

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS EVENT PRACTICES MODEL

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ABSTRACT: *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. This study applied qualitative analysis through active participative observation to investigate the process of a sustainable business event and involved 15 event practitioners namely event organizers, venue providers, associations, and suppliers. Qualitative, peer review, and triangulation as a method for validity and reliability. Limited to only 15 event's stakeholders in business event. Future Researchers should explore other event's contexts. Assisting model applied in the area of this study is the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) and Drivers and Barriers Model. The findings of this study found several emerging concepts of the sustainable event namely, waste, water, energy, safety and health, corporate social responsibility, and green purchasing activities. The assisting findings assist event practitioners in mitigating the concept of the sustainable event during an event. These concepts assist event organizers in monitoring their event performance in terms of green practices during an event. Green purchasing, waste management, energy efficiency, water consumption, sustainable performance, air quality control, safety and health, corporate social responsibility activities, information technology usage, and sustainability orientation are factor contribute to the sustainable event and sustainable business event is related with social, economy and environment.*

Keywords—green, event management, process, sustainability

INTRODUCTION

The researchers begin the discussion on the process of organizing an event by describing the meaning of sustainable business events among event organizers in Malaysia as there is still an argument on the extent to which event activities to be called sustainable event [1]. Henderson [1] argued the meaning of sustainable by referring to the sustainable activist that defined 'sustainable' as a level of progress that is adequate to meet the sustainable development needs and this definition is compliance with its renowned sustainability development definition as "development that meets the need of society without compromising the ability of future generation" (WCED 1987, cited in [2]). The illustration of the sustainable definition given by WCED in the Malaysian context is seen from the growth of demand for organizing a business event in Malaysia. In describing the tourism industry, there are two basic perspectives to define the term 'tourism industry, namely conceptual and technical perspectives. The first perspective is more towards the conceptual perspective, which describes the tourism industry as "those firms, organizations and facilities that are intended to serve the specific needs and wants of tourist" and the second perspective focuses on the tourism industry from the technical perspective. The technical perspective describes tourism as "businesses and organizations that serve tourists, residents, and markets" [3]. This shows that the term tourism describes people that travel from one destination to another for a purpose and the term tourism industry is used to show business activities that aim to serve the needs of tourists. However, as mentioned earlier, based on anecdotal evidence, the tourism industry also results in a negative impact on the environment due to the building of tourism infrastructure and tourism activities such as during the process of organizing a business event. Therefore, this factor highlights the importance in understanding the concept of sustainable tourism.

The World Tourism Organization defined sustainable tourism development as "meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future" [4]. It seems that this definition is adapted from the ground definition of sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own" [3]. This indicates that the definition of sustainable tourism is based on the ideology of sustainability and tourism.

When discussing social development from a general context of the tourism industry in Malaysia, several infrastructure developments ensure the cleanliness of public areas, increase the police personnel at tourist spots and allow competition in the transportation sector involving the taxi and train services market and their campaigning [5]. This indirectly shows the role of infrastructure development in ensuring the increase in the number of business events organized in Malaysia. However, the growth in the demand for organizing an event leads to several negative environmental impacts such as the use of event materials and transportation if it is not properly monitored. These issues were discussed by Rittichainuwat and Mair [6] who mentioned that the impact might result from transportation and event materials such as papers, bottles, and the use of conference facilities. This leads to awareness among business event researchers that highlight the importance of applying event sustainability when organizing a business event [6, 7].

II. EVENT SUSTAINABILITY

The discussion about the elements of 'sustainability' in the business event sector is based on the original definition of sustainability, which relates to the environment. Ecologists refer to sustainability as something that relates to preserving the environment [2]. Hence, due to the awareness created by the transcendentalists and authors such as Henry David Thoreau, Emerson, and John Muir, it

had led to one important conference known as the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. This conference then led to the Stockholm + 10 Conference, which was held in 1982 in Nairobi, Kenya. As a result of the Stockholm conference, the Brundtland Report was produced and took after the name of the former Norwegian Prime Minister from 4 February 1981 to 14 October 1981; 9 May 1986 to 16 October 1989 and 3 November 1990 to 25 October 1996.

