



Vaasan yliopisto  
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

OSUVA Open  
Science

This is a self-archived – parallel published version of this article in the publication archive of the University of Vaasa. It might differ from the original.

## CSR in major European football leagues in the age of COVID-19: financial vulnerability, mental health and domestic violence

**Author(s):** Ahmed, Jashim Uddin; Hasan, Md. Kamrul; Islam, Quazi Tafsirul; Uddin, Mohammad Jasim; Faroque, Anisur R.; Chowdhury, Md. Humayun Kabir

**Title:** CSR in major European football leagues in the age of COVID-19: financial vulnerability, mental health and domestic violence

**Year:** 2022

**Version:** Accepted manuscript

**Copyright** ©2022 Emerald Publishing Limited. This manuscript version is made available under the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY–NC 4.0) license, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

### **Please cite the original version:**

Ahmed, J. U., Hasan, Md. K., Islam, Q. T., Uddin, M. J., Faroque, A. R. & Chowdhury, Md. H. K. (2022). CSR in major European football leagues in the age of COVID-19: financial vulnerability, mental health and domestic violence. *Society and Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SBR-05-2022-0152>

# CSR in major European Football Leagues in the age of COVID-19: Financial Vulnerability, Mental Health and Domestic Violence

*Jashim Uddin Ahmed \**  
*Department of Management*  
*School of Business and Economics*  
*North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh and*  
*InterResearch, Dhaka, Bangladesh*  
[jashim.ahmed@northsouth.edu](mailto:jashim.ahmed@northsouth.edu)

*Md. Kamrul Hasan*  
*Department of Management*  
*School of Business and Economics*  
*North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh*  
[kamrul.hasan05@northsouth.edu](mailto:kamrul.hasan05@northsouth.edu)

*Quazi Tafsirul Islam*  
*Department of Management*  
*School of Business and Economics*  
*North South University, Dhaka, Bangladesh*  
[quazi.islam@northsouth.edu](mailto:quazi.islam@northsouth.edu)

*Mohammad Jasim Uddin*  
*Department of Management*  
*School of Business*  
*Monash University, Sunway, Malaysia*  
[jasim.uddin@monash.edu](mailto:jasim.uddin@monash.edu)

*Anisur R. Faroque*  
*School of Marketing and Communication*  
*University of Vaasa, Vaasa, Finland*  
[anisur.faroque@uwasa.fi](mailto:anisur.faroque@uwasa.fi)

*Md. Humayun Kabir Chowdhury*  
*Department of Marketing*  
*Jagannath University*  
*Dhaka, Bangladesh*  
[mhkchowdhury@yahoo.com](mailto:mhkchowdhury@yahoo.com)

\*Corresponding author

# **CSR in major European Football Leagues in the age of COVID-19: Financial Vulnerability, Mental Health and Domestic Violence**

## **Abstract**

**Purpose** - COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the lives of people and businesses around the world in different ways. France, Spain, Italy and UK are among the worst affected countries by this pandemic. The aim of this paper is to identify and compare different CSR activities taken by the clubs and player of the major football leagues of these four countries in order to develop a more comprehensive model of intervention.

**Design/methodology/approach** - This article has analyzed the initiatives taken by these football clubs and players to address financial vulnerabilities, mental health problems and domestic violence among the stakeholders and compared them with the existing CSR and humanitarian models. A case study approach has been used to collect and analyze data related to the CSR activities taken by the players and club management. Official websites of the clubs, newspaper and journal articles were among the major sources used to collect data for the paper.

**Findings** - Football clubs and players of the four major leagues have raised funds through different campaigns and delivered foods and essential medical supplies to the communities and hospitals to address financial vulnerabilities, mental health issues and domestic violence within their communities during COVID-19 pandemic. They have provided guidance to their followers using social and television media to improve their physical and mental health during the pandemic. Online competitions, quizzes or virtual hangouts have also been used by the players to engage the stakeholders on a frequent basis. Football clubs have also initiated campaigns to raise awareness within the community on available medical services for the victims of domestic violence and also provided them with shelter, food, medical, legal and online counseling services.

**Originality/value** - Football clubs and player of the major leagues were always at the forefront to help the communities and hospitals to address issues related to mental health problems, financial vulnerabilities and domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of this paper could help and guide other entities in designing a more comprehensive model of CSR interventions during pandemics or crisis situation to address financial vulnerabilities, mental health problems and domestic violence within their communities.

**Keywords** COVID-19 pandemic, Football clubs, CSR, Financial vulnerability, Mental health, Domestic violence

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

As of late November, 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected around 260 million individuals and resulted in more than 5 million deaths. Currently, while the whole world has seen strong vaccination efforts aided by governments, entities and NGOs there is still a battle going on with COVID-19. The whole world has seen several lockdowns, staying at home, social distancing and work from home were not something that people were used to about. Such dramatic change impacts the lives of people in different ways. Even the magnitude of change is different among different group of people. Children, single mothers, pregnant women, elderly people without a support system, political minorities, people with existing medical condition and residents of nursing homes are at high risk and deserve special attention during a pandemic situation (Perrin *et al.*, 2009).

During a pandemic the healthcare sector plays a crucial role. Physical and psychological health becomes another emerging issue during a pandemic as citizens are forced to stay at home, isolated from others and are required to follow social distancing standards for a long time. Contagions, like COVID-19, can create anger, fear and paranoia among the people. This emotions and behavior can lead to resistance to public health measures, panic of mass departure, overburdening hospitals and not taking family responsibilities during an outbreak (Perrin *et al.*, 2009). As of 26th November 2021, UK, France, Poland, Belgium, Netherlands, Russia and Turkey stands among the worst affected countries around the world in terms of number of confirmed COVID-19 cases. Statistics shows that majority of the businesses face massive financial loss during pandemics, some even closes down as well. As a result lot of people have lost their jobs, increasing financial vulnerability of the families living under poor socio economic conditions in these countries (End Violence against Children, 2020). Such financial vulnerability made it even difficult for the low-income families to get the essential items for sustaining their lives. This is where different organizations, sports clubs, NGOs and the governments can play a vital role from a humanitarian perspective.

The concept of CSR, as described by McWilliams *et al.* (2006), refers to any activity undertaken by firms for the betterment of the society which is beyond their legal obligations and compliance requirements. As of November 2021, 14,670 companies across 162 countries commits to the United Nations Global Compact, committing to follow its ten CSR principles. Resulting from the pandemic, the global economy stands to lose USD 4 trillion only from the tourism sector; the overall impact globally is much

more significant (UNCTAD, 2021). The European football leagues are among the worst affected industries by COVID-19. According to Reuters (2021), the top European football clubs will suffer more than €8 billion of losses due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. During 2019-20, the revenue of the European clubs had gone down by around 3.4 billion pounds (Davies, 2021). Four professional football leagues from four different countries have been selected, which are English Premier League of UK, LaLiga of Spain, Serie A of Italy and Ligue 1 of France.

The objective of this study is to develop a comprehensive model of intervention for organizations to address financial vulnerability, mental health issues and domestic violence within communities during a pandemic like COVID-19 by analyzing initiatives taken by four professional football clubs of the UK, Spain, Italy and France. Covid-19 gave us the unique opportunity to understand how organizations face challenges and disruption in their business models and even in face of those challenges whether they pursue value driven philanthropic initiatives. This paper explains four cases on the CSR activities of four professional football clubs from four highly impacted countries by COVID-19 pandemic. These initiatives by the football clubs during this pandemic is then analyzed in comparison with the existing literatures, models and effective humanitarian movements to develop a more comprehensive model of interventions to address financial vulnerability, mental health problems and domestic violence within the communities. Increase domestic violence resulting from lack financial vulnerability and caused by lockdown are identified as a critical social issue globally during pandemic and the proposed model intends to address that through sports CSR.

## Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the modernized concept of business responsibility which dates back to the 1960s where it referred to a firm's willingness to contribute resources other than to ensure financial gain (Frederick, 1960). Carroll (1991) developed a model for CSR in 1991 that portrayed organizations get involved in CSR interventions with the purpose of four intentions: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. During pandemics, humanitarian interventions of the organisations fall within the philanthropic intentions of Carrol's CSR framework Carroll and Buchhotz (2006). CSR has been termed to be an obligation towards the stakeholders where organizations engage in different activities to please those stakeholders (Jones, 1980). Today

however, CSR refers to firm's value driven initiatives for the greater good of the society (McWilliams, 2006). In pre-COVID-19 environment, CSR has been one of the most studied branches of management (Crane and Matten, 2021). **In the recent times CSR has become a strong business opportunity for organizations in the times of crisis (The Nielsen Company, 2014; Souto, 2009).**

**During the COVID-19 pandemic, in late 2020, the Governor of the Bank of** England suggested that post-pandemic business practices will ingrain more social and stakeholder values driven by what the world has witnessed (Williams, 2020). In the field of crisis response by the corporate entities, Fernando's (2007) and Våland and Heide's (2005) suggested a more prompt and genuine effort by the business entities in their CSR activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all organizations came forward with available resources. From food and beverage, to hospitality, perfumery and alcohol producers all came forward with different initiatives to fight off the pandemic and support communities. While White *et al.* (2020) pointed out that some of those efforts have been nothing other than publicity stunts, some researchers (Ahmed *et al.*, 2021) have identified genuine efforts undertaken by businesses during the pandemic. Two more recent studies (He and Harris, 2020; Manuel and Herron, 2020) stated that the current pandemic offers businesses the unique opportunity to portray the genuineness of their efforts and engage in different philanthropic activities during the pandemic. The global pandemic is putting CSR to the test, and the emerging evidence supports the idea that many organizations are striving to reset their CSR thinking and initiatives to accommodate this crisis and to meet what the public expects of them (Carroll, 2021).

