

WORK IN PROGRESS PAPER

Event Management Knowledge Domains as an Antecedent for Successful Cultural Events in Malaysia

Qistina Donna Lee Abdullah, Faridah Mohd. Nadzar (PhD), and Halifah Abdul Rahman
*Event Management Department, Faculty of Office Management System and Technology,
University Technology MARA, Shah Alam Selangor, Malaysia*
qistinadonnalee@gmail.com

Abstract

Through the global and modern world, event management is fast becoming a developing industry and its contributions towards the economic sectors have been identified and verified through yearly report performance (Getz, 2007). The event industry encompassing seminars, conferences, meetings, exhibitions, incentives, festivals, performances, and many others, is rapidly developing and generate a significant contribution to business and leisure interest.

Malaysia is one of the world's most culturally diverse nations in terms of race, religion, arts, culture and heritage. With a multi-racial society comprising three main races of Malay, Chinese and Indian, diversity is seen in its traditions, customs, religions, cultures and heritage. The promotion and success of these events is a significant contribution to the nation's strategy towards enhancing the quality of life of Malaysians.

Like all branches of management, event management demands the same functions to ensure success. The establishment of Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) by the International EMBOK Executive has earlier identified four key event management knowledge domains such as administration, operations, marketing and risk management which have its own requirement for specialization in event management process (Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2008). In managing success event, the EMBOK framework would provide another clear step towards professional development of event management (Silvers, Bowdin, O'Toole, & Nelson, 2006).

With enhanced regulation, policy and the growth of government sector involvement in staging international or domestic events, the environment has become much more complex and demanding. Realizing the government's mission and plans, this study will investigate the key success factors of managing cultural events and establish key indicators of cultural event management success. Besides, these standards will provide guidelines to managers, executives and officers in charge of respective cultural projects in the government and private sectors in Malaysia.

Keywords: Event Management Body of Knowledge; event management knowledge domains; cultural events; key success indicators

Background of the study

Event management is a rapidly growing industry in the world today. It is an exciting industry that is experiencing tremendous growth as jobs and related economic and social impacts of events lead to high demand for academic and other educational programs throughout the world (Getz, 2002a). The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) as cited in Silvers (2006) endorses event management as one of the faster growing and most important trends in the public relations profession. Silvers (2006) stated that "...the mere fact that in the US there is a special events department located in the White House, as well as Spanish Harlem's largest social service organization, demonstrates the pervasive nature of this emerging industry" (2006, p.188).

Malaysia is one of the world's most culturally diverse nations in terms of race, religion, arts, culture and heritage. With a multi-racial society comprising three main races of Malay, Chinese and Indian, diversity is seen in its traditions, customs, religions, cultures and heritage. Major staging of national yearly events such as *Gawai* Harvest Festival, Mooncake and Lantern Festival, National Day, National Water Festival, and National Craft Day requires identification of key success factors that would facilitate the process of event management. The promotion and success of these events is a significant contribution to the nation's strategy towards enhancing the quality of life of Malaysians. As stated in the Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010, chapter 23, p.468),

This is due to the active involvement of all groups in cultural and arts activities which will contribute towards the total development of the individual, strengthen national unity and enhance the quality of life of Malaysians. In this regard, more concerted efforts will be undertaken with the participation of the private sector to create greater awareness and appreciation of Malaysia's rich cultural heritage. Hence, the strategic thrusts for the Ninth Plan period will be as follows: Inculcating positive cultural values among Malaysians; Enhancing the appreciation of culture, arts and heritage among Malaysians at all levels; Conserving and preserving tangible and intangible heritage; Developing the craft industry and promoting craft products for the world market; Developing the creative cultural industry; and Strengthening capacity building programmes to ensure continuous and sustainable development of culture, arts and heritage.

In view of the important role of event management in the government sector, the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture (MICC) Malaysia has established the Event Management Department to plan and manage events at the national level.

Like all branches of management, event management demands the same functions to ensure success. The establishment of Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) by the International EMBOK Executive has earlier identified four key event management knowledge domains such as administration, operations, marketing and risk management which have its own requirement for specialization in event management process (Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2008). In managing success event, the EMBOK framework would provide another clear step towards professional development of event management (Silvers, Bowdin, O'Toole, & Nelson, 2006). According to Watt (1998) event management requires meticulous organizing, planning, motivating, communicating, creating, controlling and problem solving. Management of the arts is related to four functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling (Byrnes, 1999). In addition to the four elements of management, several other concepts identified as particularly relevant to event management with its peculiar stresses and strains are "personal management skills such as decision making, team building, delegation, leadership, staff appraisal and training, authority, responsibility of power, crisis management and problem solving" (p.26). By and large, in every nature of business the main function of management is elementary and

similar. In any situations, a manager must know what product to manage before he or she can defeat any consequences in management. (Drucker, 1980).

