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## Extending Drivers and Barriers Model of Green Event

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### Abstract

The increase in demand to organize business event triggers the exploration of this study in understanding the drivers of event organizers in organizing a green event in Malaysia. The understanding of these factors is important due to the demand of implementing green concept during an event among international event organizers. Thus, for this reason, the researcher has applied an exploratory study with 15 event practitioners involves in organizing business event in Malaysia. The results show that environmental commitment, commitment to promote corporate social responsibility practice, awareness to reduce environmental impact and awareness to reduce environmental impact drive the organizers commitment to apply green concept during their event are the drivers of organizing a green event in Malaysia. This study is only limited to business event in the context of Malaysia; therefore, it is suggested that future study should explore other types of event and other geographical areas.

**Keywords:** Green Event, Drivers, Organizing Event, Sustainable, Business Event, Barriers

### Introduction

The term green event is defined as the implementation of green practices during an event (Zamzuri, Awang, & Samdin, 2011). This term relates to the concept of environmental sustainability in the explanation of understanding the meaning. Environmental sustainability is one of the dimensions of sustainability (Musgrave, 2009). This term has been used by several researchers namely Baker (2006); Koukiasa, (2011); as well as Zhu and Sarkis (2005). These researchers highlight that the term sustainability can be used to illustrate on the meaning of green or environment, and also highlights the use of three important pillars in event management. The three pillars are economy, social and environment (Musgrave, 2009). However, it seems that there is lack of discussion on environmental sustainability especially on the issues involved throughout the process of green event (Mair & Jago, 2010). Thus, this is especially so in understanding the demand of attending a green event (Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012). For this reason, in order to understand the demand among event attendees, it is advisable that further research should explore on the drivers

among event organizers in organizing a green event. Before further exploration on the factors, it is vital to understand the need to organize a green event.

Organizing a business event involves innumerable materials and facilities utilized at the location, for example, the convention centre (Whitfield & Dioko, 2011). This indirectly triggers researchers into eventually studying environmental impact caused by paper, aluminium and bottles (Zamzuri, 2011; Mohindra, 2008; Jones 2010). The use of event materials such as paper, vertical posters or *buntings* and banners may produce negative environmental impact if these materials are not properly managed. Rittichainuwat and Mair (2012) have highlighted this and according to them, there are several environmental issues rendered from organizing a business event. In relation to the negative environmental impact from the growth of the business event sector in Malaysia, there is a lack of empirical evidence on such issues (Zamzuri et al., 2011). One of the reasons is that the business event sector only recently attracts the government's attention due to the increased demand in organizing business events. The increased number of business meetings held in Malaysia is evident based on the number of business events from 2003 to 2009. There was approximately 132 per cent increase from 2003 until 2009. In terms of the number of meetings hosted from 2009 to 2010, the figure increased from 96 meetings in 2009 to 119 meetings in 2010 (Malaysian Convention and Exhibition Directory, 2013). As there is a growth of demand in organizing a business event and the possibility of event materials may create negative impact. Therefore, it is important to apply green event concept during its event's operation.

Mair and Jago (2010) have found out that stakeholder's pressure becomes the motivating factor for organizing a sustainable business event. Pressure can also be from secondary and primary stakeholders (Reid, 2006, cited in Reid, 2011, p.12). These pressures lead organizations to make commitments regarding sustainable development in the form of policies, strategic plans and implementation of environmental management. However, among these stakeholders little is known on the pressure from business event attendees who demand for a sustainable business event (Mair & Jago, 2010; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012). Therefore, a question arises on whether business event attendees create some pressure in demanding for a sustainable event at a convention centre. This issue attracts the attention of Rittichainuwat and Mair (2012), who reveal that business event attendees are interested in attending a green event, but are not enthusiastic to pay more to attend a green event. For this reason, both researchers have suggested that future research should focus more on business event attendees. It appears that there is a demand to understand better each of the business event stakeholders. This is because the demand of attending or organizing a sustainable event depends on the commitment of event attendees in attending a sustainable business event.