Football clubs disclose very little when it comes to their sustainability efforts and CSR activities (Raimo *et al.*, 2021). Considering Football cannot go back to its glory days right away (Corsini *et al.*, 2020) it has been argued that the most desirable outcome of the crisis on European football is the increased awareness of social responsibility by the clubs. The same study projected that in 2022, the clubs and its players will have an increased level of awareness about their social responsibility (Beiderbeck, 2021). Another recent study on professional sport organizations identified that while there has been a lack of CSR reporting in this arena, the organizations can create significant social value during turbulent times of COVID-19 (Carlini *et al.*, 2021). This study extends the same idea by evaluating efforts of clubs and players.

## **Sports CSR**

There is evidence of strong expectation from the general public for sports organizations to act in times of crisis and to be generally available for philanthropic needs of the society. Studies in the past have shown that while sports firms have established CSR programs, driven by various factors, corporate image and individual firm choice to act responsibly both played major role in sports firms (Lee, Bang, & Shonk, 2021; Mamo, Agyemang, & Andrew, 2021). While many studies from the past also suggest that CSR is a direct attempt by sports firms to implement a strong branding strategy (Kyriakou, 2022). The same study also suggested that CSR in the field of sports can be interpreted differently in different parts of the world and thus studying the international initiative and reception of the sports club CSR becomes more important to be studied, especially in the context of Covid-19.

Past studies from the US attempted to understand the CSR in sports and concluded that while it is a topic worth researching but there is limited research in the field of CSR relation to the professional sports industry (McGowan, & Mahon, 2009). They also identified that unlike any other industry this industry's success and failure is directly linked to the communities and their welfare and how communities perceived the sport firms. Kim et. al. (2018) Walzel, Robertson & Anagnostopoulos (2018) portrayed enhance patronage intention and engagements from consumers with their sport team's engagement in CSR activities, thus CSR in sports is established as a significant factor utilized to do good and to enhance engagement. Li et al. (2022) explained how especially in context of covid 19, CSR activity has been a irreplaceable component to enhance engagement and development relationship with all stakeholders, not only viewers or supporters.

## **Frameworks for addressing financial vulnerability, Domestic violence and Mental Health problems during pandemics and national crises**

Organizations operating within the community need to show solidarity and loyalty towards the stakeholders from a moral perspective (Schoch-Spana, 2000). According to Royce (2005) loyalty is the willingness and devotion of a person thoroughly to a cause. It is a precondition for solidarity. On the other hand, solidarity is a strong bond of partnership between the individuals with mutual interests (Wojtyla, 1979). During a pandemic, general supports can be provided from three different levels to the stakeholders, home services through outpatient evaluation, inpatient supportive care for seriously ill patients and services to critical patients with ventilation services (Klopfenstein, 2008).

### ***Past Solidarity / Humanitarian movements of the football clubs***

According to a report published by G-14 (2008), European football clubs have been addressing a lot of social issues in their communities than ever with collaboration from the government, NGOs and the sponsors. As a matter of fact, football is still the most popular sport in Europe and has high potential to grow in future. In Sweden, the football association along with other football clubs helped troubles teenagers and young supporters of the clubs (Fotbollsalliansen, 2008). Football

clubs have been involved in numerous projects globally impacting positive long term effects at personal, national and international level through an initiative taken by the United Nations called “year of sport and physical education” in 2003. This initiative particularly concentrated on football clubs and players as the change agents around the world. At national level different football clubs globally took different initiatives to address economic, social and public health issues within their countries (United Nations, 2006). Such initiatives by the football clubs, players and the associations perhaps fall in the modern concept of CSR. The term responsibility, in this case, can also be used along with obligation or commitment for the clubs towards the society and supporters (Jonas, 1990). According to the ‘Business in the Community’ (2008), such CSR activities eventually help professional football clubs in building local relationships with the supporters, attracting sponsor and partners, securing investments, growing fan base and increase revenue and building reputation of the club by being recognized as a responsible institution or club. However, Breitbarth and Harris (2008) have found that sports managers are insufficiently following the concept of CSR in their club operation activities.

### ***Model of value creation through CSR***

CSR can be one way to show solidarity and loyalty for the stakeholder by providing them non-clinical services to the community in times of a pandemic. According to Carroll and Buchhotz (2006), organizations can perform CSR from four different intentions, legal, profitable, ethical, and philanthropic interventions. During pandemics, when organizations try to connect with their stakeholder and help them through humanitarian activities, it falls in the last category of intervention in the Carrol’s CSR framework, that is philanthropic intervention. Similar humanitarian interventions by organizations at the time of pandemics also falls in the fourth dimension of CSR territories as explained by Garriga and Mele (2004). They follow an ethical approach to intervention within the community which is focused on the “right thing” to do for an organisation in the time of a crisis.

Breitbarth and Harris (2008) has developed a model of value creation through CSR by identifying and connecting the stakeholders with areas of value creation for the professional football clubs. They have identified four areas of value creation, human, financial, cultural, and reassurance value. Firstly, professional football clubs can create human value to enhance quality



of life of the stakeholders in collaboration with the government or non-government national or international organizations. Secondly, they can create financial value for the sponsors, media, clothing and other stakeholder. Thirdly, clubs act as social agents to create cultural value through social and personal identification in collaboration with NGOs, governments, local communities, support groups and football clubs. Lastly, they can create reassurance value by connecting supporters with social actors through campaigns and existing infrastructures of the club.

### ***Psychological impact of Pandemics and intervention planning***

Evidence shows that people faces some kind of fear of unknown health risks and anxiety during a pandemic (Perrin *et al.*, 2009). The anxiety level of individuals may change in different phases of the pandemic. During a crisis like pandemic, one third of the population becomes hypervigilant, which apparently causes sympathetic arousal among the people. Fear, insomnia and anxiety are the reasons behind such arousal among the people. Depression has also been observed among part of the population during a pandemic due to self-isolation, social distancing and lockdown (Perrin *et al.*, 2009). During SARS outbreak in Honk Kong, 18% of the people reported to have stress, anxiety and depression due to the outbreak (Wu *et al.*, 2005). On the other hand, researchers have found some positive psychological effects of infectious disease outbreaks in the past. Such outbreaks increased belief in God and social cohesion among certain groups, caring more about the feelings of family members, being more supportive to each other and paid more attention for mental health (Lau *et al.*, 2006).

Perrin *et al.* (2009) has identified eight groups of people who are at the highest risk of psychological problems during a crisis or pandemic. It is very crucial to develop strategies for mental health support targeting specifically to these groups of people. These groups include, children and adolescents, older adults (living alone or disabled), females, people with lower educational status, people with lower socio-economic status, minority group, people with prior psychiatric history and people with inadequate social support. Morganstein *et al.* (2017) worked on the past pandemics and shared lessons learned from them so that the governments and organizations can learn from them while planning humanitarian interventions during future pandemics. They have also proposed several guidelines for planning mental health intervention during pandemics as mentioned in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Studies conducted by Maunder *et al.* (2003) and Chan and Huak (2004) on healthcare workers in hospitals during SARS outbreak in Singapore and Canada proposed six coping strategies to decrease negative psychological effects among the clinical employees. Balicer *et al.* (2006) in their study conducted on the employees of three hospitals in Maryland, United States found four critical factors to increase participation among the healthcare worker during a pandemic.

[Insert Table 2 here]

### ***Domestic violence***

Domestic violence, child abuse and elderly abuse can escalate sharply throughout the world during a large crisis like COVID-19 pandemic (NZFVC, 2020). Lockdown, staying at home in isolation, working from home might have influenced such violence inside households. Domestic abuse and intimate partner violence (IPV) is a form of abuse committed by a partner within households. The impact of domestic violence on children is as severe as on the partner (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2020). In Brazil, domestic violence has increased by 40-50%, help line calls have raised by 20% in Spain and 30% in Cyprus within the first few days of COVID-19 outbreak within the country (The Guardian, 2020). UK has experienced a rise in domestic violence helpline calls by 25% within a week of announcing lockdown in the country. They have also experienced 150% increase in their Refuge website visits (BBC, 2020). The use of phones and online services for counseling services are extremely critical in managing this issue. However, the affordability and access to these services by the victims might be limited due to the current pandemic scenario. Therefore, it's important to offer other more accessible services for the victims of domestic violence in order to ensure long term well-being and safety (Bradbury-Jones and Isham, 2020). Gulati and Kelly (2020) have proposed three ways to address domestic violence during COVID-19 pandemic. First, use legal measures to arrest the perpetrators or getting barring orders or safety orders in favor of the victims. Second, provide social support through advocacy services, shelters and bystander responses to the victims. Third, build awareness within the community on available medical

services for the victims of domestic violence, elderly abuse, child abuse, physical or psychological distress, etc. (Gulati and Kelly, 2020).

