

Research Paper

Unmasking Green Volunteerism at KL 2017—The Journey Forward

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Abstract: The 29th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games and 9th ASEAN Para Games, also known as KL 2017, was declared a “green event” to promote environmental awareness and sustainability practices through green volunteers. A quantitative survey was used to compile responses categorised as environmental awareness, environmental involvement and environmental support. This paper explores the role of KL 2017 on pro-environmental behaviour through green volunteerism in Malaysia. The study on green volunteers’ profile and other factors that influence pro-environmental behaviour could offer new insights into volunteer management and the planning of future green events for the promotion of sustainability and environmental awareness.

Keywords: Green events, green volunteers, pro-environmental behaviour, environmental awareness, environmental involvement, environmental support.

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Introduction

The 29th Southeast Asian (SEA) Games and 9th ASEAN Para Games, held between August 19–30, 2017 and September 17–30, 2017 respectively, ended victoriously for its host Malaysia. Also known as Kuala Lumpur 2017 (KL 2017), the event was touted as one of the most prestigious in 2017 for Malaysia as it garnered the biggest haul of 145 gold medals. While much of the media spotlight were on athletes, the success of the event was also attributed to many others behind the scene—including the 13,000 volunteers (Indramalar, 2017).

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Playing host for the sixth time, Malaysia's then Minister of Youth and Sports, Khairy Jamaluddin, took the opportunity to leverage on the sporting event to promote environmental awareness and sustainability practices through the "Kuala Lumpur 2017 Green Initiatives" (MASOC, 2017). The involvement of about 1,000 green volunteers, who were university students recruited from four public universities and one private university located within Klang Valley, Malaysia, were part of the event's green initiative. These green volunteers were deployed to selected venues during KL 2017 with the purpose of educating and promoting awareness of environmentally-sustainable practices such as no littering, use of recycling bins and monitoring waste separation (Yusof, 2017).

Volunteers have become indispensable to the overall success of many major events (Grammatikopoulos, Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2006; Williams, Dossa & Tompkins, 1995). Hence, it has become a prevailing concern for the events industry to be able to effectively understand and manage the recruitment and retention of volunteers. While past research have offered many perspectives on volunteerism, the impact of volunteerism has yet to be consistently measured nor evaluated (Bussell & Forbes, 2002). Furthermore, most studies were conducted prior to 2010 and mainly focused on volunteer motivations and reasons for their foray into volunteerism. There is a time lag on volunteerism research where very little has surfaced after 2010 and even less on the process of how volunteers are recruited and retained (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Wymer & Self, 1999), especially within the multiracial and culturally diverse context of Malaysia.

Volunteerism is often seen to be under the domain of charities, business associations, supportive agencies, non-profit and non-governmental organisations (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Wilson & Pimm, 1996). However, businesses now consider volunteerism as part of their corporate citizenship as it attracts consumers and retains staff (Mueller & Guild, 2014). Furthermore, changes in social policies and economical development have led to increased dependency on volunteers (Bussell & Forbes, 2002). In the United Kingdom, the voluntary sector accounts for assets up to £40 billion and an annual expenditure of almost £11 billion (Palmer, 2000; Palmer & Hoe, 1997). Ultimately, both private and public sectors are competing to recruit from a diminishing pool of volunteers. Hence, with the increasing scarcity of volunteers, studies to examine influences that contribute to the continuity or reactivation of volunteerism would be much anticipated (Millette & Gagne, 2008).

In Malaysia, as part of its National Blue Ocean Strategy (NBOS), the government continues to develop "high impact, low cost" initiatives through volunteerism (Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, 2018). In addition to the KL 2017 green volunteer programme, others such as the "iM4U" youth volunteer platform (iM4U, 2017) and "1Voluntourism", as presented in Figure 1, are clear indications of the rising demand for volunteers.



Figure 1. The “1Voluntourism” initiative

Source: <http://www.voluntourism.my/about-us/>

With the progression into the 21st century, it is likely that the profile of volunteers has changed with baby boomers retiring and early millennials’ coming of age (Mueller & Guild, 2014). The changes to the landscape of volunteerism due to the time lag, where research on volunteerism has decreased substantially after 2010, also necessitates further research. As previous studies were primarily based on Western cultures, opportunities therefore exist for research to examine and compare possible cultural differences in the characteristics and profile of local volunteers. It is hoped that the findings in this study would contribute significantly to these gaps.