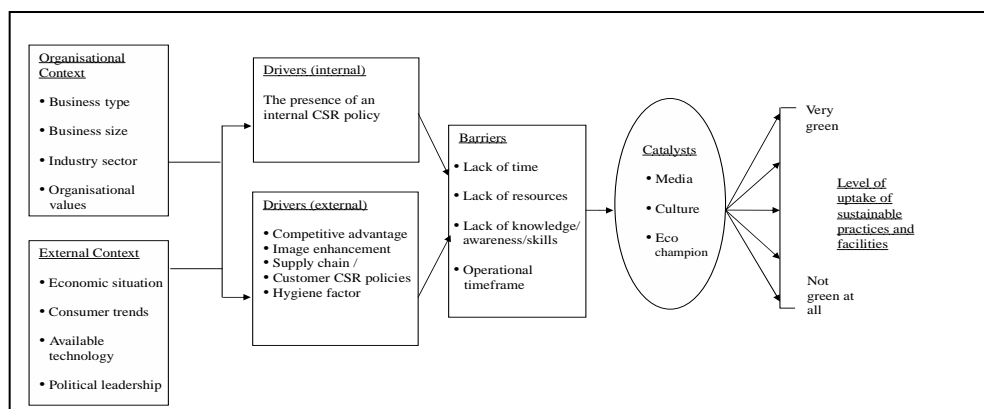
The role of business event stakeholders in driving the process of organizing a sustainable event cannot be disputed because organizing a sustainable event demands full commitment from business event stakeholders (Ogden & Mccorriston, 2007). This commitment is further delineated along the line of individual business event stakeholder. This is supported by Hede (2007), who states that organizing an event involves several business event stakeholders namely event organizers, venue providers, food and beverage suppliers and transport providers.

## Literature Review

The discussion on the involvement of several business events stakeholders has been discussed in Mair and Jago (2010). Both authors have developed Drivers and Barriers Model which discussed the drivers and barriers of organizing a sustainable business event. It shows that the drivers are divided according to internal and external drivers. The internal driver is the presence of an internal CSR policy and the external drivers are competitive advantage, image enhancement, supply chain, customer CSR policies and hygiene factor. The barriers are the lack of time, resources, knowledge, awareness, skills and operational frame. This model also shows that there are organizational context namely business type, business size, industry sector and organizational values and external context such as economic situation, consumer trends, available technology and political leadership are seen as the influence to the drivers. It appears from this model that the catalysts of organizing a green event are media, culture and eco champion. However, there is lack of information on the role of business event stakeholders in the process of organizing a sustainable business event (Mair & Jago, 2010) and both authors have revealed that researchers are not focused in understanding the process of organizing a green event. Therefore, the aim of this study will explore the process of organizing a green event by discussing the meaning in the context of sustainable business event among event practitioners. This is because there is an argument on the meaning of sustainable in the context of event management (Koukiasa, 2011).

The discussion on the involvement of several business events stakeholders was discussed in Mair and Jago (2010). Both author have developed Drivers and Barriers Model which discussed on the drivers and barriers of organizing a sustainable business event. Refer Table 2.1 on the illustration of Drivers and Barriers Model.

**Table 2. 1: The Drivers and Barriers Model**



*Note:* The Drivers and Barriers model  
(Source: Mair & Jago, 2010)

The model of greening developed by Mair and Jago (2010) aimed to create a general conceptual framework to understand the process of corporate greening. The model represents the interconnections between the dimensions that are influential and also includes 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 advantages, image

enhancement, supply chain/customer corporate social responsibility policies and consumer demand are significant drivers of greening. The barriers of greening an event are lack of time, lack of resources, lack of knowledge/awareness/skills and operational timeframe. However, this study is conceptual and is not tested in any events. This was mentioned as a limitation and an academic gap of study by Mair and Jago (2010). The academic gap in this study is that this model should be tested and involved other event operators. Mair and Laing (2012) apply the Mair and Jago to festival context and consider the importance of greening to festival organizers. The findings of this study also suggest that competitive advantage, image enhancement, supply chain/customer corporate social responsibility policies and consumer demand are significant drivers of greening. In contradicting to the finding in 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 still only focusing on festival event and involves a small number of respondents in this study. This is mentioned as a limitation of the study in Laing and Mair (2012).

According to both authors, this study only involves a small sample of event organizers of music festivals and only one individual from each festival was interviewed rather than multiple representatives. 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 Laing and Mair (2012) that future researchers 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 Laing and Mair (2012) as the demand to extend this model in other geographical areas, involve other event operators and event contexts. For this reason, this study explores the process of event in the context of business events in Malaysia.

In order to achieve the aim of this study, the researcher applied constructivist philosophical assumptions as a guide in the exploration of this study.

