Evaluating the Effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility on Program Participants: Addressing the Achilles Heel of CSR through Sport-for-Development Theory

Abstract

Although many (sport) organizations around the world have engaged in corporate socially responsible (CSR) and Sport-For-Development (S4D) programing, there is little evidence of actual social impact. This is a problematic omission since many programs (CSR in particular) carry the stigma of marketing ploys used to bolster organizational image or reduce consumer skepticism. To address this issue and build on existing scholarship, the purpose of this study was to evaluate a socially responsible youth employability program in the United Kingdom. The program was developed through the foundation of a professional British soccer team to bolster employability and life skills for marginalized London youth. Program funding was provided by a large multinational bank as part of their overall CSR agenda. This evaluation was undertaken to understand the beneficiary impacts associated with program deployment. Results from the pre-intervention / post-intervention, sequential mixed-method evaluation show statistically significant differences among several "soft" beneficiary outcomes (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy, perceived marketability, etc.). Qualitative findings buttress these results, indicating a high-level of motivation for work and satisfaction with program delivery. While traditionally, CSR and S4D have been viewed as disparately literature streams, we argue that certain elements make them comparatively similar. As such, the results of this evaluation are discussed through both CSR and S4D lenses.

- Keywords: *Sport-for-Development, Program Evaluation, Youth Employability, Social Intervention.*

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility on Program Participants: Addressing the Achilles Heel of CSR through Sport-for-Development Theory

Despite sport management scholars' progress in examining Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), much of this work has been focused on justifying the utility of CSR by discussing the strategic "paybacks" of the practice (Godfrey, 2009; Sheth & Babiak, 2010; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007; Walker & Kent, 2013). Yet, in the quest for legitimation for CSR, many authors have ignored one critical element, which is to demonstrate the elusive win-win proposition of organizations not only benefitting themselves but also program beneficiaries. To measure whether CSR initiatives benefit the groups they were designed for, a better understanding of program development and delivery is warranted. Walker, Heere, Parent, and Drane (2010) found that when consumers believed an organization deployed CSR strategically, the initiative negatively influenced organizational attitudes. To overcome such negatives, and assuage the increasingly strategic perceptions of CSR (Wagner, Lutz, & Weitz, 2009), it is imperative for organizations to communicate the positive effects of CSR programs. This can only be accomplished through third-party program evaluations.

Generally speaking, sport organizations impart significant influences on contemporary society, yielding positive and lasting effects on communities (Eckstein & Delaney, 2002), economies (Hefner, 1990), and social mechanisms that influence individual behavior (Coakley, 2011; Eitzen, 2000). However, for each positive aspect of sport, there are also negatives (Chalip, 2006). While some negatives are by-products of the sport experience (e.g., favorite team losing), many are pejoratively connected to hosting events (e.g., waste disposal, resident displacement, opportunity costs, etc.), professional operations (e.g., attendance costs, public spending issues, etc.), and the production and supply chain management of sport-related products (e.g., labor and

wage problems, environmental degradation, etc.). This dichotomy has been captured by sport-for-development (S4D) scholars who have examined the influence of sport on various social constructs (e.g., social capital and psychic income), where mildly contrasting results have been published (Chadwick, 2009; Wang, Olushola, Chung, Ogura, & Heere, 2012, Bailey, Hillman, Arent, & Petitpas, 2013). S4D has been embraced as a way to foster inter-community development, bridge social and cultural divides, and reinvigorate disadvantaged communities (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011). However, and quite similar to CSR research, Schulenkorf (2012) and Hartmann (2003) noted that project monitoring, evaluation, and planning have been encumbered by a lack of empiricism, because many organizations have not supported programs extending beyond lawful obedience. Similarly, Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) maintained that, "… with little more than anecdotal evidence, beliefs about the impact of sport are driven mainly by heartfelt narratives and evocative images" (p. 285).

Despite a lack of empirical program evaluations, the ideas posited by S4D scholars provide a strong foundation for CSR work. For example, while CSR research has mainly focused on organizational benefits (Inoue, Kent, & Lee, 2011), S4D research has been centered on general participant outcomes and program delivery (Irwin, Irwin, Miller, Somes, & Richey, 2010; Kihl, Tainsky, Babiak, & Bang, 2014; Schulenkorf, 2012). Despite this opposing research trend, a collective rise in organizational resources devoted to practices focused on community engagement, character developmental, and philanthropy has been witnessed (Coalter, 2010). Babiak and Wolfe (2009) showed that nearly 90% of professional sport teams support their own charitable programs. And, an increasing number of sport organizations have embraced their positions as change agents for issues such as social exclusion and anti-social behavior (Coaffee, 2008). This is promising since understanding how sport organizations attempt to remedy societal

ills and promote social change could meaningfully influence future programming (Green, 2005, 2008; Jarvie, 2003; Sherry, 2010; Thibault, 2008). Therefore, as CSR and S4D continue to gain practical significance and scholarly importance, the next phase of research in sport should address the beneficiary and societal influences the initiatives provide. Bridging these fields would allow CSR scholars to take advantage of the knowledge gained in S4D, while S4D scholars could benefit from the CSR researcher knowledge regarding program justification. Accordingly, a revised CSR research focus should be adopted, which seeks to capture *beneficiary outcomes* rather than simply addressing strategic organizational "paybacks".

Implementing the ideas posited by S4D scholars, the purpose of this three-phase (sequential) mixed-method study was to present an evaluation of a CSR initiative of a large international financial institution in the United Kingdom, who partnered with a local professional sport team to deliver an employability program. The focus of the study was centered on the *beneficiary outcomes* of the program participants. The goal of this particular program was to provide the skills and experiences necessary for marginalized youth in London to enter or return to employment. This purpose was supported by understanding the tenets of employability training, CSR, and S4D via a review of the associated literatures.

Corporate Social Responsibility in Sport

Walker and Parent (2010) discussed two different foci regarding why organizations engage in CSR: (1) the normative case, which suggests that fostering community programs and benefitting society are the right things to do, and (2) the instrumental case, which suggests that CSR should be used as an "instrument" to bolster organizational success through greater perceptual and financial returns. Although differences emerge when comparing these perspectives, the motives for organizations adopting CSR reflect both. In other words,

organizational values for “doing the right thing” might supersede, align with, or assume a cursory role, regarding the paybacks an organization could expect to receive (Walker & Mercado, 2013). Regardless of the motive (e.g., strategic, altruistic, egoistic, etc.), it remains unclear whether organizations are successfully doing the right things for society and for themselves. Consequently, strategy and societal discussions are necessary for determining CSR benefits and to assess whether programs are meeting their sought objectives.

Since sport has evolved from its participant-oriented roots, new community-minded business models have been embraced. As examples, numerous CSR programs in professional sport exist, including the Philadelphia Eagles “Youth Partnership”, the Miami Heat’s “Charitable Fund”, the PGA Tour’s “Giving Back” initiative, and the National Football League’s (NFL) “Play 60” campaign. Internationally, the Korean Professional Soccer Organization’s (K-League) physical activity program helps children cultivate their leadership potential; the German Olympic Sports Federation’s “Mission Olympic” promotes active lifestyles in German cities; the Union of European Football Association (UEFA) supports an “Anti-Racism” campaign, and “Eat for Goals” aims to alleviate hunger in the European Union; and the Australian Rugby League supports children’s cancer research through the “Redkite” program. A noticeable trend has been the acquiescence of non-sport organizations (e.g., banks, social movements, and community groups) partnering with sport organizations to deliver CSR programs.

