

Strategic Trisector Collaboration in Disaster Response

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The cause-related marketing concept has typically focused on how businesses are related to nonprofits with a cause. Public-private partnerships have normally stressed business and government collaboration in obtaining intended goals. Nonprofit and government partnerships have been the main trend for resolving social issues since the 1980s. A voluminous literature has focused on the three concepts separately. That is, research has been conducted to investigate how a commercial organization and nonprofit work together, and how a public sector organization and business corporation collaborate with each other. Relatively little research has primarily examined trisector collaborations for solving social problems, in particular after disasters. This paper argues that disaster recovery can be achieved more effectively if the three sectors collaborate simultaneously. A trisector collaboration framework is suggested and the Japanese tourism industry after 2011 earthquake and tsunami will be used as a case to illustrate how the framework may assist in achieving social objectives more effectively. The paper contributes to the existing literature by extending the research on trisector collaborations for disaster recovery. Limitations and future research directions will be discussed in the paper.

Field of Research: Management

1. Introduction

The concept of cause-related marketing has typically focused on how business corporations might relate to nonprofits. Chaney and Dolli (2000) define cause-related marketing as a marketing strategy whereby the firm makes a contribution, financial or otherwise, to charitable nonprofit organizations contingent upon the customer engaging in a revenue providing exchange that satisfies business and individual objectives. This involves associating a charity's logo with a brand, product or service to encourage sales of the product as well as raising funds for the charity. The public-private partnerships model has emerged rapidly in the last few decades (Makin 2003; Wright 2000; Singh & Prakash 2010). Public-private partnerships have normally stressed business and government collaboration in obtaining intended goals. Public-private partnerships allow profit-making private companies to build, own and operate public projects on behalf of the public sector (Nisar 2007). The partnerships often appear in contractual basis with specifically designed performance criteria. Nonprofit and government partnerships have been the main trend for resolving social issues since the 1980s.

A voluminous literature has focused on the three concepts separately. That is, research has been conducted to investigate how a business enterprise and nonprofit organization partner for solving social problems, and how a public sector agency and private commercial corporation collaborate for dealing with social issues. Very limited research has primarily examined trisector collaborations for solving social problems,

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particularly in the view that the approach may assist in the recovery of disasters. The present exploratory study is on the goals of, inputs to, and impact of trisector collaborations. The research question addressed is '*What benefits do business corporations, nonprofits and the government gain for trisector collaborations?*' This paper aims to extend the existing literature by offering a better understanding of trisector collaborations among businesses, nonprofits and the government, in particular in disaster responses. The collaborations are analyzed from the perspectives of reputation, responsibility and relevance of the involved parties.

The paper argues that disaster recovery may be achieved more effectively if the three sectors collaborate simultaneously. A strategic trisector collaboration conceptual framework which helps to strengthen this multidisciplinary field is proposed in the paper. The benefits of the collaborations are studied from the notion of natural disaster recovery. After reviewing the literature, the Japanese tourism industry after 2011 earthquake and tsunami will be used as a case study to illustrate how the framework may assist in achieving social objectives more effectively. The paper contributes to the existing literature by extending the research on trisector collaborations after disasters.

The paper firstly reviews the literature and offers a comprehensive study of the benefits of trisector collaborations to the involved parties. This is then followed by a proposal of a trisector collaboration framework. A short case study of Japanese tourism program after 2011 earthquake and tsunami will be used to illustrate how the trisector collaboration framework may benefit all parties involved. Limitations and future research directions will be discussed in the paper.

