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The effect of government-public relationships on residents' support in mega sport events: a moderating effect of government crisis response

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ABSTRACT

The study seeks to investigate the role of host governments' policy public relations and crisis response strategies in shaping residents' support for mega sport events. Specifically, the research focuses on the moderation effects of crisis response strategies on the relationships between the government-public relationships (GPR) dimensions (i.e., control mutuality, trust, and satisfaction) and residents' support. The research targeted residents of Tokyo, a host city for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Online surveys were disseminated via an international survey company between 23rd to 29th October 2020, obtaining 500 complete responses. Then, a two-step approach was utilised to ensure the tenability of the hypothesised model: CFA for testing the measurement model and SEM for testing the hypothetical relationships. There was a positive association between perceived control mutuality and satisfaction with residents' support for the mega sport event. The study reaffirmed the importance of control mutuality and satisfaction as GPR indicators for residents' support, introducing this concept into the mega sport event context. In addition, the relationship between control mutuality and residents' support was moderated by their perception of the appropriateness of crisis response. Based on the results, theoretical and practical implications were presented.

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Government–public relationships; crisis response; residents' support; the Olympic Games; mega sport events; public relations

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a noticeable trend – the gradual yet persistent decrease in the number of cities willing to bid for mega events (BBC News, 2018). For instance, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has faced challenges with having few bidders to host the Olympic Games. In the case of the 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games, Boston (United States), Budapest (Hungary), Hamburg (Germany) and Rome (Italy) withdrew their interest in hosting the Games, resulting in only two candidate cities (Kassens-Noor & Lauermann, 2017). Consequently, the IOC made a historic decision to simultaneously award the hosting rights to two cities. Among various factors, the referendum results were a primary trigger for these withdrawals (Gursoy, Milito, et al., 2017). The current study starts with this social phenomenon, which is diminishing public support.

Residents' support is one of the most vital elements for the overall success and sustainability of managing any mega event. The significance of residents' support lies in its role as

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a democratic tool that not only garners political legitimacy but also fosters active community involvement, such as volunteering (Nunkoo, 2015; Prayag et al., 2013). Their support and enthusiasm are essential for a smooth policy agenda setting, policy formation and policy implementation regarding mega sport events. The endorsement of residents is also directly connected to the hospitality of the local community, which determines the positive experience of tourists and visitors (G. Kim et al., 2023). A deficiency of coordination and cohesion within a host community could “turn the planning process into a highly charged political and social exercise” (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006, p. 605). This study focuses on examining the intricate mechanisms of the residents’ support formation in the mega sport event context, filling an existing theoretical gap.

Considerable research attention has been devoted to investigating the mechanism of residents’ support formation. The reason behind this argument is that new and digital media alter the landscape of citizens’ political participation (Loader & Mercea, 2011). As Cho (2008) pointed out, not all citizens remain passive policy actors who merely receive a message from their government. Despite the importance of residents as key stakeholders in the decision-making process during bidding and planning stages, as a result of digitalisation and globalisation, the persistence of traditional top-down and unilateral decision-making process has hindered their participation in preparing and hosting mega sport events (Hiller & Wanner, 2018). Notably, there has been a lack of research focusing specifically on the the relationship quality management, highlighting a significant theoretical gap.

Over the years, existing literature in sport management and tourism has explored the formation of residents’ support by utilising the social exchange theory (e.g. Gursoy, Milito, et al., 2017; Gursoy, Yolal, et al., 2017; S. Kim & Manoli, 2022; Prayag et al., 2013). Studies employing social exchange theory repeatedly have identified that perceived economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts are key driving forces of residents’ support. Various concepts, including place image (Stylidis et al., 2014), community attachment (Gursoy, Milito, et al., 2017), as well as satisfaction and quality of life (Kaplanidou et al., 2013), have been identified as key antecedents in shaping the level of residents’ support. These factors are often integrated within the framework of social exchange theory. Researchers have also drawn upon other theoretical perspectives, including social representations theory (Zhou & Ap, 2009), self-perception theory (Woosnam et al., 2018), and integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation (Y. J. Lee & Woosnam, 2010) to explain the formation of residents’ support.

Despite the efforts made in the previous literature, there is still a significant paucity of knowledge, particularly with regard to the role of host governments’ policy public relations, in building relationship quality with residents who should be considered key stakeholders in managing mega sport events (S. Kim et al., 2023). Hopwood (2005) explicitly pointed out that one of the underdeveloped research areas of sport management is public relations and communication strategies. This is an important omission since public relations that contain symmetrical and transparent communications should be emphasised in today’s digital era, where information is instant and pervasive, and the effectiveness of government communication becomes pivotal (S. Kim & Krishna, 2018). Hyland-Wood et al. (2021) highlighted that framing and delivering messages, addressing misinformation and ensuring transparency are crucial elements in establishing government communication strategies to shape public perception and elicit residents’ support and participation. The importance of government-public relations and, particularly, communication strategies in crisis is underpinned by recent studies in other contexts. For instance, W. Liu and Huang (2023) examined the relationships between government-public relationships (GPR), risk information seeking, and supportive attitude towards a vaccine policy, while Wang et al. (2022) examined the perceived governmental responsiveness to a crisis (i.e. COVID-19), GPR, and positive word-of-mouth intention. All of these consideration lead to the following research questions:

Research question 1. How do host governments' policy public relations influence residents' support in the context of mega sport events?