With enhanced regulation, policy and the growth of government sector involvement in staging international or domestic events, the environment has become much more complex and demanding. Realizing the government's mission and plans, this study will investigate the key success factors of managing cultural events and establish key indicators of cultural event management success. Besides, these structure will provide guidelines to managers, executives and officers in charge of respective cultural projects in the government and private sectors in Malaysia.

Statement of problem

World business is moving towards the accomplishment of business objectives through separate projects (Allen, O'Toole, Harris, & McDonnell, 2005). According to Allen et al (2005) again, "due to the changing nature of modern business, products and services now have to be managed as projects as a response to this change" (p.278). O'Toole and Mikolaitis (2002) noted in Allen et al (2005) that the expansion of the event industry is a result of this change. By and large, "events and festivals can be seen as a response to a constantly changing business and cultural environment and as projects which they can import increasingly pervasive management methodology" (Allen et al, 2005, p.278).

Several problems are reported to occur due to the failure of event managers in utilizing resources and facilities in managing events. Problems related to the weakness of promotion, lack of creativity in organizing event and management planning were reported on the 2009 Traditional Song Competition event. The Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture (MICC) reported problems in delivering this event especially from the management perspectives (www.bharian.com.my, retrieved on July 22, 2009). Another issue of internal sources gathered through interview conducted on August 3, 2009, with the Head of Assistant Secretary in the Event Management Department MICC, reported lack of management expertise in managing event. Allen et al 2005 stated that "one solution in management used by major events is to appoint an artistic director and an event project manager. The former represents the innovative and creative aspects of the event content, while the project manager looks after the management responsibilities" (p.302).

A final issue rose in Sunday News, reported that "there is no indicator for achievement standards in the arts and cultural sectors in order to strengthen the production quality" (www.bharian.com.my, retrieved on July 22, 2009). According to Carlsen, 2000, "the issue of service quality and standards has become increasingly prominent in events tourism, yet professional standards remain difficult to implement at the event operational level" (p.117). Carlsen added that "one means of ensuring the quality of event experiences for visitors is the introduction of accreditation for event organizations involved in event production, management and delivery" (p.117).

All these issues seem to point towards the need for a list of factors that can contribute to effective event management and ultimately develop a set of key success indicators for cultural events in Malaysia. This need makes this study most pertinent, that is to determine the key factors of managing events and determine its relationship with event management success.

Aims and objectives of the research

The aim of this study is to investigate the key success factors in managing arts and cultural heritage events under the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture (MICC) and cultural agencies affiliated under this ministry, and Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) event management companies.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify issues in managing events based on EMBOK management domains; administrative, operations, marketing and risk management in five (5) government cultural agencies, thirteen (13) government state offices under MICC and fifteen (15) SME event management companies
2. To recognize key success factors in managing cultural events in Malaysia
3. To discover the relationship between dimensions of event management domains and success.
4. To establish the successful cultural events management structure

Research Questions

In order to answer the research objectives, the following research questions are developed.

1. What are the current management strategies used in conducting events in the MICC , cultural agencies and SME event management companies?
2. What are the priorities in managing cultural events?
3. What are the key success factors in managing cultural events by the MICC state offices, MICC cultural agencies and event management companies?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the administration of event management and cultural event management success?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the operation of event management and cultural event management success?
6. Is there a significant relationship between the marketing of event management and cultural event management success?
7. Is there a significant relationship between the risk management of event management and cultural event management success?
8. Is there a significant relationship between expertise as a moderator between event management domain and successful cultural event?
9. What are the most influential predictors of cultural event management success?
10. What are the criterions of event management success?