This study was explorative in nature. Hence, the findings presented are descriptive and intended to set the basis for more extensive work in the field of volunteerism. Additionally, the plan was to conduct further studies through interviews of green volunteers on the impact KL 2017 has had on them. On its entirety, this study aimed to explore green volunteerism in Malaysia through examination of various factors such as environmental awareness, environmental involvement and environmental support. This paper is only one part of several segments that constitutes a more comprehensive study into the role of green events, such as KL 2017, in encouraging pro-environmental behaviour. While in-depth analysis is ongoing on the various segments, this paper shall present the results of descriptive statistics on demographic profiling as the first of a series of articles to identify characteristics of the Malaysian volunteers as well as to understand green volunteerism at KL 2017 and its role in pro-environmental behaviour.

Literature Review

Green Events

According to Laing and Frost (2010), a green event is defined as “an event that has a sustainability policy or incorporates sustainable practices into its management and operations” (p. 262). However, green events are not limited to environmental responsibilities but also include economic and sociocultural sustainability as reflected in the triple bottom line (TBL) of sustainability used in the private sector (Font & Harris, 2004; Getz, 2009; Hede, 2008; Sherwood, 2007). In a broader sense, green events incorporate efforts on environmental management that reduce the negative impacts of events on the environment (Jackson, 2010).

Role of Green Events for Pro-environmental Behaviour

Apart from economic gain, events are generally considered as an important vehicle to deliver social messages (Laing & Frost, 2010; Sharpe, 2008) or to raise awareness on issues such as environmental sustainability (Font & Harris, 2004; Swarbrooke, 1998; Weaver, 2006). However, the significance of events to encourage a more sustainable society or increase the level of event attendees’ environmental awareness is yet to be fully explored and analysed (Laing & Frost, 2010; Mair & Jago, 2010). Nevertheless, local authorities often fund and stage green events to encourage sustainable behaviours within a community (Mair & Laing, 2013), as in the case of KL 2017, where green volunteers were tasked with duties to implement and promote environmentally sustainable practices to event attendees.

Pro-environmental Behaviour

A simple definition of pro-environmental behaviour would be “behaviour that consciously seeks to minimise the negative impact of one’s actions on the natural and built world” (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002, p. 240). Pro-environmental behaviour would involve personal actions that are directly linked to improvement of the environment (Jensen, 2002). Examples of pro-environmental behaviour include the reduction of resource usage and energy consumption, non-toxic substances and/or waste production.

Many theoretical frameworks have been developed to understand the relationships between environmental knowledge and environmental awareness, and pro-environmental behaviour. However, there are no conclusive results to date despite the numerous studies conducted (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Many of these frameworks offer validity in a variety of circumstances, but none has been able to provide a definitive explanation in a single model.

Comprehensive reviews by Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) included some of the most prominent and commonly used frameworks featuring potential psychological,

sociological, and communication antecedents to pro-environmental behaviour. Their analyses also revealed other factors that affect pro-environmental behaviour such as demographics, external influences (e.g. institutional, economic, social and cultural factors) and internal factors (e.g. motivation, environmental knowledge, awareness, values, attitudes, emotion, locus of control, responsibilities and priorities). Additionally, several models often linked to health and energy efficiency campaigns were included along with information on social marketing.

Research by Bamberg and Moser (2007) concluded that pro-environmental behaviour is a combination of self-interest (e.g. following a routine to reduce health risk) and pro-social motives reflected in concern for other people, the next generation, other species, or whole ecosystems (e.g. preventing air pollution that may cause risks for others' health and/or the global climate).

The engagement in pro-environmental behaviour is often linked to beliefs or a sense of connectedness to the natural environment. The intensity of such beliefs would then form the foundation for environmental attitudes, concerns for environmental issues and subsequently, decisions to engage in pro-environmental behaviour (Bruni & Schultz, 2010).

Environmental Awareness

Environmental awareness serves as an educational tool to support the understanding of resource preservation along with reducing or eliminating the harmful consequences of human activities on the environment (Moss, 2016). Occasionally, it is used interchangeably with environmental knowledge. In essence, environmental awareness could arise from knowledge while environmental knowledge is the amount of information acquired on environmental issues. Additionally, the level of environmental knowledge would include understanding and evaluating various ecological issues and their impact on society and environment (IGI Global, n.d.).

Generally, it is perceived that knowledge is an essential requirement to instil behaviour and knowledge transfers are most commonly delivered through education (Frick, Kaiser & Wilson, 2004). Higher education appears to increase the level of environmental knowledge, which would then translate into pro-environmental behaviour (Schlegelmilch, Bohlen & Diamantopoulos, 1996). Several research suggested that individuals who are more concerned about ecological issues and engage in pro-environmental behaviour, tend to be so due to their higher education (Lozano, 2006; Olli, Grendstad & Wollebaek, 2001). Highly educated individuals tend to be more concerned about ecological issues as they are more aware of potential damages. Likewise, studies have shown that an in-depth knowledge of environmental issues and ways to resolve them would more likely result in actions for environmental protection (Kaiser & Fuhrer, 2003; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Mobley, Vagias & DeWard, 2010).