2. Literature Review

For decades consumers have purchased products and services from charitable nonprofit organizations which exploit their positive image when they develop a trading operation (Bennett & Gabriel 2000). Altruism, corporate responsibility and philanthropy are often used to describe cause-related marketing, an activity in which businesses join with charitable nonprofit organizations or causes to market an image, product, or service for mutual benefit. Lichtenstein, Drumwright and Braig (2004) argue that a business corporation's socially responsible behavior can positively affect consumers' attitudes toward the corporation. Nonprofits, in making their appeal, draw on a secondary motivation. The consumer might choose a charity's products or services over a private firm because any revenue that the nonprofit makes goes to a 'good cause' (Chetkovich & Frumkin 2003). Thus, an association with a charitable nonprofit organization can also build strong social or community values to a product or service, reflecting a company's proven commitment to a worthy cause. The study of corporate social responsibility in more recent times has seen some strategic partnerships between business corporations and traditional nonprofit organizations (see, e.g. Husted & Allen 2007; Lee 2008; Lichtenstein, Drumwright & Braig 2004; Matten & Moon 2008; Porter & Kramer 2006; Sakarya et al. 2012). Charities are also finding themselves in greater needs of outside support and thus are turning to the private sector for assistance (Andreasen & Kotler 2003). With today's increasingly hard-to-please consumers, marketing managers recognize that cause-related marketing can be a powerful marketing tool to gain a competitive edge. All other things being equal, many consumers would rather do business with a company that

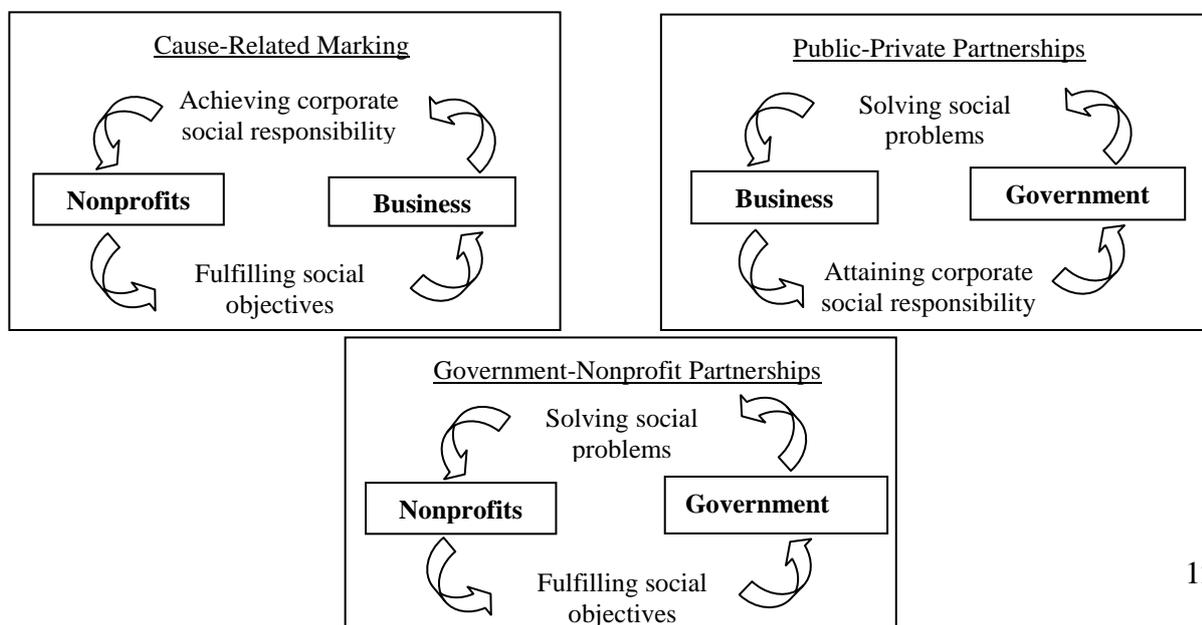
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stands for something beyond profits (Andreasen & Kotler 2003). Thus, business firms often find themselves more likely to achieve better performance if they are able to enter into partnership with charities with a similar agenda and embrace a cause makes good business sense (Lafferty, Goldsmith & Hult 2004).

Both government agencies and business corporations are increasingly being called upon to interact with the charitable sector to achieve mutual objectives (Sagawa & Segal 2000). Through public-private partnership contracts, the government, as the funding provider, achieves value for money for projects delivered by private companies which are often perceived to be able to offer expertise knowledge, skills, systems and networks for specific projects. Private companies, on the other hand, gain financial rewards if they meet the performance criteria as set in the public-private partnership contracts. It is important to note that public-private partnerships are not limited to business oriented projects. Indeed, public-private partnership projects can also aim for solving social problems. Today, social services such as employment services, services for homeless youths and healthcare are delivered through public-private partnership contracts (Carney & Ramia 2002; English 2005; Kong 2008).

