

Modelling Sustainable Business Event: Extension of Drivers and Barriers Model

¹Norol Hamiza Zamzuri, ²Khairil Wahidin Awang, ²Yuhanis Abdul Aziz and ³Zaiton Samdin

¹Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
43000 Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

²Faculty of Economics and Management, Universiti,

³Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

Abstract: This study attempts to bring forward the idea of extending the Drivers and Barriers Model. The modification of this model, result themes that emerged from the exploration in the greening process. The theoretical concept emphasized the role of drivers and barriers as predetermined to further process of greening an event. This study attempts to enlarge the scope from previous model in the context of two important themes. Interestingly, this exploration has used two methods of qualitative strategy namely active participative observation and semi-structure interview. Triangulation is used in ensuring the reliability of the information. Meanwhile peer review and interview protocols are two important strategies used in validating the result. Constant comparison method is used as technique in comparing the theme and revealing the most themes and this has rendered further exploration in testing the concept. Further exploration in testing the model is necessary to generalize other contexts of this industry.

Key words: Green event, drivers, barriers, waste management, Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

Greening an event is crucial as there is substantial growth in the demand for organizing events in Malaysia. There have been debates on the role event industry has played as one of the economic contributors to revenue income. Nevertheless, this industry has also been facing challenges for sustaining the impact as a result of organizing events thus, renders is demand for more precautionary activities in ensuring event sustainability. Event industry is exposed to the use of event materials such as study, battery and bottles. These event materials may create an impact to an environment if it is not properly monitored (Zamzuri *et al.*, 2011). The construction of building materials for event venue and the use transportation also demand proper planning among event organizers in avoiding some negative environmental impacts to the environment (Hottle *et al.*, 2015). All these factors have created awareness among event organizers on the importance of implementing a greening event concept or also known as implementing green practices throughout the process of organizing an event (Mair and Jago, 2010). The discussion on green practices are mostly in the area of tourism industry particularly hospitality sector. Only recently studies have looked into green

practices in event management. The discussion on green event began to take roots that focused on the environmental impacts of events. Since 2010, it has started with a popular conceptual model of greening, known as Drivers and Barriers Model (Mair and Jago, 2010). This model is popularly known in describing the green event process (Boijie, 2009). However, previous studies in discussion on the model, delve in qualitative research in which it cannot be generalized to the population. This is mentioned by Mair and Jago (2010) who emphasis the need to test this model and to generalize in the context of event and other geographical areas. Greening an event has rarely been the main focus of research efforts but there have been attempt to promote extensive studies on greening an event (Rittichainuwat and Mair, 2012; Boijie, 2010; Mair and Jago, 2010). Hence, the main objective is to extend Drivers and Barriers Model in understanding event organizers.

Sustainable business event: The concept of sustainable or greening an event was coined from the word sustainability which mean preserving the ecology. In the context of event, the term green event has often been used with the term sustainable or green by several researchers such as (Mair and Jago, 2010) who defined

greening as investment in environmentally friendly facilities and practices. In addition, according to (Zamzuri *et al.*, 2011) the term green event or greening reflects practicing green during the process of organizing an event. A number of studies has attempted to understand the process for improving environmental performance in event industry. This well-known model that describes the greening process established by Mair and Jago (2010).