## **Methodology**

The qualitative approach is the most appropriate method for gathering in-depth information, as it is suitable for a study that produces richness of data (Merriam, 2009). In-depth information provides wholesome understanding of the process involved in organizing an event. The understanding of the drivers would assist several business event practitioners in developing a mechanism for organizing a sustainable business event. Reid (2011) stated that event practitioners include venue providers, event organizers, policy makers and customers. However, event organizers were the focus of this research. The first rationale for choosing a case study as this research inquiry is because it permits a researcher to explore programs, events, activities, processes, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2009). Yin (2009) prefers case study as a unit of analysis because the unit of analysis is a component that is related to the fundamental problem of this study. The researcher analysed the data that were collected from the fieldwork by applying the constant comparisons method. Boije (2010) has provided a 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. Frequently, new codes and categories are found and new questions might arise based on these findings. All these outcomes are considered as temporary results as this ongoing process that would occur until there is no new insight found from the development of categories (Boije, 2010). This is also known as a saturation point and the researcher would stop when the researcher reach the saturation point. The saturation point is where there is a redundant at the primary criterion (Lincoln & Guba, 1995; cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 80). The results from constant comparison are developed into theoretical models that cover the research issue (Boije, 2010).

The validity of the information is certified through internal validity or also known as triangulation. According to Merriam (2006), triangulation is also used for validating the information. Apart from this, members check or respondent validation and interview protocol was used in validating the information provided in this research. As mentioned previously interview protocol implies a set of procedures and queries that are applied and asked during an interview; and members check or respondent validation is used to reduce the bias (Merriam, 2009; Yin (2011). The reliability of this research also lies on triangulation technique. The discussions on reliability have been debated by scholars such as Creswell (2012), Yin (2009) and Merriam (2006). These authors have their views on the use of the triangulation method as a strategy in ensuring the reliability of the information.

The informants information is listed in Table 2

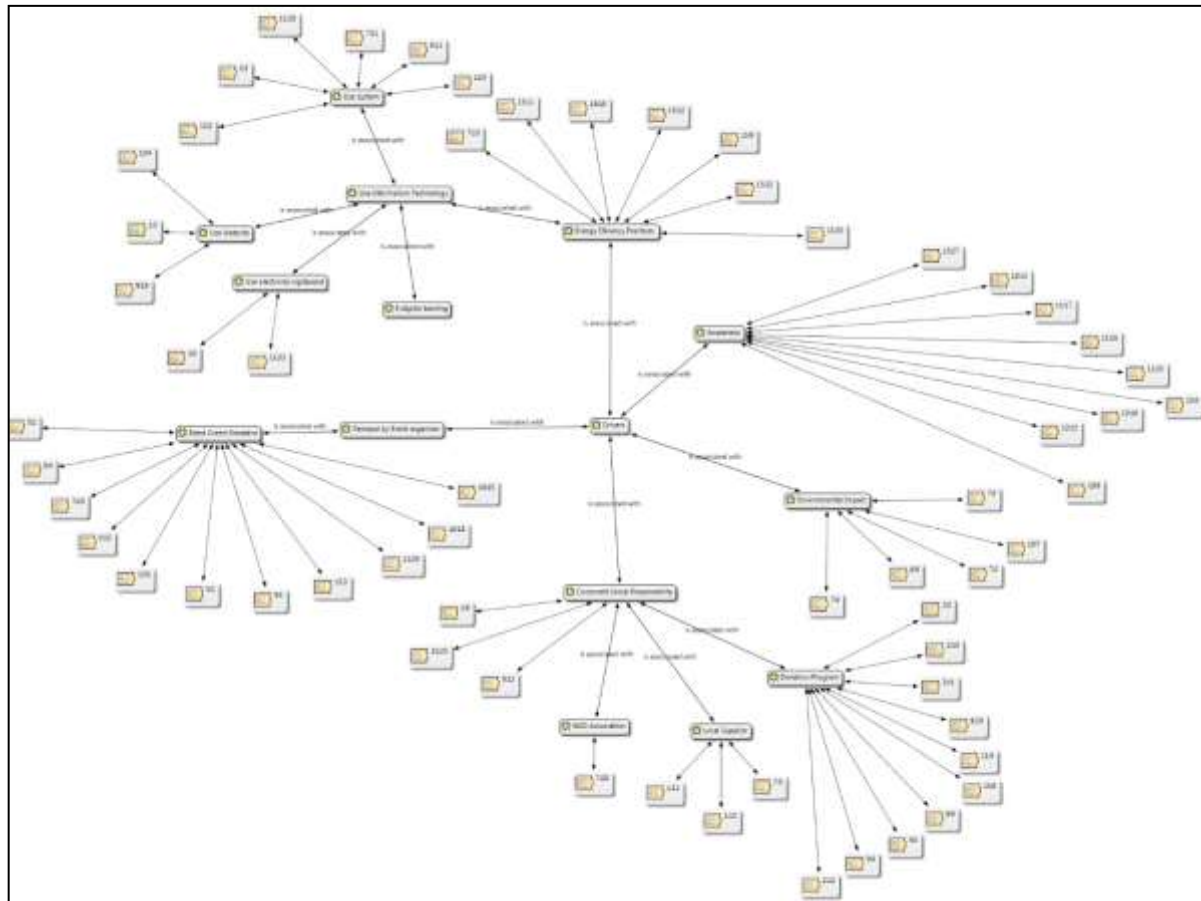
Person's code	Position	Company
P1	Event Manager	C
P2	Event Manager	D
P3	Event Manager	E
P4	Event Manager	F
P5	Event Manager	G
P6	Event Manager	H
P7	Event Manager	I
B1	Convention Centre Manager	J
A1	Director	A
B2	Convention Centre Manager	K
B3	Convention Centre Manager	L
B4	Convention Centre Manager	M
B5	Convention Centre Manager	N
B6	Convention Centre Manager	O
B7	Convention Centre Manager	P