The approach that the government contracts out its social services to nonprofits has been the main trend since the 1980s as it has been perceived to be an effective way of delivering services to people in need (Alford, O'Neil, McGuire, Considine, Muetzelfeldt & Ernst 1994; Bevir, Rhodes & Weller, 2003). There is also a voluminous literature on the subject of government-nonprofit partnerships (Brinkerhoff 1999; Brinkerhoff 2002; Gazley 2010; Krishna 2003; Osborne, Jenei, Fabian & Kuti 2005; Smillie & Helmich 1999). There is a similarity between public-private partnerships and government-nonprofit partnerships as the government is the funding provider for both partnerships. However, private companies may see achieving corporate social responsibility as an approach to attain competitive advantage (Porter & Kramer 2006) while social dimension is often the *raison d'être* of nonprofits' existence (Ryan 1999; Kong 2008; Kong & Ramia 2010). Figure 1 briefly shows the concepts of cause-related marketing, public-private partnerships and government-nonprofit partnerships.

Figure 1: Concepts of Cause-Related Marketing, Public-Private Partnerships and Government-Nonprofit Partnerships



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As can be seen from Figure 1 above, the three concepts have a common key motive. That is to make a difference by tackling social issues in the society. The paper argues that the three sectors will likely achieve more in terms of solving social and ethical issues if they form a strategic trisector collaboration focusing on social solutions as their key component in their collaboration. Selsky and Parker (2005) urge that more research on trisector collaborations is needed in order to strengthen the conceptual underpinnings of this particular type of collaborations. The paper argues that the current concepts of cause-related marketing, public-private partnerships and government-nonprofit partnerships are important in their own stand but may be insufficient in particular in disaster responses.

A disaster is a sudden, calamitous event bringing great damage, loss, and destruction and devastation to life and property (Baade, Baumann & Matheson 2007; Shaluf, Ahmadun & Said 2003). A disaster can be natural as well as manmade. It is often an unplanned event emerging from the internal or external environment of an organization, region, or country which can disrupt operations, threaten people physically and mentally, and endanger the viability of entities no longer able to cope with the situation using normal managerial procedures (Fink 1986; Kash & Darling 1998). The damage caused by disasters can be immeasurable and varies with the geographical location, climate and the type of the earth surface/degree of vulnerability. This influences the mental, socio-economic, political and cultural state of the affected area. The massive floods in Queensland, Australia in the early 2011, earthquakes in Montserrat, San Francisco, Italy and Turkey, and the tsunami in late 2004 in Thailand are examples of natural disasters that become tourism crises. Disasters often have negative consequences. The damages significantly reduce the number of tourists visiting a tourist area and it usually takes a number of years to recover. At the same time, such events may also offer opportunities to introduce new products, management programs, new markets, and new changes. Knowing how to handle disasters distinguishes an organization from being successful as opposed to failing (Okumus & Karamustafa 2005).

3. Benefits of Trisector Collaborations through Reputation, Responsibility and Relevance

The benefits of trisector collaborations can be understood through the perspectives of reputation, responsibility and relevance of business, non-profits and the government. Governments often play a key and leading role in community development as they regulate policies to both for-profit firms and charitable nonprofit organizations. Government agencies often have the ultimate responsibility in addressing societal issues and, in many cases, are the funding providers for social service and community based nonprofit organizations (Huxham & Vangen 1996). The government provides incentives to business firms which promise a certain monetary donation each time the firms' products or services are sold. An example of this incentive may include tax exemptions. One of the advantages that business and nonprofits gain by partnering with the government is the government's ability to bring together stakeholders representing interests on national, regional, and local geographical scales. Partnerships are often led by a convener, and they may well be more successful when this facilitator is perceived to have legitimate authority (Parker 2000). Governments can play this significant role. Governments in many countries endorse the use of partnership arrangements in planning for, such as, tourism and

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infrastructure development. Among the reasons for the growing interest in inter-organizational collaboration is the belief that it may lead to the pooling of knowledge, skills, expertise, capital and other resources, greater coordination of relevant policies, increased acceptance of the resulting policies, and more effective implementation (Pretty 1995).