Positive environmental values and greater environmental knowledge would lead to increased awareness and pro-environmental behaviour. This was evident through an empirical study by Pothitou, Hanna and Chalvatzis (2016), which concluded that knowledge on energy savings had an effect on the perception of convenience or inconvenience of actions to save energy. The strong significance of environmental knowledge is further supported by studies that established a positive correlation between level of education and the adoption of energy efficient technology (OECD, 2011; Mills & Schleich, 2010; Scott, 1997). Mills & Schleich (2010) discovered that knowledge about the energy efficiency label of appliances had a positive association to socio-economic factors such as higher education levels, higher income, larger households, and higher electricity prices. Knowledge is needed as individuals would need to be familiar with the existence of environmental problems and the appropriate remedial actions available (Hines, Hungerford & Tomera, 1986). Additionally, environmental education is another prerequisite for responsible environmental behaviour (Hungerford & Peyton, 1976; Stapp, 1969).

On the other hand, some studies found that there is no significant relationship between environmental knowledge and pro-environmental behaviour (Bartiaux, 2008; Laroche, Bergeron & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001; Maloney & Ward, 1973). Bartiaux (2008) pointed out the gap that existed between having information and taking action, as in the case of households who receive personalised and expert advice on reducing energy use but hardly act on such advice. Laroche et al. (2001) found that ecoliteracy did not make any difference for consumers who were willing as well as those who were unwilling to pay more for green products. Similarly, a study on Turkish university students concluded that environmental knowledge does not always influence environmental awareness and behavioural intentions (Oguz, Çakci & Kavaz, 2010).

Environmental Involvement

Generally, environmental involvement describes participation in activities that are related to environmental matters. The Rio Declaration in 1992 and the Aarhus Convention in 1998 identified three different types of involvement, which basically include access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice (Furman, Hildén, Nicro & Dass, 2002).

Firstly, access to information covers information related to policy formulation, regulatory performance, environmental impact studies, and other information essential to sustainable development. Secondly, participation in decision-making consists of policy-making processes, policies, laws and regulations along with the granting of permits, limits and other conditions important to ecological health and welfare. Finally, access to justice includes courts and/or administrative appeals and other decision-making tribunals related to the application of law and compliance with relevant standards and norms.

A study by Stanley, Lasonde and Weiss (1996) revealed that environmental involvement and pro-environmental behaviour are significantly correlated when information on environmental issues is easily obtained and incurs no financial expense. Furthermore, it suggested that the level of environmental involvement could be similar to consumers' high or low involvement in their search for information, due to the time and effort taken to make purchase decisions (Clarke & Belk, 1979). Hence, the level of environmental involvement could also be predetermined by the level of effort or time required to obtain information for decision-making (Stanley et al., 1996).

In contrast, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) revealed that Australians' involvement in various environmental activities are most likely to happen at the highest quintile of weekly personal income. The most common environmental involvement include activities such as signing petitions or donating money to protect the environment.

A study on environmental involvement by general managers of lodging companies demonstrated a positive relationship between the hotels' organisational features (class and size) and their environmental involvement and capabilities (Kim, Park & Wen, 2015). Unfortunately, this was not the case for chain-affiliated hotels, which contradicted the common notion that success in environmental programmes would increase responsiveness to environmental issues (Álvarez Gil, Burgos Jiménez & Céspedes Lorente, 2001). The study further speculated that regardless of chain affiliation, more information on environmental management would result in lodging properties becoming more aware of environmental issues, which would later lead to higher involvement in environmental programmes.

Environmental Support

In a broad sense, environmental support is any form of contribution or assistance that would facilitate the goals of environmental causes. Examples of environmental support include financial contributions (e.g. donations), action-oriented participation in community practices (e.g. recycling, carpooling) or demonstrating approval for ecological objectives (e.g. signing petitions, voting of bills). Supporters of environmental movements are often described as “environmentalists” where such movements seek to (politically and ethically) improve and protect the quality of the natural environment (Elliott, 2018).

Environmentalists have a strong sense of responsible environmental behaviour, which Sivek and Hungerford (1990) described as the remediation of environmental issues and problems. Similarly, Bamberg and Moser (2007) described environmentally responsible behaviour as a combination of self-interest and concern for other species, people or ecosystems. Many studies have been conducted to understand the precursors that would lead to responsible environmental behaviour. Descriptive studies revealed its strong correlations with variables such as verbal commitment,

locus of control, attitude, personal responsibility and knowledge of issues and action strategies (Hines et al., 1986). Situational factors (e.g. saving money, difficulty to purchase environmentally friendly products) may also increase or decrease incidences of responsible environmental behaviour (Hines et al., 1986).

