Article

The Importance of Community Perspectives on Hotel Community-Related CSR: A Position Paper

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Abstract: The purpose of this position paper is to present an opinion on the importance of understanding host community perspectives in any community-based corporate social responsibility initiative. A host community is essentially the consumer of any community-based CSR, yet they each have unique cultures, features, needs, and expectations, which may or may not fit a business's CSR initiative, unless the community perspectives are accounted for prior to the implementation of the CSR project. Focusing on the hotel sector context, the paper develops its position by reviewing supporting literature and highlighting the outcomes of a qualitative case study that involved face-to face semistructured interviews with 15 local opinion leaders who represented several local communities. The paper concludes with a firmer opinion on its position, and it offers some of the implications of its findings.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; community-based CSR; community perspectives; hotel; legitimacy theory

1. Introduction

Community development is a necessary component for every community's long-term survival since it entails the enhancement of a community's values, structure, and lifestyle to allow for better living within the community [1]. There are three dimensions of community development: economy, education, and health. The living standard dimension refers to a CSR program that promotes economic benefits, income, employment, water, and electricity, as well as the building of the dwelling. The health dimension refers to the nutrition program and the availability of health care for the community members. Meanwhile, the education dimension includes issues such as student enrolment, schooling costs, scholarships, school attendance, reading literacy, and educational quality [2–4].

To develop a community in meaningful ways, it is important to recognize that each community is unique, and that different communities may require different types of developmental assistance. Depending on the location, culture, level of education, etc., each community faces a different set of challenges [5]. Consequently, although the essential concepts of CSR are universal, the situation in each region necessitates varied emphasis in terms of CSR implementation. In other words, CSR practices can have contextual aspects [6]. For example, CSR initiatives in undeveloped countries can differ significantly from those in rich nations. In affluent countries, most states bear the main responsibility for the community's social welfare, while in poor countries, the citizens' basic requirements are not provided [6–8]. As a result, the suitability of CSR activities or initiatives in both rich

and developing nations depends heavily on the distinct patterns and criteria of the target host community.

To determine the suitability of a community-based CSR activity, community involvement at the planning level is a must. In fact, community development is one of the three critical aspects of CSR [9]. The idea that community involvement is a crucial component of CSR has been mooted since the early 1980s [9]. However, the term, "community", in the literature often refers to the employees and their participation in CSR activities, such as by donating and volunteering [10]. Not much work has focused on involving the host community that surrounds a business operation, which represents a gap in the knowledge on the role of the host community in the planning of the community-based CSR of business corporations. Consequently, most community-based CSR activities in host communities remained immeasurable [9,11]. In addition, a business that is not ready to listen to its host community may experience the disruption of its operation [11] from community protest or backlash [12,13]. Bjorn Stigson, the Chairman of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), has emphasized that business success is impossible if the surrounding society fails [14].

The abovementioned knowledge gaps are what drove this paper to focus on the importance of understanding the host community that surrounds a business operation. The aim of this position paper is to narrow the gap in the knowledge mentioned above by highlighting the importance of accounting for community perspectives in the planning and execution of any community-based CSR of a business. It is an important issue to explore because, even though excellent corporate governance and community-based CSR are ingrained in many company cultures, as well as in their short- and long-term strategies, the advantages of these activities to the community, on the other hand, are rarely measured. There is not much research on the outcome(s) of the community-based initiatives of hotels [11] in terms of how much they benefit the community. Because of the amount of time it takes for the effects to become obvious, or the multiplicity of other possible compounding factors that must be taken into account when quantifying impacts, there is not much literature that focuses on the outcome(s) of hotel community-based CSR. Hence, it is proposed that understanding the community perspectives is a good start to the greater success of CSR initiatives. Community perspectives should matter because the community is the intended beneficiary of any community-based CSR initiatives. Hence, the members know best about their own community and can help plan, execute, and measure any community-based CSR activity.

The hotel sector was chosen as the context because it is a sector that has actively benefitted local people with employment [15,16], particularly prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hotels also contribute to community development through other means, such as philanthropy and education [11]. Because of the rapid growth of the industry prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the hotel industry is often a part of a wider solution to international development and poverty reduction by providing people the opportunity to work, offering plenty of new careers, and creating prosperous societies.

The sections below are organized as follows: First, the paper provides the supporting literature for its position. Then, it presents empirical data based on a qualitative case study of a community in Phuket, Thailand. Drawing from both the literature support and the empirical findings, it establishes its position on the importance of understanding community perspectives in community-based CSR, before offering some of the implications and the conclusion.

2. State of the Art

CSR is the commitment by companies to act ethically and to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of employees, families, and the local community at large [17,18]. It denotes that big businesses have the responsibility to not only make their own profits, but also to help the environment and the socioeconomic development of the communities in which they operate [19]. Community-based CSR is a type of CSR that is intended to help improve the livelihood of the community, such as the

business employees and the host community. It may take many forms, which include the delivery of goods and services, financial assistance, and volunteering, in order to address the needs of the intended recipients.

