

Corporate Social Responsibility and a Drag Racing Attempt in Combatting Unlawful Street Racing

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Abstract—In current business environment, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has become the powerful source for competitive advantage and it became popular among companies to uphold the image and contribute to the success of the organization. This paper intends to investigate how CSR can help in reducing social issues by conducting a drag racing known as *Sprint Test*. This study is based on information gathered thru questionnaires distributed to racers at the race event. In depth interviews with a business owners and local enforcement officer was conducted to clarify the effect of the race event to local community. The importance of CSR as seen through the prism of how social issue such as illegal racing can be reduced and eliminated by having a proper race circuit was established in this study.

Index Terms—Drag racing, corporate social responsibility, business.

I. INTRODUCTION

Conventional sports have long been used in society to stimulus social change through competition, rivalries, player interaction, and fan loyalty. The massive revenues motorsports organizations create opportunities and, perhaps, expectations for these organizations to become more involved within their communities. Over the years, motorsports organizations have gradually increased their involvement in their communities through philanthropy and charitable actions [1]. Many studies support the idea that motorsports organizations have cultural implication in part because of the number of people reached and the celebrity status that is attached to professional athletes. The philanthropy work this organization pursues is consistent with business organizations' engagement in corporate social responsibility as they show true and sincere interest in the well-being of the communities [2].

Literature supports that motorsports organizations assignation in social responsibility can have a powerful impact on society and help positive social change when their motives for these actions are known to the community and they focus on specific social issues [3]. Therefore, if sports are to be used as a ways to deal with social issues, motorsports organizations must first communicate with local government and other agencies to identify on any specific social needs.

While research findings generally demonstrate that the professional sport organizations can generate social benefits, the literature has focused mostly on professional league,

team, and athlete contributions to communities and how those contributions are impacting society [4]. One side of professional sport that often goes unrecognized as a factor in social change is the sport venue. Research supports the importance of location of events as well as consumer loyalty to professional venues [5]. This faithfulness has been tied to repeat presence and has been exposed to have an overall positive impact on consumer perception of the events held at the professional venues [6].

This study seeks to address whether or not professional venues, in combination with events designed for public participation, could be a platform used in inducing social change and ultimately making communities safer through such events.

This study specifically looked at a drag racing event series, titled *Sprint Tests*, held at a professional dragway in the Kuala Trengganu, Peninsular Malaysia. The circuit cost RM12.6 million, located near the Gong Badak Sports Complex, is recognized by the Automobile Association of Malaysia (AAM), and features a 1.35 km-long cub prix circuit and a 950 meter long stretch meant for sprint tests. These events are designed for public participation and target the local community. The purpose of the study was to examine riders' awareness of the event's social responsibility initiatives with *Sprint Test* events and if these initiatives are promoting behavioral changes in riders.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Corporate Social Responsibility

Beforehand discussing ways in which how corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be adapted in professional sport venues to encourage social change, it is vital to identify what activities are considered to be effective in accomplishing CSR goals and objectives. A noticeable list of these activities has yet to emerge from the literature and perhaps might never emerge. [7] argues that "Corporate social responsibility is an ill and incompletely defined concept" (p.10). CSR is defined by the World Business Council of Sustainable Development, as "the commitment of a business to contribute to economic development, working with employees, their families, and the local community to improve quality of life" [8].

B. Social Responsibility in Professional Sport Organizations

A growing body of research on CSR recently has earned the attention of the sport industry. Consideration is now being given to the unique context in which sport operates. Some authors argue that the nature and role CSR plays in

sport organizations may be different than in other industries [9]. Supporting that statement, some researchers claimed that sport, broadly defined, has many unique factors that positively affect the nature of CSR efforts including mass media distribution and communication power, youth appeal, positive health associations, and social communication.

CSR in professional sports may have greater impact on society than other business industries due to its role in society. While there is a limited research on linking of professional sports and CSR, researcher reveal unique elements of professional sport industry that may contribute to the impactfulness of CSR initiatives, one of which is participation and fan loyalty to the organization.

The passion and interest that goes hand-in-hand with professional sports, no matter the team, players, or organization, has led to increased awareness of socially responsible messaging. This increased awareness allows stakeholders to provide greater support for CSR initiatives

C. Illegal Street Racing

This study's focus on a professional sport venue's use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to encourage positive social change through events designed for community involvement. More specifically, the study aimed to assess the venue's attempt to address the issue of illegal street racing. Illegal street racing is a never ending social issue that has gained worldwide status and is linked to unlawful actions that often result in tragedy and injury for both participants and innocent populations [10]. Illegal street racing has even been identified as a road safety problem in research literature [11]. However, this is an issue often overlooked as a social problem that needs to be overcome. The scarcity of research and data on illegal street racing makes it very difficult for law enforcement to effectively address and/or contain it.