Support of environmental goals is often seen as a social movement that has endured since the 1970s despite some intermittent decline (Dunlap, 2010). Economic factors were listed as one of the main reason for the decline of public concerns (Dunlap, 2010; Greenberg, 2004). Nevertheless, public support for environmental concerns is still noteworthy, as some issues were perceived to have direct impact on them or their families such as pollution of drinking water, environmental contamination and hazardous waste management (Crabtree, 2003; Gallup Organisation, 2003; Greenberg, 2004; Saad, 2003).

A poll on the support for environmental protection in America indicated that the most popular activities supported were activities that were easiest to perform such as voluntary recycling (of newspapers, glass, aluminium, motor oil), purchase of environmentally friendly products and reduction of household energy use (Dunlap, 2010). Results also showed that public support declined for money contributions, contacting officials on environmental issues and raising complaints on products or policies that harm the environment (Dunlap, 2010).

Methods

Measurement Instrument

Information on green volunteers was collected using a quantitative survey instrument. The entire survey consisted of four segments, where Pro-Environmental Actions was listed as Part G. A list of 24 items were developed and grouped into 3 sections, which included Environmental Awareness (10 items), Environmental Involvement (6 items) and Environmental Support (8 items).

The construction of items for the Pro-Environmental Actions section were adapted from several environmental awareness surveys (Ecomantra, 2017; National Environment and Planning Agency – Government of Jamaica, 2017; University of Connecticut – Office of Environmental Policy, 2014). The items listed for each section can be further categorised as external factors and internal factors (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002) that influence pro-environmental behaviour.

For Environmental Awareness (10 items), respondents were requested to indicate their response to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale to describe the level of environmental awareness (1 = not interested at all, to 5 = fully aware/understand). For Environmental Involvement (6 items), respondents were requested to indicate their response to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale to describe their level of participation (1 = not interested at all, to 5 = attend/participate actively). Lastly,

for Environmental Support (8 items), respondents were requested to indicate their response to each statement on a 5-point Likert scale to describe their level of support (1 = do not support, to 5 = always/fully support).

Sampling and Data Collection

The questionnaire was hosted online using Google Survey. The web link was emailed to green volunteers who attended the KL 2017 specific training sessions held separately at four different locations. Respondents consisted mainly of green volunteers from four public universities and one private university located in Selangor, Malaysia. From the 1,000 green volunteers deployed (Naidu, 2017; Wong, 2017), a total of 528 green volunteers responded to the online survey resulting in a response rate of 52%.

Results

Analysis

The demographic profile of the green volunteers who participated in the survey are compiled in Table 1. The questions required respondents to select an answer closest to their understanding based on a 5-point Likert scale (Bertram, n.d.). The 5-point scale was used as respondents have to choose between two or more equally socially acceptable options to provide an ipsative measurement, which is also known as a forced choice measure (Bowen, 2014).

As presented in Table 1, the majority of respondents were aged between 18 to 24 years old (87.6%), were single and without children (97.9%). They were also predominantly female (69.9%), which is supported by previous studies that suggested females outnumber males when it comes to sustainability engagement (Johnson, Bowker & Cordell, 2004; Mair & Laing, 2013). Students/interns (93.6%) formed the largest component of green volunteers, who are mainly degree holders (50.2%). While other nationalities from the 11 ASEAN countries were allowed to be a part of KL 2017, the survey showed that green volunteers were mainly Malaysians (96.7%) residing within Kuala Lumpur or Selangor (83.2%).

Table 1. Demographic profile of green volunteers

Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	below 18 years old	26	5.0
	18 to 24 years old	454	87.6
A.1	25 to 34 years old	27	5.2
Age	35 to 44 years old	9	1.7
	above 45 years old	2	.4
	Total	518	100.0

Table 1 (con't)

Variables		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
A.2 Gender	Male	156	30.1	30.1
	Female	362	69.9	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
A.3 Marital Status	Single (no kids)	507	97.9	97.9
	Married (no kids)	3	.6	98.5
	Married with kid(s)	8	1.5	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
A.4 Nationality	Malaysian	501	96.7	96.7
	Indonesian	16	3.1	99.8
	Bruneian	1	.2	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
A.5 Education	Secondary school or lower	119	23.0	23.0
	Diploma (or equivalent)	117	22.6	45.6
	Degree (or equivalent)	260	50.2	95.8
	Masters (or equivalent)	17	3.3	99.0
	Doctorate (or equivalent) and/or higher	5	1.0	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
A.6 Current Residence	Within KL or Selangor	431	83.2	83.2
	Peninsular Malaysia -outside KL/Selangor	86	16.6	99.8
	Sabah or Sarawak	1	.2	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
A.7 Job Title	Not working / Retiree	3	.6	.6
	Student / Intern	485	93.6	94.2
	Clerical / Junior	7	1.4	95.6
	Executive	15	2.9	98.5
	Executive / Supervisor / Asst Manager			
	Manager / Senior Manager	5	1.0	99.4
	Self-employed / Entrepreneur / Professionals (e.g. Doctor, Lawyer, etc)	3	.6	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	