A persistent shortage of government capabilities in many underdeveloped and developing countries to deal with social concerns, such as poverty and unemployment, has led community-based CSR to become an important component of community development in these countries. A business, and particularly a multinational enterprise (MNE), that operates in such countries plays an increasingly important role in the society and community in which it operates, as it is often expected to engage in charitable activities and community-based CSR projects [2,4,20,21], and to generate jobs, and to improve the quality of life of the local community [22]. However, in developed countries, MNEs are expected to engage in environmental protection, to ensure high labor standards, as well as to become involved in political governance [8]. Despite the different expectations, a visionary company would understand that engaging in good CSR behaviors could help MNEs create strategic value so that their companies could stay competitive and prosperous [23] in both contexts.

Specific to the hotel sector, the pressure for CSR started because of the increased concerns about the rapid expansion of the tourism and hospitality industry and its negative environmental and social consequences. According to research conducted by the International Hotels Environment Initiative, 90% of UK citizens, 70% of Australians, and 30% of Americans believe that the tourism and hotel business has a detrimental impact on the environment and on society in general [24]. The industry is also perceived to have a wide range of negative effects on the natural environment, including water pollution, biodiversity loss, and trash generation from its everyday consumption of large amounts of water, energy, food, paper, linen, laundry, cleaning materials, and chemicals, [25] which ultimately affect the quality of life of the locals. In addition, it can negatively impact local communities through the utilization of space and communal resources [26,27]. As a result, hotel businesses all around the world have been facing increased pressure to implement more socially and environmentally responsible initiatives [28].

From the theoretical point of view, two theories are pertinent: the legitimacy theory and the stakeholder theory. The legitimacy theory is founded on the premise that, in order to continue to operate successfully, businesses must stay within the confines of what society views to be socially acceptable behavior. The legitimacy theory revolves around the concept of a social contract between organizations and society. The survival of an organization is jeopardized if society believes that it has breached its portion of the social contract. As a result, legitimacy is viewed as a resource that is essential to an organization's survival [29]. According to [30], legitimacy is a wide view, or presupposition, that an entity's activities are acceptable, legitimate, or suitable within some socially established system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions. The institutional and organizational levels are the two tiers of legitimacy theory. The institutional level is also referred to as the "macro-theory" of legitimation, and it deals with how organizational structures interact with government, religion, society, and capitalism. Establishment, maintenance, extension, and defense are all part of the organizational level. The layers of the legitimacy theory are depicted in Figure 1.

Organizations try to align the social values that are connected with or implied by their operations with the accepted norms of behavior in the larger social context in which they operate. If these two value systems are compatible, it implies organizational legitimacy. If there is a genuine or perceived discrepancy between the two value systems, however, the organizational legitimacy will be questioned. As a result, a lack of legitimacy can have devastating consequences for an organization, including the loss of its ability to function [31]. In conclusion, the legitimacy theory can be seen as a process that helps groups to start and grow voluntary social programs. The ability of businesses to thrive and survive, as well as their ability to fail, is determined by their legal practices.
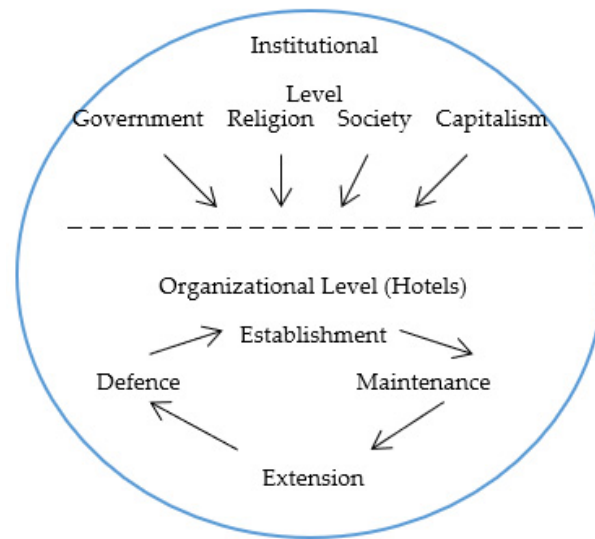
Figure 1. Layers of legitimacy theory. Adapted from: Agrawal (2013).