What is observable, is that CSR activities in sport take on many forms and are driven by a diverse array of motives, ranging from health, to economic development, to social integration. Observable still, is that little data are available on the beneficiary impacts or development outcomes these programs provide. Green (2008) argued that the potential of sport to create a developmental vision is ever-present; and through inclusion, diversion, and using sport as a

"hook" for experiential participation, sport organizations can aid in transforming cultures, social structures, and operations that lead to beneficiary changes. While Green's (2008) chapter is written from a S4D perspective, we observe crossover between this perspective and the wave of CSR strategies being adopted. For example, the scholarly interpretation of CSR has been focused on leveraging social programs for business and (to a lesser extent) societal benefit (Quazi & O'Brien, 2000). However, a new approach has been adopted where socially developmental outcomes are being sought. Levermore (2010) agreed, by introducing the term SR-for-development in order to highlight the increasing acquiescence of organizations promoting development through CSR channels. Levermore (2011) bridged the CSR and S4D literatures, citing mega-sport event examples, but cautioned readers that program evaluations have failed to show "… transparent and substantive evidence" (p. 552) of developmental or social outcomes.

The United Nations Sport for Development and Peace (UNOSDP, 2014) initiative lists eight areas where sport is said to contribute to society: (1) individual development, (2) health promotion, (3) gender equality, (4) social integration and social capital development, (5) peace building, (6) disaster relief, (7) economic development, and (8) social mobilization. Interestingly, Salcines, Babiak, and Walters (2013) assembled a compendium of CSR in sport articles where all of the areas noted by the UNOSDP are discussed by the various contributors. This begs the questions of whether CSR and S4D literatures are conceptually distinct, or should the context of the program, intended program outcomes, and beneficiaries be considered prior to labels being applied? Despite this operational and arguably philosophical argument, the common thread has been the lack of evaluation to show whether social or development programs are working.

Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) noted that while many social initiatives are seemingly well-intended, "… they may be not be serving the ends toward which they are directed, or are even

having counterproductive results" (p. 286). The available data on these programs only circumstantially details how much money has been invested and/or how many people's lives the programs have allegedly touched. In other words, impacts are being characterized by dollars allocated or participation rates, rather than by true beneficiary impact, societal development, or community advancement. A case-in-point for this idea was made by Walker, Heere, and Kim (2013) who discussed the NBA's "Read to Achieve" program in the United States. Anecdotally regarded as one of the most successful programs of its kind in professional sport, the year round program was endorsed by every NBA and WNBA team with the purpose to "… help young people develop a life-long love for reading and encourage adults to read regularly to children" (NBA, 2012). According to available information, the program reached more than 50 million children per year through player school visits and reading material donations that exceeded 200,000 units (NBA, 2012). Unfortunately, the authors were unable to locate data detailing program outcomes such as increased literacy, improved standardized test scores, or educational advancement in NBA communities. Additionally, the authors could not locate data that spoke directly to the purpose of the program, which was to engender a love for reading and parental facilitation of reading. The NBA's broad goal, coupled with a lack of evaluation, indicates the organization was seemingly more interested in telling the world about the program, rather than capturing the impact on youth literacy and education in the US. This is one of the many instances of organizations failing to report on the impact of their initiatives.

Many CSR programs in sport arguably reside on the instrumental side of the operational discussion, which means that marketing efforts often supersede beneficiary outcome reporting. However, a growing number of programs are underpinned by specific personal development and community-centric ends, which align more closely with S4D models. For example, the National

Basketball Association's (NBA) "Basketball Without Borders" program provides basketball and socialization opportunities in developing regions around the world; Barclays (i.e., English Premier League title sponsor) supports the "Spaces for Sports" program, which uses the positive values of sport to help disadvantaged young people develop life skills; and Nike's "Access to Sport" team recently developed the "Designed to Move" framework as a call-to-action intended to offset the growing epidemic of youth physical inactivity around the world. The caveat is that while these programs seek to engender community development and outreach, social change, and sport access (respectively), they are couched in the organization's CSR agenda. This creates a gap regarding the conceptual synergy between CSR and S4D. We argue that instead of differentiating the two concepts, and becoming mired in an operational debate, a case for both be presented. This article not only contributes to the program evaluation literature but makes a case for considering both CSR strategies and S4D models as similar, with the only difference residing in the idea of what development actually means for program beneficiaries.

Sport-For-Development (S4D)

S4D is grounded in the normative side of the operational discussion, and unlike research in CSR, has primarily focused on understanding how sport programs benefit participants. Fundamentally, S4D programs seek empowerment through collaborative participation, which (in theory) should lead to various latent outcomes such as capacity building, efficacy, and personal well-being. In his comprehensive literature review, Coalter (2007) opined that existing evidence for the presumed social impact of sport have produced "… rather ambiguous and inconclusive findings" (p. 1). In light of this observation, we adopted the "… interventionalist approach" (p. 287), espoused by Hartmann and Kwauk (2011), who suggested that sport is intended to transform the social life of individuals. While the strict interpretation of this position suggests

that transformation consists of collective resistance and reversal of inequalities reproduced through sport, we argue that such lofty goals are beyond the capacity of most sport organizations. Instead, we focus on the idea of development through empowerment by using a sport organization as the "hook" to foster employment pathways, leading to more productive societal members (Green, 2008). Lawson (2005) noted that empowerment is maintained through power, resources, and collaboration, enabling individuals to understand their environment, obtain resources, and sustain achievement. This latter point is germane given the goals of S4D.

In light of the potential outcomes of S4D programming, a number of sport organizations and community groups around the globe have transitioned their brand of CSR from simple philanthropy to programs based on the needs of their respective communities and society. Among the more popular trends for sport and recreation-based programs have been those dedicated to helping at-risk urban youth populations (Hartmann, 2003), which have centered on replacing deviant behaviors with socially desirable ones (Green, 2008). In defining S4D, Lyras and Welty-Peachey (2011) acknowledged the eight core areas posited by the UNOSDP (2014), which aggregately suggest that sport can be used to exert a positive influence on society and the beneficiaries of S4D programming. For example, numerous authors (e.g., Darnell & Hayhurst, 2011; Kay, 2009; Lyras & Hums, 2009; Sherry, 2010) have demonstrated the power of sport to achieve development and social outcomes such as decolonization, education, gender equality, social mobility, among others.

Scholars have only just begun to explore whether programs adopting these aims are effectively achieving the broad social goals they espouse to remedy (e.g., Fuller, Percy, Bruening, & Cotrufo, 2013; Kay, 2009; Olushola, Jones, Dixon, & Green, 2012). This gap stems from a number of factors and challenges inherent to better understanding sport-based social

intervention and S4D effectiveness. First, many sport scholars lack a clear operational conception of how these programs are predicted or expected to function (Hartmann, 2003), since in all likelihood they were not involved in the developmental phase of the program. Analogous to this point, Green (2005) contended that a lack of theoretical frameworks on the topic has significantly impeded S4D impact research. Second, program implementation may have been performed on an *ad hoc* basis by the organization, which means the intervention model may not fully address the needs of program beneficiaries and consequently, the desired social outcomes are not being met (Lyras & Welty-Peachey, 2011). Third, and perhaps the more fundamental issue, is that sport scholars have lacked proper access to the programs, participants, and administrators, which limits the researcher's ability to conduct a holistic evaluation (Hartmann, 2003; McKenzie, Wilson & Kider, 2001).

In light of these criticisms, Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) offered insight into the components required for conducting a proper intervention impact assessment. Citing the work of Burnett and Uys (2000), the authors provide three levels from which to assess the impact of a given program, which depends heavily on the intended goals and objectives sought by the delivery organization (i.e., *macro* – policies and systems; *meso* – social network development; *micro* – psychological impacts of beneficiaries). Such a rigorous approach to program evaluation is missing from the CSR literature and could assist in better understanding how these initiatives ultimately benefit participants. For this study, we focus on the micro-level-of-analysis since the objective of the funding organization was to improve confidence and employability skills of marginalized youth. Accordingly, this micro-level analysis is centered on assessing the impact of the program on participant self-esteem, empowerment, opportunity fostering, individual perception change, and skill transferability. Sugden (2006) suggested that such an intervention,

while delivered through or by sport, should also be reinforced through non-sport settings where assessments are performed over time to ensure sustainability. As such, this particular evaluation takes place over a 10-week period and multiple layers of data were collected to assess each aspect of the program from the participant, organizer, and delivery perspectives.