Research question 2. In situations of crisis, how does the government's response alter the associations between residents' perceptions of policy public relations and their support?

To address the research questions and bridge the research gaps in existing literature, the present study aims to develop a comprehensive theoretical framework of residents' support formation. This framework integrates three aspects (i.e. control mutuality, satisfaction, and trust) of GPR with consideration for governments' crisis responses. Specifically, the current research delves into the role of GPR in shaping residents' support and examines the moderating impact of the appropriateness of crisis response on the relationship between GPR and residents' support.

Theoretical framework and hypothesis development

Government-public relationships in the mega sport events context

To grasp the concept of GPR, it is important to first understand the organisation-public relationships (OPR). Since Ferguson (1984) highlighted the importance of relationships as a research topic in public relations, OPR has emerged as a central concept in public relations research (Grunig, 2006). Three components are consistently emphasised in conceptualising OPR: (a) the overarching aim of building a long-term relationship, (b) pursuing mutual understanding, and (c) facilitating exchange relationships between two entities. OPR shifts the paradigm of public relations from mere information dissemination to relationship management (Shen, 2017) and seeks to nurture and sustain long-term, mutually beneficial relationships (Ki & Hon, 2012). From the systems theorist's point of view, the concept of relationship in OPR is defined as 'the exchange or transfer of information, energy, or resources' (Broom et al., 1997, p. 15). This form of exchange relationship stands in contrast to the communal relationship (Clark & Mills, 1993). In exchange relationships, one party willingly offers benefits to the other, anticipating returns of comparable value. In contrast, communal relationships involve one party providing benefits without expecting any in return. Therefore, given its nature, OPR, which emphasises an exchange relationship, is better suited for continuous and enduring relationships.

Building upon OPR, this study identifies the government – hosting a mega sport event – and the local residents as the two central entities in the exchange relationship. An imperative for examining GPR arises due to the evident lack of public support in hosting such events, which is of primary interest to this study. Residents' support towards hosting mega sport events has great significance in that it is the precondition for choosing reasonable policy alternatives or successfully implementing the event-related policies (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012; Prayag et al., 2013). Thus, the value of GPR that pursues long-term and beneficial relationships through mutual understanding matches the value of mega sport events management.

While the concept of OPR offers a foundational understanding, the dynamics between governments and their residents present unique complexities that necessitate a tailored conceptualisation. Given that OPR does not seamlessly translate into the GPR context, S. Kim et al. (2023) conceptualised and developed a GPR measurement model in the context of mega sport events. The current study aligns with the work of S. Kim et al. (2023) adopting their conceptualisation of GPR. S. Kim et al. (2023) delineated the concept into three foundational dimensions: (a) control mutuality, (b) satisfaction, and (c) trust. Further discussion of each GPR dimension is presented in the following sections.

The association between government-public relationships and residents' support

Impact of control mutuality on residents' support

In the public relations domain, control mutuality is defined as 'relational parties' or partners' perceived mutual influence on one another' (Shen, 2017, p. 1000). The perceptions of disempowerment and exclusion from the decision-making process often result in social tensions and opposition demonstrations against bidding for the Olympic Games (Hiller & Wanner, 2018). In this regard, control mutuality is an imperative component of GPR as the two-way communication function fundamentally emphasises the involvement of various policy actors having an influence on the policy decision-making process. In addition, the advanced internet-based communication technologies enable residents to express their political opinions. Control mutuality has emerged as an indispensable factor for host governments to take into account. Implementing government communication policies (e.g. public relations) deviates from the dominant paradigm in communication research that adopts the transmission theory, which highlights the source-receiver linear relationship (McQuail, 2010). Since the current study assumes that residents are policy actors who can interpret and evaluate policies of host government rather than passive receiver, control mutuality stands out as a pivotal component of GPR.

Empirical evidence appears to support that control mutuality has a positive impact on the support of a stakeholder. For instance, Seltzer and Zhang (2011) identified that perceived control mutuality was positively linked to exhibiting supportive attitudes towards political parties. Ki and Hon (2007) found that the level of control mutuality was related to the extent to which individuals' attitudes towards the organisation. It should be noted that the concept of control mutuality is an essential indicator in predicting residents' favourable attitudes towards the government, especially in the context of mega sport event management. For instance, residents' level of power is an important topic in tourism development since all decisions and policies that directly affect residents' lives generally emerge from a political process entailing the values of entities in a struggle for power (Nunkoo, 2015). Thus, this study hypothesises as follow:

Hypothesis 1. Control mutuality is positively associated with residents' support.

Impact of satisfaction and residents' support

From the social exchange perspective, satisfaction is conceptualised as 'the extent to which one party feels favourably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced' (Hon & Grunig, 1999, p. 20). Most researchers in the area of public relations agree that satisfaction has been widely adopted in the OPR context (Shen, 2017), being viewed as an affective appraisal process (Wang et al., 2022). Ki and Hon (2007) employed the concept of OPR quality and verified that the students' satisfaction with the university directly engendered a favourable attitude towards the university, which led to supportive behaviours towards the organisation. Seltzer and Zhang (2011) emphasised that satisfaction of the public was the most influential dimension of political party-public relationships on positive attitude towards the party. In addition, ample research has confirmed that a higher order of OPR quality, which incorporates satisfaction, is positively linked to attitude and loyalty (e.g. Bortree, 2010; Kang & Yang, 2010; Y. Kim et al., 2019).