The stakeholder theory, which is a useful tool for figuring out how stakeholders impact CSR programs, and how CSR projects affect stakeholders, can also lend support to the position of this paper. Stakeholder theory is tied to CSR; if organizations want to use CSR as a source of competitive advantage that will help to them survive in the long run, they must examine all aspects of their business, including their connections with all of the stakeholders [32,33]. In the past, a company's primary purpose was to make money and to maximize profits for its shareholders, which is known as the "shareholder perspective" [34]. After Freeman's introduction of stakeholder theory in 1984, the business sector changed from a narrow economic focus on creating shareholder wealth, to a broader stakeholder focus on increasing societal benefits [35]. According to Freeman, stakeholders are individuals or organizations who benefit from or are hurt by company activities, and whose rights are exploited or respected. Stakeholders can also include individuals who have a stake in or claim to the corporation [32]. Therefore, they can influence or be affected by the organization's activities, goals, and policies. Freeman's theory has helped to reconceptualize the nature of the firm to encourage the consideration of all stakeholders [36]. Figure 2 below depicts a stakeholder model of corporations.
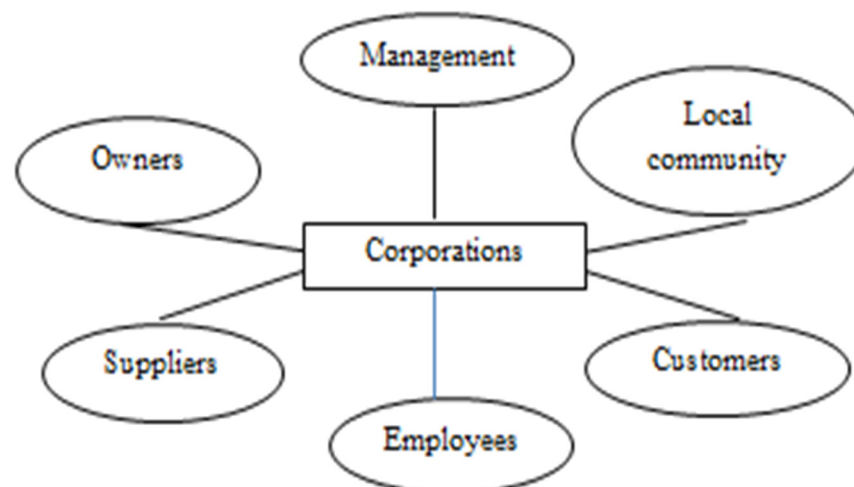
Figure 2. A stakeholder model of corporations. Adapted from: Freeman (1984).

The stakeholder concept is recognized as a core concept of CSR since it is seen as an important idea that serves to strengthen the link with corporate stakeholders and other

associated parties [37]. Stakeholders act as a conduit between the organization's goals and ambitions and the expectations of society [38]. However, despite the importance of meeting the stakeholders' needs, meeting all of their expectations is challenging because of the company's limited resources, and it is time consuming [39]. This is why Freeman suggests that businesses should consider CSR from the perspective of their stakeholders, and then identify and prioritize their stakeholders in order to determine what expectations to meet for the most important stakeholders, and what expectations will benefit the organizations the most [32,39].

The term, "stakeholders", can, however, be defined further. As there are diverse categories of corporate stakeholders, many scholars have used terminology such as "narrow and wide" stakeholders, "internal and external" stakeholders, "primary and secondary" stakeholders, "active and passive" stakeholders, and so on [32,40–42]. Internal stakeholders, as opposed to external stakeholders, are those who are already active in operational companies as owners, board members, or employees. External stakeholders, on the other hand, are persons who can be affected by an organization's activities, such as clients, shareholders, suppliers, and creditors, as well as the government, society, and community [40]. Stakeholders are classified into two types by [41], depending on their worth to the company: primary and secondary stakeholders. The primary stakeholders are those who are directly involved in achieving the company's objectives. This group frequently includes shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, and the host community. The corporation will be seriously affected or unable to operate if any important stakeholder group becomes dissatisfied and withdraws from the corporate structure, in whole or in part, which is a perennial worry. As a result, maintaining positive relationships with a company's key stakeholders can help it to avoid difficulties, increase employee morale, and achieve business success. Secondary stakeholders, on the other hand, are those who have an impact on a firm, or who have been impacted by it, but who do not have direct contact with it.

Community is one of the most significant types of external stakeholders in the business sector. In social science, community is commonly related to terms such as "group", "body", "set", "circle", "clique", "faction", "gang", "lot", and so on. A community is defined as a group of individuals who live in the same place [43], who have the same geographical location, as well as who share a common culture and/or ethnicity, and possibly other shared relational characteristics [44]. In other cases, such as in the virtual world, the notion of community must extend beyond the geographical limit. The authors of [45,46] describe community in business as being inclusive of employees, suppliers, distributors, nonprofit and public-sector partners, as well as members of the public. As a result, a community can be considered a primary external stakeholder that is directly involved in the organizational success, and without whom the organization will perish. Any activities or decisions that have direct or indirect impacts on the community must be carefully considered. Otherwise, what businesses believe the community requires may not be accurate, and businesses may waste resources on ineffective CSR projects.