The Brundtland Report highlighted three important elements namely economic, social and environmental. This led to the use of the term 'sustainability and 'sustainability development'; however, both these terms are used interchangeably in highlighting social, economic, and environmental issues. This shows that the term 'sustainability is used when discussing social, economic, and environmental issues, however, from the event sector perspective, there is still an argument about the use of 'sustainability in this sector [8]. For this reason, one of the aims of this paper is to elaborate on the meaning of sustainability and secondly to understand the elements that contribute to event sustainability.

III. METHODOLOGY

The researchers began the actual fieldwork with an event company as it permitted the involvement of participatory observation. For this reason, the study further explored semi-structured interviews with fifteen (15) event practitioners who play a role in highlighting all the elements of this research. A triangulation method was chosen to ensure the reliability of the information. Apart from this, member check and interview protocols were also used in validating the information. An analysis of in-depth interviews with several event practitioners provided extensive and in-depth information on these issues. The information obtained through analysis has formed a link through the development of several themes. The themes then provided a link to the meaning, process and factors involved in organizing a sustainable business event.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

There are several definitions given by various authors related to the use of the term 'sustainability in regards to business events. As mentioned by Stettler [9] a 'sustainable event' is also known as a conscious event, responsible event or a green event and it has been used to describe events that have been taken this route" (p. 10). In comparison to this, Smith-Christensen [10] proposed three versions to the meaning of a "sustainable event", such as: "1. Events managed as an autonomous cyclical process through the interaction between event management, the host community and event-goers, providing human resources, infrastructure, and funds. 2. Events managed as an autonomous cyclical process through the interaction between event management, host community, and event-goers. 3. Events sensitive to the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental needs within the local host community, and organized in such a way as to optimize the net holistic (positive) output".

For this reason, the meaning of a "sustainable event" mentioned by the above authors relates to the three important core elements or event management pillars. The three important elements are economic, social, and environmental elements. This was also emphasized by some of the event organizers in Malaysia with quotes

[P52:3] such as, "A sustainable event demands three important elements namely economic, social and environmental". However, among the three important elements, the researcher found that most of the event organizers relate the understanding about a sustainable event with greening an event [P1: 32], [P2: 53], [P6: 37].

Sherwood [11] referred to waste management practices as one of the strategies in greening an event. Hence, it seems that one of the strategies in promoting a sustainable event is through greening an event.

The term greening is seldom used by event organizers when defining the meaning of sustainability in a business event. This was mentioned by [B1:36] as: "...I think sustainability or greening is more on the practices of using products to reduce the environmental impact". The term greening is defined as 'sustainability, as highlighted by [P2:30], who strongly emphasized on the term 'greening' as 'sustainability. This was mentioned as: "Yes, greening an event also means a sustainable event".

The researchers also found that several researchers emphasized promoting sustainability by propagating the green concept during an event. This is in line with the meaning that provides an overview of the importance of sustainable practices by highlighting the environmental dimension in sustainability. Mair and Jago [12] defined the term 'green' as "...greening that means investment in environmentally friendly facilities and practices". Apart from these two authors, Cooper [4] also illustrated the meaning of a green event by defining it as an event with "... sustainability policies or incorporating sustainability practices into its management and operations", p.262. The illustration of the meaning of a sustainable event by these authors highlights the implementation of sustainable practices during an event. However, in contra to this, [P6:42] said that:

"A sustainable event is a practice of highlighting the social element, such as creating awareness about environmental issues through training and education, economic issues such as the aim of making profits apart from considering the environmental element in business activities...you know...everything must be balanced between social, environmental and economic". Therefore, it appears from the discussion that a sustainable business event relates to achieving economic, social and environmental stability. The three dimensions namely economy, social and the environment are known as the three pillars in event management [13]. This was reported in page 15 of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) report as, "The need to continually improve our social, economic and environmental performance". The illustration is further supported by [P51: 30] is quoted as: "Sustainability is more on how we balance and maintain and try to minimize the impact on the environment. When there is an event, we always try to minimize or reduce the use of resources, for example, the bunting would be used for another purpose, so that we will not just use it one-off...they are many kinds of carpets...so we advise the organizer not to use the whole hall area, we minimize the carpet use..and those are the things that we try to educate. In my department, we only focus on the environment but another team deals the economic and social issues. For me, we only look at the environment; they do coz they do look at the social and economic issues as they have a researcher who focuses on

the area. They even have a method to calculate how one event can impact the economy, they knew whether they can generate income".

