

## **Knowledge as Contributing Factor Affecting Residents' Support Towards a Sailing Event**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The aim of this research is to determine whether knowledge in sporting event would have impact upon the residents' views and support towards the Monsoon Cup event. This study utilized social exchange theory and data where data were collected through one to one in-depth semi-structured interview. A total of 14 individuals from the organizing team and 36 local residents were chosen. A purposive sampling and a snowball sampling method was used to gain data from among the most ingenuous respondents. Residents were selected according to their demographic background (gender, age and length of residency) and socio-economic background (type of occupation and level of education). Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the interviews. The results of this study revealed that with knowledge in sporting event such as water sport, residents would view the overall benefits and costs more positively and support the event. The results also confirmed social exchange theory principles, where knowledge is an exchange element which influences residents' evaluations of the event as bringing greater benefits than costs. As a reward from the exchange process, residents generally supported the future holding of the Monsoon Cup event.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge, resident support, social exchange theory, Monsoon Cup event, Malaysia

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Any remaining errors or omissions rest solely with the author(s) of this paper.

## INTRODUCTION

Sport events are widely recognised as having considerable value in generating direct economic benefits (Getz and Fairley, 2004) and had become important and growing sector of the event tourism industry. The potential of sports as a catalyst to spur further tourism growth in Malaysia has been seen since the Year of Sport and Recreation (YSR '98) campaign. There have been more than 240 sporting events held since 1998. This study highlighted some interesting challenges for Malaysia to host an international yachting regatta, the Monsoon Cup (MC) as it is not a world sporting power. The Monsoon Cup is a project supported by the Malaysian Federal Government with the aim of raising the country's international image as a sport tourism destination. The Monsoon Cup is part of the World Match Racing Tour leading professional sailing series in the world and was established in 2000. The Monsoon Cup is held at Pulau Duyong in Terengganu, a state in Malaysia that has always been known as a popular island and beach tourism destination. The event is held between November and January during the monsoon season when the fishermen at the location of the study cannot go fishing due to the strong winds. Therefore, this event will provide another source of income to the local residents of Pulau Duyong if they are involved in the business activity during the event. Despite that the MC event would generate income to the local resident, it is also important for the organisers to examine other issues and challenges in hosting this international yachting regatta, as it is a new kind of sport to the local residents. One of the issues is the proficiency of the organisers in providing and delivering knowledge with regards to the event and the sailing sport itself to the local residents. Hence, this research aims to investigate and determine whether knowledge in sporting event would have impact upon the residents' views and support towards the Monsoon Cup event.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research has reported the factors that influence residents' perceptions and attitudes. Jurowski and Gursoy (2004) found that research on residents' reactions to tourism development was based on the theoretical constructs of social exchange theory which examined the relationships between perceptions of the benefits, costs, impacts, and support for tourism (Ap 1990; Gursoy *et al.* 2002; Jurowski *et al.*, 1997; Lindberg & Johnson, 1997). Jurowski and Gursoy (2004) described the favourable impacts as 'benefits' while unfavourable impacts were termed 'costs'. A review of the previous literature (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011; Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Andereck *et al.* 2005; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue, Long & Allen, 1990) shows social exchange theory being used to

help explain if there was a significant relationship between personal benefits and residents' attitudes toward tourism.

Andereck, Valentine, Knopf *et al.* (2005) added further predictor variables of resident perception such as personal benefits from tourism, community engagement and attachment with tourism. Consistent with social exchange theory, their study found that residents who perceived greater benefits from tourism had positive attitudes toward tourism. Then, residents who were more knowledgeable and who have more contact with tourists had more positive perceptions of tourism's impact on community life, image, and the economy (Andereck *et al.*, 2005).

In addition, studies have demonstrated that the evaluation of benefits and costs varies according to some factors. Table 1 shows a summary of studies regarding factors that have influence on the benefits and costs of tourism development as perceived by residents.

