

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**EXPLORING SOCIO-ECONOMIC
IMPACT ASSESSMENT
INDICATORS FOR MUSICAL
EVENTS IN SARAWAK: A LOCAL
STAKEHOLDERS' BASED APPROACH**

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ABSTRACT

Acclaimed as the "Musical State" by National Geographic, Sarawak has firmly established itself as a prominent hub for music tourism through the successful organisation of various high-profile musical events. Flagship festivals such as the Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF), the Borneo Jazz Festival and the Sarawak International Festival of Music and Arts (SIFMA), organised by the Sarawak Tourism Board (STB), have positioned Sarawak as a leader in music tourism on both national and international platforms. This research investigates the socio-economic impacts of these musical events on local stakeholders and develops indicators to measure these impacts. A qualitative research methodology was adopted, involving semi-structured interviews with 12 purposively selected stakeholders from government agencies, event organisers and local community representatives in Kuching and Miri. The findings demonstrate that while musical events contribute significantly to local economic development, cultural preservation, and community engagement, they also present challenges related to environmental sustainability and equitable benefit distribution. The study introduces the Musical Event Impact Assessment Indicator, a tool designed to evaluate the extent to which musical events contribute to Sarawak's socio-economic development in a manner that is economically, environmentally and socially sustainable. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers in formulating strategies and regulations to further enhance the music tourism sector. Moreover, the study provides event organisers with practical recommendations to optimise the planning and execution of musical events, ensuring sustained benefits for all stakeholders.

Keywords: Musical events, Sarawak tourism, socio-economic impact assessment & impact assessment indicator.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will cover the introduction of the research, which includes the background of the research, problem statement, objectives of the research, research questions and significance of the research.

1.2 Introduction to Musical Events

Tourism remains one of the most significant global economic and cultural sectors, contributing extensively to employment, trade, and community development. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023) defines tourism as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes.” This globally standardised definition reflects the multifaceted role of tourism and underscores its importance as a development tool, particularly in emerging destinations. Recent literature has expanded on this understanding by framing tourism as a system embedded in a broader socio-political and environmental context. As noted by Bianchi and Stephenson (2022), tourism cannot be viewed solely through an economic lens; it must also be understood in relation to governance structures, sustainability goals and the experiences of local stakeholders. This approach provides a more comprehensive framework for analysing the interdependent relationships between tourists, destination managers, government agencies, and host communities.

Tourism is known to be a complex industry whereby it is integrated with various industries such as transportation, food and beverages and many more. Due to that, several forms of tourism and products have been established, such as eco-tourism, business tourism, cultural tourism, and education tourism, to name a few. From the tourism perspective, it can be deduced that musical events are a subset of Cultural Tourism (Basu & Imara, 2014). This is attributed to the fact that musical events offer opportunities for social interaction and attract audiences from both domestic and foreign countries. These events showcase various musical genres that are representative of