

## **THE VISITORS' PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZING STREET DANCE COMPETITION IN PROMOTING DOMESTIC TOURISM**

Awangku Hassanal Bahar Pengiran Bagul, Janie Liew-Tsonis, Charlie Albert Lasuin, Juliana Langgat, Andy Lee Chen Hiung, Toh Pei Sung, Andi Tamsang Andi Kele, Borhan Sareya and Ruby Salam Abdul Latip

School of Business and Economics, Universiti Malaysia Sabah  
Email: hbagul@ums.edu.my

### **ABSTRACT**

*This article discusses the outcome of a research on tourism promotion through events where the survey was conducted at Borneo Street Dance (BSD) 2012 in Sabah, one of states in Malaysia, and it was organised by the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia. The event was held to promote domestic tourism and to attract youth participation in performing art where they could showcase their talents and creativity. The findings of this research suggested that event such as BSD was able to attract interest and participation among youth from all over the state and this contributed to the promotion of domestic tourism. The event is also able to attract youth's interest to fill their free time with beneficial and favorable activities while exposing them to ethnic diversity in the highly diverse culture of namely Sabah, Sarawak and the Federal Territory of Labuan. This is where the event could foster tolerance and understanding on the diverse ethnic among the youth in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan and thought to be beneficial to domestic tourism. The research concluded that the event such as BSD should be made to be an annual event to enhance the promotion of domestic tourism industry in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan among young travellers and Visiting Friend and Relative (VFR) that tied with the event and eventually enhancing the sustainability of the tourism industry in Malaysian Borneo.*

**Keywords:** Tourism sustainability, Borneo Street Dance, Domestic Tourism, Cultural Tourism

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries as well as a major source of foreign exchange earnings and providing employment for many developing countries. Tourism contributes about 11% of the world's work force and 10.2% of the global gross domestic product. The dynamic growth of this industry is evident from the fact that a new job is added to this sector every 2.5 second ([www.jharkhand.gov.in](http://www.jharkhand.gov.in)). In the last three decades, tourism has been a growing sector and the industry is gaining importance in Malaysia. In 2012, about 25.03 million foreign tourists visited Malaysia, generating some RM60.6 billion in foreign exchange earnings (Tourism Malaysia, 2012).

The majority of the foreign tourists were from neighboring Asia-Pacific countries such as Singapore, Japan and China. The tourism industry in Malaysia, especially cultural tourism events, still have room for growth in the future and has been identified as one of the National Key Result Area in the Government Transformation Programme. The purpose of this paper is to explore the perception of Borneo Street Dance as a means of promotion for tourism and to explore the perception on the benefits of Borneo Street Dance activities.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Cultural Tourism**

Among many forms of special interest tourism, cultural tourism has emerged as one of the fastest growing segments (WTO, 1999). This type of special interest travel focuses on learning and experiencing the past and present of the host community through cultural heritage, including physical objects (sites, buildings, artifacts, costumes, art) and social customs (religion, songs, dances, festivals, ceremonies). ATLAS (2009) defined cultural tourism as “*All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence*”.

The development of cultural tourism not only enhances the destination appeal to the tourist market, but also helps to improve the quality of life of the local community. Through revitalizing traditional culture and heritage, awareness of the local identity and more leisure choices for destination residents can be enhanced (Pamela Ho and Alice To, 2010). It is also believed that cultural tourism can be used as a vehicle to develop tourism with high quality, hence attracting high-spending tourists.

Academic and professionals emphasis on sustainable tourism development is growing and cultural tourism has been suggested as a good way to balance conservation and development goals (McKercher and du Cros, 2002). While cultural tourism may highlight the traditional culture, the popular and contemporary culture of the locals are prevalent in promoting the tourism industry.

In order to deal with the cultural tourism, it is also necessary to determine who is a cultural tourist. The cultural tourists can easily be explained through the typology of cultural tourist developed by McKercher and Du Cros (2002) (Table 1).

**Table 1: THE TYPOLOGY OF CULTURAL TOURIST**

<b>Type of Cultural Tourist</b>	<b>Short Characterization</b>
The purposeful cultural tourists	<i>Cultural tourism is the primary motivation for visiting a destination and the tourists has a very deep and elaborate cultural experience</i>
The sightseeing cultural tourist	<i>Cultural tourism is a primary reason for visiting a destination, but the experience is less deep and elaborated</i>
The serendipitous cultural tourist	<i>A tourist who does not travel for cultural reasons, but who, after participating, ends up having a deep cultural tourism experience</i>
The casual cultural tourist	<i>Cultural tourism is a weak motive for travel and the resulting experience is shallow</i>
The incidental cultural tourist	<i>This tourist does not travel for cultural reasons, but nonetheless participates in some activities and has shallow experiences</i>

Source: Mc. Kercher and Du Cros, (2002)

The typology also suggests that cultural tourists can be totally, partially or incidentally be involved in cultural tourism or in culturally motivated activities. It is very difficult to categorize which tourists belong to which activities.