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses are needed to establish the relationship between variables and to analyze the significant of relationships occurred between variables. Therefore, the assumptions of outcome through analysis between variables are stated as follows:

- H_O1: There is no significant relationship between administration of cultural event management and successful cultural event.
- H_A1: High emphasis on Administration in cultural event management will lead to a successful cultural event.
- H_O2: There is no significant relationship between operation of cultural event management and successful cultural event.
- H_A2: High emphasis on Operations in cultural event management will lead to a successful cultural event.
- H_O3: There is no significant relationship between Marketing of cultural event management and successful cultural event.
- H_A3: High emphasis on Marketing in cultural event management will lead to a successful cultural event.
- H_O4: There is no significant relationship between Risk Management of cultural event management and successful cultural event.
- H_A4: High emphasis on Risk Management in cultural event management will lead to a successful cultural event.
- H_O5: The dimensions of event management domains do not have an influence on success of cultural event.
- H_A5: The dimensions of event management domains have an influence on success of cultural event.
- H_O6: There is no significant relationship of Expertise as a moderator between Event Management Knowledge Domains and successful cultural event.
- H_A6: High emphasis on Expertise as a moderator between Event Management Knowledge Domains and successful cultural event.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework derived from the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) which originally constructed by O'Toole (1999) in his Masters thesis work at the University of Sydney comparing project management methodology with the management of events and festivals. "The intention of the International EMBOK which comprises of event management educators and practitioners is to create a framework of the knowledge and processes that are used in the management of events that may be customized to meet the needs of various cultures, governments, education programs, and organizations", (International EMBOK executive, 2006, p.6). By and large, this study is adapting the EMBOK model as independent variables in the research framework.

EMBOK model is based on three dimensions that relate to the data, phase, and process dimensions of project management. The illustration of EMBOK framework is shown as figure 1 below:

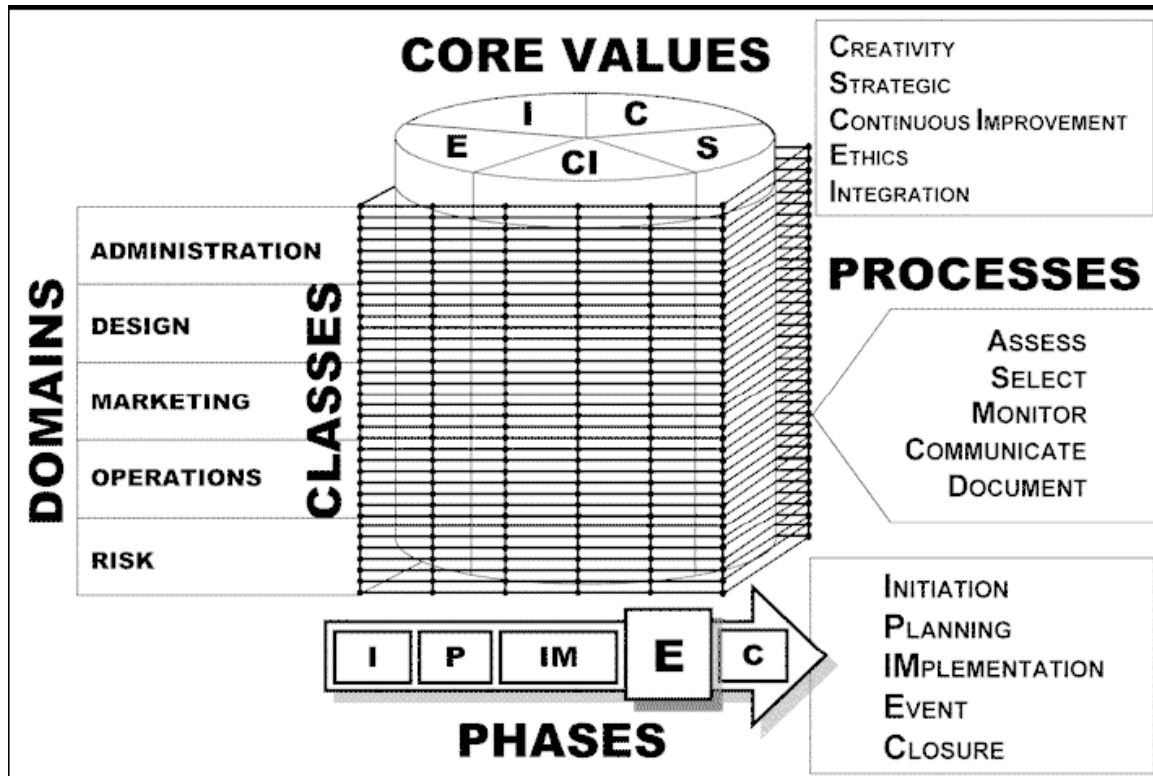


Figure 1: EMBOK Model

The knowledge domain with subcategories illustrates the grouping of tasks and responsibilities of management (Silvers et al, 2006, p.193). Hence, this study will concentrate on the knowledge domain category in the EMBOK framework. Four knowledge domains have been selected as an independent variables based on the earlier conceptual framework by O'Toole (1999) which are the administration, marketing, operations and risk management.