Program Evaluation

A program evaluation derives from the idea that a social program should yield demonstrable effects on meeting certain *a priori* objectives (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). A range of program evaluation questions exist with most centered on which programs tend to work best, how various parts of the program interrelate, and what can be done to improve certain program areas (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004). However, Cousins and Whitmore (1998) delved deeper by distinguishing between practical participatory evaluation (P-PE), which is aligned with organizational decision-making, and the higher-order idea of transformative participatory evaluation (T-PE), which seeks to "… empower people through participation in the process of constructing knowledge" (p. 8). Differentiating the two is important for our case since making an explicit commitment to effecting social change is an underpinning element of S4D programming and well-aligned with the T-PE approach discussed by Cousins and Whitmore (1998).

Another way to view a CSR or S4D program evaluation is through a systems lens (see Chelladurai, 2005), which helps the researcher visualize the evaluation process according to the inputs (e.g., funding, volunteer support, etc.), throughputs (e.g., how the inputs are utilized), and programmatic outcomes (e.g., benefits realized to the beneficiaries), while gathering feedback in support of programmatic goals. In conjunction with this systems view, Cousins and Whitmore (1998) provided three process dimensions for a program evaluation: (1) evaluation control (i.e., researcher- and administrator-controlled protocols); (2) participant selection (i.e., legitimate

target group selection); and (3) participation depth (i.e., beyond a mere consultative approach for deeper engagement and analyses). In concert, these perspectives, and systematic inquiry approach, can be used to enhance the understanding of how the variance in the outcomes can be explained by the inputs and throughputs employed.

Researchers and program administrators must utilize valid and reliable analytic techniques to gather data used to make *post hoc* evaluations. Among the most popular are quasi-experimental approaches where participants are asked to complete questionnaire assessments before and after the program (Cordray, 1986). While this approach will demonstrate latent program effectiveness, a purely quantitative approach limits the researcher's ability to understand all the reasons for success or lack thereof. Based on this, many researchers opt for a mixed-methods approach where questionnaire data are combined (i.e., triangulated) with qualitative methods (e.g., focus groups, interviews, etc.), resulting in a more complete picture of program capabilities and influences (King, Cousins, & Whitmore, 2007).

This range of techniques will provide program managers with data that can be utilized to enhance program delivery and more importantly, assess program effectiveness. If the program is deemed effective, whereby the data analysis yields findings *consistent* with program goals, the organization can better communicate the impacts to its stakeholders and community partners as evidence of social value. If the program is deemed ineffective, whereby the data analysis yields findings *inconsistent* with the program goals, the evaluators should provide recommendations for improvement (King et al., 2007). The researcher, in this case, becomes the critical factor in helping the organization determine whether the program is adequately meeting their performance indicators. For this particular study, the researchers and administrators were especially interested in both "soft" (i.e., perceptions, attitudes, and skills) and "hard" (i.e., actual employment)

outcomes; both of which speak to the idea of T-PE proposed by Cousins and Whitmore (1998), since they align with an explicit commitment to influencing direct program beneficiaries and subsequently, social change. Based on the aforementioned evaluative components, the following research questions were developed to guide the investigation:

RQ1: *Will the "soft" employability outcomes (e.g., self-esteem, self-mastery, perceived marketability, etc.) of the CSR program increase as a result of the intervention?*

RQ2: *What are the participant perceptions of CSR program effectiveness, and what forces are considered optimal for success?*

RQ3: *What are the administrator perceptions of CSR program effectiveness, and what forces are considered optimal for program success?*

Research Context

To support theoretical and operational advancement, and better understand program outcomes, a youth-based, CSR, employability program delivered by the foundation of a professional British soccer team and funded by a multinational bank was used as the research context. The two organizations announced a three-year collaborative partnership to provide a soccer and sport employability development program for London area youth not currently in education, employment, or job training. Youth from Surrey, Southwest, and Central London were invited to take part in cohort groups, which engaged participants for ~15-hours per week over a 10-week intervention period. The outcome of the program was to help young people gain or return to employment. To achieve this goal, the program sought to enhance participant work and life skills (i.e., micro-level-of-analysis). In addition to these outcomes, both organizations assisted participants in gaining accreditations for future employment, volunteering, and educational opportunities.

This type of CSR, development program is characterized as a "plus-sport" initiative, whereby sport is used as the mechanism ("hook") for attracting participants to health-, welfare-,

and/or education-based programs (Coalter 2010; Green, 2008). As well, this structure aligns with the T-PE model espoused by Cousins and Whitmore (1998), who agreed that these programs work best with smaller numbers of participants to enable a more intensive experience, which is the case for this particular program. This research is intended to contribute to the debate about the role of sport organizations in contributing collaborative resources to achieve community goals, not shaping a much broader employability movement. Although such a movement is a worthwhile pursuit, the contribution of this research was to understand how diversionary and developmental activities (Kelly, 2012), performed by a central actor in a community, can influence youth employability via frontline delivery.

Employability Intervention

The program provided the following to each program participant: (1) work-related training, (2) skill and attitude training, (3) leadership in sport training, (4) money skills training, (5) mentoring experience, and (5) other employment opportunities (e.g., volunteering, physical activity, and networking visits). The primary focus of the intervention was to enhance employability through work-related training and motivation. In addition to the sought outcome of employment, soccer was used as the "hook" to drive participant interest, since this content was deemed important to bolster employability skills training.

Participants were required to attend the program site three days a week for approximately five hours per day (~15 hours per week). The majority of time each week was spent on three study programs, which upon successful completion and assessments yielded two specific qualifications: (1) an employability skills award, and (2) a community sports leader award. For skills training, the *Oxford, Cambridge, and RSA Examinations* (OCR) board provided a series of employability skills qualifications, since the program was founded on the acquisition of these

skills. Participants undertook the entry *Level-3 OCR Employability Skills Qualification*, which is intended to provide learners the confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding to return to employment (OCR, 2013). Three units were selected from this award: (1) preparing for and learning from interviews, (2) learning about a range of work opportunities, and (3) learning about workplace values and practices. Within a classroom setting, education officers from the soccer club delivered lessons the participations, working through the course content and supervising assessments that were returned to OCR for verification and awarding of the qualification.

A second qualification participants had the opportunity to achieve was the *Level-2 Award in Sports Leadership* (GCSE), issued by *Sports Leaders UK* as their mid-level sport leadership qualification. Participants were afforded the opportunity to develop organizational, motivation, and communication skills, learn from positive role models in sport, learn how to mentor others, and learn to use leadership skills in a variety of settings (Sports Leaders, 2013). Again, this course was delivered in a classroom setting by education officers from the soccer club. Within a practical setting (e.g., local school sports day), participants were required to demonstrate the leadership skills they learned from the course, which were assessed by soccer club education officers. Records produced by the soccer club education officers were sent to *Sport Leaders UK* for verification and qualification. Although a sport qualification, these skills are transferable to general employability, which reflects the approach of using sport as the programmatic "hook".

In addition to these three qualifications, participants were provided with money skills training via a financial program offered by the bank. Participants received training from bank employees via face-to-face workshops designed to build the skills, knowledge, and confidence participants need to effectively manage money. Further, training was provided via a mentorship element of the program, which matched participants with a mentor from either the soccer club or

the bank. Participants and mentors met at a launch event where mentors provided employment advice, shared inspirational experiences, and worked with mentees on developing their CV and cover letter for job applications. Finally, a variety of opportunities were provided to participants, which included community volunteering, participating in health and fitness classes at a local gymnasium, meeting sport industry professionals at soccer conferences and tournaments.

