

# Impacts Of Musical Events in Sarawak: A Review from Literatures

Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts (JTHCA)  
2024, Vol. 16 (1) pp 293-302  
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UiTM Press  
Submit date: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023  
Accept date: 21<sup>st</sup> December 2023  
Publish date: 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024

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## Proposed citation:

Affandy, R., Gani, A. A., & Jabar, M. A. (2024). Impacts Of Musical Events in Sarawak: A Review from Literatures. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Culinary Arts*, 16(1), 293-302.

## Abstract

One of the key tourist attractions that has a solid international reputation is musical events. The popularity of musical events like Summerfest, Woodstock, and Rock in Rio were attributed to their reputation as being significant, Sarawak, which National Geographic refers to as the "Musical State," has successfully hosted a range of musical events throughout the years such as Rainforest World Music Festival, Jazz Borneo Music Festival, and Sarawak International Festival of Music and Arts have been held through strategic partnerships between public and private sectors. Musical event in Sarawak has also contributed well towards the local economy and social improvement in terms of job opportunities and better livelihood. However, the introduction of musical events in Sarawak has paved the way for unfavorable effects such as exposing unhealthy cultures, producing social issues, and charging exorbitant entrance costs. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to study the impacts of musical events in Sarawak from the literature perspective. This research will focus on reviewing the relevant literatures with the aim to identify the impacts of musical events held in Sarawak. This research will be conducted through extensive search for literatures such as journal article and online publishing from verified sources. This research is significant as it will outline the impacts of musical events in Sarawak which will assist the stakeholders such as government agencies, event organisers and local communities in facilitating decision making pertaining to the development of musical events.

## Keywords:

Musical Events, Sarawak, Tourism Industry, Impact

# 1 Introduction

A musical event is a gathering that typically lasts for a few days and includes musical performances by different singers, musicians, and musical ensembles (Collins English Dictionary, 2023). Maharjan (2014) emphasised the importance of acknowledging the differences in musical events' characteristics among various global locations. This can be attributed to the various cultural backgrounds that are found in each area, which in turn creates unique sound segments that can be sold as a type of tourism offering. Thus, this practice creates a cultural milieu that promotes an appreciation of the distinctive contributions that various cultures from around the world have to offer.

Musical events have gained significance over time as festivals because they offer opportunities for positive outcomes, like generating employment and drawing tourists to the location of the event (Laing and Mair, 2015). A variety of festivals, including musical events, have been approved as one of the tourism offerings and are classified as entertainment products (Anderson & Westcott, 2021). This is a result of the fact that going to a musical performance necessitates travel to a specific location and engaging in tourism activities. This involves utilizing local transit, participating actively in local economies, and taking in musical performances (Anderson & Westcott, 2021). Therefore, it has been demonstrated that musical events are a component of the tourism sector.

## 1.1 Musical Events in Sarawak

Sarawak, a Malaysian state located on Borneo's northwest coast, is well-known for its rich cultural fusion, varied rainforests, and vibrant indigenous communities (Haigh, 2020). Known as the "Land of the Hornbills," Sarawak captivates travelers with its breathtaking scenery, which includes the ancient rainforests of Bako National Park and the charming beaches that border the South China Sea (Junkie, 2018). This area, which is distinguished by its unique blend of modern elements and traditional practices, provides an engaging experience for individuals who wish to get a glimpse of Malaysia's diverse heritage (Phillips, 2023). In Sarawak, a range of musical events are planned to attract both local and foreign visitors. Sarawak's unique blend of cultural values and customs from 27 distinct ethnic groups makes it a prime destination for the development of musical events as a tourism offering.

According to a 2020 National Geographic article, Sarawak has the potential to be the most "Musical State" in Malaysia. Furthermore, Sarawak's musical events are distinctive because they feature not just foreign cultures but also the musical traditions of the various ethnic groups that call the state home. Among them are the diverse communities of Iban, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu, and Malay (Nerva, 2023). The use of unusual instruments, like the sape, a traditional lute, and gendang, is what defines Sarawakian traditional music.