On the other hand, business firms often find themselves more likely to achieve better performance if they are able to enter into partnership with nonprofits with a similar agenda (Lafferty, Goldsmith & Hult 2004; Porter & Kramer 2006). Embracing a cause makes good business sense. With today's increasingly hard-to-please consumers, marketing managers recognize that partnering with nonprofits can be a powerful marketing tool to gain a competitive edge through a positive corporate reputation. All other things being equal, many consumers would rather do business with a company that stands for something beyond profits (Andreasen & Kotler 2003).

Like their for-profit and public sector counterparts, nonprofits are increasingly forming partnerships both within and across sectors to achieve their social objectives (Andreasen & Kotler 2003; Guo & Acar 2005; Sagawa & Segal 2000; Salamon 1999). Nonprofits' primary objective is to serve people in need. If nonprofits would like to continuously gain support and legitimacy from funding providers and the public, they must follow ethical principles that are broadly supported by a major portion of society (Bryson, Gibbons & Shaye 2001). In other words, they must demonstrate to their funding providers and the public that what they are doing is relevant to the society. This also reflects that these charitable nonprofit organizations have an obligation to develop sound and balanced relationships with all their stakeholders which include both the government and business corporations. As the environmental turbulence such as social and economic problems generates unintended consequences which often exceed the scope of a single organization can tackle (Mulroy 2003; Selsky & Parker 2005), nonprofits may gain benefits such as sharing resources and risks, increasing efficiency, enhancing co-ordination, facilitating mutual learning and nurturing expertise from working collaboratively with other stakeholders (Huxham & Vangen 2005). One way of achieving a balanced stakeholder relationship is by engaging strategic trisector collaborations with business and the government. Table 1 shows the potential benefits of a business-nonprofit-government strategic trisector collaboration through the lens of reputation, responsibility and relevance.

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Table 1: Potential Benefits of Trisector Collaborations through Reputation, Responsibility and Relevance

	Business	Nonprofits	Government
Reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enhance corporate reputations ✓ Create customer loyalty ✓ Increase in corporate sales ✓ Differentiate firms in consumers' minds ✓ Counteractive negative image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide a legitimate cause ✓ Promote nonprofit brands ✓ Generate financial resources directly from donor firms ✓ Attract higher consumer's based donations ✓ Attract prospective employees and volunteers ✓ Obtain managerial assistances from firms ✓ Increase publicity and generate more awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improve government image ✓ Develop community commitment and trust
Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Achieve corporate social responsibility ✓ Achieve social profits ✓ Create trust among stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fulfill social mission ✓ Increase the number and scope of community development project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Protect vulnerable citizens ✓ Solve social and ethical issues ✓ Managing environmental crises ✓ Regulate social policies
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Behave in social responsible ways ✓ Gain competitive advantage ✓ Achieve social profits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gain financial supports ✓ Solve social problems Community development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduced financial pressures for social problems ✓ Solve social and ethical issues

Through strategic trisector collaborations, business firms gain a reputation which focuses not only on profit, but also social issues that concern community development. An improved reputation likely increases sales and revenues. In other words, a business-nonprofit-government strategic collaboration likely assists business firms to fulfill both business and philanthropic objectives. For nonprofits, the strategic collaboration possibly assists the organizations to generate higher income or revenues which give the organizations greater self-sufficiency (Guo 2006). Such self-sufficiency gives the organizations the ability to fulfill more social objectives. The government is likely to be benefited from trisector collaborations in terms of reducing social expenditure and resolving social problems. The paper argues that trisector

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collaborations should be emphasized which will likely maximize the outcomes for all parties involved. Figure 2 below depicts the relationships between business, nonprofits and the government.