Additionally, how CSR is implemented must also fit the cultures and perspectives of the target community [5,6]. There has been empirical work that highlights the negative consequences of ignoring the community concerns when implementing CSR. In [47], for example, the authors investigated community opinions on CSR activities across Zimbabwean hotel enterprises and they found that, although many of the hotels had engaged in community-based CSR with their surrounding communities by donating food products, problems arose when the products that the hotels offered were of inferior quality or were not really what the community needed. This problem could be due to the failure to account for community perspectives, which could lead to misunderstandings and problems. Had the hotels researched the community opinions before embarking on their CSR projects, the project's failure would have been less likely. A good example to illustrate this is the "WeCan" project that was developed by the Wharf hotels to assist less privileged students in Hong Kong [48]. The hotels actively collaborated with schools and students in

designing the program, which aimed to provide financial and volunteering support for the benefit of those in need. The program began in 2011 with eleven secondary schools. Currently, fourteen schools have been matched with fourteen business sponsors through the program [48].

3. Methodology

The findings of our qualitative research in Phuket, Thailand, below, further confirm the need to understand community perspectives prior to the implementation of community-based notions. The qualitative study, which was conducted by the first and second authors on what the host community received versus what they truly needed in relation to community-based CSR initiatives, used face-to-face semistructured interviews with the local opinion leaders of several local communities. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is useful for studies at the individual level to find out, in depth, the ways in which people think or feel [49]. In addition, it is vital to recognize that each community has individual features, as different locations have different social, cultural, geographic, environmental, economic, and historical factors that may influence their requirements and expectations [50].

To ensure representativeness in the sample of community leaders, the qualitative study utilized the stratified sampling technique to collect data from all three districts in Phuket, which are further segmented into 104 communities [51]. As it was difficult to obtain information from community leaders because the researchers had never met them before, the procedure also included the use of a purposive sampling technique to choose only the target communities that used to receive the hotel community-based CSR. In addition, the snowball sampling approach was used to obtain information from difficult-to-reach populations [52]. After interviewing the first community leader, the researchers requested assistance in making recommendations to other community leaders, and they then asked those leaders to do the same. These steps were repeated until the needed sample size was found.

Finally, five community leaders were chosen from each district, giving the study 15 community leaders from the three districts to provide information on the hotel community-based CSR that they received, the type of the hotel community-based CSR that they required, and their perspectives on the hotel CSFs for community-based CSR. Because saturation frequently occurs in samples between 12 and 15 people, 15 is considered the smallest acceptable sample size for a given group [53]. The number of settlements in each district, as well as the sample size, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The number of communities in each district and the sample size.

Districts	Number of Communities	Sample Size
1. Mueang Phuket district	44	5
2. Kathu district	14	5
3. Thalang district	46	5
3 Districts	104 Communities	15 Samples

To collect qualitative data from the community leaders, the face-to-face semistructured interview was adopted as the study method. An interview protocol was created in accordance with the study's aims and problems. The interview protocol was divided into Section A: Informant Information, and Section B: Community Leaders' Perspectives. To ensure construct validity, all of the questions were adapted from past studies (such as [54–61]) that explored the issue, but in other contexts. Four main procedures that have been proposed by qualitative experts (such as [62,63]) were adopted to analyze the data thematically: transcriptions of audio recordings; the coding of all transcripts in the margins; the tabulation of all codes, key categories, and subcategories; a reexamination of all the codes; breaking down the subcategories into more specific variables; and reorganizing the quotes and refining the codes into possible themes. Rigor was maintained by a continuous

discussion of the coding among the researchers, and between the researchers and the informants, to help attain a broader picture of the research findings. The content validity was established by using probes, or by asking more detailed questions, in order to obtain the depth and breadth of the issue, and the validity was established by continuously checking the accuracy of the interviewers' understanding and interpretation of the answers with that of the informants.

Validity was also established by using the triangulation approach, which is a data validation process that involves cross-checking data from two or more sources—in this case, the informants and secondary sources—in order to further understand the data. Triangulation is a good way to establish validity, as it allows the use and combination of different research approaches in the investigation of a single topic, the usage of diverse data and the s mixing of the various approaches and theories, as well as the perspectives of various investigators [62,63], in order to see the big picture.

4. Result Analysis and Discussion

From the interview data with the community leaders (please see Table A1 in Appendix A), the hotel community-based CSR that the communities received were categorized into five types on the basis of their frequency of mentions:

(1) Donations—Most of the informants mentioned donations, such as donated money, foods, drinks, clothes, supplies, and in-kind for the disabled people and elderly in nursing homes, disadvantaged children in orphanages, and the residents in the disaster-affected areas. Most of the sponsored activities were arranged on special occasions, such as the anniversary of the hotel's foundation day, Children's Day, Father's Day, the International Day of People with Disabilities, the New Year festival, the Songkran festival, etc. There were activities that hotels arranged on their own, and those that were supported through CSR projects of the government sector. A member of the municipal council of the Ratsada subdistrict said, *"The hotel sector supported community activities by sending prizes and supporting foods for community events, and also supported foods and drinking water for the police and volunteers at the police checkpoints during the festivals"*. One community leader of the Vichit subdistrict said, *"Hotels always donate food and supplies for elderly, children, and residents on special occasions"*.