## Methodology

In this study, where the objective is to develop a comprehensive model of intervention by identifying and analyzing different initiatives taken by the professional football clubs of different countries during a disaster of any nature. Therefore, we chose to study the response from football clubs as organizations in a pandemic like COVID-19. A case study approach is found to be an effective method for collecting relevant information for the study as has been done by several authors to study disaster response by many authors before (Ahmed *et al.*, 2021; Choi and Choi, 2021; Cvik and Pelikánová, 2021). Case study allows researchers to get a more detailed and holistic view of different perspectives explained by different cases. This approach helps in depth analysis of firms operating and people living in different territories and their activities in specific situations. Case study method is one of the best approaches to study and analyze important issues of atypical national cases (Ahmed, 2007; Xu and Li, 2012; Yin, 2014) like the one being studied in this research article.

Eisenhardt (1989) discourage to use single case study approach as it allows biasness in information processing and limitations in generalization of the findings and thus this four case approach seemed like a better choice. Although it is true that this four clubs were chosen because of convenience of availability of information, and in the covid-19 context several studies attempting to study CSR in sports used the same methodology (Li et. al, 2022). Such limitations and biasness in information processing and findings generalization can be resolved by considering and analyzing multiple cases in a study (Leonard-Barton, 1990). Thus, we include four different case studies and arrange multiple sources of information to ensure data triangulation (Seale, 2000). Multiple case study approach not only increases external validity of the research but also minimizes observer biases and helps develop confidence among the readers on the findings of the research (Miles and Huberman, 1994). To be more specific, an ideal recommendation would be to use a maximum number of four cases in a study to have an in-depth analysis (Creswell, 1998).

This study thus undertakes a multiple case study method to allow for a diverse data and generalizable findings. Four professional football leagues from four different countries have been selected as four cases in this study to analyze their initiatives and interventions to address financial vulnerability, mental health problems and domestic violence within their respective communities. The selected football leagues are English Premier League of UK, LaLiga of Spain, Serie A of Italy and Ligue 1 of France. The rationale behind selecting these four football leagues is because they are from the countries that are highly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiatives and interventions taken by the football clubs and players from these countries can therefore provide important findings in generating a more effective model of interventions for the football clubs in future to address specific issues like financial vulnerability, mental health problems and domestic violence among their stakeholder and the community.

## **Findings**

Football clubs and players working and playing within respective communities have responsibilities towards their stakeholders at time of national crisis and pandemics like COVID-19. According to Haski-Leventhal *et al.* (2017), employees can affect the behavior of their employers by initiating CSR activities by themselves which intern will push the employers in taking CSR initiatives to help the communities. According to Ahmed *et al.* (2021), during pandemics like COVID-19, organizations not only pursued financial goals but also assisted communities in need in different ways using their available resources. Initiatives taken by European football clubs and players of four different football leagues from UK, Spain, Italy and France to address financial vulnerability, mental health problems and domestic violence within their communities are presented and analyzed in this article in four cases to generate a more comprehensive understanding about their respective interventions to address issues related to COVID-19 pandemic. Then specific interventions of these clubs and players were explained under three broad categories, financial vulnerability, mental health and domestic violence, in order to have a more focused discussion on their CSR interventions to help develop a comprehensive model at a later stage. The data for this study are mostly collected from articles published online in the league's official websites, research articles and online newspaper articles. All the information presented in the following cases is during COVID-19 pandemic.

### ***Case-1: English Premier League (EPL), England***

English Premier League with 20 teams is largest and richest football league in the world that was formed in 1992. “We Are One Team” is one of those initiatives taken by English Premier League itself to ensure health and social welfare of the players, employees and supporters during COVID-19 pandemic. Saint foundation (Southampton Football Club) has produced and shared online exercise videos to help everyone to stay active and healthy (Southampton FC, 2020). Jose Mourinho, head coach of Tottenham Hotspur, went to a local community in Enfield with his coaching staffs to help the elderly residents in isolation to deliver vital supplies like food and medicines (Tottenham Hotspur, 2020). Staffs of Manchester United FC delivered 3000 items of food and drinks to local charities to help fight this crisis. They have also donated £50,000 to the Trussell Trust to provide support across Manchester (Manchester United FC, 2020a). Legends of this club along with other staffs have reached to around 3000 fans as part of an outreach campaign to keep the club connected with elderly supporters during the pandemic (Manchester United FC, 2020c). Everton FC started the “Blue Family Campaign” to maintain contact with their fans and provide support to the most vulnerable in the society during this pandemic across Liverpool (Everton FC, 2020).

Besides donating foods and money to charities and vulnerable, supporting schools, supplying emergencies to localities and healthcare facilities, the premier league clubs have also taken some major initiatives to get connected with their vulnerable and socially isolated fans during this pandemic. AFC Bournemouth has made around 3000 calls to their supporters, players of Everton, Watford and Liverpool called their isolated and vulnerable fans along with supporters over 65 years. Brighton introduced the ‘Get active’ campaign to helps fans with home workouts through online fitness activity and guides, AFC Bournemouth started a ‘Wellbeing’ campaign to supports physical and mental health of their supporters, Brighton shared healthy recipes and positive mental health activities through their ‘Stay well’ campaign, Everton, Manchester City and Burnley started Mentoring programmes for vulnerable young people and other clubs like West Ham United and Crystal Palace shared tips and guidance to fans on physical and mental health during isolation (Premier League, 2020).

Liverpool FC had launched an ‘online safeguarding campaign’ for the fans where the staffs and coaches of the foundation will voluntarily get involved in friendly chats to give advice and supports to the

participants. Another campaign is called the ‘Digital Hangouts’, which is designed to help fight social isolation by supporting each other by staying connected during this pandemic. Through this campaign they have streamed past games, hosted quizzes, chats, and also virtual hangouts to share love and passion for the club (Liverpool FC, 2020).

### ***Case-2: LaLiga, Spain***

“LaLigaSantander Fest” is one of the unique ways of the clubs association to beat COVID-19 pandemic together with artists, players, football clubs, Universal Music and Santander Bank. The footballers worked jointly with the musicians in this charity festival where they participated from their respective homes to generate funds for fighting COVID-19 pandemic in Spain (LaLigaSantander Fest, 2020). The festival took place in an online platform on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2020 which generated around €1 million and masks as donations (LaLiga, 2020c).

LaLiga authority has launched three program that is broadcasted to bring its supporters closer to players and also to give them a sense of belongingness with the clubs and Spanish football. In “LaLiga StayAtHome” program, players filmed their daily lives at home sharing with their fans how they are spending time during the lockdown. “LaLiga Nations” program shared the importance to have different nationalities football teams. “LaLiga Clubs” connected Spanish cities and fans with the LaLiga teams (LaLiga Launches, 2020). “All of LaLiga, All in one place” is another daily show broadcast in LaLiga TV from the fourth week of March, 2020. This show featured the classic matches of LaLiga from the last two decades (LaLigaClassics, 2020).

FC Barcelona in collaboration with the “United Chinese Dragons Supporters Club” started a new campaign called “Stronger Together” to encourage Chinese people to stay strong against this pandemic. This campaign has helped raise funds to support medical supplies and also encouraged different Chinese companies to donate medical equipment’s to hospitals and healthcare professionals (Global Times, 2020).

Three LaLiga clubs, Cadiz CF, Deportivo Alaves and Malaga CF, together have launched a new campaign called “Solidarity Shirts” to raise funds to fight against COVID-19. Through this campaign their fans will get a chance to help the community by showing commitment to their clubs. LaLiga clubs have launched different campaigns to raise and donate funds, medical supplies, even their own training facilities to help fight COVID-19. The staff and players of the clubs have volunteered in different medical services and also donated bloods to help the fight against

coronavirus. CD Leganes and Cadiz CF have donated €200,000 and €10,000 respectively to different hospitals. CF Fuenlabrada has donated mobile phones to the hospitalized elder patients for communicating with their families at home. 'Granotas solidarios' campaign has been launched by Levante UD to fund supply of essential medical equipment's for health workers and older residents in the localities.

Other than raising funds, donating medical supplies and volunteering activities, LaLiga clubs and players have also initiated different virtual activities. Suso, a Spanish footballer, have shared his favorite recipe with his fans through social media. Raul de Tomas, a striker, has been painting the sun and shared the process of painting with his fans. He has also shown some of his best paintings to his fans through his Instagram page. Some players of the top teams of the league have been sharing their sharp skills with the balls with their fans through the social media (News 18, 2020).