In conclusion, it appears that the meaning of a sustainable business event is related to economic returns, social benefits, and reduction in negative environmental impact. Thus, in the context of this research, a sustainable business event is mainly about discussing social and economic issues while achieving environmental sustainability by greening an event. However, what is the issues involved throughout the process of organizing a business event that propagates sustainable elements that demand a further investigation? Indirectly, this defines the role of economy and society development that may not result in a negative impact on the environment. This prominent definition indirectly highlights the role of three important pillars in event management [13]. These pillars are seen as three important elements for sustainability as according to Baker [3] sustainability development is divided according to social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The sustainable event business process is observed from the assimilation of sustainability practices throughout an event. The practice was evaluated according to eight dimensions.

Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency strategy is one of the methods of reducing the use of energy during business activities by event practitioners. There are several strategies applied by event practitioners such as the use of coated glass in Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. This was quoted by [P 3:132] that "the use of coated glass has assisted in reducing the temperature at the convention center" and this was cited in [14]. Apart from using coated glass, the use of passive solar energy for heating and cooling systems, insulation, passive solar, energy-saving light bulbs, low energy appliances and equipment, lighting timers, and sleep mode on equipment are some of the ways in reducing energy consumption. This was mentioned in the KLCC Corporate Social Responsibility Report 2010 that the use of this energy efficiency electrical equipment assists the convention center in reducing the use of energy. As reported in page 25 that: " a reduction in energy consumption resulted in a decrease of total carbon dioxide produced, which was equivalent to (tCO₂-e) from 11860.2 t CO₂ -e for 2008 to 7726.2 for 2009 to 2010. The improvements made had contributed to the decrease in carbon dioxide, such as the close monitoring of air conditioning to all the function areas, maintaining a set temperature, and switching it off immediately after the event. This includes the installation of tinted film to reduce solar heat on West Wing Level 3 and Ground Floor Park facing the elevation and progressive replacement of high wattage lamps in non-essential areas with energy-saving types whilst improving maintenance standards to ensure equipment is running at peak efficiency".

Apart from this, as mentioned in the Environmental Factsheet report 2014, there are other energy-saving strategies used at the convention. This was reported on page 1 as: "With the building's design making the most of natural light in all pre-function areas, energy is further saved with a lighting system that extinguishes the lights in function rooms and exhibition halls, except those required for emergency management purposes, when not in use. Since opening in 2006, the Centre has had a retrofit program in place to gradually replace high energy lamps,

neon lights, and incandescent bulbs with energy-saving light-emitting diodes (LED) ones throughout the venue. Other energy-saving measures include a specially-designed Variable Speed Drive (VSD) or inverter system that regulates the escalators and air conditioners so that they automatically stop or slow down when not in use or when a drop in the temperature is detected, turning lights down to a minimum during build-up and tear-down and using battery-operated forklifts and burden vehicles (buggies) to reduce the amount of fuel burnt".

The energy efficiency initiatives observed at the convention center had used coated glass that helped reduce the use of energy and enables the transformation of the sun's energy to provide lighting at certain areas of the convention center [Photo 8]. This was mentioned by [P4:53] as "the lighting is at the corridor of the conference hall, which faces a large window, so the lights are not turned off".

The discussion on the sustainable practices of the event company is observed from several sustainable practices at the A1 Company. It was found that the energy efficiency practices by the A1 Company began with business operations before, during, and after the event. This was mentioned by A1, who is the A1 Company's director, in line 13:

"We try not to use paper as far as possible; we book flights but we do not use the paper process, we just use the system but we need to have a guideline on paper usage. When we send our reports to the ministry they want us to use paper Furthermore, the accounting department wants to use paper for future reference, so we have to keep our documents because the accounting law wants us to keep it for 7 years. These factors are barriers to the process of organizing a green event. We need an audit trail, we need to keep it in a server and all the processes in a soft copy but we need to give certain stakeholders a hard copy. P1 would advise you that everything should be in soft copy but to print out and to look at the color scheme we need to print. The booklet we designed is also in a softcopy but we need to it print out. During operations, everything is in softcopy, and during the conference; no banners will be used as we only use electronic signboards. We are going into the future and the future uses electronic boards, therefore, if there are facilities then we can use it. However, if we cannot do that, for instance, in certain areas and if there are no electric signboards, then again, this application is optional. Hence, certain industries might use it, yet how can we mitigate it but we work together with certain authorities. The signboards that we use during this event will be recycled, while the banners are sent for recycling and made into handbags".