Method

Procedure

A working relationship between the research team, the soccer club foundation, and the bank was negotiated prior to conducting the evaluation, which consisted of pre-intervention and post-intervention program questionnaires, participant focus groups, and administrator interviews. This approach is characterized as a sequential mixed-methods design (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006), which implies "… collecting and analyzing quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study" (p. 3). Fundamentally, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches will point out complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses in the data, which is considered by Johnson and Turner (2003) to be the guiding principle of mixed research. To accomplish this, we adopted a dominant-status sequential approach suggested by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) where the pre-intervention data were collected, followed by the post-intervention data, and concluded with the interview and focus group data collection to gain a deeper understanding of the causal relationship (i.e., quantitative → qualitative approach). Similar methods have been employed by a variety of scholars, in a variety of contexts in sport management (e.g., De Bossher et al., 2010; Deshriver, 2007; Kwon, Trail, & James, 2007; Walker & Kent, 2009; Woolf, Heere, & Walker, 2013). The parallel use of both qualitative and quantitative data helped inform the research questions, above and beyond

either method in isolation. The full programmatic analysis took place over a one-year period, consisting of 4 cohort groups, with approximately *n*=20 individuals in each cohort (N=86).

Quantitative Technique

For this micro-level analysis, and to support the sequential structure of the study, pre- and post-intervention questionnaires were collected before the focus groups and interviews were conducted. The questionnaires consisted of valid and reliable constructs and items adapted from the extant literature on employability and life-skills training. All of the constructs were compared against the program curriculum to ensure the appropriate measures were selected. For example, the constructs of self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-mastery, emotional wellness, perceived external marketability, technical skills (e.g., reading and writing, computer skills, etc.), employability skills (e.g., interviewing, CV writing, etc.), high-order skills (e.g., problem-solving, creativity, etc.), and program satisfaction were assessed 1-week prior to the participant starting the program and 3-weeks after the intervention had concluded. The questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired-sample *t*-tests (i.e., to detect changes among the variables between study conditions), and regression analyses to assess the explanatory power of program satisfaction on perceived employability. In addition to the main statistical effects, effect sizes for the significant results were used to determine the level of practical significance. According to Cohen (1988), *r*=0.01 is a small effect, *r*=0.06 is a moderate effect, and *r*=0.14 is a large effect.

Quantitative Instrumentation

The pre and post questionnaires were developed through a review of the employability, vocational, and life-skills literatures, where scales used in previous research were adapted for the current context and age groups (see Table 1). Some items had to be slightly modified due to contextual differences among prior data collections. The following scales were adapted for the

program evaluation: self-esteem (*10-items*, Rosenberg, 1965); self-efficacy (*3-items*, Schwarzer & Jarusalem, 1995); self-mastery (*5-items*, Marshall & Lang, 1990); perceived marketability (*3-items*, Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003); employability ambition (*6-items*, Rothwell, Herbert, & Rothwell, 2008); emotional wellness (*8-items*, Chesney, Neilands, Chambers, Taylor, & Folkman, 2006); personal skills, which consisted of three aspects: (1) technical skills (*3-items*), (2) employability skills (*3-items*), and (3) higher-order skills (*3-items*, Robinson, 2000); and program satisfaction, which consisted of two aspects: (1) autonomy support (*11-items*), and (2) competence support (*4-items*, Lim & Wang, 2009). Autonomy and competence support were used to examine and characterize the quality of the social-learning and motivational environment fostered by the instructors and administrators. According to Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), autonomy-supportive social contexts facilitate self-determined motivation, esteem enhancement, and increased social functioning. Similarly, the level of perceived competence among the training staff should enable a greater motivation for work, since the construct is considered a determinant of intrinsic motivation (Guay, Boggiano, & Vallerand, 2001).

Qualitative Technique

The qualitative data were collected via interviews with program administrators and focus groups with program participants two weeks after the post-program questionnaires were administered. For a program administrator to qualify for inclusion in the data collection, they should have been responsible for the development or delivery of the program. Six interviews were conducted mid-way through the first year of the program, while another set of interviews were conducted after the full year of the program (N=12). The interviews, which included one bank employee and five soccer club employees on each occasion, were conducted at the interviewees' offices with durations ranging from 17 to 45 minutes. A semi-structured interview

protocol guided administrator interviews. The researchers designed the interview protocol to produce open-ended questions that considered the following four general themes according to the research questions: (1) perceptions of program effectiveness, (2) perceptions of participant success, (3) perceptions of program impacts, and (4) program challenges and opportunities.

Three focus groups were conducted, consisting of six participants each (N=18). One focus group was conducted in the final week of the program for the first three cohorts. The participants for each focus group were randomly selected from the cohort register using a simple random sampling technique, whereby six numbers were randomly selected by the researcher, which corresponded to six participants in the cohort register. A second semi-structured interview protocol was used to guide the three focus groups. The interviews and focus group transcripts were analyzed by adopting an inductive approach of emergent coding, whereby themes were established based upon examination of the data (Stemler, 2001).

All interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded and professionally transcribed. The interview and focus group transcriptions were analyzed using an inductive coding strategy to extract themes and quotes related to the research questions and the goals of the program. Two researchers analysed the transcriptions using a line-by-line open coding procedure to "… expose the thoughts, ideas, and meanings contained therein" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 102). To remain focused on the research questions, a selective coding process was used whereby only data relevant to program effectiveness (i.e., employability outcomes) and program delivery (i.e., conditions for success) were analyzed. Segments of relevant and meaningful text were identified with memos with initial codes being attributed (Spiggle, 1994). Axial coding was then used to group these segments of text into larger abstract categories, to sort, synthesize, organize, and reassemble the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000), from which general themes were established.

Two researchers read each other's memos and discussed their insights, comparing coding and themes before reaching a consensus on the effectiveness and delivery themes. Validity of the qualitative data was ensured through: (1) the use of multiple methods of data collection, and (2) through the use of multiple researchers to reduce researcher bias (Maxwell, 2012).

[Insert Table 1 here]

Quantitative Results & Discussion

Participants

The results of this evaluation include the four cohort groups from year-1 of the program, which consisted of N=86 total program participants who completed the full 10-weeks, and participated in the pre- and post-program data collection. Ages ranged from 16-28 (M=20.78), with n=80 males and n=6 females; ethnicities were White/White British (n=32), Black (n=31), Mixed (n=15), Asian/Asian British (n=1), and "other" (n=5). Of the participants, n=72 were unemployed and n=8 were either in or had just left education at the outset of the program; the majority (n=66) were seeking employment after the program, while the remaining were interested in educational channels after the program was complete.

Analyses

Prior to the main analyses, preliminary data checks confirmed no violations of normality or linearity. Visual inspection of the histograms showed a slightly positively skewed distribution (i.e., more lower than higher values in the data range) in the pre-intervention condition, and a slightly negatively skewed distribution (i.e., more higher than lower values in the data range) in the post-intervention condition. However, since none of the skewness values exceeded +/- 2 and none of the kurtosis values exceeded +/- 7, the distributions were deemed acceptable for further analysis (Curran, West, & Finch, 1996). Following these preliminary data checks, construct

correlations, mean scores, and internal consistency calculations for the research variables (i.e., for both test conditions) were calculated (see Tables 2 and 3). All of the correlations and reliability values fell in the acceptable range for testing.

[Insert Table 2 here]

[Insert Table 3 here]

The descriptive analyses showed that all research variables increased from the pre-intervention to the post-intervention condition (see Table 4). The largest proportional mean differences for the attitude variables were seen for perceived external marketability, emotional well-being, self-efficacy, and higher-order skills, which from a quantitative perspective, indicated the program had a significant perceptual influence on the program beneficiaries. Paired-sample *t*-tests revealed statistically significant increases among all the research variables between the study conditions (see Tables 4 and 5). To illustrate the practical significance of the pre-post changes, effect size calculations were performed. The within-group analyses showed large effect sizes for perceived marketability (r=.38), higher-order skills (r=.26), emotional well-being (r=.20), self-efficacy (r=.18), self-esteem (r=.17), and employment ambition (r=.17), technical skills (r =.15), and employability skills (r=.15). Finally, a moderate effect size was seen for self-mastery (r=.06).