Participants of the musical events in Sarawak will have the chance to gain knowledge and delve into the uniqueness of the cultural values intertwined with the music's rhythm (Geikie et al., 2013). For instance, during the FWMF, various strategies were employed to educate participants about traditional music through workshops, lectures, interactive

sessions with musicians and experts, as well as the sale of merchandise and local handicrafts (Shuib et al., 2013).

In general, the success of an event is often linked to strong cultural values and an effective management system (Chris, 2022). Similar to Sarawak, the musical events strongly highlight the cultural values present in the performances, incorporating emotions, historical occurrences, and various other elements. As noted by Myers (1914), Sarawak enjoys the benefit of hosting musical events due to its traditional music displayed using locally crafted instruments, expressing emotions, past experiences, and current aspirations.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

The objective of this research is to study the impacts of musical events in Sarawak from the literatures perspective. This is crucial as measuring and analysing the effects of specific activities on the socio-economic aspect is essential for decision-making, creating development plans, and minimizing negative outcomes (Abrar-ul-haq et al., 2016). When it comes to musical events, it is important for relevant parties to carefully consider the impacts to ensure that the event does not harm the local community. It is necessary to have a plan in place to reduce the negative effects of musical events, as failing to do so can have a detrimental impact on their success and sustainability. Understanding the impacts will help organisations or individuals set realistic goals, make informed decisions, and secure funding (Buckland & Hehenberg, 2021). By measuring the impacts of musical events, there is an opportunity to identify areas for improvement and elevate the quality of future events by learning from past mistakes.

## **1.3 Significance of Study**

The reader's understanding of the impacts of musical events in Sarawak will be aided by this research. This makes the research important since it will benefit various groups for their own needs, including academicians, government agencies, local communities, and organisers of musical events. Here are the specifics of the significance:

- a) Facilitate government agencies in decision making and policy direction pertaining to musical events in Sarawak;
- b) Business planning and product development for event organisers;
- c) Stimulate awareness among the local communities; and
- d) Contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to the impacts of musical events in Sarawak.

## 2 Literature Review

Festivals constitute a swiftly growing sector within the realm of travel and entertainment, capable of exerting substantial influence on local stakeholders, whether beneficial or detrimental (Fullcrum, 2023). Pavluković et al. (2017) similarly acknowledged the dual impact that festivals can have on the communities hosting them. Hence, this portion of the study will elucidate the effects of musical gatherings as underscored in various scholarly works. In Sarawak, a wide variety of more than 50 officially registered events and festivals were meticulously organized across the State in 2019 (Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Sarawak, 2018). These events transcended the cultural domain, with musical gatherings being consistently arranged by governmental and private entities throughout the region. The involvement of local communities emerges as a prominent aspect of the musical events in Sarawak, highlighting the incorporation of their cultural heritage. Ling (2021) underscored the profound influence of the RWMF on the global recognition of the traditional musical instrument "Sape," exclusively owned by the Orang Ulu people in Sarawak.

Similar to Sarawak, the organised musical events placed a strong focus on the cultural values expressed through the performances, which also included feelings, historical events, emotions, and many other things. According to Myers (1914), Sarawak created its own traditional music, which is performed using home-made traditional instruments and expresses things like emotions, past occurrences, and present aspirations. Musical events, which have culture and music as their strong fundamentals, have the potential to be one of the main travel offerings in Sarawak.

For the purpose of this research, the researcher has made reference to the following literatures:

Author	Title	Findings	Research Focus	Respondents
Kumar, Seok Khen, & Govindarajo. (2018).	A Sequential Exploratory Study On Visitors Food Choice Behaviour And Intention To Revisit Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors food preference attending Musical Events.</li> <li>• Food and beverages were identified as one of the major expenditure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor experience on food and beverage.</li> <li>• Visitor behavior.</li> </ul>	Visitors of RWMF.
Ting, Mering, Ahmad Zaidi Aduce, & Memon	Intention to Attend the Rainforest World Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficient value chain impacts the visitor's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research covers visitors' experiences.</li> <li>• Strength of</li> </ul>	Local Visitors of RWMF.