This finding emerged from the information given by the director, where he emphasized the reduction of energy use during office hours, the sharing of printers, the recycling of wastewater from the air-conditioning system for use in the washrooms, and the use of technology in disseminating information and processing all event business operations. The information given by the director was compared with the information given by the employees and also based on personal observation. Thus, the researcher found that the information was credible based on the actual practices. This is quoted by A2, who was one of the employees in the A1 Company, in line 21: "The director advised us to reduce the use of energy during office hours. We usually switch off the lights during office hours and I think that the

use of the emailing system helps us to reduce the use of paper”.

The practices were observed during the initial fieldwork and the researcher found that the information given corresponded with the actual practices. Observations made before and during the event itself revealed that there was a lack of paper use before and during the event and several recycling waste bins were placed at several locations in the office and at the conference hall. This is supported by pictures taken before and during the event. Furthermore, the event was held at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, which is known for highlighting sustainable practices during their business events. This is supported by the report on the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on page 3 line 7:

“... sustainability is one of the strategies related to corporate social responsibility at the convention”.

The use of several sustainable practices, such as using coated glass for reducing the use of lighting, seems to be a strategy by the convention center to ensure the practice of energy efficiency initiatives at the convention center. This shows that there are several energy efficiency practices at the convention center; however, based on the interview with most of the event managers, there is also energy efficiency practices at their office. This was especially so during lunchtime, as quoted by [P5:108], "the employees were encouraged to switch off the lights during lunchtime". This was quote as "We encourage the staff to turn off the lights during lunch". This is supported by the observations made at the A1 Company where researchers found the lights switched off during lunch. Based on this, researchers concur that there is an awareness among event practitioners on energy efficiency practices during an event. In comparing energy efficiency practices between event organizers and KLCC, it concurs that most of the energy efficiency practices were found at KLCC. One of the reasons is because Earth Check had certified the convention center as a green building. Mair and Jago [12] had said that most convention centers are more towards energy efficiency buildings.

The energy efficiency (EE) building has to make several considerations, especially for climate change. This is because, as being in a tropical country, the important element in reducing the generation of heat in the building. For this reason, the energy efficiency practices in the KLCC building helps to reduce the energy consumption at the convention center. This was reported as: "As Malaysia's leading convention facility, the Centre has invested RM2 million to retrofit and improve the lighting efficiency for its five exhibition halls totaling 10,000 sq meters in January this year. The initiative entails replacing about 900 250W metal halide lamps with light-emitting diodes (LED) bulbs and in turn, reducing overall electricity consumption by 28%. Based on an estimated 5,000 hours of electricity use per year for all five exhibition halls, the LED bulbs could result in a saving of some 800,000 kWh per year or an annual saving of around RM250,000. More important though, is the reduction in the building's carbon footprint and overall operating costs". This shows that the energy efficiency practices at the convention center helped in reducing 28 percent of energy consumption and the use of LED bulbs was estimated to save more than RM250,000 per year.

Based on the discussions, the researchers found that there were several energy efficiency initiatives by most event

organizers but these practices were only for a few situations compared to KLCC. firstly, of what energy efficiency is all about and secondly, on how it will profit owners and users”.

The energy efficiency practices were also observed in the use of green information technology during business activities. For instance, as quoted by [P5:154], "we use registration software such as event prop, because, as you know if the conference is attended by more than 500 people, the organizers would print at least 2000 registration copies". This was agreed upon by [P6:301], "We email the program book and burn it on a cd upon request, if they request the program book we give the cd, we do print but the copies are limited". The green practices of using technology were emphasized by [P1:147] as, "As far as knowledge of the event is concerned, we introduce the technology earlier since the use of technology is important for greening". This shows that that one of the strengths in practicing sustainability is the use of information technology by event practitioners. The use of email, websites, and event software is a push factor that drives the use of technology for event promotions [15] (Arcodia, 2010). This is also the same strategy used by event organizers when promoting their event by using information technology such as social media. For example, the use of Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn in promoting their event. According to Lee, Tyrrell, & Erdem [16]. "Increased use of social networking media for meeting planners has been motivated both by the ongoing economic recession and the dynamic behavioral adjustments of meeting planners in terms of social media use. The implication is that promotion of social media by meeting planners will be most effective if it stresses the number of planners who have already adopted the technology and the usefulness in the planning process. The results of this study indicated that the ease of use strongly influenced the adoption of social media as a tool. Thus, when promoting the use of social media to meeting planners, aspects of convenience and fun should be emphasized" (p.16). The discussion revealed that the use of information technology helps in driving the process of greening an event. Thus, the use of several event materials was replaced by several paperless technologies such as corporate and social media software.