The model of greening developed by Mair and Jago was aimed to create a general conceptual framework to understand the process of corporate greening. The model underpins the development to enhance greening. This model represents the interconnection between the dimensions that are influential including both the organisational context of the individual firm and the role of the media in setting the agenda for the salience of environmental issues. The model proposes that competitive advantage, image enhancement, supply chain/customer corporate social responsibility policy and consumer demand are significant drivers of greening. The barriers of greening an event include lack of time, lack of resources, lack of knowledge/awareness/skills and operational timeframe. However, this study is a sketchily conceptual and has not been tested in any events. This was mentioned as a limitation and an academic gap of study by Mair and Jago (2010). It was suggested that the model should be tested and involved other event operators. Mair and Laing (2012) apply the Drivers and Barriers Model to festival context and consider the importance of greening to festival organizers. The findings of the study also suggest that competitive advantage, image enhancement, supply chain/customer corporate social responsibility policies and consumer demand are significant drivers of greening. Contradicting the finding by Mair and Jago (2010), the organizational and external environment was less important in music festival context and the presence of eco-champion was found to be significant catalyst. The barriers are lack of finance, lack of support from stakeholders, lack of time, lack of control over venue, lack of split incentive, lack of control over patron behaviour and availability of sustainable suppliers/supplies. However, this study is only focusing on festival event and involves a small number of respondents in this study. This is mentioned as limitation of the study by Zamzuri *et al.* (2011). According to both researchers, this study only involves small sample of event organizers of music festivals. Therefore, not all conclusions drawn may be relevant to all festivals or to other types of events, or even be generalisable across an organisation. It is suggested by Mair and Laing (2012) that future researcher should extend this study in other

geographical areas and interview multiple representatives of event organizers across a broad range of event contexts. Thus, this reveals the academic gap in the study by Mair and Laing (2012) as the demand to extend this model in other geographical area, involve other event operators and event contexts. For this reason, this study explore on the process of event in the context of business event in Malaysia.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study began in an exploration in one event company in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A list of event companies was based on Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCeb) registered under MyCeb. Utilising interview, it observed that 2 companies organized an exhibition event, thus, this did not meet the criteria chosen for event company selection. Due to this, purposive sampling was chosen as the sampling strategy. For this study, several phone calls were made to the companies listed. However, only one event company agreed to be involved as a respondent. Seven companies were not able to give their commitment as they did not meet the criteria of having the experience for organizing a green event. Active participative observation was chosen as the research strategy. As a result 96 h was spent in the company. Fieldnotes and observation methods were used, in addition to strengthen the research finding, semi-structure interviews were used on four event staff in the company. However, as the researcher was also involved as volunteer in this company, it limited the ability of the researcher to do more in-depth interview. Furthermore, the researcher was fully occupied with tasks as volunteer. Therefore, the researcher applied semi-structure interview as the second research strategy. This was to ensure in-depth information revealed during the data collection process. The study end-up with 15 informants for the saturation of a data. Peer review and interview protocol were used to ensure the validity of the result and triangulation was used for the reliability of the data. Atlas-ti was used to assist the segmentation process of the theme. The researcher analysed the data that were collected from the fieldwork by applying constant comparisons method. Bojje (2010) has provided description of the procedures that could be used by qualitative researchers to analyse the data. The constant comparison method compares segments within and across categories. The constant comparison procedure refers to the development of constructs that are linked together by a theory (Merriam, 2009). The aim of this data analysis procedure is to identify the variation that is found within

a phenomenon because each time data is gathered, data collection is temporarily halted and the data is then gathered for analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed an important factor in the process of organizing an event. The role of venue providers in providing green facilities for an event is seen as one of the factors that strengthen the motivation of event organizers in implementing green event concept or greening an event. The greening concept is rendered by the role of venue providers in strengthening the vast development of greening process of an event. Event venue that is occupied with energy efficiency facilities vest the transformation from traditional way of organizing an event to a more sustainable green event concept. This demands full support from venue providers top management as the direction and their commitment for a green leadership behaviour strengthen the establishment of this concept in event industry (Fig. 1).