[Insert Table 4 here]

[Insert Table 5 here]

In the post-intervention phase, participants were asked about satisfaction with the program based on two dimensions: (1) autonomy support and (2) competence support (Lim & Wang, 2009. These variables were used as proxies for overall program satisfaction and were based on the delivery of the program by the instructional staff. The mean scores revealed that

autonomy support was rated slightly lower (M=4.39, SD=.481) than competence support (M=4.50, SD=.500), which indicates the training was both self-directed and adequately (i.e., competently) delivered by the instructors. To probe this effect further, we were interested in the influence of both competence and autonomy support on employability ambition, since the primary aim of the program was personal empowerment for work. The regression analysis showed that autonomy support significantly and positively influenced employability ambition (β=.462, p=.005, R^2=.26), explaining nearly 30% of the variance. However, competence support was not a significantly influencer of this particular variable (β=.078, p=.632).

The quantitative portion of the study sought to answer RQ1 and RQ2, which were focused on perceptual/attitudinal and skills changes and program effectiveness. From these results, several observations emerged. First, it is clear that the program intervention has partially achieved its stated goals, which was to develop life-skills and perceptually enable employment outcomes through attitude and skill changes among the participants. The notable uptick in the mean scores, and significant variable differences, from the pre- to post-intervention illustrate the program is working towards achieving its developmental objectives. However, the modest changes for self-mastery, self-esteem, and employability ambition are concerning since these variables fundamentally represent empowerment but can be quite temporal in their effect if not internalized or acted upon. That said, the idea that such changes did occur in a relatively short period of time is noteworthy. And given the goals of SR and S4D programs to create opportunities and promote individual and social advancement, underscores the importance of this particular intervention.

Second, considering the average mean scores, interesting results for perceived marketability and self-esteem emerged. Although perceived marketability had the largest effect

size, levels still remained moderate with a mean average of 3.65 out of 5. In comparison, self-efficacy returned a moderate effect size but the mean scores remained high among participants prior to the program and following the program. This result indicates that prior to the program, participant attitudes were positive (and remained positive), but marketability was viewed as the most important for participants. Additionally, perceived marketability showed the greatest increase among all variables, which indicates the program provided an environment where perceived employability was fostered.

Third, this evaluation illustrates how the non-sport components of the program influenced the beneficiaries, which we view as both a positive and a negative. On the positive side, participants showed increases in problem solving, typing, and interviewing, which are transferrable employment skills. As such, we feel that, at least in this context, the previously espoused notion of sport-based social interventions lacking a coherent conceptual foundation (see Hartman, 2003) is misguided, as RQ1 was answered with these data. Additionally, the participants were satisfied with both program delivery and autonomy, which was indicated by the high mean scores for both constructs. This latter result shows that while the participants did improve as a result of the program offerings, they also appreciated and enjoyed the manner in which the content was delivered. On the negative side, however, the results failed to show if and how sport was used as the catalyst for participant success. This is troubling from both practical and theoretical perspectives since "sport" is the critical characteristic of S4D programming.

To summarize the quantitative aspect of the research, this particular employability program provided positive insights into the experiences, perceptions, and outcomes of an interventionist, T-PE approach. However, beyond perceptual and attitudinal improvements for the participants (i.e., "soft" changes), it is unknown whether the program is achieving the "hard"

programmatic outcome of employment, which can only be assessed through proper tracking and follow-up by the host organization. As such, we posit that when participants are unsuccessful in achieving their "hard" goal (i.e., employment), and they experience failures in the search process, the "soft" changes might rapidly evaporate and negate the value of the intervention. Therefore, evaluating the outcomes of the program should be confirmed in the long-term and should be a key area of concern for both the host organization and the sponsoring firm.

Qualitative Results & Discussion

Interviews with administrators and focus groups with participants were conducted. Focus group participant ages ranged from 16-25, with *n*=17 males and *n*=1 female; ethnicities were White/White British (*n*=7), Black (*n*=7), Mixed (*n*=4). The purpose of these conversations was to more deeply explore the idea of CSR program effectiveness beyond the quantitative pre-post comparison and explore the issues and challenges inherent to this social intervention. Based on the interviews and focus groups we identified the following four themes:

Theme #1: Lack of synergy between program goals and the delivery

For the financial institution, employability was the cornerstone of this particular program, and they viewed delivery by the Premier League soccer club as the mechanism by which participants were attracted and retained (e.g., the "hook"). This means the influence of the financial institution in designing the program, supplanted the influence of the soccer organization as the deliverer. While characterized as a "plus-sport" initiative (Coalter, 2010), a theme that emerged in the qualitative data was the question of how the program was being delivered. This question is critical to gauge overall program effectiveness (RQ3) through both a systems lens (Chelladurai, 2005) or the process dimensions outlined by Cousins and Whitmore (1998). Accordingly, from the interviews and our observations, it was apparent the programmatic

outcome sought by both the financial institution and the soccer foundation was employability using sport as the "hook". Yet, while both organizations agreed there was a bigger goal than sport participation to be accomplished, they were unclear about what the actual role of sport in this program. And, moreover, they were seemingly unclear about how sport could help with accomplishing employability outcomes.

> It certainly wasn't created to try and get hundreds of young people jobs in sport, it was to try and be generic, use football and the power of sport to help to get them in and then to teach them employability; and the sports leadership element was about more about the leadership side than the actual sport side. (Soccer Club Foundation Head of Development)

> For me, it is using a sport organization to give young people the employability skills to help them get a job, go back into education or training, or apprenticeship. I still think of it as an employability program, which means using sport as the tool. (Bank Community Investment Assistant VP)

Many of the administrator comments focused on sport as a "hook", and reflected the use of sport to recruit participants, rather than on how to use sport to accomplish the larger employability goal. Thus, there were few sport opportunities provided to the participants. However, the strength of the Premier League soccer club's brand was apparently enough to recruit participants and give them an initial sense of empowerment. As one program participant noted "… it's football. It feels grand. You're worth more. It's the Premier League. The high end of football". Although other employment training programs exist in the UK, notably from the UK Government agency *Jobcentre Plus*, linking employment training to the UK's national sport of football was an attractive mechanism and a tool for participant retention:

> The brand obviously of the club and the fact that it is delivered this way [*soccer club*], I think it is hugely attractive to the young people and will help recruitment for the program in the years ahead. (Bank Community Investment Assistant VP)

> Coming to a [*Premier League*] stadium is a whole different thing. It's like yeah, you're coming to a stadium. It's just the atmosphere and environment you're working in is more

> positive and can make you think bigger just based on the location of the program. (Program Participant FG2)

The glamour associated with the professional soccer team, led to participant aspirations that were not necessarily aligned with program goals. Whereas the financial institution wanted to provide jobs through sport, many participants were hoping for a job in sports: "… I want to be a coach so the program was very beneficial to me" (Program Participant FG1). The educational manager of the soccer club foundation further acknowledged this divide: "… I still think of it as an employability program means as sport as the tool, but I guess maybe the people that sign up see as an employability probably to get into sports". The soccer club failed to conduct any formal research into participant aspirations, which suggests an adverse relationship between the content of the program and its influence on recruitment efforts. In line with the views of Cousins and Whitmore (1998), who outlined process dimensions of: (1) evaluation control, (2) participant selection, and (3) participation depth, we concur that a focused recruitment process, delivery, and outcome achievement did not result from this program. Thus, it can be concluded from this theme that a major challenge faced by the CSR program was to understand the role of sport within the intervention, and achieving consistency between the stated program vision and actual program delivery. This issue could be assuaged through a more iterative process of interviewing potential participants prior to the program, providing them with a realistic overview of the potential program outcomes, and using the collected data to inform future program goals.