Environmental Awareness

As presented in Table 2, of the 10 items listed, “Fully Aware/Understand” for “Global Warming” received the highest number of (352) responses. The subsequent issues, which respondents were fully aware /understand, were “Air Pollution” with 333 responses and “Water Pollution” with 320 responses. The 3 issues which respondents indicated as having the lowest awareness/understanding of were “Bio Engineered Food” (115 responses), “Carbon Footprint” (99) and “Food Contamination by Pesticide” (64).

Table 2. Environmental awareness of green volunteers

Variables	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
G1.1 Climate Change	Not interested at all	0	0
	Am not aware/Do not understand	9	1.7
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	203	39.2
	Fully aware/understand	306	59.1
	Total	518	100.0
G1.2 Global Warming	Not interested at all	0	0
	Am not aware/Do not understand	5	1.0
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	161	31.1
	Fully aware/understand	352	68.0
	Total	518	100.0
G1.3 Waste Management	Not interested at all	0	0
	Am not aware/Do not understand	26	5.0
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	232	44.8
	Fully aware/understand	260	50.2
	Total	518	100.0
G1.4 Water Pollution	Not interested at all	1	.2
	Am not aware/Do not understand	7	1.4
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	190	36.7
	Fully aware/understand	320	61.8
	Total	518	100.0

Table 2 (con't)

Variables		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
G1.5 Air Pollution	Not interested at all	0	0	0
	Am not aware/Do not understand	9	1.7	1.7
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	176	34.0	35.7
	Fully aware/understand	333	64.3	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G1.6 Noise Pollution	Not interested at all	1	.2	0
	Am not aware/Do not understand	31	6.0	1.7
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	239	46.1	35.7
	Fully aware/understand	247	47.7	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G1.7 Over Population	Not interested at all	1	.2	.2
	Am not aware/Do not understand	44	8.5	8.7
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	244	47.1	55.8
	Fully aware/understand	229	44.2	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G1.8 Bio Engineered Food	Not interested at all	10	1.9	1.9
	Am not aware/Do not understand	115	22.2	24.1
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	237	45.8	69.9
	Fully aware/understand	156	30.1	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G1.9 Food Contamination	Not interested at all	6	1.2	1.2
	Am not aware/Do not understand	64	12.4	13.5
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	225	43.4	56.9
	Fully aware/understand	223	43.1	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G1.10 Carbon Footprint	Not interested at all	12	2.3	2.3
	Am not aware/Do not understand	99	19.1	21.4
	Partially aware/Have little knowledge	226	43.6	65.1
	Fully aware/understand	181	34.9	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	

Environmental Involvement

In the results shown in Table 3, “Car Pooling or Use of Public Transport” tops the list of activities which respondents were involved in with 279 responses. This was followed by “Earth Hour or other Global Environmental Activities” and “Recycling at Community/Campus” with 155 and 151 responses respectively. Respondents also indicated that the activities they were least interested to be involved in were “Talks or Seminars on Climate Change or Environmental Issues” with 36 responses, and “Nature or Environmental Clubs/Societies” with 26 responses.

Table 3. Environmental involvement of green volunteers

Variables		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
G2.1 Tree Planting	Not interested at all	25	4.8	4.8
	Interested but did not attend/participate	258	49.8	54.6
	Volunteer occasionally	133	25.7	80.3
	Attend/Participate actively	102	19.7	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G2.2 Recycling	Not interested at all	12	2.3	2.3
	Interested but did not attend/participate	173	33.4	35.7
	Volunteer occasionally	182	35.1	70.8
	Attend/Participate actively	151	29.2	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G2.3 Earth Hour/ Global Env Activities	Not interested at all	9	1.7	1.7
	Interested but did not attend/participate	152	29.3	31.1
	Volunteer occasionally	202	39.0	70.1
	Attend/Participate actively	155	29.9	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G2.4 Env Talks/ Seminars	Not interested at all	36	6.9	6.9
	Interested but did not attend/participate	212	40.9	47.9
	Volunteer occasionally	170	32.8	80.7
	Attend/Participate actively	100	19.3	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	