(2017)	Festival:	<p>experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive experience will improve branding and positioning.</li> </ul>	Musical Events to be the major main motivation to visit.	
Ahmad Shuib, Salbiah Edman and Fazlina Yaakub (2013)	Direct Expenditure Effects Of The Rainforest World Music Festival 2009 In Santubong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical Events provides job opportunities</li> <li>• Ability to increase Government revenue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic impacts derived from RWMF.</li> <li>• Spending pattern of visitors.</li> </ul>	Visitors of RWMF.
Shaik Hussain, Shaik Azahar & Azmi, Siti. (2016).	<i>Impak Sosial Rainforest World Music Festival Terhadap Masyarakat Kampung Santubong</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Musical Events caused social problems among the locals.</li> <li>• Impacted the behavior of the local communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social impacts derived from RWMF.</li> </ul>	Local communities from Kampung Santubong.

## 2.1 Impacts of Musical Events in Sarawak

Shuib et al. (2013) conducted a study that unveiled the remarkable triumph of the RWMF in 2009. This festival yielded around RM7.4 million in total sales, generated 117 employment opportunities, RM3.3 million in indirect income to the locality, and RM690,000 in tax revenue for the local authorities over the course of the three-day festivities. After a hiatus of two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, the event finally resumed in its physical form in 2022, drawing 12,000 visitors to the festival, with 2,000 attendees on the first day, 7,000 on the second day, and 3,000 on the third day (Petinggi, 2022).

Moreover, the engagement of local musicians not only provides them with economic advantages but also social betterment which enables them to showcase their musical abilities and improve their performance aptitude (Ling, 2022). As an exemplary endeavor, the Borneo Jazz Festival (BJF) 2022 is set to launch the Borneo Jazz Talent Search program with the primary aim of affording local communities the chance to display their exceptional talents on the esteemed BJF stage (TTR Weekly, 2022).

Furthermore, the musical events in Sarawak have notably become platform for the promotion of environmental sustainability through the implementation of various eco-friendly measures. For example, in the year 2019, the Rainforest World Music Festival (RWMF) introduced the utilisation of biodegradable tableware and recycled food containers, adopted sustainable waste management techniques, and provided eco-friendly gifts like reusable tote bags (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2019). Similarly, the RWMF in 2022 has commenced a tree planting scheme, where a segment of RM10 from each RM25 ticket purchase will be designated for tree planting endeavors (Sarawak Tourism Board, 2023). This is in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations, as it presents a viable approach to effectively address climate change. Moreover, the Eco Art initiative was inaugurated alongside the Borneo Jazz Festival 2022, with the objective of revitalizing Miri as a sustainable and environmentally aware urban center by advocating for recycling practices (TTR Weekly, 2019).

## **2.2 Measuring Impacts of Musical Events**

For the context of Musical events, Brown et al., (2015) emphasised that assessment for events is a process that should be completed through the utilisation of various approaches and key indicators, with the aim to study the values and results of the events held. This is important to ascertain that stakeholders will be aware of the overall impacts of conducting musical events whether it produced more towards the positive or negative impacts. Besides that, it is also used to guide in future development such as policy formulation, enforcement of rules and regulations and producing pertinent intervention plan. Nordvall and Brown, (2018) mentioned that there is a need for a holistic assessment approach for the events organised at a specific location in order to measure the impacts deliberately.

The critical analysis and evaluation of the repercussions of specific activities on the impacts are imperative for facilitating decision-making, devising development strategies, and mitigating adverse effects (Abrar-ul-haq et al., 2016). In the context of musical events, it is essential for relevant stakeholders to thoroughly deliberate on the impacts to safeguard the well-being of local stakeholders. The implementation of a mitigation strategy is necessary to minimise any adverse effects resulting from musical events. Neglecting to do so will detrimentally impact the efficiency and sustainability of such events. Moreover, the assessment impacts will aid organisations or individuals in setting realistic objectives or targets based on performance evaluation, continuous learning, activity improvement, decision prioritization, and securing funding (Buckland & Hehenberg, 2021). Therefore, evaluating the impacts of musical events will highlight opportunities for enhancement, elevating the quality of musical events by identifying past errors or missteps during the monitoring process conducted by relevant entities.