The dependent variables were developed in the preliminary stage of conceptual framework. In the preliminary stage, initial development of exploratory survey instrument was conducted by using open-ended questions to selected event management experts. The event experts were selected based on Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre Preferred Event Organisations and suppliers that usually handle events organized at their venue. Data was collected through telephone interviews and email to find out the list of successful event management indicators. From this survey, data were collected and analyzed through a process called "content analysis" (Singh et al, 2006). The finding which consists of four variables declared as Return on Objectives (ROO), Customer Satisfaction, International Status, and Creativity, are employed as the dependant variables in the research framework.

The Expertise has been indicated as a moderating factor. Allen et al, 2008, describe expertise in job analysis "defining a job in terms of specific tasks and responsibilities and identifying the abilities, skills and qualifications needed to perform that job successfully" (p.237). This moderating factor has also been an issue in event management project in the government department especially in the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture. Therefore, expertise is an essential factor to be analyzed in this study by looking at the significant as a moderator in the conceptual framework.

The illustration of the research framework is shown in figure 2 below:

(IV) Event Management Knowledge Domains

(DV) Successful Cultural Event

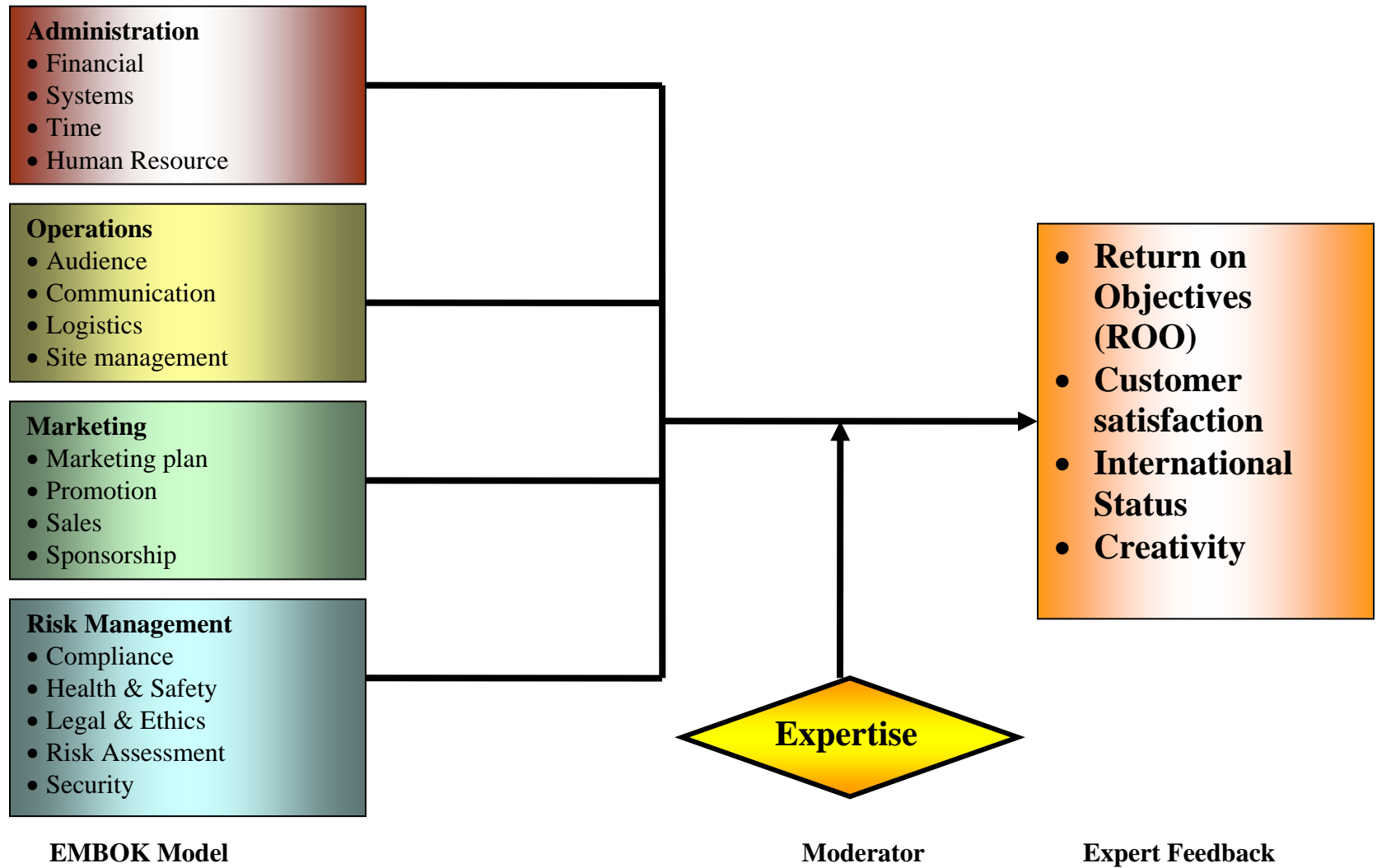


Figure 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for this study employed the survey research which classified into two categories: descriptive and exploratory research. As stated by Rani (2004), “descriptive surveys basically inquire into the status quo. Whereby they attempt to measure what exists without questioning why it exists. Rani added that “exploratory surveys go beyond collecting data on variables, by attempting to explain the relationships among variables” (p.48). As event management is part of leisure and tourism area, therefore as mentioned by Veal (2006) “since leisure and tourism are relatively new fields of study there is a need to map the territory. Much of the descriptive research in the field might therefore be described as Exploratory; it seeks to discover, describe or map patterns of behaviour in areas or activities which have not previously been studied” (p.3).

The determination of this study is to provide standard guidelines on managing successful cultural events in Malaysia by scrutinizing the relationship between the event management knowledge domains and successful cultural event indicators. The present study was design as nationwide survey as its population. It is correlation that acquires to determine the relationship between event management knowledge domains and successful cultural event.

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for this study is an aggregate list of directors, assistant directors and officers of all states offices of Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture (MICC) and the cultural agencies under this ministry was obtained from the MICC website, www.kpkk.gov.my and list of SME event management companies was acquired from SME Info Portal, <http://secure.smeinfo.com.my> . The SME Info Portal listed down all directories of event management companies registered under SME category.