Figure 2: Strategic Trisector Collaboration between Businesses, Nonprofits and the Government



4. Methodology

As the study of trisector collaborations, particularly in the view of disaster recovery, is relatively limited for the current investigation, a critical analysis of the relevant literature and supplemented by a case study analysis is adopted. The paper has firstly critically reviewed the literature and then used a case study approach and applied the trisector collaboration conceptual framework in a real case of tourism industry in Japan after 2011 earthquake and tsunami. This approach helps to provide a cogent and comprehensive perspective on the theoretical and practical aspects of the conceptual framework as a strategic management method in cross-sector collaboration. It also helps to illustrate if the framework may be theoretically applied in disaster response in the tourism industry in Japan. A case study approach, supplemented by a literature-based analysis, helps to increase the level of clarity and precision of a concept, which is a necessity if we are to understand the constitutive use of the trisector collaborations in disaster response. Although this is a theoretical approach, the findings are believed to be very important to both practitioners and researchers as they provide new insights on the concept and creates more calls for future research.

5. Developing Strategic Trisector Collaborations: A Case Study of Tourism Industry in Japan after 2011 Earthquake and Tsunami

On March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake, with an epicenter located about 230 miles northeast of Tokyo, jolted a wide swath of Honshu, Japan's largest island. The earthquake generated a tsunami that pounded Honshu's northeastern coast,

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causing widespread destruction in Miyagi, Iwate, Ibaraki, and Fukushima prefectures. It was estimated that over 15,188 people died in the disaster, with 8,742 missing and likely to be included in the final death toll. It appears that the tsunami, rather than the earthquake, caused nearly all the deaths. Entire towns were washed away. Over 432,047 homes and 27,019 other buildings, as well as 3,700 roads were damaged or destroyed (Source: Japan National Police Agency, http://www.npa.go.jp/archive/keibi/biki/higaijokyo_e.pdf).

The earthquake and tsunami that occurred in Japan followed by the nuclear crisis, created a large negative impact on the economy of Japan as a whole as well as its tourism industry. Physical damage has been estimated to be from \$195 billion to as much as \$305 billion (Nanto et al. 2011). Today, restrictions to public access remain in some of the affected areas and those were once famous tourist areas. The President of the Japan National Tourism Organization, Tadatoshi Mamiya, wrote on the organization's website: 'The devastating disaster has had an enormous impact on Japan's inbound tourism. While many areas in Japan remained unaffected by the disaster, they are also suffering from the sudden decrease in international visitors. We are deeply concerned that this will not only affect Japan's tourism industry directly, but also will have a very negative impact on our industry partners around the world' (Source: <http://www.uia.be/message-japan>). Besides extending well wishes for the people of Japan, many Japanese Tourism partners wonder how the natural disaster may have affected the tourism industry in the country (Nanto et al. 2011). That is why the global tourism community is still watching and calculating the impact of the recent earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear reactor issues that have devastated parts of Japan and how it will affect the rest of the world.