The researcher found that green information technology devices assist in reducing energy consumption. The practice of energy efficiency uses green information technology devices and this is observed from the practices at the convention center and the A1 Company. Several event organizers confirmed the use of green information technology in their office. This highlights the role of green information technology in achieving energy efficiency among event practitioners. However, Dickson & Arcadia, [15] think that there is a lack of event organizers highlighting the sustainable processes on their websites. This is similar to the context of Malaysia, whereby based on observations of event company websites; I found a lack of information on green practices among event organizers in Malaysia. One of the reasons based on the interview with all the event organizers was the aim of the event, which was to make profits. As said by [P5:54], "when organizing events, the emphasis is on profits and implementing sustainability might defer the aim to gain profits”. The discussion emphasizes the use of green

information technology as a medium to achieve energy efficiency during an event; however, the event organizers did not highlight the assimilation of green practices during an event. This is because, based on the observation of all company websites involved in this study, I found that there was a lack of information about the assimilation of green practices during an event.

Waste Management

Apart from energy efficiency, green practices during an event also include waste management practices. There are two types of wastes found in events. The first type is called production waste, which consists of waste cooking oil, compostable catering waste, damaged equipment and goods, plastic, and paper. The second type of waste is called audience waste, which includes food packaging and drinking cups, newspapers, magazines, and flyers. Similarly, there are several other wastes found throughout the event and this waste is categorized according to operation waste, comprising mainly paper, bottles, and unused buntings, the production waste at the convention center, and the audience waste during the event [17].

The discussion on waste management practices in a business event was commented on by [B1:212], who said, "Well, the environmental impact is definite. As I understand it there is an environmental impact on the environment due to waste products, therefore to reduce waste we brought in a waste management group to identify and recover types of waste we produce". Ball [18] agreed to this and said that problems that resulted from improper waste management might lead to negative environmental impacts.

The discussion on waste management had attracted the attention of the International Convention of Conference Associations in 2006 to discuss this issue. According to the report in 2006, 1,084 tonnes of waste were produced per venue per year or an equivalent of € 77,545 or MYR 339,282 (1.00000 EUR @ MYR4.37529 for 2014). Similarly, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre had produced 163 tonnes of waste in 2011.

The implementation of these policies culminated in several waste management activities conducted in KLCC, such as recycling food waste products from the food and beverage department; the use of paper was reduced by emphasizing double-sided printing and use of recycled paper for printing and purchase of non-biodegradable cleaning chemicals [17]. Apart from this, support had been given to the staff and visitors to reduce wastage, reuse and recycle.

This is similar to the practices at A1 Company, where I found several sets of bins placed around the office, and based on the observation, the waste was distributed to recycling companies to be recycled and reused later. I concur that the waste management activities among event practitioners are divided according to operations and production waste. The waste was then distributed to recycling companies; however, most of the event companies depend on waste management activities at Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre to dispose of the waste. This was mentioned by [P6:16] as, "KLCC will decide how many bins we need, so we need to depend on our build-up. If it's a conference event the number of bins is less compared to an exhibition event because usually, the exhibitors would leave their waste at the convention center after the event".

This was mentioned by [P51:57], who said that:

"For event-related activities we charge per bin and when we start to charge them, the awareness came in. This means that if before they just threw all waste materials because they used 6 bins and when we start charging them they began to reduce the use of bin by recycling all their materials. So now, they request only 2 or 3 bins. Therefore, it shows that they actually can reduce the use of paper. So indirectly, we have educated them because when they start to pay then they realize. This shows that most of the waste management activities are practiced at the convention center, thus this reveals that event organizers depend on the initiatives taken by the convention center to manage waste".