Theme #2: The challenge of skill improvement within a sport program intervention

Rather than through direct observation of the interview and focus group data, most of the evidence for the second theme was gleaned indirectly from what was not said. Meaning, there was a noticeable absence of the participants mentioning "hard" skill development. This observation indicated that skill improvement within a program intervention is a challenging

undertaking, especially within a 10-week period. Additionally, there is a lack of evidence that sport intervention programs (in general) have the power to yield "hard" beneficiary skills. Through an extensive literature review, Bailey, et al. (2013) concluded that sport-related physical activity programs can generate improvements in job success and job performance. However, the only "hard" skill improvements noted by the authors were in goal setting, time management, leadership, and teamwork. From the focus group data, there was (albeit minor) evidence of perceived skill attainment, many of which were not captured by the questionnaire data:

> After this course, my mind is more focused. The goals that I'm setting, I'm trying to strive towards. Look at everyday as an opportunity to find something new and just make the most of it and just stick it out really. To write plans down in facts and figures, so that you can see what you're trying to stride for, and set little goals, and now I'm seeing little outcomes. (Program Participant FG2)

> They have more of a focus on what they want to do, that is, once they have completed the program over the course of the 10 weeks we hope they have a clearer picture of what they can do with their life (Soccer Club Foundation Program Development Officer)

These quotes affirm that perceived strides in "hard" skill improvements (e.g., reading, writing, interviewing, public speaking, etc.) may be overly ambitious for a part-time 10-week program. While the quantitative data indicated upticks in these areas, there are obviously barriers for the participants to perceive achievement in these particular areas. Complicating matters more is that by using sport as a "hook", the program drew a diverse population making it nearly impossible to design an effective intervention strategy that adopts a "one treatment cures all" mantra. The participants recognized this as well: "… yeah, because a few of us came from like high education, and there was few people in the class that came from work…they [*former university students*] will literally be doing easy work" (Program participant, FG1). Another focus group participant mentioned this divide by indicating that many program participants did not

take the coursework seriously and, therefore, struggled. Several participants noted that the program was not challenging enough:

> Work-wise it was easy. You could literally get through the booklet in a couple of hours. What we did in 10 weeks, you could probably get done in 5 weeks. So, if you came from a university to this would be a walk in the park basically. The level of the work should be at least at Level 2/ 2nd Year GSCE level. (Program participant FG3)

Thus, the heterogeneity of each cohort group represented an inherent challenge for this, and many other S4D programs that intend to use sport as a "hook". The outcomes of S4D programs are influenced by several factors (McCormack & Chalip, 1988), and many S4D programs may only work for certain target groups under certain circumstances. Related to this, was the aforementioned confusion about whether the intervention was meant to be an employability-through-sports program, or an employability-in-sports program. Both organizing parties seemed divided on this aspect, as the financial institution wanted participants to gain employment outside sport, while the soccer foundation was happy to place participants in sport organizations (e.g., coaches, stewards, etc.). For example, the financial institution noted: "… for me, it is using sport to give young people the employability skills to help them get a job, go back into education, or training, or apprenticeship" (Bank Community Investment Assistant VP); while the soccer club foundation noted: "… we pitch the program as employability with sport as the hook, but actually most of the employment outcomes are within sport" (Soccer Club Foundation Head of Development). Ultimately, the program seemed to be positioned between being a "sport-plus" initiative and true S4D program.

Theme #3: Positive attitude change

Although hard skill development was challenging, there was substantial evidence for positive attitude change (i.e., "soft" outcomes), facilitated by strong program elements (e.g., mentoring). Bailey et al. (2013) opined that sport-based physical activity programs can generate

emotional capital, which is defined as psychological and mental health benefits (Dishman, 1995). One participant remarked: "… it [*Funding Bank's Global HQ*] was inspiring going to the building and seeing how everything works" (Program Participant FG1). From focus group data it appears this program set a good example for the participants, offering a gateway to a brighter future by providing access to facilities, executive personnel, and mentorship:

> Yeah, but I found it quite good at first because he [*mentor*] was quite inspiring. He is only about five years older than me and he is a manager at [*Soccer Club*] and he is doing the stuff that he wants to do. (Program Participant FG2)

These quotes show how the inspirational events and relationships served an eye-opening purpose, which were underpinned by employment opportunities and individual attention. The focus group data further indicated that various tutoring sessions and employability skills qualifications served as catalysts for participants to perceive employment opportunities:

> I can see a lot more options now, before I could only see one option. Before this course I was a bit blind eyed to a few things. My mind was a bit blurred on where I was going and what I am going to do in a few months, let a lone a few years. This course definitely opened my eyes [*to opportunities*]. (Program Participant FG3)

The questionnaire data measured self-esteem and self-efficacy, which were confirmed by both the participants and administrators, mainly in terms of increased confidence among the participants. For example, both groups mentioned confidence with regard to specific capabilities and also a general boost in self-esteem and efficacy, illustrated by the participant's improved ability to communicate, interview, and were further reflected by an elevated level of motivation:

> It's important to boost confidence and learn how to speak to groups, and that part is important even if you're not going to do coaching. In terms of going for a job now, a lot of us should feel a bit more confident in talking to a person like you giving us questions and answering confidently. (Program Participant FG1)

> Just waking up [*laughter*], waking up to do something. Yeah, that's a positive thing, you know, setting your alarm to wake up at 7, to get down here, absolutely good. (Program Participant FG2)

> But the main change I suppose in them is confidence, having the confidence to speak […] They have really shown and developed how they speak to other professionals, like when we first came across a number of them, they were quite shy and they don't necessarily know how to have that professional chat with someone. I think the participants open up a lot more as the program goes on. They become more comfortable with the surroundings and the people, which helps them build their confidence. They feel that we are more knowledgeable and more ready to take employment for a go. (Soccer Club Foundation Program Development Officer)

While an increased readiness for employment was not closely tied to new skill acquisition (e.g., Theme #2), it was strongly related to positive attitude changes among the participants. A primary positive attitude change was a motivated routine, whereby participants indicated a general propensity to break from their negative routine in order to engage in more positive behaviors with an enhanced professional attitude:

> Getting up every day, getting into that rhythm is good. When you're not working, you wake up at a really late time. Terrible sleep patterns, so just getting used to waking up every day at 8 o'clock, it's a good thing. (Program Participant FG1)

> It gave me something to do with myself for the last 10 weeks. It kept me from mingling, loitering on the roads, on estates, with friends who are not doing much either. So it got me out from that routine really, away from people who are not doing much and around people who are trying to get somewhere. So when I'm on this course I'm getting energy from the rest of the group. They're all making sure they're here early. They're putting their heads down. It's got me in a more positive perspective. (Program Participant FG2)

> I feel more comfortable talking to people and I know a bit more about the workplace from the Employability course and how to behave in the workplace. What they expect of me, code of conduct. It's got our mind frame in a more professional manner and it's got us thinking more professionally. Got us looking more professional. (Program Participant FG2)

Based on these quotes, it can be concluded that a positive attitude change occurred among the participants. Although hard skill development is a challenge for this, and many other, CSR and S4D programs, the "soft" outcomes are important since they will likely manifest as an actual behavioral change for the participants (e.g., future employment) (Anderson-Butcher, Riley, Amorose, Iachini, & Wade-Mdivanian, 2014). Evidence of this was identified by

participants disengaging from prior pejorative patterns, and being motivated to engage in a routine necessary for seeking, and eventually gaining, employment.