Despite the empirical evidence, someone could raise a question of whether residents' relational perception towards their 'government' leads to support towards hosting a 'mega sport event'. Nevertheless, ample evidence exists showing how residents' perceptions of local government, including satisfaction, can be transferred to support for hosting mega sport events (e.g. Gursoy, Milito, et al., 2017; Ouyang et al., 2017) or the development of tourism (e.g. Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Zuo et al., 2017). Based on the existing knowledge, the following hypothesis is proposed.

Hypothesis 2. Satisfaction is positively associated with residents' support.

Impact of trust and residents' support

Trust is essential in most social and economic transactions and is considered a key component of relationship quality (Hon & Grunig, 1999). The concept is often regarded as a cognitive appraisal process (Wang et al., 2022). Within the dynamics of any relationship, trust not only fosters mutual understanding and cooperation but also catalyses long-term commitment and loyalty. Hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games requires a local government to make significant infrastructure and sport venue investments, which can result in increasing taxpayers' burden and reshaping residents' relationships with their community. As a low level of residents' trust in various phases of the host process can lead to a highly charged process for a government, it is imperative for the government to obtain political trust to be able to make more optimal decisions that are legitimate and accepted by a host community (Nunkoo, 2015; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Also, it is important for a government to gain the trust of residents since most financial and policy decisions related to hosting a mega sport event are usually made by small groups of politicians (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006; Nunkoo et al., 2018).

Numerous studies have underlined the importance of trust, especially when it is incorporated as one of OPR dimensions and consistently demonstrated its positive association with supportive attitudes or loyalty (e.g. Bortree, 2010; Kang & Yang, 2010; Y. Kim et al., 2019). Additionally, the dynamic between trust in government actors and public support is further highlighted in the realm of tourism development. Nunkoo and Smith (2013) and Nunkoo and Ramkissoon (2012) provided empirical evidence for this relationship, confirming the connection between trust in governmental actors and support for tourism development. Building upon the importance of trust in hosting mega sport events and the empirical results, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Trust is positively associated with residents' support.

Government crisis response: a moderating role

Compared with organisations in the private sector, public's demand for the governmental level of crisis management is much greater (Graham et al., 2015). Government communication is especially critical in a crisis since an effective government crisis response would result in a high degree of public acceptance of government policies (Bakker et al., 2018). Yet, the area of governments' crisis response in the context of mega sport events remains largely unexamined, despite its significance (W. Liu & Huang, 2023). This study operationally defines the appropriateness of government crisis response as residents' evaluative perception of a government's communicative actions to handle the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of transparency and opportune information provision. Given the unique and unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis, the scope of 'crisis' in our study is specifically confined to this context (see Table 1). It should be noted that the current study views that the research population (i.e. Tokyo residents) has enough technological advancement in their communication infrastructure with their government.

Table 1. Tokyo government's communication actions in response to the COVID-19 (source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government, 2022).

Dates	Communication actions
January 2020	Tokyo Metropolitan Government Crisis Management Council was held
February 2020	'Basic Policies for Novel Coronavirus Disease Control' was introduced
March 2020	The first Governor's press conference was held (monthly)
April 2020	A state of national emergency was implemented
June 2020	The infection prevention thorough declaration sticker was issued
July 2020	The first monitoring meeting were held (weekly)
October 2020	Tokyo Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control (Tokyo iCDC) was established
December 2020	'Three Cs' (the government's countermeasure against COVID-19) was announced by Tokyo Governor in media briefings

Although it is exploratory, this research posits that the strength of the relationship between GPR dimensions (i.e. control mutuality, trust and satisfaction) and residents' support would vary depending on residents' perception about crisis communication. The significance of a government's crisis communication in understanding residents' support can be expounded by the uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Bradac, 1982). The theory explains the individuals' motives to reduce uncertainty in situations as anticipation for future interactions and reward given for decreasing uncertainty (Berger & Bradac, 1982).

Another keyword for understanding the uncertainty reduction theory is information-seeking behaviours. Although the uncertainty reduction theory stems from interpersonal relationships, it is now expanded and applied in the crisis communication domain to explicate individuals' information-seeking behaviours during crises (B. F. Liu et al., 2016). In other words, individuals feel secure when they are able to anticipate what will happen in the future in a crisis situation, meaning that publics seek more information to fill the information gap in the crisis (Xu, 2018). How people respond to a crisis often depends on information people receive (Bakker et al., 2018). Since individuals who have sufficient knowledge about a crisis are likely to make informed decisions, reducing the susceptibilities to the crisis (Cahyanto et al., 2014). In addition, Y. Kim et al. (2019) empirically confirmed that the moderating effect of crisis communication (i.e. stealing-thunder communication strategy) on the association between OPR and employees' supportive behaviour. Based on the discussions, the current study exploratively examines how the effect of GPR on residents' support is moderated by residents' perception of the government's crisis response appropriateness and assumes as follows (see Figure 1):

Hypothesis 4-1. Appropriateness of a government's crisis response moderates the relationship between control mutuality and residents' support in a positive way.