The waste management strategy is one of the elements of green practices in event management and proper waste management is needed to reduce the number of waste products. Kokkranikal, et. al, [19] are of the view that waste management is also one of the methods for controlling pollution. It is categorized according to several strategies, such as procurement that focuses on a selection of contractors that promote green during their business activities; management of subcontractors who collaborate to minimize waste; training and close supervision of waste management; handling and controlling materials to ensure the quality of the work.

Responsible Water Management

The practice of responsible water consumption is one of the green practices implemented by event practitioners. This was observed at the A1 Company whereby wastewater from air-cons was treated and used as toiletry wash water. In relation to this and based on the observation during an event at KLCC and CC2 Events, I found that the mineral water used was labeled "eco-green" at the bottom of the bottle. However, based on the interview with event organizers, they did not recognize the role of water as part of green activities during an event. None of the interviewees emphasized the use of mineral water or water as one of the green materials during an event. Mohindra (2008) agreed that the discussion on the use of mineral water is related to greening. According to the author, there was an argument on the use of mineral water during an event related to the different types of plastics used to manufacture these bottles, which has implications on recycling and human health. Recycling symbols (from 1-7) found at the bottom of containers help consumers and recyclers to differentiate the various kinds of plastics (cited in Mohindra, [20]. The use of plastic as mineral water containers leads to a dilemma about greening [21], thus, the numbers 1 to 7 grade the plastic according to reusable and none reusable categories. This highlights the need for awareness among event practitioners on the type of plastic bottles that can be used during an event. Apart from the use of plastic containers for mineral water during an event, I found there were water stations [Photo 10] located at the corners of the KLCC. This is mentioned in the Factsheet Environmental Report, 2014 as "The use of water stations is a strategy for storing and supplying drinking water. Hence, event delegates at KLCC are encouraged to use water stations instead of bottled water to reduce the use of water during an event". This shows that the water stations are used to reduce the use of water at the convention center.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Activities

Apart from green practices during an event related to water consumption, energy efficiency and waste management

activities, I also found several corporate social responsibility strategies that promoted green practices during an event. For example, donation programs that support activities such as, "Lets and Meets program", Recycle Programs, Reusable Programs, and activities that involve communities. These activities highlight the element of green practices during an event. However, I found that some of the organizers were not aware of the "Lets and Meets" program, which was promoted by the Malaysian Convention Exhibition Bureau (MyCeb), this was quoted by [P1:299] as "I am not aware that we have a "Lets and Meets program"(sounded surprised). It seems there is an initiative by MyCeb to promote green practices in the event industry, however, some of the event organizers are not aware of this initiative". Apart from the "Lets and Meets" program as a strategy for promoting green awareness among the community; the Reusable, Recyclable and Reduce (3R) activities are also strategies discussed by several authors such as Laing and Frost [2] and Kassaye [21] when highlighting the green element during an event.

Green Purchasing Activities

The sustainable purchasing activities observed at the convention center were commented upon by [B1:69] as "we actually use most of the materials we can get locally". This was reported in the CSR Report, [19], which read; "The center makes a conscious effort to use locally grown produce both to support the local community and minimize greenhouse gas emissions caused by the supply chain. Locally grown vegetables are used as ingredients for local cuisine, pastries, and cakes, while beef, lamb, and seafood such as black mussels, codfish, and halibut are imported as the local quality is not acceptable or not available in the case of seafood. This constitutes a significant percentage under the food category, which includes dairy products such as cream, cheese, and chocolates" (p. 57). The sustainable purchasing activities observed at the convention center were related to purchasing local products rather than imported ones for ingredients that could be planted by the staff at the convention center. However, for chemical products, the sustainable purchasing activities were more inclined to use products that were not chemically based. This was mentioned by [P51:139] as, "it is one of the criteria we look for...but for cleaning chemicals, we will always look for 100% biodegradable products and we need to look at the products carefully one-by-one to determine if it is a biodegradable product". This reveals that sustainable purchasing activities do assist in the process of a sustainable business event by selecting appropriate products that are not chemically based or hazardous to the public.

