

The Influence of Place Attachment and a Certification of Event Sustainability on Residents' Perceptions of Environmental Impacts and Event Support: An Abstract

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Abstract Hosting events has become an important tool in stimulating tourism development for local communities. A growing corpus of studies examines different ways of evaluating the environmental sustainability of events using concepts such as the ecological footprint, event greening, and event legacy planning. Existing studies on the environmental impacts of mega events do not consider how residents perceive a certificate of environmental sustainability (CES) and whether such perceptions have an impact on how they evaluate the environmental impacts of the event. Also, despite some studies examining the relationship between tourism impacts and place attachment, no studies have yet established whether place attachment of residents accentuates or attenuates perceptions of environmental impacts of a mega event and the perceived benefits of a CES.

A theoretical model with five constructs, place attachment (PA), positive environmental impacts (PEI), negative environmental impacts (NEI), perceptions of CES (PCES), and event support (ES), is developed using social exchange theory (SET). The main objective of this study is to assess whether the perceived benefits of an event's endorsement with a certificate of environmental sustainability (CES) mediate the relationship between residents' perceptions of environmental impacts and their support for the event.

A survey of residents of Milan during 2015 the World Expo led to 449 useable questionnaires that were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The two-step procedure for PLS model analysis and interpretation was used, where first, the measurement model was assessed for reliability and validity followed by an assessment of the structural model. The findings indicated that place attachment (PA) has a positive relationship with positive environmental impacts (PEI) and negative relationship

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with negative environmental impacts (NEI). PEI has a positive relationship with perceptions of a CES (PCES). PA has positive influence on event support similar to PCES. The partial mediating effect of PCES on the relationship between PEI and ES is supported. The partial mediating effect of PCES on the relationship between NEI and ES is also supported. The findings have both theoretical and managerial implications.

References Available Upon Request