

**Unveiling Sustainable Innovations: A Study of Business Event Planners' Intrapreneurial  
Behavior Through the Lens of Identity Theories**

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## **Research Background**

The business events industry has a significant social and environmental impact on the host communities (Holmes & Mair, 2020). Consequently, there has been an increasing trend in corporate social responsibility (CSR) within the events industry. From customers' perspectives, engaging in CSR can bring benefits such as customer loyalty and trust (Palacios-Florencio et al., 2018). For employees, CSR has been shown to impact their engagement with the company (Glavas, 2016), their well-being, and their loyalty (Guzzo et al., 2022), more importantly, their active participation in improving corporate sustainability performance (Wang, 2016). Thus, engaging in CSR will not only bring long term benefits to event organizations' financial and marketing performance but will also ensure customer and employee well-being and loyalty.

However, in the business events sector, research and industry reports have shown that few sustainability practices have been implemented by events (Russell, 2020). For instance, only 4% (out of over 800) event planners have included CSR activities at their events (Russell, 2020). This might be due to limited support from the higher-level management groups, such as a lack of financial support and excessive focus on short-term financial performance (i.e., return on investment) (Alves, 2023). According to the results of the 29<sup>th</sup> annual market survey by the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), 61% of the surveyed event planners consider environmental sustainability important (Russell, 2020). Therefore, there is a gap between event planners' expectations and current event sustainable practices.

Event planners' active engagement in sustainable practices is crucial for organizational sustainability performance as they are the project executors and can influence the

implementation of sustainable practices. Thus, bottom-up CSR (i.e., social intrapreneurship) would be effective in improving events' sustainability performance by addressing employees' perceptions and expectations of sustainability practices. This study aims to investigate how event organizations' CSR practices could influence event planners' sustainability-related intrapreneurial behavior through company-employee identification and employees' sustainability role identity (Hogg et al., 1995). Additionally, the moderating effect of psychological empowerment will also be examined (Duan et al., 2018).

### **Methodology**

This study will build a structural model to examine the relationships between event companies' CSR, planners' employee-company identification, sustainable role identity, psychology empowerment, and intrapreneurial behavior. An online survey will be employed for data collection. Event planners who are in the business event sector (corporate meetings, trade shows, conferences etc.) will be the target population. Data will be collected through conferences and associations (e.g., IAEE, PCMA, etc.) in the events industry. After data collection, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used to conduct descriptive analysis and SmartPLS 4.0 will be used for partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

### **Expected Results and Implications**

The results of descriptive analysis will reveal the current status of the adoption of CSR practices in companies involved in business events. The results of PLS-SEM will identify how CSR will influence business event planners' identity with the company and sustainability role identity, furthering their intrapreneurial sustainable behavior. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights to event organizations on how to improve corporate sustainability performance in collaboration with their employees.

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