### ***Case-3: Serie A, Italy***

Italian football league, Serie A, has faced a serious survival crisis as a result of the impact of COVID-19. On 30 March 2020, the Chief Executive of Serie A presented a proposal to completely freeze the salaries of the players so that Italian football can survive the impact. In the beginning of April 2020, all the clubs unanimously agreed to this proposal to cut salaries of the players, coaches and staff, except for Juventus. Even before this agreement, players, coaching staff along with the head coach of AS Roma already agreed to forego their entire salaries from March to June 2020 because of this pandemic. The fund saved will partially be used to cover up wages of the club staff (Arab News, 2020). AC Milan has continued to support a recent campaign called "Dispositivo di Aiuto Alimentare" launched to raise funds to support elderly and weakest families within Milan with food supply. The campaign already collected €57,000 and has a target to reach €100,000 (Baresi and Massaro, 2020). Simone Zaza of Torino FC has started an initiative which has collected 30,000 Euros to help the affected families due to this pandemic. Lorenzo Insigne, captain of Napoli FC, has donated €100,000 to the health system of Italy to help the government deal with COVID-19 more effectively. Andrea Agnelli, President of Juventus FC, and his family have a donation of 10 million Euros and medical devices to Italian Civil Protection department to help fight against COVID-19 pandemic (Marca, 2020). AS Roma has donated eight thousands pairs of

gloves and two thousand hand sanitizers to different churches. Inter Milan; on the other hand, has donated three hundred thousand face masks to the public health department of the country. The staff and players of the clubs have also donated €500,000 to the government fight this pandemic. Each of the crowdfunding campaigns launched by AC Milan, Juventus, AS Roma and ACF Fiorentina has risen more than €400,000. Another Serie A club, SS Lazio, launched a campaign to create public awareness and influence citizens to donate blood for the treatment of the infected patients. Through a campaign called “Kick the Virus Away”, Zlatan Ibrahimovic of AC Milan has raised more than €250,000 to help others fight against coronavirus. On the other hand, Andrea Petagna of S.P.A.L., Lorenzo Insigne of S.S.C. Napoli, Simone Zaza of Torino FC and Federico Bernardeschi of Juventus have donated more than €430,000 for this pandemic. Whereas, Francesco Totti, a former footballer of Roma, has donated 15 healthcare machines to a hospital in Rome (Reuters, 2020). Pescara football club has organized a competition among their young fans with a motto of “give a kick to COVID-19” to help ease the boredom of the fans while staying home during the pandemic.

#### ***Case-4: Ligue 1, France***

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the players and coaches of the clubs of Ligue 1 have been helping hospitals, nurses and patients in different ways and raised €2 million to support the fight against COVID-19 pandemic in France (Les Travaux Se, 2020). For this reason, the players and coaches have agreed to partially split their activity allowances and also to cut their remuneration by 30% to help save the jobs and health of the general staff during this pandemic. Such gesture of solidarity by the players and coaches helped save 8,000 direct and 30,000 indirect jobs of the clubs (Tous Engagés Pour, 2020). French football club, Marseille, have been taking care of the accommodation and food for the women who have been victims of violence offering 46 rooms of their training center available for the women along with the support of nurses, social workers and psychologists. Paris Saint-Germain, on the other hand, has delivered 25,000 meals to the hospital staffs in the capital. AS Monaco has launched an online donation collection program called “AS Monacoeur solidarity program” to support and provide assistance to the vulnerable groups through Red Cross, nationally and internationally. The program received an initial donation of €50,000 from the club itself. Along with their supporters and partners, AS Saint-Etienne has



raised €88,000 by selling virtual seats of the “Coupe de France” to help the research on COVID-19 at Saint-Etienne University Hospital. The OGC Nice has been encouraging their supporters to donate blood through its “Red & Black Blood Donation program”. Stade Rennais FC has raised funds to help the nurses fighting this pandemic by engaging their supporters in an online draw to win 25 signed jerseys from the club. In order to stay connected with their supporters and keep them busy, FC Nantes draws a portrait of a fan with their favorite action every week from the context of COVID-19 pandemic. The club also participated in a joint sale of signed photographs and jersey of a handball player to raise funds for supporting three hospitals during this pandemic (Les Actions Des, 2020).

The Ligue 1 committee has launched a raffle draw under the “Unite Against the Virus' ' campaign to help the COVID-19 caregivers by giving supporters opportunities to win signed jerseys from their favorite clubs (Jouons Le Collectif, 2020). In addition to raising funds through campaigns and salary cuts, volunteering activities, donating food and essential supplies to hospitals and the vulnerable, Ligue 1 clubs and players were also involved in activities during the pandemic to address different social issues. In collaboration, with the State Secretariat for Child Protection, some players participated in making a video to raise awareness against child abuse. They circulated this video in social media to publicize the number 119 among the children and also others to help children in danger (Le Foot Se Mobilise, 2020).

## **CSR Interventions of the football clubs to address specific issues during the Pandemic**

### ***Economic crisis and CSR interventions***

Recently some big firms in the UK have announced more than 12,000 job cuts due to the adverse impact of the pandemic on businesses (BBC, 2020). According to Eurostat, around 397,000 employees have lost their jobs in Europe in April 2020 alone (Davies, 2020). In the UK, clubs and their staff have delivered vital food and medicine supplies to the elderly residents living in isolation. Many other clubs have also donated food and money to charities and the vulnerable. In Spain, LaLiga and Santander Bank together had generated €1 million through a charity musical fest to help Spain fight against the pandemic. Players of Barcelona FC together have agreed to cut their own salaries by 2% to help supplement the salaries of other club members. Villarreal CF has launched a campaign to ensure food for families with limited supplies and another club Malaga CF provided support to local older residences. Other LaLiga clubs have launched different

campaigns to raise and donate funds to help families deal with their financial vulnerabilities during this pandemic. In Italy, football clubs agreed to cut salaries of players, coaches and staff to cover wages of the club's staff. The President of Juventus and his family has donated €10 million to help families fight against this pandemic. Different crowdfunding campaigns launched by clubs generated hundreds of thousands of Euros to assist the economically deprived. Players sacrificed their salaries to save thousands of jobs for the club's staff.

### ***Mental health issues of the community and healthcare workers and CSR interventions***

Recently, Italians have been experiencing a long term impact on their mental health as they have been under the lockdown since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic (COVID-19 Takes, 2020; Fiorillo and Gorwood, 2020; Mental Health and COVID-19, 2020). It has also found that among the people aged between 18 to 75 years, 57% of British, 67% of Spanish and 59% Italians are either depressed, felt down or became hopeless about the future in this pandemic (Price, 2020). British clubs and players have addressed this issue by connecting with their supporters directly and providing guidance for improving physical and mental health during the pandemic. Manchester United reached out to its 3,000 elderly supporters through an outreach campaign to make them feel heard of and stay connected with the club. Everton, AFC Bournemouth, Watford and Liverpool have also contacted their isolated and most vulnerable supporters. Brighton, AFC Bournemouth, West Ham United and Crystal Palace have launched different campaigns to help supporters improve their mental and physical health through online fitness guidelines. Some clubs have also introduced mentoring programs for their vulnerable supporters to guide them during this pandemic. "Digital Hangout" is another effective platform created by the players to help their supporters fight social isolation by enabling them to share their love for the clubs through quizzes, chats and virtual hangouts. Spanish clubs and players, on the other hand, have strongly used television and social media platforms to help their supporters maintain better mental and physical health conditions during this pandemic. Barcelona on the other hand has been trying to minimize cyber bullying through different initiatives such as sharing painting skills, recipes, asking fans to interact etc. Clubs and players of Serie A and Ligue 1 launched only a few initiatives to address the mental health of their supporters. These interactive sessions have had a significant impact as they have kept fans engaged during turbulent times.

According to a study conducted by Jansson and Rello (2020), the healthcare workers in hospitals are experiencing high levels of anxiety, stress and insomnia during this pandemic. They have been facing high emotional distress and shown posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms when exposed to high level of risk, extensive workload, shortage in protective equipment, ethical dilemmas or quarantined. In another research conducted by Khajuria (2020) on the healthcare workers of the UK, 60% of the healthcare workers were depressed or felt down during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas 80% of them are having trouble sleeping and 60% have been feeling lonely (Khajuria, 2020). The UK and European football clubs have taken different types of initiatives to provide support to the healthcare system and workers during this pandemic. Mostly they have donated medical equipment to the hospitals, funded research projects, volunteered in the healthcare services, donated blood and also raised funds to help the nurses and hospitals fight this pandemic together. Spanish football clubs and players have launched several programs to collect and donate supplies and equipment to hospitals and medical centres. Players and staff of different clubs have volunteered in different medical services and donated blood to help the patients during COVID-19 pandemic. Italian football club Inter Milan has donated 300,000 face masks to the public health department. Significant investments and donations have been made by clubs to address mental health and support the wellbeing of healthcare workers.