Hypothesis 4-2. Appropriateness of a government's crisis response moderates the relationship between trust and residents' support in a positive way.

Hypothesis 4-3. Appropriateness of a government's crisis response moderates the relationship between satisfaction and residents' support in a positive way.

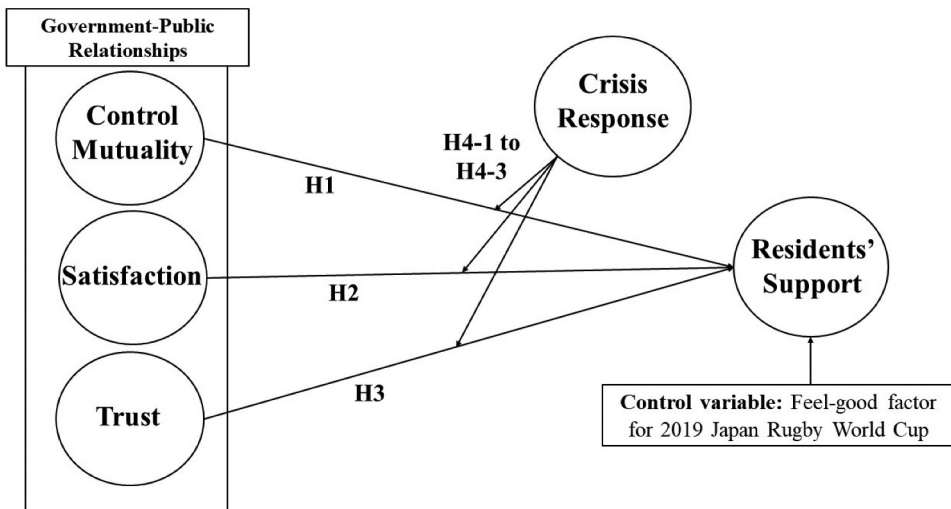


Figure 1. The research framework of this study.

Method

Participants and data collection

The target population for this study consisted of residents of Tokyo, the host city for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. A convenience sampling technique, which is a non-probability sampling method, was employed. For data collection, online surveys were administered via Rakuten Insight, an international research company based in Japan. The survey was conducted from 23rd to 29 October 2020, following the announcement of the postponement of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, but prior to the event, yielding 500 complete responses. A survey link generated by Qualtrics was provided to the research company for distribution. To ensure linguistic accuracy, the questions were translated into Japanese using a back translation technique (Brislin, 1970).

The company's system then assigned a unique UID to each participant (i.e. panels of the company), capturing their identifying details and conveying this information back to the research company. To ensure the relevance of respondents, the survey included screening questions such as, 'I currently live in Tokyo'. Only those meeting the criteria were considered in the final tally of complete surveys. Quality control questions were also incorporated to avoid unengaged responses. An example of the quality control question is 'Please click [7] in the multiple-choice', and the survey was terminated if a respondent did not click on the designated number. Lastly, ethical approval for this study was granted by the employing university of one of the authors, and all research procedures were conducted in accordance with the Internet Research Ethics Guidelines 3.0.

Instrument development

The survey was structured into three parts: (a) a thorough explanation of the survey's aim with instructions for completion, (b) measurement items to assess five latent constructs and a control variable, and (c) five questions for sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, education, employment and income. A 7-point Likert scale was utilised ('strongly disagree' [1] – 'strongly agree' [7]).

The measurement items were employed from existing studies, including the newly developed GPR items (S. Kim et al., 2023). The GPR items ($n = 15$) with three dimensions explicitly asked about the residents' perceptions of the local government, Tokyo Metropolitan Government. The emphasis on the local government stemmed from certain considerations. While policies from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC) largely targeted a broader national level, the operational directions of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government were intricately tied to the daily lives of Tokyo residents. Since much of the responsibility of managing and planning a mega sport event rests with a host local government (Ruhanen, 2013), the study focuses on the relationship between local government and their residents.

To measure residents' support towards the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, four items were adapted from Pappas (2014) and Prayag et al. (2013), which were used in the context of the Olympic Games. To measure the appropriateness of crisis response, three items developed by Bowen et al. (2018) were used. The items focused on accommodative signals and information of the government, and the participants were asked to respond to their perceptions of COVID-19 related crisis responses of the local government.

The current study assumes that residents' experience or general sentiments on the previous mega sport event (i.e. 2019 Tokyo Rugby World Cup) is effective to control for confounding effects on their support towards the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. To avoid the effect of previous experience with the mega sport event, this study controlled for the feel-good factor of the previous mega sport event (i.e. 2019 Japan Rugby World Cup) to rule it out as alternative explanations for residents' support. The feel-good factor was assessed by one item, 'I feel good about the 2019 Japan Rugby World Cup'.

Subsequently, the content analysis process was conducted with a rigorous review of the measurement items by a panel of experts. Three academics in sport management assessed each item for clarity, conciseness, and alignment with the research objectives. As a result, some expressions and the name of the mega sport event (e.g. adding Paralympic) were modified.