**Table 1** Factors evaluating costs and benefits

Factors	Studies
socio-demographic characteristics	Williams & Lawson, 2001
political and demographic position in society	Mansfeld, 1992
level of contact with tourists	Akis <i>et al.</i> , 1996; Lankford, 1994
environmental attitudes	Gursoy <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Jurowski <i>et al.</i> , 1997
the type and form of tourism	Gursoy <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Jurowski, 1994
level of knowledge about tourism and local economy	Lankford, 1994
heavy tourism concentration	Madrigal, 1993
degree of tourism development	Long, Perdue & Allen, 1990
level of an individual's involvement in the tourism industry	Smith & Krannich, 1998
the maturity of the destination	Sheldon & Abenoja, 2001
distance of residence from the tourism area	Daniels, 2007; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004

With regards to sporting event research, Bull and Lovell (2007) examined the perceptions of residents in the run up to the Tour de France bicycle race event. The tour commenced in London and the first stage ended in the City of Canterbury, England. Residents were interviewed to assess the extent to which they were aware of the event, were likely to participate in it, and how far they would support it. The study also assessed the effectiveness of the City Council's promotional campaign in providing an awareness of the event. Results of the study showed that the vast

majority of residents were aware of the event with many planning to watch the race or participate in its related activities.

Subsequently, Cheng and Jarvis (2010) suggested the importance of internal marketing techniques which were to promote the knowledge of event tourism more intensively to the local community, and to engage them in more ways so that residents would feel more involved, excited, and informed about the event. Knowledge has been categorised as intangible benefits which is significant for the success of tourism activities, planning and development (Gibson *et al.*, 2012; Hiller & Wanner, 2011). In most recent study, Kaplanidou Kerwin, Karadakis (2013) explained about intangible benefits which include among others knowledge development for the community through volunteering, socialization opportunities with other people who share similar interests (Kaplanidou, 2010), a level of emotional investment from participants (Kaplanidou, 2010) and the building of social capital (Misener & Mason, 2006) or psychic income (Crompton, 2004).

Kaplanidou *et al.* (2013) through their empirical research had identified the specific factors composing the framework of success for sport event tourism by comparing and contrasting the views of the providers and the sport event consumers. Thirteen themes had emerged from the sport event consumers' responses regarding the success factors of the event which include knowledge development. Further, they indicated that support by and benefits to the community were defined through increased opportunities for community involvement, awareness and positive community feedback for the event.

### **Conceptual Framework for the Study**

The reviewed literature showed little research has been conducted on residents' education and knowledge in sport event such as water sport. Therefore, this research will examine a factor that may influence residents' views about the Monsoon Cup, which is the residents' knowledge of a sporting event. This research was justified according to its contribution to theory and practise.

'Knowledge of the sports event (MC)' was the first determinant factor of residents' views and support suggested by Gursoy and Kendal (2006). Attaining knowledge about a sport event may increase their interest and awareness of the MC, and influence them to view the MC in a more positive way. Knowledge of a sport event may be provided through educational programs such as training courses, seminars, workshops, and public forums.

The theoretical foundation of this study was developed based on social exchange theory (Homan, 1958, Blau, 1964) which suggested that an individual can evaluate an exchange based on the costs and benefits incurred as a result of that

exchange. Thus, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2011) developed a community support model based on social exchange theory and their results found that the perceived benefits, perceived costs and community satisfaction influenced the level of support.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study had employed a constructivism paradigm and a qualitative research approach for the purpose of achieving the research aims and objectives. Data was collected by utilising a series of semi-structured interviews with the residents of Pulau Duyong, officials of the Federal and State government of Terengganu and the event company. A total 36 respondents from the local residents of Pulau Duyong were selected through the process of purposive and snowball sampling. Data was collected within 2 months. Thematic content analysis (Green & Thorogood, 2009) was used to analyse the transcribed data with the aid of NVIVO 9.1 software.

The interview process began at the District Office of Kuala Terengganu where the researchers met with a government officer of the Community Development Unit who then introduced them to the head of Duyong Sekolah Village at Pulau Duyong. The researchers showed him an information sheet describing her research. Pulau Duyong has five villages which were named Duyong Sekolah, Duyong Wan Su, Duyong Kecil, Pulau Ketam and Kelak Ayer. Each village has its own head or chieftain.

The researchers asked for the characteristic of Pulau Duyong's residents from the Chieftain of Duyong Sekolah Village. Based on a purposive sampling method, the researchers chose the residents according to their socio-economic profile (types of occupancy and level of education). The chieftain of Duyong Sekolah Village also helped the researcher by providing her with the contact numbers and addresses of potential interviewees whom the researchers had selected to interview.

The chieftain also offered information on any residents who were involved either directly and indirectly in the organisation of the Monsoon Cup from the beginning, until the present day. He then suggested that the researchers should interview the former community representatives who had been involved in the early stages of the organisation of the event.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Demographic and Socio-economic Information**

The residents were selected according to their demographic information (gender, age, and length of residency) and their socio-economic background (type of occupancy and level of education). In addition, residents of Pulau Duyong included

two former Community Representatives, two current Community Representatives, five JKKs (Heads/ Chieftains) of the five villages in Pulau Duyong. In all, 27 residents were recruited for the interviews. The demographic and socio-economic background information of the residents is detailed in Table 2 and 3.