### ***Domestic violence and CSR interventions***

French football club, Marseille, took a lot of initiatives to help the victims of domestic violence and child abuse during this COVID-19 pandemic. They have been taking care of the accommodation and food for the women who have been victims of domestic violence during the pandemic. They have given away 46 rooms of their training center for the victims and also provided support for nurses, social workers and psychologists. They have also raised awareness against child abuse and circulating a video on social media to publicize the emergency number among the children and others to help child in danger. According to the recommendations by both Bradbury-Jones and Isham (2020) and Gulati and Kelly (2020), several interventions can be designed and taken by the football clubs and players in order to minimize domestic violence, child and elderly abuse during a pandemic like COVID-19 within their countries. First of all, they need to develop and offer more affordable and accessible online counseling services for the victims of domestic violence within the community to order to ensure long term well-being and safety for the

victims. At the same time they need to build awareness about the available medical services among the groups at risk through social media or other form of campaigns. Secondly, they should ensure proper social support for the victims. For example, providing free accommodation services, ensuring food supplies, providing essential medical services and mental health supports for the victims. Lastly, providing free legal services to the victims to arrest the perpetrators or getting barring orders from the court in favor of the victims.

## **Discussion**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of people have lost their jobs throughout Europe and the UK. A study conducted on the population of the UK, Spain and Italy has revealed that the mental health of 41% of the UK population is under high risk due to COVID-19 pandemic (Groarke, 2020). Healthcare workers working in the frontline in hospitals and other medical centers during this COVID-19 pandemic are at huge risk of developing mental health problems as well. Therefore, a comprehensive model of intervention is needed in order to address these issues by organizations operating in areas highly affected by the pandemic.

clubs, players, coaches and staff of the English Premier League, LaLiga, Serie A and Ligue 1 have undertaken several initiatives to address issues related to financial vulnerability, mental health and domestic violence among the people living in the most hard hit countries by coronavirus during this COVID-19 pandemic. The authors have integrated the findings from the cases of interventions of the four professional football clubs within the theoretical frameworks as identified in the Literature review in order to create the comprehensive model of intervention for the football clubs and other organizations to address specific social and economic issues within the communities during a national crisis or pandemic.

## **Learnings from the past interventions during Pandemics**

Based on the lessons learned from the past Pandemics, Morganstein *et al.* (2017) have proposed several guidelines for different organizations to plan for mental health interventions within the community during pandemics (Table-1). Several coping strategies were also proposed by Maunder

*et al.* (2003) and Chan and Huak (2004) specifically for the healthcare workers to minimize their negative psychological effects during Pandemics. Another study conducted by Balicer *et al.* (2006) found four critical factors to be considered while designing interventions to enhance participation of the healthcare worker during a Pandemic.

[Insert Table 3 here]

According to Table 3, football clubs and players can plan for specific interventions to improve mental health conditions of specific groups of people who are most at risk during a pandemic. Two different sets of interventions have been proposed to two broader groups of people, healthcare workers and most vulnerable groups within the community. Interventions designed for the most vulnerable groups within the community might include educating them to maintain proper safety measures, nutrition, sleep, exercises and enhancing their abilities in taking care of self and family. On the other hand, interventions for the healthcare workers may include limiting working hours, providing resting places and sufficient healthcare resources and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) so that they can treat patients effectively and take safety precautions for themselves.

### **Connecting theories and CSR practices for a new CSR intervention framework**

One of the most popular frameworks on CSR and organisation's moral management of stakeholder have been developed by Carroll, A. B. in 1991. According to the framework, organizations get involved in CSR interventions with the purpose of four intentions: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. During pandemics, humanitarian interventions of the organisations fall within the philanthropic intentions of Carrol's CSR framework Carroll and Buchhotz (2006). According to the CSR territories developed by Garriga and Mele (2004), during Pandemics such humanitarian interventions by organizations follow an ethical approach within the communities that focuses on doing the "right thing" in the time of a crisis. The authors have tried to incorporate the broad areas of CSR interventions of the football clubs during COVID-19 Pandemic within Carrol's framework in order to connect the theories with practices.



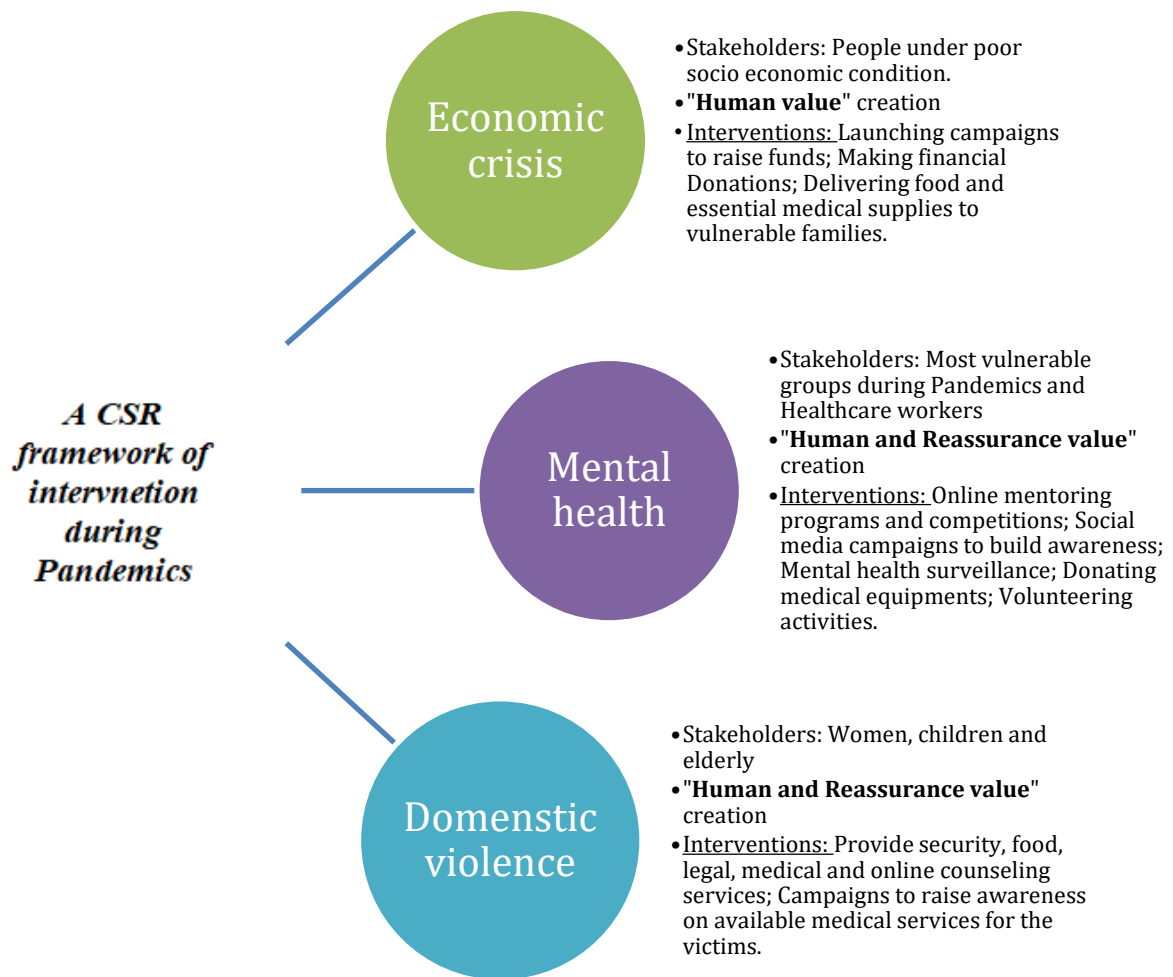
**Figure 1: Carroll's CSR in application for football clubs during Pandemics**

According to the model of value creation through CSR for the professional football clubs by Breitbarth and Harris (2008), professional football clubs can create “human value” to enhance quality of life of the stakeholders and “reassurance value” by connecting supporters with social actors through campaigns and existing infrastructures of the club. This is exactly what the European football clubs and players have done during the COVID-19 Pandemic in order to address economic crisis, mental health issues and domestic violence of their stakeholders within their communities, to create human and reassurance value through CSR. It is very crucial to develop intervention plans to address mental health issues for the children and adolescents, older adults, females, people with lower educational status, people with lower socio-economic status, minority group, people with prior psychiatric history and people with inadequate social support, as they are the most vulnerable groups during a Pandemics (Perrin *et al.*, 2009).

### **New comprehensive model of intervention and implication for practice**

An in depth analysis of the initiatives taken during the COVID-19 pandemic by the professional football clubs and their player along with extensive review of the existing literatures and models of CSR and humanitarian movements have helped in development of a comprehensive model of interventions for organizations and football clubs to address financial vulnerabilities, mental health

issues and domestic violence among their stakeholders during pandemics. The comprehensive model of interventions proposes separate list of initiatives that organizations can take to these issues during a social or economic disaster.



**Figure 2: A comprehensive model of CSR interventions for the football clubs to create human and reassurance value through Philanthropic activities during Pandemic**

According to the above comprehensive model of intervention, football clubs can take four different initiatives to address *financial vulnerability* of the people living under poor socio-economic conditions within the community. They can raise funds through different campaigns; make direct financial donations to the families in need; deliver foods and essential medical supplies to vulnerable families; and encourage their own staffs and players to contribute from their salaries to cover wages of the remaining clubs' staffs during a pandemic.