Data analysis

A two-step approach is conducted to ensure the tenability of the hypothesised model: CFA for testing the measurement model and SEM (CB-SEM) for testing the structural model (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). IBM SPSS Statistics and SPSS Amos version 25.0 version were used. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to analyse the structural relationships between the latent variables, which are theoretical prepositions, to confirm whether the established hypotheses account for the paths. Specifically, the structural model is designed to test the direct effects of three dimensions of GPR and residents' support. Subsequently, the moderating role of appropriateness of crisis response was tested by looking at the effects of its interactions with the GPR dimensions on residents' support.

Results

Descriptive statistics and preliminary analysis

Of the 500 participants, 52.0% were females ($n = 260$) and 48.0% were males ($n = 240$). Age distribution was notably skewed towards the older cohort, with 28.4% being 65 ($n = 142$) and above and 17.8% between the ages of 45 and 54 ($n = 89$). Concerning education, the majority held a 4-year university degree, accounting for 50.6% ($n = 253$), followed by those who had completed high school at 24.0% ($n = 120$). In the employment domain, company employees formed the predominant group at 38.8% ($n = 194$), while homemakers constituted the next significant category at 15.4% ($n = 77$). As a preliminary analysis, skewness and kurtosis values for univariate normality should fall within ± 1.00 (Hair et al., 2010). The univariate normality test revealed the skewness statistics between -0.53 and 0.13 , and the kurtosis statistics between -0.74 and 0.77 , all meeting the criteria (see Table 2). For multivariate normality, Mahalanobis distance was used, and this identified 34 samples, ranging from 18.23 to 33.1, as outliers; these were thus subsequently removed.

Common method bias

In accordance with Podsakoff et al.'s (2003) guidelines, this study addressed potential common method bias. The respondents were assured anonymity and informed the aim of the research, and there were no correct answers. Then, Harman's single factor test was employed to detect any statistical bias. The main factor explained 43.55% of the variance, which is below the 50% threshold set by Podsakoff et al. (2003), suggesting minimal common method variance in the data.

Reliability and validity

To assess reliability, two indicators were utilised: McDonald's omega and composite reliability (CR). The McDonald's omega coefficients for the latent variables ranged from .87 to .95, exceeding the .70 benchmark set by Peters (2014), showcasing satisfactory internal consistency for all variables. The CR values, ranging from .92 to .94, surpassed the recommended .70 threshold (Hair et al., 2010), further confirming the internal consistency of the constructs (see Table 3).

To establish convergent and discriminant validity, three indicators were used: standardised factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE) and maximum shared variance (MSV) were

Table 2. Descriptive statistics, normality and internal consistency of the measurement items (source: author own creation).

Items	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Government-public relationships: Control mutuality</i>				
The Tokyo government believes the opinions of citizens like me are legitimate. (CM1)	3.77	1.19	−0.42	0.55
The Tokyo government listens to what citizens like me have to say. (CM2)	3.63	1.32	−0.18	−0.23
The Tokyo government and citizens like me are attentive to what each other say. (CM3)	3.68	1.26	−0.14	0.19
I believe citizens like me have an influence on the policy-making process of the Tokyo government. (CM4)	3.44	1.41	0.13	−0.33
Generally speaking, Tokyo government and citizens are both satisfied with the decision-making process. (CM5)	3.50	1.32	0.01	−0.15
The Tokyo government gives citizens enough opportunities to say in the decision-making process. (CM6)	3.42	1.35	0.08	−0.28
<i>Government-public relationships: Satisfaction</i>				
Citizens' relationship with the Tokyo government is good. (Satis1)	4.02	1.19	−0.40	0.47
Both the Tokyo government and citizens like me benefit from the relationship. (Satis2)	3.99	1.19	−0.45	0.74
I am pleased with the relationship the Tokyo government has established with citizen like me. (Satis3)	3.67	1.20	−0.34	0.40
Most citizens enjoy dealing with the Tokyo government. (Satis4)	3.49	1.29	−0.13	−0.13
<i>Government-public relationships: Trust</i>				
The Tokyo government treats citizens fairly. (Trust1)	3.55	1.40	0.02	−0.44
Whenever the Tokyo government makes an important decision, I know it will be concerned about its citizens. (Trust2)	3.78	1.34	−0.11	−0.32
The Tokyo government can be relied on to keep its promises to citizens. (Trust3)	3.80	1.34	−0.20	−0.09
The Tokyo government has the ability to accomplish what it says it will do. (Trust4)	3.63	1.32	−0.10	−0.10
I feel confident about the Tokyo government's ability for the administration. (Trust5)	3.52	1.33	−0.05	−0.07
<i>Appropriateness of crisis response</i>				
The released information regarding the COVID-19 is very transparent. (ACR1)	3.93	1.43	−0.34	−0.57
The government released an appropriate amount of information regarding the COVID-19. (ACR2)	3.98	1.40	−0.29	−0.57
The government has handled the COVID-19 outbreak appropriately. (ACR3)	4.05	1.39	−0.47	−0.24
<i>Residents' support</i>				
I support the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games (the Olympic Games hereafter). (RS1)	4.39	1.81	−0.53	−0.77
I support the policies that are related to the Olympic Games. (RS2)	4.05	1.68	−0.36	−0.74
Tokyo should bid for other major sporting events. (RS3)	3.97	1.65	−0.21	−0.58
The Olympic Games will help for the promotion of Tokyo as a mega-event destination. (RS4)	4.28	1.69	−0.45	−0.54