Event organizers should adhere to a purchasing policy, which considers the commitment towards sustainable purchasing. These purchases include electrical equipment that reduces energy and carbon emissions, products that use small volumes of water, products that are free of toxins and pollutants, the awareness on forest conservation, the use of products that are made from recycled and re-usable materials, use of bio-degradable products for business operations, use of local supplies and product miles and fair trade that considers fair labor conditions and price. The purchasing policy must also consider the life-cycle impact element or in other words, the product used during an event must observe the life-cycle assessment. This emphasizes the evaluation of environmental aspects and the potential

impact associated with a product, the ecological footprint that measures the impact of certain activities, and the redesigned product that considers the element of recyclability, being toxic-free, better performance, and long-lasting. The environmentally friendly product should use eco-labeling, such as "Environmental Choice", which is practiced in Australia, Nordic Ecolabel in Norway, Ecologo in North America, and Green Seal Certified in the USA. Thus, this shows that selecting appropriate products that are sustainable is one of the strategies that should be applied during a sustainable event.

Social Safety and Health

Safety and Health Management is one element involved in the process of a sustainable business event. As stated in the KLCC CSR 2010 report, KLCC emphasizes social safety and health policy in its sustainable practices at the convention center. This complies with the ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System that has incorporated the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP), which is the food safety system for international convention centers. This is an important policy because employees at the convention center are susceptible to common physical hazards such as trips and falls, exposure to sharp objects such as knives and manual handling machines, biological hazards related to food safety, chemical hazards related to cleaning, and natural hazards related to outdoor working activities. This was mentioned by [P51:75] as "According to SACCPC the food that has been left open for 4 hours must be disposed and cannot be consumed as it could lead to food poisoning. This is also applicable to staffs, who are not allowed to take the center's food out from the center".

Apart from emphasizing social safety and health policy, KLCC also highlights the element of training for social development. In relation to this, a Trainer's Council was established to improve the quality and training of employees. The programs organized by the council were Customer Training, English Programs, Emergency First Aid, Basic Food Handlers Course, Cultural Awareness Workshop, and Leadership development program. The social development strategy also emphasizes human rights and human capital development, which enables employees to express their future aspirations and career advancements. This concept is similar as mentioned by Ghaffarianhoseini [22] that sustainable energy performance of green buildings, the appropriate application of renewable energy supplies in buildings is a fundamental criterion. In this regard, solar sustainability systems have always been a key factor in the development of green buildings. Green building enhances the capacity of the sustainable building by following the green criteria established by several green building policies such as practice in Malaysia. There are several policies introduced by the government such as National Energy Policy that is the first policy that emphasizes on oil and gas.

V. CONCLUSION

The findings underpin the role of strength according to the convention center's commitment to assisting event managers to apply the sustainable business event concept during an event. Apart from this factor, the researcher found there are several factors that contribute to a sustainable business event such as waste, water, energy, safety, and health. However, although there are these drives that

motivate event practitioners, the findings also reveal several barriers. For this reason, testing the findings by applying different research methods is in demand. This research focuses on the main city in Malaysia, using the qualitative approach. Therefore, an area of study focusing on a wider scope of generalization from a Malaysian context, a different sector in the tourism industry, and event management entail future research. The researchers intend to fill the void in the study, which has demanded the need to explore sustainable business event practices at a convention center during a business event. The researchers found that the sustainable practices at the convention center constituted three dimensions, namely economic, societal, and environmental dimensions. Thus, in comparison to this, the sustainable business event practices among event managers have mostly highlighted the elements of the environment compared to the other sustainability pillars. One possible reason for this gap could be the lack of understanding of the meaning of a sustainable business event. This is because, during the interview session, the event managers requested an explanation of the meaning of a sustainable business event. For this reason, the researcher suggested that it is vital for future research to investigate the concept of a sustainable business event, especially focusing on the societal and economic dimensions.

The researchers have also looked into the discussions by the previous researcher who concerning several factors involved in the process of organizing a sustainable event. However, both authors discussed issues regarding a sustainable event in general terms. In contrast, my research has focused on several factors in the context of just one particular convention center. Therefore, a future area of research focusing on the scope of generalization from a larger sample size entails further research. When researching the organizing process of a sustainable business event, the researchers have come across sevI also found that there were several legislative enforcements conducted based on the Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Management Act 2011 and the Water Enactment Servicing Act 2006 by the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communication, Malaysia. This raises the question of how policies affect the business event sector. As mentioned earlier, organizing an event involves several natural resources and elements such as water, energy, and waste. Sherwood [11] has mentioned this area when evaluating an event. Therefore, the researchers suggest that future research should study how government policy influences sustainable practices among event practitioners.

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