economic development/depression, and etc.), so we can continue to explore the existential question: Why do sports exist in our lives?

To conclude, I believe this research, although still at an early stage, contributes to the discussion of CSR initiatives by professional sport organizations. Babiak and Wolfe (2006) indicate that “strong relations with the local community are essential for a sport organization’s success (i.e., it is believed to affect an organization’s ability to attract fans, secure corporate sponsors, and to have effective dealings with local and state governments) (p. 215).” I believe that taking part in relief efforts may facilitate recovery in areas impacted by disasters, and foster positive attitudes towards sports organization, which would also have a positive impact on sports consumer behavior over time. Moreover, I speculate that media coverage of sports activities may facilitate the spread of information to the public, so their relief efforts by sports organizations may improve the image not only of teams and/or players, but also enhance the value of sports themselves. This research could supplement the importance of the research about connections between social change (this research introduce negative events) and sporting activities.

Nowadays, many of the scholars discuss whether CSR initiatives have the potential influence society and business (e.g. Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Porter & Kramer, 2006). Ultimately, socially beneficial actions should be initiated to improve human society. Thus, sports managers and
academic researchers of Sport Management should pursue this goal to not only make the most of their professions, but also improve the societies that we all live in.
APPENDIX A

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

Office of the Vice President for Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 04/22/2014
To: Kosuke Okoshi
Address: 
Dept.: SPORT MANAGEMENT

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair
Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Responses to Professional Sports Teams CSR initiatives following Natural Disasters

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 04/21/2015 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the chairman of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: James Jeffrey Advisor
HSC No. 2014.12661
APPENDIX B

IRB APPROVED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANT LETTER (ENGLISH)

Consent to Participate

Dear Participant,
My name is Kosuke Okoshi, and I am a graduate student in the Department of Sport Management at Florida State University. I am conducting a study to examine victims’ responses about companies’ social outreach/philanthropic activities following natural disasters (this case is Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011).

This research might have positive effects on future decision-making processes by organizations following natural disasters, so that they can conduct relief efforts after natural disaster correctly. These actions might affect not only the research participants (including you) but also those who experience natural disasters both directly and indirectly.

Thus, I am requesting your participation, which is extremely important and is greatly appreciated. It will take approximately 60 minutes to complete through an interview. Your participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time.

In terms of the risk of this study, the questions that I will ask you about these natural disasters are personal or sensitive, and you might have potential risks to harm you through the process of remembering the disaster. If you hesitate to talk about this issue, I will never force you to answer my questions. Answering questions depends on personal preference.

This interview will be recorded by an audio recorder, and the data is anonymous due to confidentiality to the extent allowed by law. Also the results of the study may be discussed overall, but your information will remain confidential.

After conducting the data as recorded file, I will protect the digital, audio, and text data with interview answers with passwords. The data will be kept until May 31, 2015. After that day, I will delete all of the data associated with this research.

Kosuke Okoshi translates this consent letter into Japanese. If you feel uncomfortable by his explanation and translated document, you may ask others to check whether the information is correctly translated at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this research study, please contact Kosuke Okoshi (primary investigator) via email or phone or Dr. Jeffrey James (advisor) via email or phone. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant of this study, please contact the Human Subject Committee, Institutional Review Board via email or phone.

These above phone numbers are overseas calls from Japan, so it will cost an international call fee.

Sincerely,
Kosuke Okoshi
Recipient Signature

Kosuke Okoshi
Researcher

HSC # 2014.12661
修士論文：研究協力同意書

関係者各位

この書類は、大越光介の修士論文（企業、団体の震災支援活動における現場での反応に関する研究）において、そのインタビューに同意して頂くための書類です。本研究は、震災後の企業行動の意思決定に対して、実際の被災地では彼らの支援活動がどのように役立つ、効果を得ているかを研究します。本研究が今後の企業の意思決定の際に参考となり、今後の支援活動を合理的かつ信頼あるものにするものと期待しています。また、回答者ご自身、そして将来自然災害が起こった際の被災者のためになるものとしています。

インタビューは、約1時間、アメリカの法律に基づき、プライバシー保護のため匿名性を保持することを約束します。またこのインタビューは自主性を重んじ、研究中のいかなるタイミングでも中止させることができ、また質問への回答の強制力を持ちません。この研究は回答者に震災時の状況を回想させるリスクがあります。そのため、震災のことを思い出し、回答を拒むこと、またはインタビューを中止することの戦いません。

インタビュー中はデータをオーディオレコーダーにて録音し、回答されたデータに関しては、修士論文の結果、そして考察の参考資料として使用致します。データは2015年の5月31日まで、パソコンにて、パスワードを用いて保管します。

また、英語での同意書に関しては、英語に自信がない場合、いかなるタイミングでも第三者からのチェックを受けることが許されます。日本語と英語での内容が異なる場合は、研究者である大越光介が全責任をおおうことを約束します。

今後研究に関して何か質問がある場合は、次のページのご連絡先に連絡ください。この度は研究にご協力頂きありがとうございます。

HSC # 2014.12661
研究責任者：大越光介
大学：
私用：
電話：[電話番号](国際電話)

担当教諭：ジェフリ・ジェームス

参加者の権利に関して:
フロリダ州立大学研究機関副学長
Florida State University
Human Subject Committee
Institutional Review Board

インタビュー参加者

大越光介

HSC # 2014.12661
REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kosuke Okoshi

Sport Management

Kosuke Okoshi earned his Bachelor of Health and Sports Science degree from Juntendo University in 2012. In the same year, he joined the Sport Management’s graduate program at The Florida State University. While pursing his master’s degree, Okoshi got an in-state tuition waiver from Florida-Japan Linkage Institute due to his competitive GPA.

Also, Okoshi interned at Historic Dodgertown in Vero Beach FL during summer in 2013. Los Angeles Dodger used this facility for spring camp training until 2008. He worked as a marketing assistant and created a database of Asian sports organizations, as well as an event operator. In addition, during his master’s career, he also worked as a Japanese and English translator for Meiji University baseball team (Japanese collegiate baseball powerhouse) and Yuzo Kanemaru (a Japanese 400 meter Olympian) to facilitate smooth integration for all aspects of their lives in Florida.

Okoshi’s master’s thesis, Responses to Professional Sports Teams CSR Initiatives following Natural Disasters, was supervised by Dr. Jeffrey James at Florida State University.