**Table 2** The demographic information and level of education of sample population

Age: 51-60 years old	47.2%
Gender:	No. of Interviewees
Male	28
Female	8
Education:	No. of Interviewees
Primary	6
Secondary	18
Bachelor Degree	9
Postgraduate	3

**Table 3** Occupation of sample population

<b>Socio-economic factors</b>	<b>No. of Interviewees</b>
Government Sector	12
Business Sector	11
Private Sector	5
Politician	4
Fisherman	2

## **Theme Classification**

### ***Knowledge about the Monsoon Cup***

This topic discussed the residents' knowledge of the MC. The main themes for this topic were the different ways of receiving knowledge about the MC, the knowledge of the sport itself, the amount of knowledge received, the types of information needed, and whether increased knowledge affected residents' views of the MC.

### ***Different ways of receiving knowledge about the Monsoon Cup***

The interviewees stated that they mainly received knowledge about the MC from the local mass media, particularly newspapers, TV, and radio. As Hakim commented,

*'Given that we (myself and the community representative) were not invited to any meeting at the State Level, we only received information from the local media.'*

Apart from the mass media, most of the interviewees mainly received information about the MC from banners and bunting. Several of the interviewees also received information about the MC from the information board located at the entrance to Pulau Duyong and billboards around the town of Kuala Terengganu.

Most importantly, several interviewees stated that they wanted the organisers to give talks on sailing sport. A number of respondents mentioned that the Sailing Academy should have been located at Pulau Duyong as previously promised. If the Sailing Academy was located at Pulau Duyong, it would encourage more youth to join the academy so as to create awareness, interest, and greater knowledge about sailing as an international sport.

### ***The knowledge received***

When asked about the knowledge that they received, most of the interviewees reported that they had only received information about the event program. As Ramli stated, the information that he received was, *'Only just about the event program.'* Only 50% of the interviewees stated that they had received enough information and knowledge about the MC, while the other half stated that they had not received enough information and knowledge. They stated that there was not enough publicity and promotion of the event in the town of Kuala Terengganu. As Jamal commented, *'The organiser did not distribute any fliers, brochures or a newsletter in order to provide information to residents about the Monsoon Cup.'* Many of the interviewees commented that they definitely needed more information and knowledge about the MC.

### ***Types of knowledge needed***

With regards to the types of knowledge that was required by residents, many felt that they required more knowledge about the sailing race. This was because they did not understand the rules of the competition, such as how it starts and ends. As Jalil mentioned, there was, *'A lack of knowledge about this kind of sport.'*

Furthermore, several of the interviewees also stated that they needed knowledge regarding the organisation of the event, and especially the side events. As Salih stated, *'What was needed was more information on how the community can take part in the side events.'*

### ***The effect of increased knowledge on residents' views about the Monsoon Cup***

In regard to the effect of knowledge on the residents' views, most interviewees agreed that this lack of knowledge affected their views about the MC. Several stated that if they had been given more information and knowledge, they would have been more understanding about the event and enjoyed it more. Several of them also mentioned that they would have appreciated the event and be more positive and supportive towards the MC event if they had greater knowledge about the sailing event. As Rahim commented, '*If we knew more about the sailing event or race, we would enjoy it more.*'

## **DISCUSSIONS**

According to Andereck *et al.* (2005), local residents who had greater knowledge about localised tourism initiatives and who were in regular contact with tourists, generally had a more positive perception about tourism's impact on their community. This was also supported by Gursoy and Kendall (2006), who contended that a local community's knowledge of a mega event was a critical factor for determining residents' perceptions of the event and, more particularly, the level of support for it.

The study findings revealed that most of those interviewed had been able to access some form of information about the MC via a diverse range of sources. These included local radio, television, newspapers, banners, and buntings, as well as an information board located at the entrance of Pulau Duyong. Study respondents also made reference to billboards located in the town of Kuala Terengganu that they had used as a source of information about the event. Several researchers (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Timothy & Tosun, 2003) have suggested that educating the public via effective communication mechanisms such as brochures, courses, newspapers, pamphlets, and even television advertisements to inform residents about the benefits of tourism was the best means of obtaining their support for a particular initiative. Furthermore, such effort has also been recognised as serving to increase the public's awareness and knowledge of tourism development more generally, so that they might perceive such activities as being desirable, long-term elements of the local economy (Hung *et al.*, 2011 and Simmons, 1994).