Theme #4: Translating positives attitudes into enduring outcomes

The previous two themes illustrated program challenges in terms of "hard" skill development. However, the capacity of a developmentally-couched, CSR sport program to elicit positive attitude changes was a critical element. While "hard" skills and positive attitudes are seen as a precursor to employability, participants did not achieve the end goal of actual employment at the time of the focus groups. As such, translating positives attitudes into enduring outcomes was viewed as being the logical next step on the basis of strong attitude improvements. Indirect evidence of enduring outcomes from the program were observed during the focus groups. For example, mentions of achieving employment though networking opportunities, training, and certification attainment were the main ideas conveyed by the participants:

> The contacts you have been given. I mean, you know, no one is going to hand you job on the plate but this is the closest way you get to someone. We did a lot of trips and got to meet a lot of people and get contacts. I think that was probably the most important thing. Meeting new people and meeting coaches. (Program Participant FG1)

> After this course, I'm now on an employability course and I've got my FA level 1 going for me. There's a few things in line. I just need to stick it out and keep an open mind for other things coming at me, opportunities. (Program Participant FG1)

> I wanted to make the most of it, and the result is that things are still going. And it's not like it's just cut off and it's back to what I was doing at the beginning. Things are still going for me. I've got this employability course, I've got this FA Level 1. Being on that, other opportunities will come from that. (Program Participant FG3)

To overcome the challenge of translating attitudes into enduring outcomes, program administrators identified that establishing exit routes for program participants was a critical and necessary aspect of the overall program delivery. Exit routes would entail placing participants with partner organizations or providing internal employment through the bank partner or soccer

club. However, obtaining the necessary resources to deliver high-quality exit routes was identified as a barrier. Whereas similar programs have staff responsible for exit routes and employment planning, this particular program was not adequately resourced in this area. This means that when a cohort ended, the staff were immediately focused on recruiting the next cohort rather than working to achieve the enduring (and necessary) outcome of actual employment or intern placement:

> One of the big things or opportunity we're going for the next ten weeks is trying to make sure that we have a multitude to different exit routes. So it's not necessarily just volunteer and come and work for [*Soccer Club*] or go and work for [*Bank*] that we do have other bits and pieces that we've already been talking to other in-house departments about them coming to do. So, I think there haven't been as many as we would have liked but I think that will get better as the program develops. (Soccer Club Foundation Operations Officer)

> Having more partnerships in local businesses I think there is something that we did try to look at before Christmas by and contacting Westfield in particular to kind of come in and do some kind of career talks and talk about any opportunities that they had especially over the Christmas period. (Soccer Club Foundation Program Development Officer)

> I know other competitors like Street League [Soccer-based Employability Program in London] have so many designated persons to find them outcomes and I would love that. I guess that is what the job center is for, but we could have one in our program just specifically for that and I think that could make it better. (Soccer Club Foundation Education Manager)

Much of the post program guidance was dependent on the relationship between the participant and their assigned mentor. After their initial meeting, it was up to the mentor and participant to maintain a relationship, since this initiative was started as part of the intervention, rather than as a post-program strategy. Mentors were mainly people working for the bank or upper management of the soccer club. As such, it was noticeable that many relationships faltered because the mentors did not know how to empower participants. Additionally, the participants did not know how to communicate with the mentor and were easily discouraged. One participant complained: "… yeah, I had the first meeting with him and then I tried to contact him via email,

but he never contacted me back" (Program Participant FG3). Another participant had a great first meeting but never contacted the mentor again: "… after that, he was like probably too busy" (Program Participant FG1). After the interviewer probed further, the participant acknowledged it was actually the mentor who contacted her again to meet, which they did. While some participants were still in contact with the mentors, and stated how important they thought these mentors could be, in its current discourse the mentors struggled to connect to the participants.

In summary, this theme identified a critical shortcoming of the program. Although positive attitude changes represent significant participant benefits, there still exists the need to translate positive attitudes to enduring outcomes. In concert with this strategy, the capacity to deliver the enduring outcome of actual employment should be viewed as a necessary aspect for the program in the future. Positive attitude changes are highly temporal and might wane over time if not translated into "hard" outcomes for the participants. While the program is achieving many of its stated goals regarding improvements in participant confidence, esteem, and motivation for work, without a proper exit strategy, these attitudes might not be converted into the ultimate goal of providing employment to the beneficiaries.

General Discussion & Implications

Ultimately, the goal of this study was to emphasize the need for program evaluation within the stream of sport management CSR literature. This was accomplished through a case analysis and the implementation of S4D scholarship. This particular case provided insights on the challenges that might be associated with a CSR program evaluation, most notably the use of sport itself within the intervention. S4D stresses the importance of sport being the catalyst for the intervention (Lyras & Welty-Peachey, 2011; Sherry, 2010). Yet, many sport-centric CSR programs fail to include a sport component, and instead rely on the glamour and allure of

professional sport to attract participants. This case study questions the effectiveness of such an approach. Based on this, we argue that using the sport as a "hook" could lead to a situation that ignores the expertise and network of the sport organization and the funding arm of the program. In this instance, the financial institution wanted participants to gain general employment, yet the soccer foundation lacked the expertise and network to assist the participants in this quest. Instead, their strengths were actually in providing participants jobs within sport.

Although CSR and S4D have previously been approached as separate streams of research, the case study illustrates the overlap between both fields. Over the past several decades, sport organizations around the world have devoted considerable time and expense to activities that aim to promote positive social change. Many of these organizations invest millions in CSR programs with the primary purpose of bolstering organizational perception, and to a lesser extent, generating positive societal outcomes. However, when these activities are performed in a vacuum, divergent visions of the programs are considered, and administrators fail to evaluate and report programmatic benefits, the aim of achieving broad social impact will never materialize. We concur with the position of Hartmann (2003, p. 299) that sport should be "… retheorized" as an educational practice that contributes to changes in social life; and the position of Sherry (2010) who advocated for broad social outcomes to result from social programming. However, these effects do not occur by accident since CSR and S4D programming will not automatically yield socially desirable outcomes. Such outcomes can only accrue if the proper focus is first adopted, followed by detailed planning, delivery, and evaluation by scholars.

While social interventions undoubtedly result in immediate psychological increases for beneficiaries, many of the outcomes could be (arguably) be explained by the *Hawthorne Effect* (Landsberger, 1958). The *Hawthorne Effect* was proposed as a way to understand the temporary

nature of a psychological change, particularly when such effects are not acted upon in a post-intervention model – in this case, converting "soft" outcomes into "hard" outcomes. While we believe the program evaluated in this study was effective as a social intervention, issues and challenges still remain. For example, participant tracking, mentoring, and participant selection remain primary concerns for long-term success. Moreover, these issues should be resolved so that future modeling of this program in additional contexts can be performed. While we stated at the outset that an employability movement is beyond the scope of this small-scale initiative, this particular outcome is a worthwhile and necessary pursuit in light of the growing number of marginalized youth worldwide and shrinking government budgets used to assist the unemployed.

The literature on CSR in sport has been informative regarding the motives, antecedents, stakeholder perceptions, and strategic benefits gleaned for the organizations themselves (Inoue & Kent, & Lee, 2011; Walker & Kent, 2009). While this research has given rise to several interesting discussion points, our contention is that few strides have been taken to empirically evaluate the beneficiary or societal impacts these programs provide. Thus, CSR scholars are encouraged by the call of Schulenkorf (2012), who offered several areas where scholars could capitalize on this emerging line of work. For example, longitudinal evaluations, amassing numerous case-study examples to help draw parallels, and matching stated program goals with what is actually being achieved by the organizations, are all critical to advancing the literature. This can only be accomplished when synergy is created between academia and practice, which is what was accomplished with this study. The authors had access to both partner organizations and the program participants, making a holistic evaluation possible. Additionally, as noted by Hartmann (2003), the *ad hoc* nature of many of these programs limits the impact and scope of what can be accomplished. This was not altogether the case with this particular program. As part

of their CSR employability agenda, the multinational bank was interested in the power of sport as the "hook" for attracting marginalized participants to achieve employment outcomes. While this goal will take time to assess through tracking and job placement, immediate skill improvements and attitudinal changes did occur among the beneficiaries.

Previously, many sport organizations have gone to great lengths and considerable expense to market, promote, and publicize their social programming. However, the impact could be far greater if they used their pulpit to actually engender change and offer lasting socio-cultural benefits to program beneficiaries. In concert with the work of S4D scholars in this area (e.g., Green, 2005; 2008; Hartmann, 2003; Sherry, 2010; Schulenkorf, 2012), this study aimed to fill the evaluation void by examining both the processes and outcomes associated with a CSR program centered on youth employability. While the immediate performance indicators were achieved, the goal of broad employability outcomes will take some time to assess. What is clear, is that through access to the program and deployment discussions with the partner organizations the researchers were able to empirically and holistically assess this particular program.