### **3 Research Methodology**

Fink (2019) emphasised that a methodical, explicit, and repeatable approach to locating, assessing, and compiling the body of finished and documented work created by academics, practitioners, and researchers is the literature review. As this research emphasised on the literature perspective, it aims to provide better understanding on the previous researches which helps to establish guidance and reference for future studies and adding to the body of knowledge from the perspective of Musical Events in Sarawak. For this purpose, the researcher has reviewed various literatures relevant to the establishment of musical events in general and the events held in Sarawak.

The sources were from various verified platforms such as journal articles and online publishing. The literatures were searched using search engines such as Google and Bing through various websites such as Google Scholar, Emerald Publishing, Research Gate and JStor. In order to ensure its credibility, the search will be done using relevant keywords such as Sarawak tourism, musical events, socio-economic impact assessment and Sarawak event. The search will be filtered to only shows journals published from the year 2015 and beyond to ensure that the data and information derived are relevant.

Aguinis et al. (2018) highlighted the following measures to ensure transparency in reviewing literatures which were adapted for this research:

- a) Search literatures with relevant keywords from verified platforms and sources;
- b) Establish log for the outcomes of searchers in various channels;
- c) Referencing materials within the literature survey; and
- d) Provide provisions for the availability of complete-text renditions of the referred materials.

### **4 Discussion**

As mentioned, several studies have examined the impacts of musical events in Sarawak. However, none of the recent studies, however, placed a strong emphasis on a thorough socio-economic impact analysis from the local stakeholders perspective. Additionally, rather than concentrating on only one musical event, which can result in insufficient data collection and could introduce bias into the analytical process, a broader study's scope is critically needed. This will lead to setting gaps in terms of research focus area which only study one musical event and specific impact. This is supported by Brown et al. (2015) which highlighted the importance of studying impacts in a comprehensive approach.

There is a need to justify this research because of the debates about whether musical events hosted in Sarawak have beneficial or harmful effects, as stated by various literatures. Additionally, the Sarawak government is confident in making a comeback because of the reopening of borders and the RWMF's return to the tourist event wall (Ling, 2022). To effectively plan and strategise the growth, it is important to properly investigate the effects of musical events to clearly recognise their potential as one of the

primary tourism goods in Sarawak. Furthermore, in a personal communication (May 20th, 2023) with an industry expert stated that there is no proper monitoring mechanism in for musical events in Sarawak which assessed the impacts of musical events held.

Despite the growing popularity of musical events in Sarawak, less writing and research have been done on the subject over the last five years. Due to the gaps in the evidence for musical events in Sarawak, there is now need and opportunity to further deliberate and study the impacts of musical events in Sarawak.

## 5 Conclusion

Moving forward, a more comprehensive research is required for the impacts of musical events in Sarawak from the local stakeholders perspective. The proposed research should focus on the socio economic impacts which highlighted economy, social and environment as the key indicators as highlighted by Abrar-ul-haq et al. (2016) and Everett et al. (2010).

In addition, the scope of the research should take into consideration of more than one event to avoid bias and insufficient data. The events selected must be impactful whereby the impacts are significant and able to represent the musical events in Sarawak as a whole.

As a result, the proposed research with a more comprehensive focus areas and wider event scope will address the setting gaps highlighted in previous topic. The significance of this lies in Lesmana and Sugiarto's (2021) statement that impact assessment must take into account important factors or impacts in order to be feasible and effective in influencing the environment. As a result, it is envisaged that this will strengthen the conclusions and enable the emergence of more underlying factors pertaining to the effect of musical events on local stakeholders.

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