The research is based on a popular and contemporary cultural tourism, the Borneo Street Dance (BSD), which was organised by Ministry of Tourism Malaysia or MOTOUR (Sarawak, Sabah and WP Labuan). Its main purpose is to promote domestic tourism where the event attracts youth participation to serve as a platform for them to showcase their talents and creativity (New Sarawak Tribune, 2011a). Visitors to this event can be classified as both casual and incidental cultural tourists based on the typology in Table 1.

The event was conducted in the capital cities of Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan. Other objectives of MOTOUR in organizing the dance competition include creating awareness among the youth on functions and importance of the tourism industry, curbing immoral activities among young people by participating in such activities while promoting integration among the youth from different backgrounds (Borneo Post Online, 2011). The event was appropriately themed "Tourism Thru Dance" (Bernama, 2011).

Among various cultural tourism products, cultural events are able to provide valuable strategic option to tourism and government agencies as well as to corporations via sponsorship as marketing tool (Getz, 2004). MOTOUR (Sarawak, Sabah and WP Labuan) has successfully attracted various sponsorships for the BSD event, which not only promote their products but at the same time assisting the MOTOUR in promoting the tourism industry in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan.

The benefits of the events in tourism also highlighted in the literatures where it is suggested that proper development of events held as tourist attractions not only satisfy the curiosity of tourists who are temporary visitors to the place, but also contribute to the better quality of life of the local residents (Li, Huang & Cai, 2009) and thus, promoting the destination uniqueness and contributing to the overall destination marketing of Borneo region.

## **2.2 Borneo Street Dance**

Street dance refers to the term used to describe a variety of styles and dance moves made popular by teen or youth and is usually performed in public places such as streets, open areas, open fields, parks and others (Macmillan Dictionary, 2007).

On the other hand, street dance is also a physical activity that is characterized by motor coordination work of upper and lower limbs, choreographed acrobatic movements like jumps, and musicianship with strong beats (Gustavo *et al.*, 2011). Interestingly, street dance has gained popularity in schools, universities and the public especially among young people. It is believed that street dance is an emerging phenomenon. Borneo is well known with cultural and nature environment that could inspire people. This was in line with the statement that "Borneo's sunshine, vivid rainforest and laid-back attitude are the perfect ingredients for outdoor festivals" (Gregory, 2012). The uniqueness of Borneo can be seen through a festival that featured an element of inspiration and creativeness that provides opportunities to showcase their talents through events.

Moreover, in this modern world, youth are easily influenced by negative and unhealthy activities. Therefore, creating an innovative and creative entertainment such as dancing is the best method to attract them in joining such healthy event (New Sarawak Tribune, 2011b). Furthermore, according to Nikolaos, (2008) dancing is one of the basic motives for travelling. This indicates that cultural tourism could help to curb negative social ills among the youth besides promoting tourism. "Tourism thru Dance" has become the choice of the theme for Borneo Street Dance. This brings the combination between tourism and dance as a means of tourism promotion.

### **2.3 Tourism Thru Dance**

The theme for Borneo Street Dance was "Tourism thru Dance". In fact, dance performances are an important area of cultural tourism (Masete, 2004). This theme brought the meaning regarding to the local tourism that was highly participated by youths.

Furthermore, it is also inviting the youth to be involved in the promotion of domestic tourism indirectly and also able to educate them through dance competition. On the other hand, dance becomes a medium or tool by connecting itself to tourism. Jaya, (2007) points out that dance is a powerful medium that helps in creating and enhancing tourism.

"Tourism thru Dance" can also be another form of creative tourism rather than traditional cultural tourism. Creative tourism is based on experiencing, participating and learning (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). According to UNESCO, (2006) dances are one of the creative activities. This clearly shows that "Tourism thru Dance" can bring sustainable tourism to Borneo.

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Sampling and Instrument**

The objective of this research is to study the promotion of the domestic tourism through events where data and information would be based on the visitors' actual experiences through a survey by questionnaire. The main event of BSD was in the town of Kota Kinabalu, the capital city of Sabah, which is the chosen research site. Taking into account the ethnics differences in the groups profile and educational levels, the questionnaire developed was simple and easy to understand with minimum reading and writing. *Bahasa Malaysia* was used in the survey instruments, as potential respondents would be of various races and ethnics groups in Malaysia, who would understand the national language. The questionnaire was divided into seven major sections, A-G. Section A was designed using nominal scales focusing on the respondents' demographic profile like gender, age, ethnicity and education.