Football clubs and players also need to take separate initiatives to address *mental health issues of the healthcare workers and different groups* at risk during a pandemic like COVID-19. To address mental health issues of the healthcare workers, the football clubs and players can raise awareness within the community for blood donation, participate in volunteering activities for the medical centres, provide trainings to the healthcare workers on dealing with mental health problems and health safety precautions, and most importantly raise funds to donate medical equipment and personal protective equipment to the medical centres. To improve the mental health condition of general people, the clubs and players first need to identify specific groups of people from the community who are under high risk of mental health issues. Then the clubs can either communicate directly with the stakeholders to ensure sufficient medical support or use social and television media to providing guidance to improve physical and mental health during the pandemic. They can also initiate online competitions, quizzes or virtual hangouts with the players to engage the stakeholders. During the time of a pandemic like COVID-19, conducting campaigns to build awareness on health protective response and initiating mental health surveillance plays a vital role in addressing mental health problems within the community.

*Domestic violence*, on the other hand, can be addressed by the football clubs mainly through two different ways. They can initiate campaigns to raise awareness within the community against domestic violence and on available medical services for the victims of domestic violence. They can also provide shelter, food, medical and legal services, and online counseling services to the victims of domestic violence so that they can have a sense of support and be able to take necessary steps to save and improve their life and mental health during the crisis.

### **Limitations of the study**



The current study uses a well-established methodological structure to develop a thorough understanding of the situation. However, there are certain limitations that could be addressed when future research is undertaken in the same discipline. For example, the study only covered four major clubs, although these are the most prominent clubs that comprise most of the market share in this industry, it is true that the subjects are only based in Europe and we try to draw a generalizable conclusion from it. On the other hand, the study uses a case study methodology, which is qualitative in nature, hence a quantitative study that uses a more concrete structure to look at events and a numerical structure to draw conclusions could add value to the study. The study also looked at financial vulnerabilities, mental health problems and domestic violence within their communities. Whereas, we could only look into one of the factors to develop an in depth understanding of the events.

### **Direction for future research**

This research followed a case study approach to collect and analyze data on CSR related initiatives taken by the European professional football clubs to address financial, mental health and domestic violence related issues within their communities during COVID-19 Pandemic. Later this study proposed a comprehensive model of intervention for the organizations to address all of these issues during a disaster or pandemic. This study has opened a huge horizon for the future researchers in the field of disaster management and CSR activities focusing on the stakeholders and local communities. This study was conducted with a broad objective to develop a model of intervention to address financial, mental health and domestic violence related issues, but investigated on a specific geographic segment, only the European football clubs. Future studies can conduct investigations with a more focused objective, (e.g. to propose interventions for organizations to address only mental health issues in the local communities during a social or economic disaster), but can include samples or collect cross-industry data from a more geographically diversified population. Results of such a study will have higher implication for practice. In addition, future researchers can follow quantitative research methodology to find significant impact of proposed interventions in addressing social or economic issues during a pandemic or disaster.

### **Conclusion**

COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the physical and mental health of the people in many ways. This pandemic has also forced lots of businesses to close down. The remainders are even facing huge losses and therefore cutting plenty of jobs. As a result, families living under poor socio-economic conditions are facing serious financial vulnerabilities. On the other hand, social distancing, self-isolations and staying home for longer periods during this pandemic have hugely impacted the mental health of general people and the healthcare workers. Most of the people are experiencing anxiety, depression, fear, insomnia and feeling of loneliness as symptoms of mental illnesses. This pandemic has also triggered domestic violence against women, elderly and children within communities. During a pandemic, mostly the healthcare workers working in risky environments, older citizens, children, people under lower educational and socio-economic status, minority groups, females and people with prior psychiatric histories are under high risk of mental health problems. It is not only the responsibility of the government and the medical sector to address these financial, mental and societal problems of the communities. It's also a social responsibility for the organizations operating within the communities to address these problems alongside the governments and support the healthcare sector in effectively managing this pandemic.

Professional football clubs and players of UK, Spain, Italy and France have been trying to address financial vulnerabilities and mental health issues of their supporters, communities and healthcare professionals in different ways during this pandemic. Such initiatives include initiating mentoring programs to provide online guidance, organizing campaigns and musical fests to raise and donate funds, using both television and social media to engage supporter and communities, volunteering for medical services and supporting the victims of domestic violence, etc. Addressing such variety of financial, mental and societal issues within the communities during a pandemic by the football clubs is really complex. Therefore, this article has proposed a comprehensive model of interventions for all the football clubs and players to address financial vulnerability, mental health problems and domestic violence within the communities during a national crisis or a pandemic.

## References

- Ahmed, J. U., Islam, Q. T., Ahmed, A., Faroque, A. R. and Uddin, M. J. (2021), “Corporate social responsibility in the wake of COVID-19: multiple cases of social responsibility as an organizational value”, *Society and Business Review*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 496-516.
- Ahmed, J.U. (2007), “Research issues in case study method: debates and comments”, *AIUB Journal of Business and Economics*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 1-14.
- Arab News (2020), “Italian footballers cut wages amid Calcio’s COVID-19 crisis” available at: <https://arab.news/wdufb>.
- Balicer, R.D., Omer, S.B., Barnett, D.J. and Everly, G.S. (2006), “Local public health workers’ perceptions toward responding to an influenza pandemic”, *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 6 No. 1, p. 99.
- BBC (2020), “Coronavirus: Domestic Abuse Calls up 25% Since Lockdown, Charity Says”, available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52157620>.
- BBC (2020), “Coronavirus: UK firms slash more than 12,000 jobs in two days”, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-53247787>.
- BBC (2020), “Italian football club adopts boy’s shirt design”, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52368010>.
- Beiderbeck, D., Frevel, N., Heiko, A., Schmidt, S. L. and Schweitzer, V. M. (2021), “The impact of COVID-19 on the European football ecosystem—A Delphi-based scenario analysis”, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 165, 120577.
- Bradbury-Jones, C. and Isham, L. (2020), “The pandemic paradox: The consequences of COVID-19 on domestic violence”, *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, Vol. 29 No. 13-14, pp. 2047–2049.
- Breitbarth, T. and Harris, P. (2008), “The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Football Business: Towards the Development of a Conceptual Model”, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 179–206.
- Business in the Community (2008), *Clubs that count—A spotlight on partnerships*. London, UK.
- Carlini, J., Pavlidis, A., Thomson, A. and Morrison, C. (2021), “Delivering on social good—corporate social responsibility and professional sport: a systematic quantitative literature review”, *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, ahead-of-print, pp. 1-14.

Carroll, A. B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business horizons*, 34(4), 39-48.

Carroll, A.B. (2021), “Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the COVID-19 pandemic: Organizational and managerial implications”, *Journal of Strategy and Management*, Vol. 14 No. 3, pp. 315-330.

Carroll, A.B. and Buchholtz, A.K. (2006), *Business and Society: Ethics and Stakeholder Management*, South-Western Cengage Learning, Southampton.

Chan, A.O.M. and Huak, C.Y. (2004), “Psychological impact of the 2003 severe acute respiratory syndrome outbreak on healthcare workers in a medium size regional general hospital in Singapore”, *Occupational Medicine*, Vol. 54 No. 3, pp. 190–196.

Choi, M. and Choi, Y. (2021), “Employee perceptions of hotel CSR activities during the COVID-19 pandemic”, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 33 No. 10, pp. 3355-3378.

Coronavirus: When will Premier League, Bundesliga, Serie A, La Liga and Ligue 1 restart? (2020), “DW.COM”, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/coronaviruswhen-will-premier-league-bundesliga-serie-a-la-liga-and-ligue-1-restart/a-53202352>.

Corsini, A., Bisciotti, G. N., Eirale, C. and Volpi, P. (2020), Football cannot restart soon during the COVID-19 emergency! A critical perspective from the Italian experience and a call for action.

COVID-19 Map. (2020), “Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center”, available at: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>.

COVID-19 takes its toll on Italy’s mental health. (2020). Retrieved from <https://newseu.cgtn.com/news/2020-06-02/COVID-19-takes-its-toll-on-Italy-s-mental-health-QYGdQU2cww/index.html>.

Crane, A. and Matten, D. (2021), “COVID-19 and the future of CSR research”, *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 58 No.1, pp. 280-284.

Creswell, J.W. (1998), *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Cvik, E. D. and Pelikánová, R. M. (2021). The significance of CSR during COVID-19 pandemic in the luxury fashion industry—A front-line case study. *European Journal of Business Science and Technology*, 7(1), 109-129.