Table 3 (con't)

Variables		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
G2.5 Car Pool/ Public Transport	Not interested at all	6	1.2	1.2
	Interested but did not attend/participate	73	14.1	15.3
	Volunteer occasionally	160	30.9	46.1
	Attend/Participate actively	279	53.9	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G2.6 Nature Eco Clubs	Not interested at all	26	5.0	5.0
	Interested but did not attend/participate	206	39.8	44.8
	Volunteer occasionally	153	29.5	74.3
	Attend/Participate actively	133	25.7	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	

Environmental Support

As shown in Table 4, respondents were fully supportive of “Bring Your Own Water Bottle” campaign with 406 responses. Respondents were also supportive of environmental campaigns such as “No Styrofoam” and “No Plastic Bags”, which gathered 316 and 312 responses respectively. Results also show that “Meatless or Vegetarian meals” which received 116 responses, and “Use of Chemicals or Pesticides” with 104 responses, were environmental campaigns that respondents did not support.

Table 4. Environmental support of green volunteers

Variables		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
G3.1 No Plastic Bags	Do not wish to support	1	.2	.2
	Would like to know more before supporting	15	2.9	3.1
	Occasionally support	190	36.7	39.8
	Always/Fully support	312	60.2	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G3.2 BYOB	Would like to know more before supporting	12	2.3	2.3
	Occasionally support	100	19.3	21.6
	Always/Fully support	406	78.4	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	

Table 4 (con't)

Variables		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
G3.3 No Styrofoam	Do not wish to support	1	.2	.2
	Would like to know more before supporting	54	10.4	10.6
	Occasionally support	147	28.4	39.0
	Always/Fully support	316	61.0	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G3.4 Meatless/ Vegetarian	Do not wish to support	116	22.4	22.4
	Would like to know more before supporting	119	23.0	45.4
	Occasionally support	185	35.7	81.1
	Always/Fully support	98	18.9	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G3.5 Buy Local	Do not wish to support	11	2.1	2.1
	Would like to know more before supporting	87	16.8	18.9
	Occasionally support	249	48.1	67.0
	Always/Fully support	171	33.0	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G3.6 Solar Energy	Do not wish to support	2	.4	.4
	Would like to know more before supporting	85	16.4	16.8
	Occasionally support	159	30.7	47.5
	Always/Fully support	272	52.5	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G3.7 Reuse/ Preloved items	Do not wish to support	5	1.0	1.0
	Would like to know more before supporting	50	9.7	10.6
	Occasionally support	179	34.6	45.2
	Always/Fully support	284	54.8	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	
G3.8 Use Chemical Pesticide	Do not wish to support	145	28.0	28.0
	Would like to know more before supporting	140	27.0	55.0
	Occasionally support	129	24.9	79.9
	Always/Fully support	104	20.1	100.0
	Total	518	100.0	

Discussion

Demographics

As indicated earlier, various studies (Johnson et al., 2004; Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Mair & Laing, 2013) have shown that sustainability-focused events often attract more female volunteers. Apart from age, gender was found to have a strong relationship with pro-environmental attitudes (Gifford, Hay & Boros, 1982). Environmental activities are more likely to be carried out by women in both advanced and emerging countries (Vicente-Molina, Fernández-Sáinz & Izagirre-Olaizola, 2013). Furthermore, women are more concerned about the environment, are more committed and emotionally involved in resolving environmental issues even if they have lesser knowledge compared to men (Blocker & Eckberg, 1989; Bord & O'Connor, 1997; Pavalache-Iliea & Unianu, 2012). This is also true for KL 2017, where 70% of green volunteers were female. Organisers may find it useful during the pre-event stage, to plan the assignment of duties and work roster if they know ahead that usually more females will volunteer for sustainability-focused events. Certain tasks assigned to the green volunteers may require physical strength, such as moving 120-litre or 240-litre recycling bins and the transfer of its content at the composting stations. Hence, such duties may require allocation of green volunteers into groups, as was done during KL 2017.

Female volunteers, especially from the ASEAN region, are generally petite in size. Green volunteers at the KL 2017 were very happy that they were allocated 2 pairs of uniform. Unfortunately, many female green volunteers had to cope with 1 set of uniform as the stock received for t-shirts and pants were 2 or 3 times larger in size and had to be returned. Advance planning with a higher volume of smaller sizes (i.e. small or medium) to cater to a bigger proportion of female volunteers would prevent excess stock of unsuitable sizes, leading to more prudent financial efficiency. Additionally, safety issues may arise from oversized and ill-fitting uniforms, especially for activities involving machinery (e.g. handling 500-litre composting machines).