Based on our results and findings, we encourage CSR scholars to pursue research agendas that explore the societal impacts of social programming. If we continue the path of current CSR, the literature will be mired with work that reflects only the strategic payback for the organizations and the antecedent conditions that drive CSR decision-making, rather than reporting actual benefits. This point is even more germane in light of the public backlash against financing professional sport stadiums, mega-events, and recreation-based programs around the world. Therefore, the importance of accounting for multiple levels-of-analysis (e.g., macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level) and gathering multiple source data to understand the holistic impact of CSR and S4D is not only important, but necessary for future program deployment. This article

will hopefully stimulate such a debate by narrowing the public-private interest divide and showing how the interactions within (and across) levels of sport businesses intersect for social change. This paradigm shift will enable sport organizations to tout their social programming as beneficial and critical for social and stakeholder advancement rather than just peripherally connected to their core operations.

Conclusion and Limitations

In sum, we conclude with a few salient questions and limitations to consider for evaluation research in CSR: (1) how does the program benefit program participants, the local community, and society at large; (2) how long will the outcomes of the program last for the beneficiaries and society; (3) how do the immediate "soft" psychological outcomes (i.e., self-esteem, marketability, perceived skills) translate into "hard" outcomes (i.e., employment, career, education) for the program benefactors; (4) what is the social return on investment for the organization facilitating the program, and the community where the program is housed; and (5) how can programmatic outcomes be effectively integrated into both the focal organization's and their corporate partner's marketing strategies? In terms of major limitations, is the issue of generalizability to other CSR programs since this case study was exploratory in nature? As well, the researchers had very little say in the design and implementation of the program, which limited to scope and depth of measurement. In summary, answering the aforementioned questions, addressing them as potential limitations, and expanding the substance of program evaluations should spawn a new era of CSR research in sport – one where beneficiary and societal impacts are deemed more important than those potentially reaped by organizations deploying CSR initiatives.

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Table 1. *Variables and Example Items*

Employability Variable	Example Items
Self-Esteem [a]	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others I am able to do things as well as most other people
Self-Efficacy [b]	I can always manage to solve difficult problems if I try hard enough It is easy for me to try my best and accomplish my goals
Self-Mastery [b]	What happens to me in the future, mostly depends on me There is really no way I can solve the problems I have (*Reverse Coded*)
Perceived Marketability [b]	I could easily obtain a job with the skills I have Given my skills and experience, an organization would view me as valuable
Emotional Well-Being [b]	[*I am able to*] … Make unpleasant thoughts go away [*I am able to*] … Look for something good in a negative situation
Employability Ambition [b]	I am satisfied with my progress of meeting my goals for new skill development I feel it is urgent that I get on with my career development
Technical Skills [c]	Reading / Writing Typing
Higher-Order Skills [c]	Problem-Solving Decision-Making
Employability Skills [c]	Interviewing for a job Writing a cover letter
Autonomy Support [b]	[*In this program*] … The instructors provided us with choices and options [*In this program*] … The instructors showed confidence in our abilities to do well
Competence Support [b]	[*In this program*] … The instructors helped us improve [*In this program*] … I feel the instructors wanted us to do well

Note. [a] Anchored by a 4-point scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 4 "strongly agree"
[b] Anchored by a 5-point scale from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree"
[c] Anchored by a 5-point scale from 1 "very bad" to 5 "very good"

Table 2. *Mean Score and Change Statistics*

	Pre-Intervention	**Post-Intervention**	**Pre → Post Difference**
Employability Constructs	*Mean (SD)*	*Mean (SD)*	M_{change}
Self-Esteem	3.12 (.437)	3.27 (.453)	0.15 $^{+}$
Self-Efficacy	3.82 (.625)	4.02 (.550)	0.20 $^{+}$
Self-Mastery	4.04 (.634)	4.12 (.646)	0.08 $^{+}$
Perceived Marketability	3.07 (.762)	3.65 (.633)	0.58 $^{+}$
Emotional Well-Being	3.70 (.678)	3.95 (.685)	0.25 $^{+}$
Employment Ambition	4.10 (.541)	4.26 (.535)	0.16 $^{+}$
Technical Skills	3.96 (.588)	4.14 (.545)	0.18 $^{+}$
Higher-Order Skills	3.68 (.602)	3.99 (.528)	0.31 $^{+}$
Employability Skills	3.37 (.641)	3.56 (.622)	0.19 $^{+}$
Autonomy Support	*Post only*	4.39 (.481)	--
Competence Support	*Post only*	4.50 (.500)	--

Note. $^{+}$ Indicates a positive and significant mean score increase

Table 3. *Zero-Order Correlation (Pre-Intervention)*

		Correlations								
Construct	**α**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
1. Self-Esteem	.81	1.00								
2. Self-Efficacy	.74	.524**	1.00							
3. Self-Mastery	.81	.658**	.514**	1.00						
4. Perceived Marketability	.76	.538**	.414**	.474**	1.00					
5. Emotional Wellness	.83	.475**	.514**	.567**	.311**	1.00				
6. Employment Ambition	.71	.468**	.489**	.407**	.356**	.289**	1.00			
7. Technical Skills	.75	.237**	.300**	.203	.219*	.253*	.145	1.00		
8. Higher-Order Skills	.73	.390**	.683**	.386**	.320*	.362**	.463**	.331**	1.00	
9. Employability Skills	.71	.366**	.461**	.403**	.529**	.370**	.525**	.326**	.539**	1.00

Note. *p<.05, **p<.01

Table 4. *Zero-Order Correlation (Post-Intervention)*

		Correlations								
Construct	**α**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
1. Self-Esteem	.85	1.00								
2. Self-Efficacy	.76	.570**	1.00							
3. Self-Mastery	.80	.708**	.444**	1.00						
4. Perceived Marketability	.76	.516**	.342**	.425**	1.00					
5. Emotional Wellness	.92	.475**	.359**	.432**	.428**	1.00				
6. Employment Ambition	.80	.530**	.487**	.540**	.445**	.542**	1.00			
7. Technical Skills	.74	.358**	.316**	.369**	.326**	.276**	.311**	1.00		
8. Higher-Order Skills	.71	.368*	.620**	.402**	.269**	.410**	.416**	.306**	1.00	
9. Employability Skills	.74	.503**	.433**	.442**	.502**	.356**	.348**	.448**	.606**	1.00

Note. *p<.05, **p<.01

Table 5. *Paired-Samples T-Test*

	Standard Error (*df*)	95% Confidence Interval		Pre → Post	Pre → Post	Effect Size
Paired Variables	Pre → Post	Lower	Upper	*t*-Value [a]	*p*-Value	*r*
Pair 1: Self-Esteem	0.045 (85)	-0.226	-0.049	3.096	.003 [+]	.166
Pair 2: Self-Efficacy	0.060 (85)	-0.314	-0.076	3.254	.002 [+]	.167
Pair 3: Self-Mastery	0.073 (85)	-0.802	1.096	2.865	.000 [+]	.062
Pair 4: Perceived Marketability	0.074 (85)	-0.716	-0.425	7.812	.000 [+]	.382
Pair 5: Emotional Well-Being	0.054 (85)	-0.261	-0.046	2.840	.006 [+]	.180
Pair 6: Employment Ambition	0.077 (85)	0.391	-0.085	3.095	.003 [+]	.147
Pair 7: Technical Skills	0.045 (85)	-0.252	-0.073	3.620	.001 [+]	.152
Pair 8: Higher-Order Skills	0.054 (85)	-0.416	-0.201	5.695	.000 [+]	.264
Pair 9: Employability Skills	0.058 (85)	-0.294	-0.062	3.075	.003 [+]	.136

Note. [+] Indicates a positive and significant difference
[a] Absolute value of the *t*-statistic
* r=0.01 is a small effect, r=0.06 is a moderate effect, r=0.14 is a large effect