(2) Education—The hotels provided scholarships, learning equipment, and money for the development of school buildings and facilities. There were activities that hotels arranged on their own, and those that were supported through CSR projects of the government sector. The director of the Ban Kho En school said, *"Schools in Thalang district received help from many hotels such as scholarships, school facilities, and drinking water dispensers"*. Moreover, some hotels cooperated with schools to create special courses. The director of the Yaowawit school said, *"Marriott hotels in Phuket have supported the schools for a long time by being a partner in teaching knowledge and skills in kitchen, housekeeping, food, and beverage service departments. Moreover, hotels have also cooperated in creating pre-vocational education degrees in hospitality management and students of Yaowawit school who have been given a chance to have an internship in Marriott hotels"*.

(3) Environment—Most of the informants mentioned beach cleaning as the environmental activity that hotels organized in partnership with the government sector. In addition, there were many environmental campaigns to promote the use of waste separation tanks, recycled materials, and the protection, restoration, and conservation of ecosystems and natural resources. After floods and natural disasters, all of the sectors helped with the cleaning and restoration activities, such as cleaning the canals, cleaning the residents' houses, creating portable toilets, and providing temporary houses. The director of public health and the environment division of the Patong municipality office said, *"Patong is the most famous beach in Phuket. It is the center of Phuket's nightlife which includes restaurants, cafes, bars, dance clubs, massage places, discotheques, night clubs, and cabaret shows. Many tourists and shops can cause a lot of*

garbage. Two tons of marine trash was collected on Patong beach in just two hours, and most of the garbage was glass bottles and plastic bags. Patong municipality received cooperation from many hotels every time it arranged a beach cleaning campaign".

(4) Health and life care—In terms of health care, hotels donated money and bought sports facilities for public parks, which motivated people to exercise. Many hotels created marathons for charity and to raise funds for special purposes, and there were many times that communities received benefits from the marathon activities. For example, a community leader of the Rawai subdistrict said, *"Hotels used to donate money from marathon charity to hospitals in the communities. The residents helped to prepare the event and provide convenience for hotels. This created a better relationship between hotels and communities"*. In terms of life care, the director of the public health and environment division of the Patong municipality office said that, *"Hotels cooperated with the government sector and communities to create and practice the evacuation plans for the tsunami disaster. Hotels also donated money for making tsunami warning signs"*.

(5) Job and labor skills development—In terms of job placement, hotels were involved in hiring residents and supporting labor skills development. A community leader of the Chalong subdistrict said, *"Hotel industry has contributed income and generated employment in the communities. Many years ago, some young people decided to abandon their homes to find jobs in the capital city. Since tourism has begun and become one of the main factors in economic development, creating jobs for people and generating more income in the communities, then these young people in the communities could find jobs and have a better quality of life"*. In terms of the labor skills development, hotels were involved in developing their knowledge and skills for residents. A village health volunteer of the Bang Tao community said, *"Many hotels came to teach the residents and children in the community about English language, flower arrangement, and European cooking"*.

The interview data also shed light on what the community actually needed, which are categorized below on the basis of the frequency of mentions:

(1) Jobs and quality of life—Instead of donations, the community, including disabled individuals, preferred opportunities to work in hotels. They also preferred better quality of life, as some communities are still lacking adequate infrastructure and public utilities. A member of the municipal council of the Ratsada subdistrict, a community leader of the Vichit subdistrict, and the head of accounting and finance at the Phuket Sunshine Village said, *"Some areas still need support of water supplies, electricity supplies, roads, and street light poles. People in some areas still have to buy water for household use"*.

(2) Education—In terms of the education dimension, the informants mentioned that hotels should provide more long-term support via scholarships, learning facilities, sports equipment, and Thai instruments for students and disadvantaged children. The secretary of the Patong Development Foundation said, *"Youth football teams in Patong were created for children to motivate them to play sports and keep away from drugs. Patong development foundation still needs support for footballs and other equipment because there are a lot of youth participating in this activity, so there is not enough equipment"*. The director of the Baan Kalim school and the director of the Yaowawit school said, *"Apart from the scholarships and learning facilities, schools also need help for renovating school buildings and long-term support for school expenses"*.

(3) Environment—Informants mentioned that hotels should make more effort in waste management and disposal. A member of the municipal council of the Ratsada subdistrict, a community leader of the Vichit subdistrict, a village health volunteer of the Bang Tao community, and the secretary of the Patong Development Foundation said, *"Waste is one of Phuket's main problems. There is a lot of waste from hotels. Hotels should have policies and strategies for waste management, wastewater treatment system, and energy consumption"*.

(4) Society improvement—The community leader of the Karon subdistrict, a community leader of the Rawai subdistrict, the director of the public health and environment

division of the Patong municipality office, the secretary of the Patong Development Foundation, and the director of the Ban Kho En school said, "*Drug abuse is a major problem of tourist city. Hotels should have campaigns to promote and prevent drug addiction among youth and hotels' staff*".