Street racing usually involves extreme speeding on open roadways and is illegal in most countries. The Malaysian Highway Authority (LLM) added racing as a determining factor in 2015 in order to more accurately address fatal crashes involving illegal street racing. The Malaysian Institute of Road Safety (MIROS) concluded that, compared with all deadly crashes, street racing fatal accidents were more likely to occur on urban roadways and with risky driving behaviours. The study also concluded that illegal street racing was of greater hazard to the racer and innocent drivers because open roadways include immovable objects, such as street lighting that may add to casualty during these crashes. Therefore, mindfulness of the risks of speeding is highly pertinent to illegal street racing. Opponents of street racing mention that a lack of safety related to sanctioned racing events, as well as legal repercussions arising from incidents, among street racing's problems. The term *street racing* must not be confused with the legal and governed sport of a drag racing.

Researchers found that extreme speeding is identified as one of the most common caused to motor vehicle fatalities, second only to impaired driving [12]. Other studies have identified young males as the main group contributing to collisions involving excessive speeding [13].

The graph indicates that the main factors had caused an accident is Human which >80% for both 2013 and 2014.

Based on analysis, driving above speed limit is the main contributor of these incidents. While as for Surrounding and Vehicle factors had a least significant.

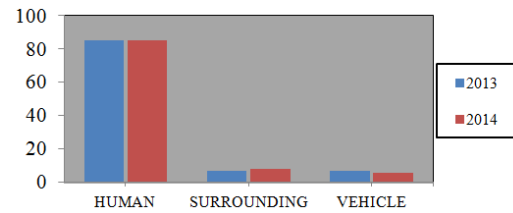


Fig. 1. Breakdown of accident factors.

D. Sprint Test Series

In an effort to combat illegal street racing, a professional dragway in the Peninsular Malaysia such as Jempol Negeri Sembilan and Kuala Trengganu has created a dragracing series unique to this particular venue. The *Sprint Test* series is designed and operated by staff of this professional dragway venue. With the Illegal Street racing on the rise in this local community and on a national level, the dragway motorsports organizations reached out to local law enforcement to initiate the design of an event that would produce a safer community. These dragracing events were designed to offer an alternative to illegal street racing.

A recent interview with the director of the dragway revealed an information on how the dragracing events work. In order to participate in *Sprint Test* events, a person must have a valid driving license and a street legal motor vehicle. With a minimum of RM20 as an entry fee, the racer can make unlimited drag race runs for that day in the same category and similar specifications. Each event is staffed with local law enforcement, as well as staff and volunteers, who check motor vehicles for safety, and retrieve legal documents in order to ensure safe racing. The legal dragracing events run throughout the year twice a month. This long season allows for greater social change capabilities by providing the community with a safer and affordable place for the dragracers competing frequently.

"This dragracing series has had a phenomenal impact on our community in the past three years. We in motorsports see less illegal street racing and more young adults talking about *Sprint Test* events at the dragway. These events have an attraction factor because of the location and affordability (Owner of a motor bike shop, April 16, 2016)."

Local law enforcement indicated that while it is hard to estimate how much illegal street racing has reduced, there has been a drastic decrease in excessive speeding crashes and fatalities in this community over the past several years. There has also been a decreased amount of complaints about an illegal street racing (Law enforcement officer, personal communication, March 2, 2016).

We do not want our young people to race illegally on roads which is dangerous. We are building the circuit to produce professional racers. (State Minister, April 10, 2016)

III. METHODS

A. Participants/Data Collection

Data were collected onsite during the *Sprint Test* series.

Potential survey participants, (riders) were approached and asked to participate in the study. Of the 120 potential survey respondents, 92 completed surveys (n=92) for a 77% return rate. Each rider was approached during the preparation session of the event, and asked to participate in the study. If they agreed to participate, they were given a survey form to be completed. All participants were given the opportunity to complete the survey, which was designed to explore rider awareness of *Sprint Test* events as a means for positive social change within this community. The survey questions were also intended to explore whether or not the participants were engaging in less excessive speeding on open roadways because of *Sprint Test* events.

B. Instrument

The survey was developed based upon information drawn from relevant literature, individual personal communications with local enforcement and venue operators, and a panel of experts. The panel of experts was composed of two dragway professionals, one sport management professional, and one law enforcement agent. The panel reviewed and rated the instrument’s face and content validity. The resulting survey focused on the social impact of the *Sprint Test* events on the local community, specifically exploring participant awareness level of this event series as a safe place to legally race and change of behavior resulting from participation in these events.

C. Analysis and Results

The data collected using the *Sprint Test* survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics to illustrate effectiveness of this event series on positive social change in a community in regards to illegal street racing. All statistical tests utilized IBM SPSS software version 23. The results showed that 69.3% of the respondents indicated they were aware that the *Sprint Test* event offered a safe place to legally race, while 80.0% of racers indicated they were less likely to engage in excessive speeding on open roadways because of the event.