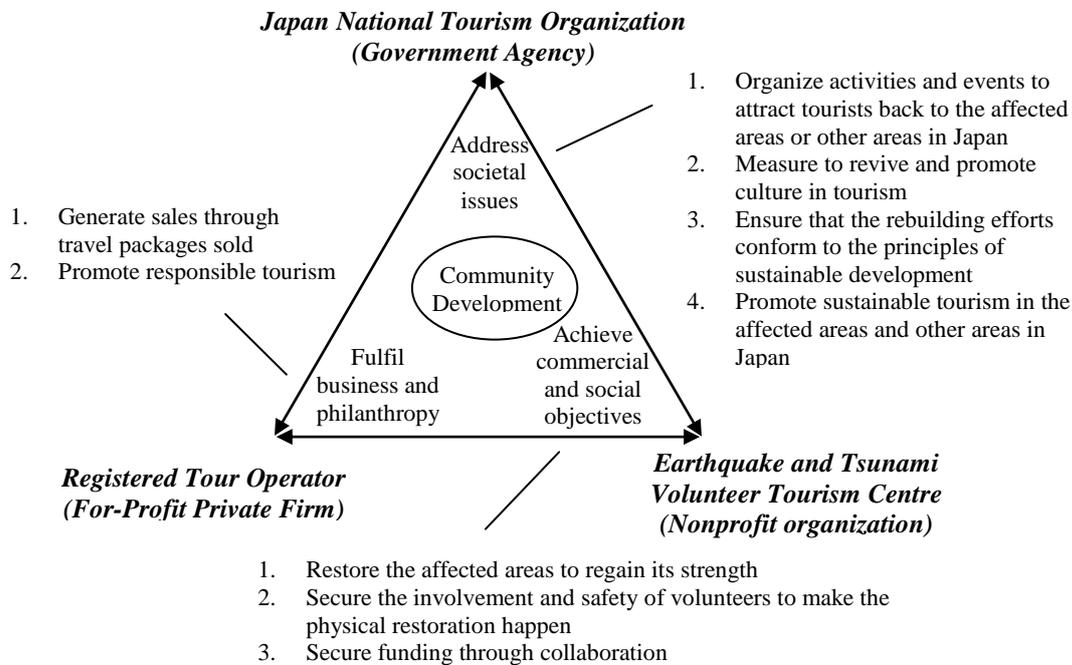
In the wake of disasters of earthquake and tsunami, many businesses have stepped up for their corporate social responsibility to provide help to the affected areas. For example, Microsoft has activated their disaster response protocol and they continue to collaborate with their customers, partners, local government, inter-government and nonprofit agencies to develop solutions that can help. The organization has made a commitment of \$2 million, which includes \$250,000 in cash as well as in-kind contributions. It is, however, important to note that communities require more than just spare cash but long-term commitment and financial support to resolving social problems (Jamali & Keshishian 2009; Kanter 1999), particularly in times of global economic crisis (Kong 2010). Corporate social responsibility may not be able to provide long-term solutions to disasters and crises like the one in Japan.

The Japanese Government can offer supports to the affected areas but such supports can be a long-term burden to the Government. This is because disaster recovery such as infrastructure from the earthquake and tsunami can be much longer than many people expected and it possibly requires a long-term solution for the affected areas. Traditionally, nonprofit organizations receive significant corporate and individual donations after disasters but the donations often decrease sharply as time goes by and others may think someone else should foot the bill (Kong 2010). Besides, many business corporations and individuals are still struggling with financial difficulties themselves and thus their contributions may not last long enough for the recovery (Brock 2008). Accordingly, it is important to have a sustainable framework which will be able to provide a long-term solution to the tourism industry in Japan. Figure 3 below shows a trisector collaboration framework which is based on the

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natural disaster in relation to the tourism industry in Japan. The framework helps to illustrate how the government, businesses and nonprofit organizations can work collaboratively in response to the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Figure 3: A Trisector Collaboration Framework for Tourism Industry in Japan



As can be seen from the above framework, the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), acts as the government agency, is involved in a broad range of activities promoting travel to Japan through various activities overseas as well as tourism-promoting activities in Japan. Thus, JNTO acts as an independent administrative institution on behalf of the government of Japan. Its key responsibilities may include:

1. Organize activities and events to attract tourists back to the affected areas or other areas in Japan
2. Measure to revive and promote culture in tourism
3. Ensure that the rebuilding efforts conform to the principles of sustainable development
4. Promote sustainable tourism in the affected areas and other areas in Japan

An Earthquake and Tsunami Volunteer Tourism Centre can be operated and run by a nonprofit organization. The Centre's key responsibilities may include:

1. Restore the affected areas to regain its strength
2. Secure the involvement and safety of volunteers to make the physical restoration happen
3. Secure funding through collaboration

Similar successful tsunami volunteer centre has been set up in the other part of the world in response to natural disasters. For instance, the Tsunami Volunteer Centre (TVC), based in Khao Lak, Thailand, was founded in January 2005 after the Indian Ocean Tsunami. The Centre provides the framework for service-minded, results-

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oriented volunteers to contribute on life-changing levels. In the first nine months after the Indian Ocean Tsunami alone, more than 3,500 volunteers from 51 countries joined our team, with confirmed arrivals well into the following year. TVC is a Thai-led NGO funded almost entirely by private donation and is not affiliated with any religions. Its only aim is to assist in the restoration of tsunami-affected communities through empowerment. The Centre serves strictly as a 'partner organization' in that projects undertaken by the Centre are driven exclusively by community needs and are executed in full partnership with village members. Such example can be borrowed and applied in Japan.