(5) Health—Some communities have a lot of elderly people; therefore, health care centers are needed. The Ketho community leader said, "*During daytime, elderly people were left alone at home. Therefore, communities need health care centers where elderly people can be taken care of for the entire day. Hence, hotels should cooperate with the government sector to establish health care centers in the communities*".

As can be seen in Figure 3, only one type of community-based CSR initiative—education support—fits into what the community both needed and received. Even so, further probing reveals that the hope for such an initiative is that it is long-term in nature, rather than a one-off. Hence, we can say that there is a clear divide between what the hotels think the community needed, and what the community truly needed. Donations, beach/community cleaning, and energy/environmental conservation were evidently three activities that all three districts received. This is in line with Bowman et al. (2003), as cited in [64] (p. 396), who contend that corporate philanthropy, such as gifts and community involvement, were the most common CSR activities in Thailand, which shows that hotels tend to go for normal/standard activities when performing CSR instead of tailoring their activities according to community needs. The authors of [64] confirm that most of the CSR activities in Thailand still primarily involved charity and donations a decade later. According to [65], the reason Thailand's CSR concept is based on philanthropic ideas could be because giving is an important component in Thai culture and in the Buddhist tradition of merit making, which is typically accomplished through philanthropy, charity, sponsorship, volunteering, and sharing. Hence, this could be one plausible explanation for such an observation in Thailand. The interview results also reveal that the environmental dimension of the community-based CSR activities of hotels typically focus on beach cleaning and energy saving. Hotel CSR operations tend to focus on such activities because, according to [39,66,67], doing so benefits the business efficiency. Merlin Beach, the training operation manager at the Phuket Marriott Resort and Spa, stated that, "*Every hotel has energy and environmental conservation activities because environmental protection and community development must be developed together. Communities will not be difficult to develop if located in a good environment, and when communities have a good environment, it can attract tourists to come, and residents are able to generate more revenue*".

The data also show that, in terms of the environment dimension, all three districts needed a more meaningful type of community-based CSR. Specifically, they needed community-based CSR in the form of better waste disposal management by hotels, instead of just simple beach cleaning and environmental campaigns, in order to better preserve the local environment. This is an interesting finding because, conventionally, people in poor/developing nations, such as Thailand, expect corporations to focus on philanthropic activities, to create jobs, and to improve the quality of life, rather than to safeguard the environment [11]. These findings also contradict the CSR pyramid in [68], which offers relative weightings for economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic duties. Furthermore, the findings contradict Visser's theory, which states that economic duties come first, followed by philanthropic, ethical, and legal responsibilities. As a result, it is reasonable to say that, despite being a province in a developing country, the inhabitants of Phuket are more concerned with environmental protection than with their own personal needs, such as donations.

Apart from the environmental aspect, the communities and residents in each of the three districts have distinct demands. This is not surprising because, according to [69] and [70], CSR implies different things to different people, based on the circumstances in each area. This further highlights the need to treat each community as unique, and it may require a distinct emphasis in CSR implementation. A Ratsada subdistrict member of the Mueang Phuket district municipal council stated that, "*Some areas of Ratsada sub-district still*