- Davies, P. (2020), “Which companies in Europe are cutting jobs because of COVID-19?”, available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2020/07/01/coronavirus-job-cuts-which-companies-in-europe-are-slashing-their-workforces-because-of-co>.
- Davies, R. (2021), *European football clubs' revenue declines by £3.4bn over pandemic*. The Guardian, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2021/jul/29/european-football-clubs-revenue-declines-by-34bn-over-pandemic>
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989), “Building theories from case study research”, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14 No. 4, pp. 532–50.
- End Violence against Children (2020), “Protecting children during the COVID-19 outbreak: Resources to reduce violence and abuse”, available at: <https://www.end-violence.org/protecting-children-during-covid-19-outbreak>.
- Everton FC, (2020), “Call Me Carlo - Ancelotti Speaks with Isolated Evertonian”, available at: [https://www.evertonfc.com/news/1648020/watch-call-me-carlo-ancelotti-speaks-with-isolated-evertonian?utm\\_source=www.premierleague.com&utm\\_campaign=website&utm\\_medium=link](https://www.evertonfc.com/news/1648020/watch-call-me-carlo-ancelotti-speaks-with-isolated-evertonian?utm_source=www.premierleague.com&utm_campaign=website&utm_medium=link).
- Fernando, M. (2007), “Corporate social responsibility in the wake of the Asian tsunami”, *European Management Journal*, Vol. 25 No. 1, pp. 1-10.
- Fiorillo, A. and Gorwood, P. (2020), “The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and implications for clinical practice”, *European Psychiatry*, Vol. 63 No. 1, e32 (1-2).
- Fotbollsalliansen (2008), “Fryshuset social projects”, available at: [www.fryshuset.se/documents/Fryshuset/OmFryshuset/Fryshuset\\_english\\_version2.0.pdf](http://www.fryshuset.se/documents/Fryshuset/OmFryshuset/Fryshuset_english_version2.0.pdf).
- Frederick, W.C. (1960), “The growing concern over business responsibility”, *California Management Review*, Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 54-61
- G-14. (2008), “Community engagement—Insights into the contribution of European club football”, available at: [http://www.bitc.org.uk/resources/publications/community\\_engagement.html](http://www.bitc.org.uk/resources/publications/community_engagement.html) (accessed 25 June 2021).

- Garriga, E. and Mele, D. (2004), "Corporate social responsibility theories: Mapping the territory", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 53 No. 1-2, pp. 51–71.
- Global Times (2020), "Barcelona becomes model for football clubs fighting COVID-19", available at: <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1187140.shtml>.
- Groarke, J. M., Berry, E., Graham-Wisener, L., McKenna-Plumley, P. E., McGlinchey, E. and Armour, C. (2020), "Loneliness in the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic: Cross-sectional results from the COVID-19 Psychological Wellbeing Study", *PloS one*, 15(9), e0239698.
- Gulati, G. and Kelly, B.D. (2020), "Domestic violence against women and the COVID-19 pandemic: What is the role of psychiatry?", *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, Vol. 71 No. 101594.
- Haski-Leventhal, D. (2013), "Employee engagement in CSR: The case of payroll giving in Australia", *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, Vol. 20 No. 2, pp. 113-128.
- Haski-Leventhal, D., Roza, L. and Meijs, L. C. (2017), "Congruence in corporate social responsibility: Connecting the identity and behavior of employers and employees", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 143 No. 1, pp. 35-51.
- He, H. and Harris, L. (2020), "The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on corporate social responsibility and marketing philosophy", *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 116, pp. 176-182.
- Inman, P. and Elliott, L. (2020), "UK manufacturers planning tens of thousands of redundancies", available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/may/28/job-vacancies-collapse-has-hit-low-income-workers-hardest-ons>.
- Jansson, M. and Rello, J. (2020), "Mental Health in Healthcare Workers and the Covid-19 Pandemic Era: Novel Challenge for Critical Care", *Journal of Intensive & Critical Care*, Vol.6 No. 2, pp. 1-2.
- Jonas, H. (1990), *Le principe responsabilite'*, Cerf, Paris.
- Jones, T.M. (1980), "Corporate social responsibility revisited, redefined", *California Management Review*, Vol. 22 No. 3, pp. 59-67.

- Jouons la collectif pour lutter contre le COVID-19 (2020), available at: [https://www.lfp.fr/Articles/JOUONS LA COLLECTIF/2020/04/30/jouons-la-collectif-pour-lutter-contre-le-covid-19](https://www.lfp.fr/Articles/JOUONS_LA_COLLECTIF/2020/04/30/jouons-la-collectif-pour-lutter-contre-le-covid-19).
- Khajuria, A. (2020), “*Coronavirus is whipping up a mental health storm for NHS workers*”, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/28/coronavirus-mental-health-storm-nhs-workers>.
- Kim, J.K., Overton, H., Hull, K. and Choi, M. (2018), "Examining public perceptions of CSR in sport", *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 629-647. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-05-2018-0060>
- Klopfenstein, M. L. (2008), “Pandemic Influenza and the Duty to Treat: The Importance of Solidarity and Loyalty”, *The American Journal of Bioethics*, Vol. 8 No. 8, pp. 41–43.
- Kyriakou, A. P. (2022). Branding and CSR in sports organizations.
- LaLiga (2020a), “*LaLiga Classics debuts on LaLigaTV from this week*”, available at: <https://www.laliga.com/en-GB/news/laligaclassics-debuts-on-laligatv-from-this-week>.
- LaLiga (2020b), “*LaLiga launches three new exclusive programmes exploring the stars, clubs, cities and nationalities behind the competition*”, available at: <https://www.laliga.com/en-GB/news/laliga-launches-three-new-exclusive-programmes-exploring-the-stars-clubs-cities-and-nationalities-behind-the-competition>.
- LaLiga (2020c), “*LaLiga Santander Fest’ brought together 50 million viewers, raised €1,003,532 and 1 million masks for the fight against COVID-19*”, available at: <https://www.laliga.com/en-GB/news/laligasantander-fest-brought-together-50-million-viewers-raised-euro1003532-and-1-million-masks-for-the-fight-against-covid-19>.
- LaLiga (2020d), “*LaLiga Santander Fest’ set to bring music and sport together to beat COVID-19*”, available at: <https://www.laliga.com/en-GB/news/laligasantander-fest-set-to-bring-music-and-sport-together-to-beat-covid-19>.
- LaLiga (2020e), “The solidarity gestures of LaLiga clubs to fight COVID-19”, available at: <https://newsletter.laliga.es/global-futbol/the-solidarity-gestures-of-laliga-clubs-to-fight-covid-19>.
- LaLiga (2020f), “*Today our fans’ songs are needed more than ever*”, available at: <https://www.laliga.com/en-GB/news/today-our-fans-songs-are-needed-more-than-ever>.

Lau, J.T.F., Yang, X., Tsui, H.Y., Pang, E. and Wing, Y.K. (2006), “Positive mental health-related impacts of the SARS epidemic on the general public in Hong Kong and their associations with other negative impacts”, *Journal of Infection*, Vol. 53 No. 2, pp. 114–124.

Le foot se mobilise pour les enfants en danger (2020), available at: [https://www.lfp.fr/Articles/JOUONS LA COLLECTIF/2020/05/04/le-foot-pro-se-mobilise-pour-les-enfants-en-danger](https://www.lfp.fr/Articles/JOUONS_LA_COLLECTIF/2020/05/04/le-foot-pro-se-mobilise-pour-les-enfants-en-danger).

Lee, C., Bang, H., & Shonk, D. J. (2021). Professional Team Sports Organizations' Corporate Social Responsibility Activities: Corporate Image and Chosen Communication Outlets' Influence on Consumers' Reactions. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 14(2), 280-297.

Lega Serie A (2020), Baresi and massaro at the hub n. 7 of milan's dispositivo di aiuto alimentare, available at: <http://www.legaseriea.it/en/press/news/info/baresi-and-massaro-at-the-hub-n-7-of-milans-dispositivo-di-aiuto-alimentare>.

Leonard-Barton, D. (1990), “A dual methodology for case studies: Synergistic use of a longitudinal single site with replicated multiple sites”, *Organization Science*, Vol. 1 No. 3, pp. 248–66.

Les actions des clubs face au COVID-19 se poursuivent (2020) available at: [https://www.lfp.fr/Articles/JOUONS LA COLLECTIF/2020/04/24/les-actions-des-clubs-face-au-covid-19-se-poursuivent](https://www.lfp.fr/Articles/JOUONS_LA_COLLECTIF/2020/04/24/les-actions-des-clubs-face-au-covid-19-se-poursuivent).

Les travaux se poursuivent au sein du Bureau de la LFP. (2020). available at: <https://www.lfp.fr/Articles/COMMUNIQUÉS/2020/04/24/communiqué-de-la-lfp>.

Li, T., Hao, L., Kubiczek, J., & Pietrzyk, A. (2022). Corporate social responsibility of sports club in the era of coronavirus pandemic. Zagłębie Sosnowiec case study. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 35(1), 2073-2092.

Liverpool FC (2020), “LFC's global fanbase unites during coronavirus pandemic”, available at: <https://www.liverpoolfc.com/news/community/393580-lfc-s-global-fanbase-unites-during-coronavirus-pandemic>.