The survey sought to uncover reasons why racers attended these events. The most common reasons racers stated for participating in *Sprint Test* events were, location is near to their stay (67.9%), affordability (62.4%), socialization (57.7%), and bike components test (61.5%). Another interesting finding was 43.6% of the racers surveyed stated they participated in *Sprint Tests* is an effort to safety and stay out of trouble.

TABLE I: REASONS WHY RACERS ATTEND *SPRINT TEST* EVENTS

Reasons	Number of respondent	Percent (%)
Location	53	67.9
Affordability	49	62.8
Socialization	48	61.5
Bike Test	45	57.7
Safety and out of trouble	34	43.6
Winning	18	23.1
Competition	13	23.1
Mrkt Promotions	10	12.8

Each respondent could answer multiple reasons. N=77

The results showed no significant difference on the participant’s age having an effect on participation in the event, levels of awareness regarding the dragway’s social

message, and the participant’s willingness to decrease illegal excessive speeding, in these categories based on age. However, in regards to age, the category of < 20 years old, 84.6% indicated they were aware these events were created to offer a safe place to race. Twenty-one to 30 year old racers indicated 87.1% awareness, with this age group bringing in the highest percent of level of awareness for which *Sprint Test* events. As the age increases, the level of awareness decreases slightly. Although these results were not significantly different they do indicate a trend.

The analysis also showed that 87.5% of 31-40 year olds indicated they would be less likely to engage in the illegal excessive speeding as a result of their participation in the event. The two youngest categories < 21 and 21-30 years old had the lowest agreement in avoiding excessive speeding with 83.3% and 80.6% respectively. As is readily apparent, these data still indicate a high degree of avoidance of excessive speeding across all age groups.

When looking at differences between gender and levels of awareness of *Street Fight* events as a safe place to race, 85.2% of the male population indicated they were aware, while 80% of the female participants were aware as well. As indicated earlier this study also sought information about whether or not racers would engage in less excessive speeding on open roadways because of their involvement in *Sprint Test* events. Analysis of this data revealed similar results with 83.3% of males and 85.7% of females expressing their willingness to avoid excessive speeding because of attending this event.

The survey also asked respondents the frequency and length of their participation in *Sprint Test* events. Analysis revealed 29.5% of participants surveyed had been attending *Sprint Test* events for five or more years. This category represented the highest number of participants surveyed, followed by respondents with two years of participation at 25.6%, and one year of participation at 16.7%. Of the participants of which had indicated racing at Street Fights for five or more years, 48% were between twenty years old to thirty years old. Within the main two age categories, < 20 years old and 21-30 years old, fourteen of the seventy-four participants had attended two years of *Sprint Test* events.

IV. CONCLUSION

Sports teams and sport organizations remain to try to influence social change through competition, rivalries, player interaction, and special sporting events. The *Sprint Test* survey focused on intentions of the professional sport organization as they pertained to participant safety, affordability of legal racing, and community collaboration. The survey also focused on impact the racing series had on influencing positive social change within the community.

Study reveals that illegal street racing is a social problem which has gained global status and is linked to tragedy in both participants and innocent populations. The *Sprint Test* series was designed out of a need to combat this problematic and data from this study indicates that the community is responding in a positive way. Data analysis showed that a majority of the surveyed racers were willing to avoid excessive speeding on open roadways. Corporate social responsibility in professional sports may have a greater opportunity to impact society than other business industries

due to its role within society. In the current study we are able to see what age population is attending as well as the frequency.

Further study is needed in order to make a direct correlation between repeat participation and decreased illegal drag racing. With information revealed by local law enforcement about decreasing excessive speeding citations during the months of *Sprint Test* events, an indirect correlation could be suggested that the more one participates in *Sprint Tests*, the less likely they are to engage in illegal street racing.

A. Implications, Limitations and Future Research

The current study's implications for practitioners include the need for more attention to positive impacts on society resulting from sport corporate social responsibility efforts. This study provides a framework for motorsports organization to follow in order to reach out to their local communities and become involved for the purpose of social change, not profits. It also increases the awareness of illegal drag racing and offer a means by which to decrease this social problem and have a positive social influence on the community. Another implication from this study is the importance of CSR communication to the community.

One of the purposes of this study was to bring about awareness of the important role motorsports organization play in society and if this awareness, in fact, influences positive social change. The researchers perceive the study as successful in that regard, however, there are limitations to address. The study examined a small respondent sample participating in one *Sprint Test* event. Future research could target a much larger number of participants by surveying at multiple race nights. Another population to be examined would be the spectators of *Sprint Test* events. This demographic would have different motivations for attending as well as different perceptions of illegal street racing. Another limitation of this study was the lack of more in-depth information about the racers. Further studies also need to be conducted in order to find direct correlation between racers participation and decrease in illegal street racing citations.

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