Population

The population of significance for this study is thirteen (13) MICC state offices and five (5) cultural agencies affiliated under MICC, and fifteen (15) SME event management companies based in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. A total of 33 offices and companies were identified as a population for this study.

Sampling Technique

“A sample is a subset of the population. It comprises some members selected from the population” (Sekaran, 1992, p.226). This study will employ the probability sampling which refers to Singh et al (2006), “in probability sampling, each and every member in the population has an equal and same chance of being selected” (p.123). And under this probability sampling, it employs proportionate stratified random sampling. According to Sekaran, “once the population has been stratified in some meaningful way, a sample of members or subjects can be drawn from each stratum can be either proportionate or disproportionate to the number of elements in the stratum” (1992, p.232).

Sample Size

The population of this study is consists of 180 respondents which are sixty-five (65) respondents from MCIC's state offices, twenty-five (25) respondents from MCIC's agencies (Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation, National Department of Heritage, National Culture and Arts Department, Palace of Culture and National Art Gallery) and ninety (90) respondents from SME event management companies. The determining of sample size for research activities based on number of population 180 is equivalent to 123 sample size established by Krejcie and Morgan, 1970.

Therefore in this study, the proportion of sample size is shown as figure 3 below:

Organization	Number of sample	%	Disproportionate number of sample
Government MICC	65	36	44
Cultural Agencies	25	14	17
SME Event Companies	90	50	62
Total	180	100	123

Figure 3: Proportion of sample size

Unit of Analysis

The unit analysis will be the employees working under the organization of thirteen (13) MICC state offices nationwide, five (5) cultural agencies, and fifteen (15) SME event companies. The employees are placement under the post of Directors, Assistant Directors and Officer's level under the government sector and agencies, meanwhile for the SME event companies, the positions are the Managers, Assistant Managers and Executive's level only.

Reliability and Validity

This research will design a new set of survey instrument, therefore the reliability and validity of this instrument will be determined using the factor analysis. Pallant (2005) declared that "factor analysis is used extensively by researchers involved in the development and evaluation of tests and scales" (p.172). In this study the event management knowledge domains will be referred as the evaluation of test and scales. According to Pallant again, "the scale developer starts with a large number of individual scale items and questions and, by using factor analytic techniques, they can refine and reduce these items to form a smaller number of coherent subscales which is more manageable" (p.172). Rani, 2004 concurred with Pallant on factor analysis description.