Note. SD denotes standardised deviation

assessed. The AVE values for the proposed constructs revealed ranging from .69 to .79, providing evidence of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). The results also showed that all standardised factor loading of the indicators loaded significantly at $p < .001$ level and met the .707 cut-off (Hair et al., 2010). The result of the discriminant validity test revealed that the square root of AVE values representing each construct exceeded the correlation coefficients between its construct and other related constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), meaning all latent variables were considered discrete constructs (see Table 4). This study also confirmed that all the AVE values were higher than MSV of each latent construct, satisfying another discriminant validity condition (Hair et al., 2010).

Structural model assessment and hypotheses testing

The model fit indexes for the structural model offered evidence of a good model fit ($\chi^2/df = 3.81$; RMR = .07; GFI = .93; NFI = .94; TLI = .90; CFI = .94, RMSEA = .08). The significant relationships were found between control mutuality ($\beta = .23$, $p < .001$) and satisfaction ($\beta = .24$, $p < .001$) and residents' support, which supported Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, respectively. However, unlike the expectation, Hypothesis 3, which proposed the effect of trust in government on residents' support, was not supported.

With regard to the moderating effect, the current study determined a moderating effect of the appropriateness of crisis response on the relationships between RCS and GPR according to the

Table 3. Results of reliability and convergent validity (source: author own creation).

Measurement items	Reliability		Convergent validity	
	ω	CR	β (t-value)	AVE
<i>Government-public relationships: Control mutuality</i>				
CM1	.93	.94	.82* (–)	.72
CM2			.91* (25.26)	
CM3			.86* (24.02)	
CM4			.81* (20.85)	
CM5			.85* (22.36)	
CM6			.82* (21.02)	
<i>Government-public relationships: Satisfaction</i>				
Satis1	.93	.92	.80* (–)	.69
Satis2			.81* (19.57)	
Satis3			.87* (21.73)	
Satis4			.89* (22.32)	
<i>Government-public relationships: Trust</i>				
Trust1	.89	.94	.86* (–)	.74
Trust2			.87* (25.29)	
Trust3			.86* (24.37)	
Trust4			.88* (25.60)	
Trust5			.85* (23.95)	
<i>Appropriateness of crisis response</i>				
ACR1	.87	.92	.88* (–)	.79
ACR2			.93* (28.89)	
ACR3			.85* (24.66)	
<i>Residents' support</i>				
RS1	.95	.92	.94* (–)	.74
RS2			.94* (37.69)	
RS3			.74* (20.09)	
RS4			.80* (24.97)	

Note 1. $p < .001^*$.Note 2. ω = McDonald's Omega; β = Standardized factor loading; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.Note 3. Goodness-of-fit statistics: $\chi^2/df = 3.28$, RMR = .06, GFI = .90, NFI = .93, TLI = .94, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .07.**Table 4.** Results of discriminant validity (source: author own creation).

	CM	Satis	Trust	ACR	RS	AVE	MSV
CM	.85					.72	.59
Satis	.77	.83				.69	.59
Trust	.76	.76	.86			.74	.58
ACR	.67	.65	.71	.89		.79	.50
RS	.56	.58	.52	.46	.86	.74	.35

Note 1. The values on the diagonal in bold and italicised type indicate the square root of the AVE value.

Note 2. CM: control mutuality; Satis: satisfaction; ACR: appropriateness of crisis response; RS: residents' support; MSV: maximum shared variance.

significance of the interaction conditions (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The result indicated that appropriateness of crisis response of the government significantly moderate the relationship between control mutuality and residents' support ($\beta = .17$, $p < .01$), supporting Hypothesis 4–1 (see Figure 2). However, the tests failed to support Hypotheses 4–2 and 4–3 (see Table 5).

Lastly, residents' feel-good factor with the 2019 World Rugby World Cup was controlled as a covariate in the analysis. The result indicated that the relationship between the feel-good factor and residents' support was significant ($\beta = .30$, $p < .001$). This result implied that control mutuality and satisfaction still significantly affect residents' support regardless of the feel-good factor with the previous mega sport events.