In line with its green initiatives (refer Figure 2), major venues of KL 2017 were only accessible by public transport. Another area of concern would be the safety and security of female green volunteers while commuting to and from work venues. The numerous activities and programs running concurrently during KL 2017, would entail long working hours, which were broken into 2 shifts (i.e. 0800-1500 hours and 1400-2100 hours). On certain days, there would be an additional third shift (i.e. 2000-0100 hours) to cater to late evening events. As accommodation was not provided, organisers may have to ensure the availability of public transportation for female green volunteers working on these night shifts or reduce the number of female green volunteers for late evening events.

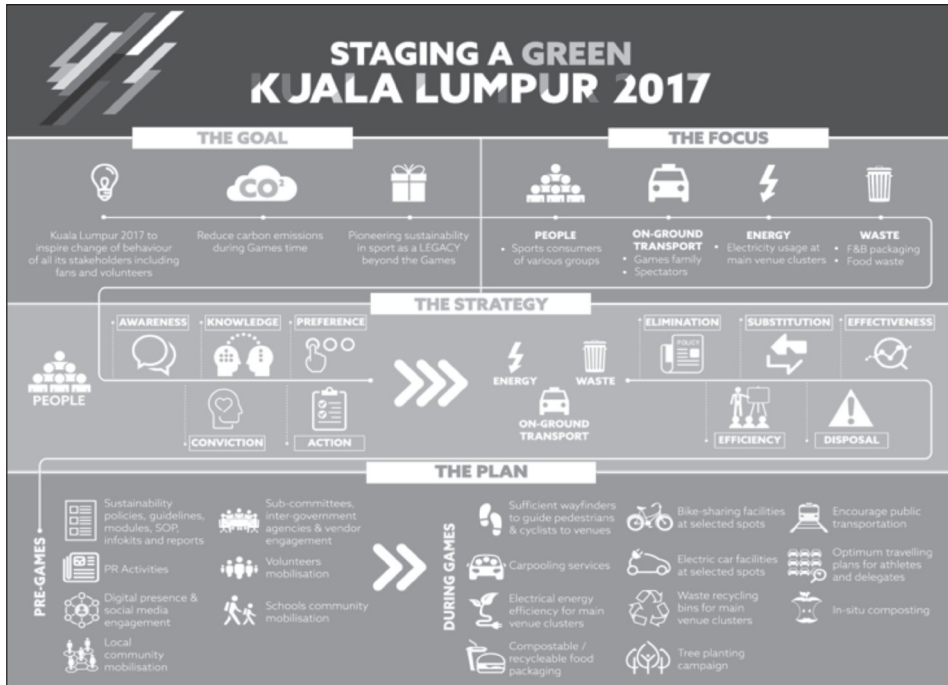


Figure 2. Green initiatives of KL 2017

Source: <https://kualalumpur2017.com.my/about-greeninitiatives.cshml>

Environmental Awareness

Apart from gender, another demographic factor found to significantly influence pro-environmental behaviour is years of education (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). While education does not guarantee increased pro-environmental behaviour, studies indicate that awareness of environmental issues are more extensive with a longer period of education. This holds true for KL 2017 as data shows (in Table 1) that green volunteers were predominantly diploma (22.6%) and degree (50.2%) students, who are partially (41%) or fully aware (50%) of prevalent environmental issues at both global and local levels.

On the other hand, studies have also proven that environmental awareness and knowledge does not necessarily result in pro-environmental behaviour (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Attempts to change attitudes and beliefs by just providing information are highly unlikely to be effective and requires an integrated approach (Verplanken & Wood, 2006). Hence, reliance on information alone to change behaviour is ineffective. However, with direct experiences and a dominant culture or family customs that propagate pro-environmental behaviour, change would be more imminent (Rajecki, 1982).

Environmental Involvement

The responses procured also suggest that green volunteers are more action-oriented in their environmental involvement. Many are already participating in activities such as carpooling or using public transport, recycling in their community/campus and Earth Hour campaigns. They are not interested in passive activities such as attending talks or seminars, nor joining clubs or societies. This discovery corroborates with a previous study (Mair & Laing, 2013) which suggested that sustainability-focused events would attract individuals who are actively engaged in sustainable practices. Therefore, training sessions for green volunteers would be more effective if a larger component of its content contains activities with immediacy. The direct and instant involvement of such activities would create a sense of urgency or excitement that would also help in the recruitment and retaining of green volunteers for future events.

Furthermore, activities such as carpooling or recycling are environmental actions that appeal to green volunteers who have an internal locus of control. People with an internal locus of control are more susceptible to be protective towards the environment (McCarty & Shrum, 2001) as they believe that their actions determine the results they get. In comparison, people with an external locus of control believe that their actions do not matter as the results they get in life are beyond their control.