Critically speaking, however, the study findings revealed that only approximately one half of the local residents interviewed for the study had received information about the event schedule itself. That is, they had received virtually no other information about the sport of sailing or what was actually entailed in staging

a yachting regatta. As Jalil (one of the residents) commented, '*The residents do not understand the method of the sailing race, how it starts and ends. This is a lack of knowledge about this kind of sport.*'

These findings would indicate that greater efforts need to be made by event organisers to educate the local residents about the sport of sailing and, more generally, about the manner in which the event is being staged. Simmons (1994) in particular stated that increasing the level of knowledge about a tourism initiative can strengthen the local community's confidence in the event, and open up avenues by which local residents might increase their level of participation in planned activities. Such effort is highly desirable because, as noted by Cheng & Jarvis (2010) who also support this view, internal marketing techniques are an important means of promoting events more intensively to the local community. The researchers pointed out that such activity needs to be suitably cased so as to engage residents so that they felt more involved, excited, and better informed about the event. This notion was supported by the local residents themselves who readily commented that they were likely to be more positive, appreciative, and supportive of the event if they could acquire greater knowledge about what was actually going on around them in their community. Such responses serve to confirm the notion previously contended in the published literature that increased knowledge can positively affect residents' views about a tourism initiative.

They also serve to highlight, however, that a lack of readily available information to local residents of Pulau Duyong about the MC is indeed a factor that has negatively impacted on how they have come to view this event. Interestingly, one such conduit for information dissemination and awareness training that revealed itself in the comments made by the local residents themselves, but which appears to have not been used to full effect by the other stakeholder groups in this instance, is the local Sailing Academy. This operation was initially established for the purpose of creating awareness, interest, as well as increased knowledge about sailing among the local youth. While initially established in Pulau Duyong, it was subsequently relocated to Putra Jaya. This move was not supported by the local community, and is one that continues to serve to disenfranchise many in the region who looked upon the Academy as one of the true long-term benefits that the local community could derive from the staging of the annual regatta. Clearly, current community access and the physical location of the sailing academy is a point of contention with local residents, and it is an issue that needs to be meaningfully addressed by government officials and event organisers alike in the immediate future.

## CONCLUSIONS

As conclusions, the findings expand upon the research with regards to the determinant factors that influence resident perceptions about the benefits and costs, and support for the event. The findings revealed the utilisation of knowledge in sport (sailing) event as factor influencing residents' views and support for the event. The residents agreed that they would be more appreciative of, positive and supportive towards the event if they received greater knowledge about the event. The study findings confirmed that greater knowledge of a sailing event (the MC) was a factor that had an impact on residents' views and support for the event. Further, in relation to implications to practise, this research also expected to create attention at the local government level about the importance of knowledge about event tourism specifically sailing and sport event. This research may also generate government awareness to organise seminars and workshops to educate local residents about the benefits of event tourism to be accrued for the local community. It is expected that these seminars and workshops would further attract the resident's interest in the Monsoon Cup, and as a result would develop their positive feelings and confidence in the event. With regards to limitation of the study, several interviewees had refused to be voiced recorded. The age and education of the interviewees were limited to older people (in their 50's) and less educated residents because most of the younger generation had previously migrated to work in big cities such as Kuala Lumpur. The poor weather condition is another limitation because the event was held during the monsoon season (or the wet season). The researcher could not undertake any interviews at Pulau Duyong for three days because it was raining too heavily. Further research is essential to expand the scope of this study. There is a need to improve the quality of residents' data by using a different sampling technique, as well as different questions for each group and a different method of data collection might be considered. As a result, the research will provide the opportunity to investigate the views of younger people who had left Pulau Duyong to work or study in other places in Malaysia. Information could be obtained from their parents about where they now live. Interviews could then be conducted via telephone or skype, or by meeting the potential respondent at a convenient location. The radius of the study location needs to be extended to the district of Kuala Terengganu so that the findings could be further generalised. The radius of the data collection would then be extended to Kuala Terengganu which is five km away from Pulau Duyong. This is because the people of Kuala Terengganu felt that there was an impact on them from the MC event in terms of its social and economic benefits or costs. To end with, this research showed that knowledge about the sport (sailing) event was found to be important in this research which affects their views about the benefits and costs.

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