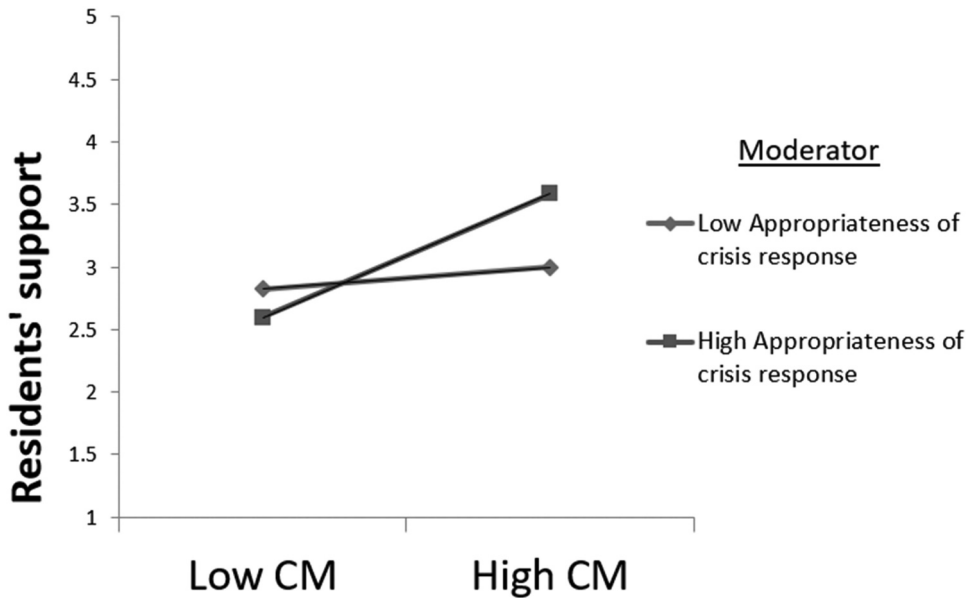
Table 5. Results of hypotheses testing (source: author own creation).

Hypothesised paths	Direct effects		Interaction effects	
	β	t-value	β	t-value
H1: CM \rightarrow RS	.23	4.07***		
H2: Satis \rightarrow RS	.24	4.28***		
H3: Trust \rightarrow RS	.06	1.21		
H4-1: CM \times ACR \rightarrow RS			.17	2.81**
H4-2: Satis \times ACR \rightarrow RS			-.03	-.57
H4-3: Trust \times ACR \rightarrow RS			-.10	-1.80
Endogenous variables				
RS			R²	.44
Control variable				
Feel-good factor for 2019 Japan Rugby World Cup	.30	7.89***		

Note 1. β = Standardized factor loading; CM: control mutuality; Satis: satisfaction; ACR: appropriateness of crisis response; RS: residents' support.

Note 2. $\chi^2/df = 3.81$, RMR = .07, GFI = .93, NFI = .94, TLI = .90, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .08.

Note 3. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed significance for standardised indirect effects).

**Figure 2.** The result of the moderating role of appropriateness of crisis response.

Discussion and implications

Discussions

The results of Hypotheses 1 and 2 elucidate that perceived control mutuality and satisfaction were positively related to residents' support towards the mega sport event and related policies. The significant results furnish continued support for the assertion that the control mutuality and satisfaction are crucial indicators of GPR in explaining residents' support while expanding the finding by applying the developed GPR concept into a mega sport event context. Regarding the insignificant relationship between trust and residents' support (Hypothesis 3), two plausible explanations for this counterintuitive result are discussed.

Firstly, the changes in political leadership can hinder the residents from a consistent level of trust. Planning, organising, and staging mega sport events generally require nearly 10 years. During

these stages, many host countries and cities might face leadership changes, which might lead to discontinuities in trust. For example, there have been three elected governors of Tokyo Metropolitan city since Tokyo won their bid to host the Olympic Games in 2013. This time frame might entail major changes to the image and trust level of the government since the image of political leaders and parties are interconnected (Smith, 2001). In other words, the level of trust in a government is vulnerable to power changes whereas other GPR dimensions are relatively stable to the changes.

The second potential explanation could be that the relationship can be fully mediated by other factors rather than being influenced by trust directly. This reasoning draws upon the result of Gursoy, Yolal, et al. (2017) that the relationship between trust in government and residents' support was mediated by their perceptions about both positive and negative impacts of hosting the mega sport event. When the residents of the host city trust their government, they are likely to perceive positive impacts, which in turn, generate supportive attitudes. Indeed, many scholars explored and confirmed the structural relations among trust in government, perceived negative and positive impacts and support for mega sport events or tourism development (e.g. Gursoy, Milito, et al., 2017; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). Transferred into this study, trust in local government might lead to residents' support via positive economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts. In addition, potential impacts of other intervening variables, such as perceptions of Olympics legacy (Ribeiro & Almeida, 2021), that might overshadow the role of trust in this context can be considered.

In an attempt to deepen our understanding of the link between GPR and residents' support, this study found that only the association between control mutuality and residents' support was moderated by residents' perception of appropriateness of crisis response (Hypothesis 4-1). On the other hand, a plausible explanation for the insignificant moderating effects of the government's appropriateness of crisis response (Hypothesis 4-2 and Hypothesis 4-3) can be made. The direct effects of two GPR dimensions (trust and satisfaction) on residents' support might be influenced by other crisis communication frames, strategies and timings implemented by governments (Y. Kim et al., 2019). For example, the crisis communication frame of a government plays an important role in understanding how individuals respond to a crisis, since it determines whether people are willing to accept the advice of the government (Bakker et al., 2018).