Atlati qualitative data analysis software was used to identify the codes and themes. Atlati handle data that keep track of all data and it is save in a container called hermeneutic unit or HU. Atlati HU can be understood as a container which holds everything that need to be interpreted such as quotes, code, words, notes, memos links, code families and super codes (Friese, 2012).

The originality highlighted in this study is based on the use of quotations and references that acknowledge the informants involved in this research and by citing publications, ideas or concepts belonging to other researchers. Yin (2011), p. 50 has mentioned that 'original' means that the study should be the researcher's own endeavour, using his own ideas, words and data. Therefore, the originality of this research is based on several methods that differentiate this research from previous researches. This is because, previous research such as that by Mair and Jago (2010), has applied qualitative methods that involved five event's organizers. However, in this research, I applied qualitative analysis through active participative observation to investigate the process of a sustainable business event and involved 15 event's practitioners namely event's organizers, venue provider, association and supplier.

The exploration using theoretical reviews and in-depth analysis of the process of organizing a sustainable event has led me to propose a few recommendations. It suggested that the awareness can be created through education that has to begin in early childhood and it is a lifelong educational process. The implementation of several education policies that emphasize the issue of preserving the environment would be important factors in creating awareness among society, which ultimately ensures economic and societal development.

Apart from that, the originality of this research is substantiated with the introduction of the meaning of a "sustainable business event", which stressed on three important pillars in event management, namely social, economic and environmental aspects, throughout the process of organizing a sustainable business event. This was compared with previous studies by Mair and Jago (2010) as well as Rittichiniwat and Mair (2012) that had only highlighted the environmental perspective.



## Result and Discussion

Being an environmental champion is an important factor that contribute to green commitment among event organizers. This is because, it is incorporated into the greening process of an event is indicative of modifying the existing event cycle by adopting green practices throughout the event process. Apart from being an environmental champion, the commitment among event organisers is important to ensure the green practices among event organizers. The issue of practising green is discussed as one of the corporate social responsibility strategies among event practitioners. This is observed as one of the driving factors among event practitioners that culminate in the application of green practices during an event. This is mentioned by Lloyd et al. (2008) who have discussed the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the context of tourism.

Event organizers claim that this provides benefits to the community. The benefit is in disseminating knowledge to the community. It appears as one of the factors that shape the process of a green event is through creating awareness by disseminating knowledge about the environmental impact and this indirectly is one of the practices that promote corporate social responsibility. It is concluded that one of the driving factors shapes the process of a green event is the promotion of corporate social responsibility and this actually indirectly leads to ensuring social sustainability among event practitioners.



Apart from the social development, practising green during an event was emphasized in the economic performance. The discussion on cost and money by these event organizers indirectly highlight the economic dimension. This is because, cost, which are the expenses involved throughout the business activity; and money, being the monetary value, are two important elements that measure the revenue of a business. Thus, the business revenue measures the economic performance (Tassiouplus, 2010).

### **Conclusion**

There was awareness among event organizers in implementing green during an event. The researcher observed from the tone and gesture of the informant in expressing their feelings and views about the assimilation of green practices during event. As she mentioned although they advise the customer, the green practices still depend on the demand from the customers. Therefore, this indicates that although there is awareness among event organizers, the demand on green practices is still depended on the customer. Based on the discussion on the driver that led to sustainable practices during business events, I concur that there have been several factors or drivers that shape the process of a sustainable business event. The first factor highlighted from the above discussion was being an environment champion by becoming the company that initiated the idea of applying green during an event. The second and third factors were created from the commitment to promote corporate social responsibility and the awareness to reduce environmental impact. The fourth factor was awareness to reduce environmental impact and lastly to achieve efficiency.

It is revealed that the demand to apply sustainable concept during an event becomes the fifth factor. There was a green commitment by event organizers, but this commitment depended on the demand from customers because to ensure the success of implementing green practices during an event, it was vital to determine the customer's demand. One of the reasons is because, there is still an argument about the cost of applying green practices during an event.

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. 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 focuses 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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