lack adequate infrastructure and public utility such as water supplies, electricity supplies, street light poles, disposal of garbage, and roads". For the Kathu district, the secretary of the Patong Development Foundation said that, "*There is a drug epidemic in Patong because this area is the centre of Phuket's nightlife and there are a growing number of tourists who are drug users. Thus, Patong needs to campaign against drugs*". For the Thalang district, a village health volunteer of the Bang Tao community said that, "*There are many areas in Thalang district that local communities create unique community products such as batik cloth, pearls, crispy dried shrimp salad. The government and business sectors should help local communities by supporting and distributing community products*". The specific and unique nature of the community needs in each location shows that hotel CSR should not ignore the different needs. In fact, it is critical for hotels to identify and tackle the real issues. Although past studies have pointed out the difficulty of choosing appropriate CSR activities for the unique societies in which businesses operate [7,30,70–72], we stand by our position that it is critical to listen to the community itself so that community-based CSR can be tailored to the needs and the context of each place. Companies must interact with residents before constructing projects in order to provide the best benefits to both communities and businesses [73] so that there will be no clash of values, and so that their organizational legitimacy will not be questioned.
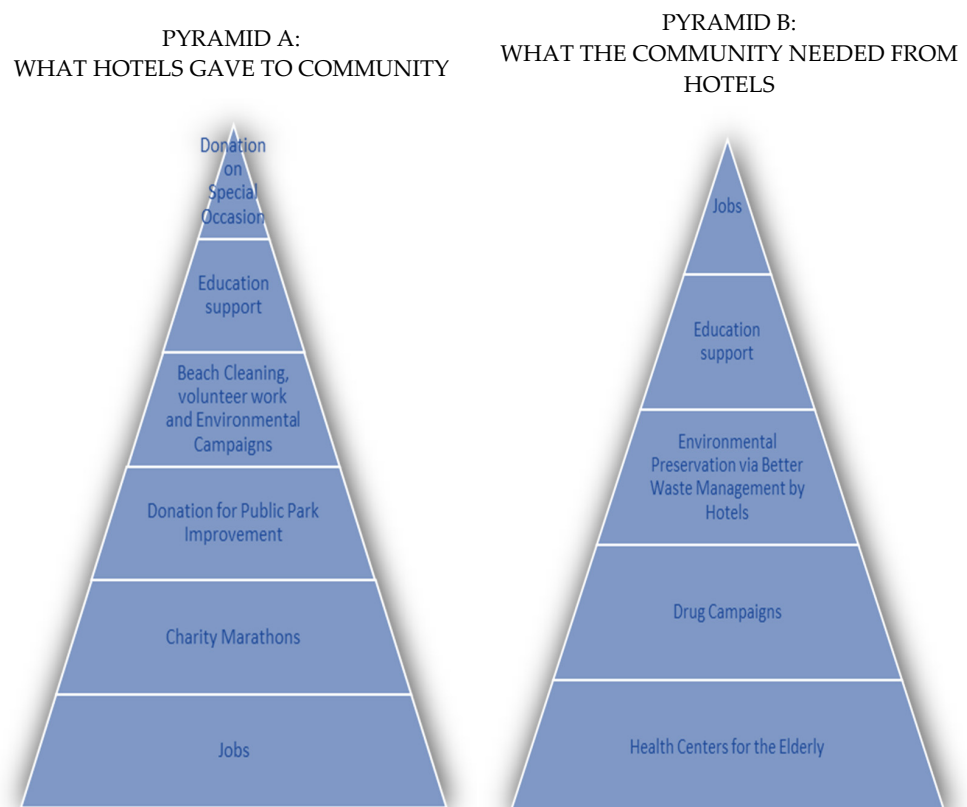
Figure 3. Graphical representation of the findings. (**A**) What hotels give to community, (**B**) What community needed from hotels. Top of pyramid represents the most common type of hotel community-based CSR initiative.

5. Conclusions

From the reviewed literature and qualitative data presented above, the paper reaffirms its position that understanding the host community perspectives prior to any community-based CSR activities is important. To achieve positive synergy between hotels and communities, hotels should emphasize consistency between the hotel CSR strategies and the needs of local communities, as it is one of the most important determinants of the long-term partnership between communities and businesses [23]. Hotels, therefore, should contact local communities before embarking on community-related projects, as community con-

sultation is a vital procedure for hotels to learn about and respond to community issues appropriately.

The findings also accentuate [71] the contention that organizations should analyze and understand the local context, needs, requirements, opinions, perceptions, expectations, and preferences before embarking on CSR programs or developing business strategies. Incorporating society and community perspectives into the planning process, as well as community involvement efforts, company philanthropy activities, corporate volunteering, and sustainable approaches, are all sensible ways to reduce conflict [74]. It would also help to strategically improve a business's integrated reporting (IR) of its nonfinancial capital [75], particularly from an honest point of view, since it is prepared on the basis of the perspectives of the beneficiary, rather than the benefactor. This is in line with both the legitimacy theory and the stakeholder theory discussed earlier, as it indicates good relationships between the businesses and their stakeholders.

In conclusion, this paper reiterates its position that community-based CSR initiatives are best designed by understanding community perspectives first, as this will ease the collaboration with the key stakeholders in the host communities. In doing so, this will narrow the existing gap in the knowledge on the role of the host community in any community-based CSR initiative. As the data have clearly shown, what hotels think the community needs may not be what the community truly needs at all. Hence, hotels that perform CSR should be aware that community perspectives are important in understanding the local context so that effective community-based CSR strategies can be created [76,77]. Hotels should continuously consult the host communities because the latter could supply reliable information that could assist them in developing suitable community-based CSR projects. Furthermore, continuous engagement with the host community can make it easier for hotels to examine their CSR performance, and to measure the impacts of their CSR activities on the target recipients, and especially on the communities with whom they are engaged [78–80]. In short, community-based CSR must be designed with consideration to the local reality and by continuous consultation with the host community. By doing so, hotels, or any other business corporations for that matter, will be able to measure the suitability and effectiveness of their current initiatives, and improve the appropriateness and success of their future community-based CSR.

We humbly acknowledge two limitations of this paper: (1) It provides only contextual empirical evidence from Phuket, Thailand; and (2) It may benefit from a wider range of literature support. Future researchers are advised to obtain empirical evidence from a wider context and/or review a wider range of literature in order to provide a more comprehensive outlook on the issue.

Appendix A

Table A1. The interview results of hotel community-based CSR that the communities received and what the communities needed.