Involvement in environmental issues is significantly related to overall pro-environmental behaviour and has been proven to be effective on purchase and recycling behaviours (Stanley et al., 1996). With more definitive research in this area, environmental activities could be further developed or improved to increase involvement of communities in recycling and purchase of eco-products.

Environmental Support

It was advantageous that the KL 2017 green volunteers were mainly residents of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor. The proximity of their residences to their assigned venues contributed to the reduction of transport miles and subsequently, a lighter carbon footprint. Additionally, green volunteers were also encouraged to use public transportation as they were given free passage by displaying their security badges to attendants at any light-rail transit (LRT) stations.

It would appear that the KL 2017 green volunteers were more aware of environmental issues such as air, water and noise pollution, as well as waste management. It could be inferred that green volunteers may perceive to have a higher internal locus of control over such issues, as opposed to global issues such as carbon footprint, bio-engineered food and food contamination by pesticide. If there is a correlation between locus of control and environmental awareness, then further research could help develop information on specific issues to increase environmental awareness for similar target audience. This would help save resources (time and money) to have a more direct impact with concerted efforts.

A study conducted in Canada (Kennedy, Beckley, McFarlane & Nadeau, 2009) revealed that 60% of respondents felt a perceived lack of knowledge limited their pro-environmental behaviour. Similarly, green volunteers have indicated that they wish to know more before supporting meatless or vegetarian meals (23% of respondents) and eliminating the use of chemicals or pesticides (25% of respondents). Perhaps environmental support for these topics could be improved through social marketing campaigns or public service announcements. Social marketing has been used vastly in many different contexts to modify behaviour (Andreasen, 1994; McKenzie-Mohr & Smith, 1999).

Further Areas of Research

It had been suggested that the unique attributes of events, with its fun and relaxed carnivalesque atmosphere could encourage attendees' capacity to learn something new (Anderton, 2008; Laing & Frost, 2010; Sharpe, 2008). The gathering of exhibitors with a common theme at events provides opportunities to meet and engage visitors, who could also impact behavioral change (Rosson & Seringhaus, 1995). Hence, it is possible that staging a sustainability-focused event, such as KL 2017, could facilitate the process of change for both green volunteers and visitors as they interact directly with green practices. Future research could explore the level of impact that sustainability-focused events may have on pro-environmental behaviour of event participants (i.e. attendees, vendors, contractors).

Since Malaysia is such a culturally diverse country, it would be thought-provoking to look into pro-environmental behaviour from a cross-cultural perspective. Social and cultural values of small yet densely populated countries such as Switzerland and the Netherlands are more mindful of resources than countries such as the United States of America, where resources are more abundantly available (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002).

Events have been acknowledged as an effective tool in integrated communication and marketing (Varela et al., 2014). However, studies that offer evidence on the use of events to facilitate behaviour change are rare (Mair & Laing, 2013). Further investigations may render assistance to determine the extent to which sustainability-focused events would encourage pro-environmental behaviour through downstream and upstream interventions.

During KL 2017, the role of green volunteers included educating visitors on the recycling bins that were available to separate the different types of wastes, along with other activities related to management of waste at several venues (e.g. waste segregation, collection and transfer to composting centres). The responses from visitors, whether positive or negative, were direct experiences for the green volunteers on duty. Therefore, these direct experiences encountered by green volunteers during KL 2017 would further inform their existing environmental awareness and increase

the chances of inculcating pro-environmental behaviour. Perhaps a post event survey could gauge if such behaviour changes had occurred and, if so, to what extent.

Conclusion

Green events such as KL 2017 definitely have a role to play in advancing pro-environmental behaviours. However, pro-environmental behaviour is shaped by multiple factors and influences, which could not be explained in a single framework due to its complexity. This study supports this stance. Nevertheless, there are overlapping commonalities that could help establish meaning to some factors influencing pro-environmental behaviour. Deeper investigations would offer increased understanding that would benefit events with green initiatives and objectives.

Unravelling the profile of green volunteers may prove to be useful in the planning of similar events in future as more effort is needed to promote sustainability and environmental awareness. Whether it is more effective and more viable to have these attached to sustainability-focused event remains to be seen. In many ways, KL 2017 has acted as a catalyst in highlighting many issues for the management of green events while also promoting pro-environmental behaviour with its various green initiatives. Perhaps this tiny yet bold step has kick-started a worthwhile journey that can leverage on events as a vehicle for the greener good, and the unmasking of green volunteers would offer them more visibility at other events. It is hoped that many more events of this stature would follow with opportunities for environmentally sustainable practices at all stages of event planning and management.

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