Theoretical implications

This study contributes theoretically by introducing the examination of GPR as a pivotal concept in understanding the formation of residents' support. By embracing GPR as the central concept, the study sheds light on how fostering long-term, mutually beneficial relationships aligns with the principles of sustainability and legacy management inherent in mega sport events. Previously, the social exchange theory has become a predominant theory in explaining the formation of residents' support (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). The social representations theory has also been applied as an alternative social exchange theory for understanding community support (Woosnam & Norman, 2010). Even though the two theories have gained much support as one of the most acceptable frameworks in explaining residents' support towards tourism development and hosting mega sport events, it has its limitations on predictive power (Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012). In addition, it is worth acknowledging that support for the event is not always the outcome of a rationally and economically driven decision (Zuo et al., 2017). By confirming GPR as a driver of residents' support formation, therefore, this novel approach offers a new perspective on residents' support dynamics in the context of mega sport event management. This novel contribution suggests the imperative for host governments to recognise residents as key stakeholders in the decision-making process. It advocates for a strategic shift in policy public relations, emphasising the importance of two-way symmetric communication to cultivate quality relationships with residents, thereby enhancing their support in mega sport event management.

Since the moderating role of the appropriateness of crisis response is under-explored, particularly within the context of the mega sport event, the result provides an original perspective on mega sport event management research. Crisis communication researchers insist that synthesising other theories with crisis communication theories could yield a more robust explanation power (Coombs, 2013). In a similar vein, Xu (2019) pointed out that crisis communication research is primarily focused on image repair and restoration, neglecting relational perspectives. In this sense, this study fills the theoretical gaps by integrating the crisis communication strategy approach with the GPR concept. The new finding of this study, the moderating role of appropriateness of crisis response on the control mutuality – support linkage, contributes to the existing understanding of crisis communication and further extends the scope of the governments' crisis management literature.

Managerial implication

To build and sustain control mutuality, host governments should enhance the ability to listen to residents' opinions and feedbacks on policies, which facilitate the residents to believe that they have an influence as a decision-maker in the process. As a communication channel, the current study suggests holding a policy debate in the form of an open forum and a panel discussion with the involvement of residents. These forums can effectively bridge the gap between governmental decisions and resident expectations, fostering a sense of control and involvement among residents, which is essential for garnering support for mega events (Johnston et al., 2021). Also, active involvement in policy debates and collaborations with various non-governmental organisations in a local community should be considered. These interactions may build a sense of mutual obligation, common goals and interdependence between local governments and residents. Their opinions should be considered in policy agenda setting, policy formation and policy implementation stages, and this could promote the sustainability of the mega sport event (Zuo et al., 2017).

Next, practical implications regarding the satisfaction-support linkage can be made. Since one of the central challenges of hosting mega sport events is the management of the new infrastructure after the event (Baade & Matheson, 2016), explicit policies and meticulous planning such as a long-term legacy plan to tackle post-event venue failures would help local governments to gain residents' satisfaction. Host governments should also be careful about offering satisfactory community service experience. The benefits of these services to residents are not negligible as they determine the quality of life of the residents in their daily lives. Thus, the government should seek to spend more budget and be consistent in carrying out policies to develop public services, ensuring that their citizens are satisfied with their ongoing relationship with the government.

Another implication is associated with the moderating role of the appropriateness of crisis response. Host governments should diversify information provision strategies to communicate with residents since the degree of exposure to information related to the crisis varies from individual to individual (Hong, 2014). In a similar vein, governments should consider the segmentation of the public according to the level of interest or knowledge of the crisis and mega sport event as identifying the pattern of media usage to seek information provides a practical guideline to choose appropriate target publics to communicate, which saves cost and time (Hong et al., 2012).

Limitation and future research

This study is not devoid of limitations, which also present guidelines for future research. The first limitation is the oversight of controlling for the amount of information reception across individuals. Although host governments tend to actively implement public relations efforts and seek an appropriate crisis response, it is not likely that every resident absorbs the same amount of information. There would be fundamental differences in the quality and quantity of information that residents receive. Hong et al. (2012) argued that 'to build desirable relationships with its publics, [...] understanding the diverse spectrum of public via effective public segmentation is

a primary step for organisations' (p. 38). By segmenting residents, governments could save costs in communication initiatives while maximising management effectiveness for fulfilling and establishing a strong relationship and public support.

Additionally, the methodological approach of this research was cross-sectional, with the data being collected in a singular session. Future investigations could adopt a longitudinal study to capture the change of structural relationships among GPR, crisis response and residents' support over a period of time from pre-event, during an event to post-event (Gibson et al., 2014). In a similar vein, qualitative research methods, including focus groups and in-depth interviews, can be considered to provide more in-depth findings for the theoretical development of GPR and residents' support. In addition, the present study acknowledges that the application of the theory (i.e. uncertainty reduction theory) and concept (i.e. GPR) used in this research may not be universally applicable across different cultures. For example, communication patterns and norms can significantly influence how individuals interact and approach uncertainty. In a similar vein, the postponement of the Olympic Games due to the COVID-19 pandemic presents a unique crisis context. This unprecedented situation highlights the need for adaptability in GPR and crisis response strategies in understanding the formation of residents' support. Therefore, we recommend that future research expands the theoretical framework used in this study to various cultural contexts to enhance its explanatory power and validate its applicability.

Lastly, it is worth noting the limitation of sample bias. Factors such as the method of participant selection and the inherent characteristics of online survey respondents may have influenced the results. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalising the findings to the broader population, as the sample may not perfectly represent the diverse perspectives of all residents.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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