Finally, a registered tour operator, as a private business organization, can be set up and this operator can generate income through the sales of travel packages in the earthquake and tsunami affected surrounding areas or other non-affected areas. Also, it can help to promote responsible tourism in Japan.

The paper argues that a trisector collaboration framework involving the government, businesses and nonprofits can provide a more sustainable and effective solution to the tourism industry in Japan after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. As already made clear in the paper, research has been conducted in relation to cross-sector partnerships mainly focus on investigating how a commercial organization and nonprofit work together or how a public sector organization and business corporation collaborate with each other. Very limited research has primarily examined trisector collaborations for solving social problems, in particular after disasters. This paper acts as the first step to examine a trisector collaboration involving the three mentioned parties. The Japanese tourism industry after 2011 earthquake and tsunami was used as a case to illustrate how the framework might assist in achieving social objectives more effectively. The paper argues that disaster recovery can be achieved more effectively if the three sectors collaborate simultaneously. A suggested trisector collaboration framework provides new insights to practitioners and researchers and creates more calls for future research. This helps to answer the research question that '*What benefits do business corporations, nonprofits and the government gain for trisector collaborations?*'. The potential benefits of the proposed framework were illustrated in Table 1. The paper contributes to the existing literature by extending the research on trisector collaborations for disaster recovery.

6. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although such strategic partnership may open new opportunities to disaster recovery after 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, it is important to put a caution when the concept is applied. Consumers may be skeptical that business firms that link their products or services to a cause are taking advantage of nonprofits. For-profit private firms' motivation may be distorted by high financial returns and thus often focus on particular groups of consumers, a select number of key competitors and suppliers and environmental elements that play a role in maximizing profit (Hill 2002). To avoid such potential drawbacks all parties must enter a strategic agreement with good faith and fair deal. For instance, business firms must be careful not letting their business objective outweighs the motive for doing social good to the community. This is also why partnerships with the government must be emphasized as the government can take the role of regulating and monitoring as well as setting limits for such establishment to prevent any harmful act to the community and promote responsible

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and sustainable tourism. In addition, there are still areas in the affected regions which are affected by nuclear radiation. Careful considerations must be carried out before any tourism program is implemented for the safety of the volunteers. It is important to ensure volunteers are well informed about the conditions and situations in the affected areas. More importantly, they must be informed that their involvements to other unaffected areas can still contribute greatly to the affected areas and affected residents in the areas.

Since the study of trisector collaboration in relation to disaster recovery remains a relatively new research stream, qualitative methods provide the best avenue of exploration of a new field. The use of case studies offers an excellent research methodology to investigate with qualitative or a combination of research methodologies. This would further provide the opportunity to examine the effect of trisector collaboration among business, nonprofits and the government. The paper suggests that qualitative research methods, particularly in case study method, can be used in future research.

7. Conclusion

A voluminous literature has focused on the concepts of cause-related marketing, public-private partnership and nonprofit-government partnerships separately. Relatively little research has primarily examined trisector collaborations for solving social problems after disasters. The paper argues that a trisector collaboration framework involving the government, businesses and nonprofits can provide a more sustainable and effective solution to disaster recovery. The paper has used the case of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan as a case to validate if the proposed framework is applicable. Due to the complexity of the tourism industry and the needs for disaster management after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, a formal relationship between business-nonprofit-government is proposed in the paper. In this strategic collaboration arrangement, business serves as major source of fund. For business, the potential benefits of partnering include enhanced company image, increased sales volumes and higher brand recognition, while charity benefits through a new source of contributions and increased public awareness of the organization. Working jointly with business and charity will enable the government to respond to the local community's needs after the disaster—to restore the affected areas from the damage in a faster pace and to put the tourism business back to the affected areas or surrounding areas. The paper contributes to the existing literature by extending the research on trisector collaborations for disaster recovery and creates calls for further research.

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