On the other hand, determining the reliability of a scale is needed by employing the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Pallant (2005) affirmed that "one of the most commonly used indicators of internal consistency is Cronbach's alpha coefficient which ideally of a scale should be above .7, whereby the Cronbach's alpha values are, however, quite sensitive to the number of items in the scale (p. 90).

Significance of study

To ensure that cultural events organized by the government sector is well established and as a source of income to the country, therefore the establishment of event management structure based on key success indicators would give greater impact and help the event organizers as their main reference. Event organizer especially in the government sector need to be

guided with substantial findings and rich pool of information regarding the success factors, as this knowledge is significantly correlated with the outcome of every event.

As this study is apparently the first attempt to investigate the key success indicators in managing cultural event in Malaysia whereby the end product will be the establishment of event management structure, therefore this study may provide a useful launching pad for further research in this area of interest. The findings of this research could provide some form of empirical data for future research in this area.

The construction of event management guidelines will be significant to the MICC especially to the Department of Event Management, the MICC state offices, the cultural agencies under the MICC, Department of Standards Malaysia in terms of establish new data and information, Meetings Incentives Conventions and Exhibition (MICE) industry, academicians, public and private universities and colleges, students, future researchers and the event management industry.

REFERENCES

- Allen, J., O'Toole, W., Harris, R. & McDonnell, I. (2008). *Festival & Special Event Management* (4th ed.). Queensland: John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd.
- Allen, J., O'Toole, W., McDonnell, I., Harris, R., (2005). *Festival and Special Event Management* (3rd ed.). Australia: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
- A.J.Veal., (2006). *Research Methods for leisure and tourism: A practical Guide* (3rd ed.). England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Ayob, N. (2000). *Trends of festivals and special events in Malaysia*. Retrieved Mac 12, 2009, from <http://www.perpun.net.my/myto/resindex1.php?df1=author&rt=norazirah+ayob&ph1=%25&df3=title&std=ASC&Search=Search>
- Benton, J.R., & DiYanni, R., (2002). *Arts and culture: An introduction to the humanities*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Byrnes, W.J., (1999). *Management in the arts* (2nd ed.). USA: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Carlsen, J., 2000. *Events Industry Accreditation in Australia*. Event Management Vol.6, pp. 117-121, 2000. USA.
- Druncker, P.F., (1980). *Managing in turbulent times*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Getz, D. (2002a). *Event Studies and event management: On becoming an academic discipline*. Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 9(1), 12-23.
- Getz, D. (2007). *Event Studies Theory, research and policy for planned events*. Great Britain: Elsevier Ltd.
- Helde, A., Jago, L., & Deery, M. (2002). *Special events research during 1990-2001: key trends and issues*. Conference proceedings of events and place making 2002. Sydney : Australia Centre for Event Management.
- <http://secure.smeinfo.com.my>. Retrieved January 12, 2010
- Krejcie, R.V., & Morgan, D.W., (1970). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. Educational and Psychological Measurement. 1970, 30, 607-610
- Misfar, Z. (2009). *Fragmen: Tanggungjawab stesen TV, radio semarak seni dan budaya bangsa*. Berita Harian Online. Retrieved July 22, 2009, from http://www.bharian.com.my/current_News/BH/Wednesday/Hip/2009

- Ninth Malaysia Plan (2006-2010). Chapter 23, p.468, www.epu.com.my
- O'Toole.W.J., (2002). *Towards the Integration of Event Management Best Practice by the Project Management Process*. Retrieved July 26, 2009, from http://www.personal.usyd.edu.au/~wotoole/conf_paper.htm.
- Pallant. J., (2005). *SPSS Survival Manual: a step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS* (2nd ed.). NSW: Allen & Unwin.
- Rani, H.O.,(2004). *Economic and Business Research For Malaysian Students*. Tanjung Malim: UPSI.
- Sekaran. U.,1992. *Research Methods for Business: A skill Building Approach* (2nd ed.). USA: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Silvers. J. R., Bowdin. G. A. J., O'Toole. W. J., & Nelson. K. B., (2006). *Towards an International Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK)*. Journal Event Management, Vol.9, 185-198, USA
- Silvers, J.R., (2004). *Professional Event Coordination*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Singh, R.,Chan, Y.F., Sidhu,G.K.,(2006). *A comprehensive guide to writing a research proposal*. Selangor: Venton Publishing (M) Sdn. Bhd.
- A.J.Veal., (2006). *Research Methods for leisure and tourism: A practical Guide* (3rd ed.). England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Watt, D.C., (1998). *Event management in leisure and tourism*. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- www.kpkk.gov.my. Retrieved January 12, 2010