Informant's Position/Community's Name	Hotel Community-Based CSR That Residents Received	Hotel Community-Based CSR That Residents Needed
Mueang Phuket District: 5 Community Leaders		
Informant 1 Member of the Municipal Council, Ratsada Subdistrict	- Donated foods and supplies for elderly, children, and residents on special occasions (i.e., Children's Day, New Year festival, Songkran) - Cleaned beaches and communities	- Water supplies - Electricity supplies - Street light poles - Disposal of garbage - Roads - Supporting disadvantaged children
Informant 2 Community Leader of Chalong Subdistrict	- Donated foods, drinks, snacks, clothes - Created jobs - Created activities for special occasions (such as making merit on Father's Day, or pouring water on the hands of elders during the Songkran festival)	- Supporting Thai instruments for children in community - Supporting employment - Supporting community facilities
Informant 3 Community Leader of Karon Subdistrict	- Marathon - Cleaned beaches	- Preventing drug addiction among youth and hotel staff - Supporting employment
Informant 4 Community Leader of Vichit Subdistrict	- Donated food and supplies for elderly, children, and residents on special occasions (i.e., Children's Day, New Year festival, Songkran) - Cleaned beaches and communities	- Water supplies - Electricity supplies - Street light poles - Disposal of garbage - Roads
Informant 5 Community Leader of Rawai Subdistrict	- Marathon - Donated food, drinks, snacks, clothes - Created activities for special occasions (such as making merit on Father's Day, or pouring water on the hands of elders during the Songkran festival) - Cleaned beaches	- Preventing drug addiction among youth and hotel staff - Supporting employment
Kathu District: 5 Community Leaders		
Informant 6 Director of Public Health and Environment Division, Patong Municipality Office	- Created and practiced the evacuation plans for the tsunami disaster - Participated in Thai and community culture and traditional ceremony - Supported CSR projects of the government sections - Created "Bike week campaign" - Cleaned beaches and communities - Supported sports facilities - Promoted the protection, restoration, and conservation of ecosystems and natural resources - Donated learning facilities - Created activities for special occasions (such as making merit on Father's Day, or pouring water on the hands of elders during the Songkran festival)	Preventing drug addiction among youth and hotel staff

Table A1. *Cont.*

Informant's Position/Community's Name	Hotel Community-Based CSR That Residents Received	Hotel Community-Based CSR That Residents Needed
Informant 7 Community Leader of Ketho Community	- Hotel community-based CSR activities are fewer now than before - Created Children's Day party - Supported scholarships and learning equipment - Donated food	- Health care center for elderly
Informant 8 Secretary of Patong Development Foundation	- Donated money, clothes, and supplies for children - Cleaned canals - Cleaned beaches and communities	- Preventing drug addiction among youth and hotel staff - Waste management and control in hotels - Scholarships for children - Sports equipment for children to create youth football teams
Informant 9 Deputy Municipal Clerk, Patong Municipality Office	- Marathon	- Hiring disabled people - Supporting education - Improving the scenic quality in the community
Informant 10 Director of Baan Kalim School	- Donated food, clothes, and supplies for students - Supported scholarships and learning equipment - Arranged garden in front of the school - Supported money for employees' salaries and wages - Donated computers and air conditioners	- Renovating school buildings - Supporting learning facilities
Thalang district: 5 community leaders		
Informant 11 Director of Ban Kho En School	- Built canteen - Donated drinking water dispenser - Created hero helmet project for schools - Painted school crosswalks - Created Children's Day party - Supported scholarships and learning equipment	- Preventing drug addiction among youth and hotel staff
Informant 12 Director of Phuket Children and Families Foundation		- Supporting expenses of underprivileged families - Donating food, water, clothes, milk powder
Informant 13 Head of Accounting and Finance, Phuket Sunshine Village	- Donated money, clothes, and supplies, such as for disadvantaged children - Donated computers - Created Children's Day party	- There is no public water plumbing (the residents have to buy water) - Long-term scholarship - Supporting expenses
Informant 14 Village Health Volunteer, Bang Tao Community	- Labor skill development - Donated money for people who were affected by tsunami disaster - Donated food and supplies - Cleaned beaches and communities - Cleaned canals - Created charity activities	- Wastewater treatment system - Disposal of garbage - Control energy consumption - Supporting community products

Table A1. *Cont.*

Informant's Position/Community's Name	Hotel Community-Based CSR That Residents Received	Hotel Community-Based CSR That Residents Needed
Informant 15 Director of Yaowawit School	- Supported education by being a partner of the Yaowawit school in teaching knowledge and skills in kitchen, housekeeping, and food and beverage service departments - Cooperated with the school to create prevocational education degree in hospitality management - Students have the chance to have an internship in Marriott hotels - Donated learning facilities for underprivileged children - Created hero helmet project for schools - Painted school crosswalks - Created Children's Day party	Long-term support for school expenses

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