Mamo, Y., Agyemang, K. J., & Andrew, D. P. (2021). The Role of Culture on Fan Perceptions of CSR Initiatives: A Cross-Cultural Study of NBA Fans across Three Countries. *Journal of Global Sport Management*, 1-20.

Manchester United FC (2020a), “Club and Man Utd Foundation staff deliver food to local community”, available at: [https://www.manutd.com/en/news/detail/Man-Utd-Foundation-and-club-staff-deliver-food-to-local-community?utm\\_source=premier-league-website&utm\\_campaign=website&utm\\_medium=link](https://www.manutd.com/en/news/detail/Man-Utd-Foundation-and-club-staff-deliver-food-to-local-community?utm_source=premier-league-website&utm_campaign=website&utm_medium=link).



- Manchester United FC (2020b), “*Ed Woodward issues message on coronavirus to supporters at fans’ forum*”, available at: <https://www.manutd.com/en/news/detail/ed-woodward-issues-message-on-coronavirus-to-supporters-at-fans-forum>.
- Manchester United FC, (2020c), “*Man Utd legends Cole, Robson and Pallister reach out to the elderly*”, available at: <https://www.manutd.com/en/news/detail/man-utd-legends-including-cole-robson-pallister-call-elderly-fans>.
- Manuel, T. and Herron, T. (2020), “An ethical perspective of business CSR and the COVID-19 pandemic”, *Society and Business Review*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 235-253.
- Marca (2020), “Sport steps up and promotes solidarity initiatives against coronavirus”, available at: <https://www.marca.com/en/football/international-football/2020/03/18/5e725dfa268e3e0a398b4597.html>.
- Maunder, R., Hunter, J., Vincent, L., Bennett, J., Peladeau, N., Leszcz, M., Sadavoy, J., Verhaeghe, L.M., Steinberg, R. and Mazzulli, T. (2003), “The immediate psychological and occupational impact of the 2003 SARS outbreak in a teaching hospital”, *CMAJ*, Vol. 168 No. 10, pp. 1245–1251.
- McGowan, R. A., & Mahon, J. F. (2009). Corporate social responsibility in professional sports: An analysis of the NBA, NFL, and MLB. *Academy of Business Disciplines Journal*, 1(1), 45-82.
- McWilliams, A., Siegel, D. and Wright, P. (2006), “Corporate social responsibility: Strategic implications”, *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 1-18.
- Miles, M.B. and Huberman, A.M. (1994), *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, London.
- Mogaji, E. (2020), *Financial Vulnerability during a Pandemic: Insights for Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)*, SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 3564702, Social Science Research Network.
- Morganstein, J.C., Fullerton, C.S., Ursano, R.J., Donato, D. and Holloway, H.C. (2017), *Pandemics: Healthcare emergencies. Textbook of Disaster Psychiatry*, pp. 270-283, Cambridge University Press.
- News18 (2020), La Liga Players Keeping Fans Engaged Amidst Coronavirus Lockdown, Here’s How. *News18*, available at: <https://www.news18.com/news/football/la-liga-players-keeping-fans-engaged-amidst-coronavirus-lockdown-heres-how-2577745.html>.
- NZFVC (New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse) (2020), “*Preventing and Responding to Family, Whānau and Sexual Violence during COVID-19*”, available at: <https://nzfvc.org.nz/COVID-19/preventing-respo-nding-viole-nce-COVID-19>.

- Perrig-Chiello, P., Hutchison, S. and Knöpfli, B. (2016), *Vulnerability following a critical life event: Temporary crisis or chronic distress? A psychological controversy, methodological considerations, and empirical evidence*, In *Surveying human vulnerabilities across the life course*, pp. 87-111, Springer.
- Perrin, P.C., McCabe, O.L., Everly, G.S. and Links, J.M. (2009), “Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic: Mental Health Considerations”, *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, Vol. 24 No. 3, pp. 223–230.
- Premier League (2020), “*Premier League, FA, EFL and WSL unite to postpone fixtures*”, available at: <http://www.premierleague.com/news/1645173>.
- Price, S. (2020), “*COVID-19: Mental health of 41% of British population at risk*”, available at: <https://www.health.europa.eu/covid-19-mental-health-of-42-of-british-population-at-risk/99959/>.
- Raimo, N., Vitolla, F., Nicolò, G. and Polcini, P. T. (2021). CSR disclosure as a legitimization strategy: evidence from the football industry. *Measuring Business Excellence*.
- Reuters (2020), “*Serie A clubs, players and fans raise millions of euros to fight coronavirus*”, available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/mar/20/serie-a-clubs-players-and-fans-raise-millions-of-euros-to-fight-coronavirus>.
- Reuters. (2021). *UEFA projects 8 billion euros losses for top-flight clubs due to covid-19*. Reuters, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/uefa-projects-8-billion-euros-losses-top-flight-clubs-due-covid-19-2021-05-21/>
- Royce, J. (2005), *The philosophy of loyalty. In the basic writings of Josiah Royce*, Vol. 2: Logic, loyalty, and community, Fordham University Press, New York, NY:
- Schoch-Spana, M. (2000), “Implications of Pandemic Influenza for Bioterrorism Response”, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, Vol. 31 No. 6, pp. 1409–1413.
- Southampton FC (2020), “Online exercises for older adults”, available at: <https://www.southamptonfc.com/news/2020-03-20/saints-foundation-older-adult-exercise-online>.
- Souto, B.F. (2009), “Crisis and corporate social responsibility: threat or opportunity?”, *International Journal of Economic Sciences and Applied Research*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 36-50

- The Nielsen Company (2014), “Doing well by doing good: Increasingly, consumers care about corporate social responsibility, but does concern convert to consumption?”, available at: [www.nielsen.com/content/dam/niensglobal/apac/docs/reports/2014/Nielsen-Global-Corporate-Social-ResponsibilityReportJune-2014.pdf](http://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/niensglobal/apac/docs/reports/2014/Nielsen-Global-Corporate-Social-ResponsibilityReportJune-2014.pdf).
- (The) Guardian (2020), “*Lockdowns around the world bring rise in domestic violence*”, available at: [https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/28/lockdowns-world-rise-domestic-violence?CMP=Share\\_iOSApp\\_Other](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/28/lockdowns-world-rise-domestic-violence?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other).
- (The) Independent (2020), “*French Ligue 1 season cancelled due to coronavirus*”, available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/european/france-ligue-1-cancelled-season-games-postponed-coronavirus-a9488131.html>.
- Tottenham Hotspur (2020), “*To Care Is To Do*”, available at: <https://www.tottenhamhotspur.com/news/2020/march/to-care-is-to-do/>
- UNCTAD. (2021), “Global economy could lose over \$4 trillion due to COVID-19 impact on tourism”, available at: <https://unctad.org/news/global-economy-could-lose-over-4-trillion-due-covid-19-impact-tourism>.
- United Nations (2006), “*Sport for development and peace: The way forward*”, Report of the Secretary-General, Geneva, Switzerland.
- Våland, T. and Heide, M. (2005), “Corporate social responsiveness”, *European Management Journal*, Vol. 23 No. 5, pp. 495-506.
- Van Aardt, C.J., Moshoeu, A., Risenga, A., Pohl, M. and Coetzee, M.C. (2009), “*A Consumer Financial Vulnerability (CFV) Index for South Africa*”, Pretoria: University of South Africa, Bureau of Market Research.
- Walzel, S., Robertson, J., & Anagnostopoulos, C. (2018). Corporate social responsibility in professional team sports organizations: An integrative review. *Journal of Sport Management*, 32(6), 511-530.
- Warrier, S. B. (2020), “*La Liga clubs Cadiz, Alaves, Malaga launch solidarity shirts to support fight against coronavirus*”, available at: <https://www.Mykhel.Com>.  
<https://www.mykhel.com/football/coronavirus-in-sport-la-liga-clubs-launch-solidarity-shirts-143085.html>.
- WHO (2020) “Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), "Situation Report - 94", available at: [https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200423-sitrep-94-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=b8304bf0\\_2](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200423-sitrep-94-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=b8304bf0_2).

- WHO (2020), “Mental health and COVID-19”, available at: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19/technical-guidance/mental-health-and-covid-19>.
- Williams, D. (2020), “By invitation: Mark carney on how the economy must yield to human values”, *The Economist*, available at: [www.economist.com/by-invitation/2020/04/16/markcarney-onhow-the-economy-must-yield-to-human-values](http://www.economist.com/by-invitation/2020/04/16/markcarney-onhow-the-economy-must-yield-to-human-values).
- Wojtyla, K. (1979), “*The acting person*”, In *Analecta Husserliana: The yearbook of phenomenological research*, pp. 3–5. D. Reidel Publishing, Dordrecht, Holland.
- Wu, K.K., Chan, S.K. and Ma, T.M. (2005), “Posttraumatic stress, anxiety, and depression in survivors of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)”, *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 39-42.
- Xu, K. and Li, W. (2012), “An Ethical Stakeholder Approach to Crisis Communication: A Case Study of Foxconn’s 2010 Employee Suicide Crisis”, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 117 No. 2, pp. 371-386.
- Yin, R. K. (2014), *Case study research: Design and methods*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.