Apart from the role played by the venue providers, the practices of energy efficiency throughout the process of organizing an event is also deemed important in seeing the role of event organizers in implementing green. This is

especially so during office operation on the use of green energy devices or electrical appliances. Furthermore, the practices of studyless and recycle activities are seen as factors that contribute to green behaviour commitment among event organizers. However, resistance to change is observed among event attendees throughout the researcher’s discussion with the event organizer. Thus, this render green behaviour commitment among event organizers in creating awareness on the importance of practicing green concept or greening during an event. The green behaviour commitment among event organizers is also a part of corporate social responsibility attitude toward preserving the environment. Several green activities practices applied in an organization. In order lead to in creating green attitude awareness or behaviour among event organizers or event staff, several activity-based practices have to be applied in an organization. In the process of organizing an event, there are several elements that need to be highlighted such as green purchasing activities, waste management, energy efficiency, water consumption, sustainable performance, air quality control, safety and health, corporate social responsibility, information technology usage and sustainable orientation. Among all these areas, waste management is observed to be demanding for full

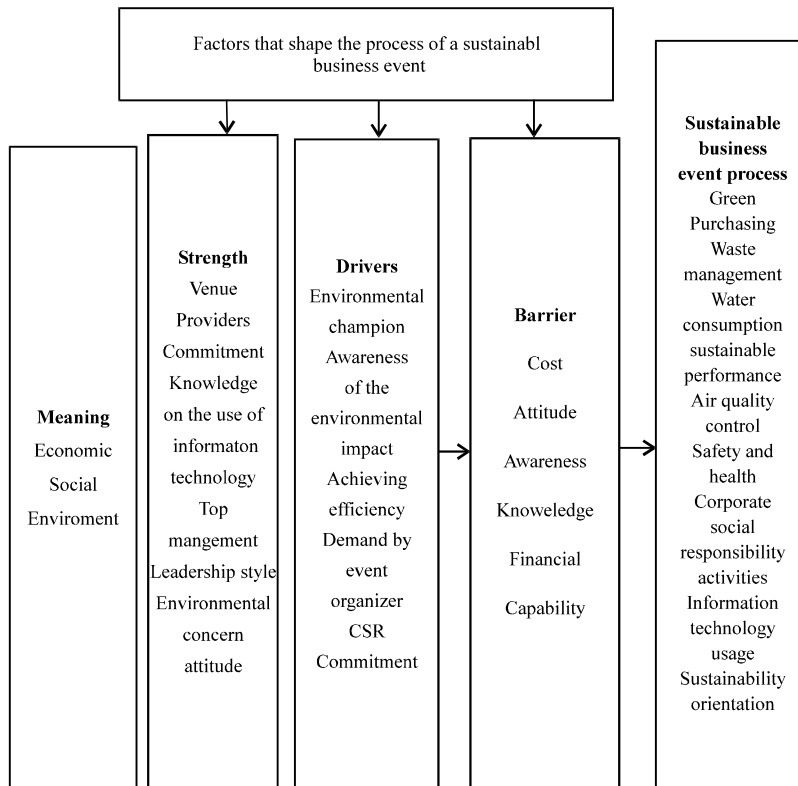


Fig. 1: Sustainable Business Event Model

commitment from event organizers. Interestingly, waste management activities create cycle process of event materials. The use of recycled banting, for example and recycle into a conference bag has become an attraction to another event. This is observed as an important innovation from the use of event materials. Furthermore, wasted food served as assistant to third party in green cycle.

CONCLUSION

Waste management is an important activity for all events, as most of the waste produce such as study, bottles and plastic may creates and damage the ecology system. Thus, several activities or strategies taken by companies, associations and agencies in creating awareness on the importance of reducing the volume waste during business operation is very crucial. However, waste management practices also involve extra cost for office operation. If it is in short term this seen as involving high cost but in contrary, although, in a short term, this also involves long term benefit to the community. This is because, sustainability is seldom seen a fast effect rather it seen more on the long term effect. This study is only limited to business event whereas, there are other events that demand further investigation. Apart from this, the study applied constructivism philosophical assumption in developing the theory.

SUGGESTIONS

The researchers found the environmental concern, the knowledge on the use of information technology and top management's values as factors that consolidate and drive the event managers to organize a sustainable

business event. In contrast, this research has focused on a main city in Malaysia, using the qualitative approach. Therefore, an area of study focusing on a wider scope of generalisation from a Malaysian context entails future research.

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