Four questions were used in Section B to draw answers from the respondents on how to promote domestic tourism while three items were in Section C to identify the beneficial activities through organizing such event. In order to gain insight on how to enable the youth to display their talent and creativity, two questions were designed for that purpose in Section D. Meanwhile, five questions in Section E were designed to probe the respondents to gain insights on how the event could build and foster the relationship amongst the youth. Two questions in Section F were designed to measure the racial integration amongst the Malaysians and four questions were designed in the final Section G to measure the federal government's

contributions. All sections required the respondents to indicate their level of agreement on Likert scales ranging from one (1) with "strongly disagree" to five (5) with "strongly agree".

### **3.2 Data Collection**

The survey was conducted during the Borneo Street Dance Competition event, which was held in Centre Point Shopping Mall Kota Kinabalu, Sabah. The visitors, mainly youths, were approached as respondents. Prior to answering the questionnaire, every respondent were briefed on the confidentiality and anonymity through the information sheet attached with the questionnaire. The survey garnered positive feedback and there were no obvious problems. At the end of the survey, 167 questionnaires were collected with 100% usability. The respondents were mainly 20 years old and below ( $n = 121$ ), while the rest were at the age bracket of 21 – 30 years old ( $n = 40$ ) and only 6 respondents were 31 years old and above. The questionnaires were coded and keyed using Social Statistical Package (SPSS) Version 16. The reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) was undertaken on Section B, C D, E and F separately and result showed that the instrument and items used was reliable with coefficient alpha value at 0.83 for section B, 0.87 for section C, 0.76 for section D, 0.88 for section E, 0.84 for section F and 0.90 for section G.

## **4.0 RESULT**

### **4.1 Characteristic of the Sample**

Out of 167 respondents, 52.1 percent ( $n = 87$ ) of were females as opposed 47.9 percent ( $n = 80$ ) males. 26.3 percent ( $n = 44$ ) were Malays, 20.4 percent ( $n = 34$ ) were *Kadazan/Dusun*, 18.0 percent ( $n = 30$ ) were Chinese, 1.2 percent ( $n = 2$ ) was Indian and 34.1 percent ( $n = 57$ ) were other ethnic groups. Samples also showed that 72.5 percent ( $n = 121$ ) of respondents were between 20 years old and below, 24.0 percent ( $n = 40$ ) who were between 21-30 years and 3.5 percent ( $n = 6$ ) were above 31 years old. The highest proportion of the respondents that accounted 92.2 percent ( $n = 154$ ) were among the singles and 7.8 percent ( $n = 13$ ) were married. As for the educational level, 48.5 percent ( $n = 81$ ) were secondary students, 46.7 percent ( $n = 78$ ) were university, polytechnic and college students, 2.4 percent ( $n = 4$ ) were primary and others 2.4 percent ( $n = 4$ ) students. Among these respondents 93.4 percent ( $n = 156$ ) were from Sabah, 4.2 percent ( $n = 7$ ) were from Sarawak, 0.6 percent ( $n = 1$ ) were from others state in Malaysia and 1.8 percent ( $n = 3$ ) were from Philippines and Korea.

A total of 77.2 percent ( $n = 129$ ) respondents came to this event with friends, 16.8 percent ( $n = 28$ ) came with family members and 6.0 percent ( $n = 10$ ) came alone. Majority of the respondents 82.0 percent ( $n = 137$ ) stayed at their own house, 7.8 percent ( $n = 13$ ) stayed at hotels and motels and 10.2 percent ( $n = 17$ ) stayed at the guesthouse during the event. 80.2 percent of the respondents ( $n = 134$ ) visited the event for one day and 19.8 percent ( $n = 33$ ) visited the event for more than one day.

In terms of experience, 45.0 percent of respondents ( $n = 75$ ) mentioned that they had never visited such event before while 55.1 percent ( $n = 92$ ) had visited similar event before. In terms of awareness, only 12.6 percent ( $n = 21$ ) of the respondents knew that such similar event had been organized before by different organizers and 16.8 percent ( $n = 28$ ) knew that MOTOUR is the organizer. The summary of the survey results is shown in Table 1 to Table 9.

**Table 1: Gender**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	80	47.9
Female	87	52.1

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 2: Ethnics**

<b>Ethnics</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Malays	44	26.3
Chinese	30	18.0
Indian	2	1.2
<i>Kadazandusuns</i>	34	20.4
Others	57	34.1

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 3: Age**

<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
20 and below	121	72.5
21-30	40	24.0
31 and above	6	3.5

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 4: Status**

<b>Status</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Single	154	92.2
Married	13	7.8

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 5: Educational level**

<b>Educational level</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Primary	4	2.4
Secondary	81	48.5
University/Polytechnic/ College	78	46.7
Others	4	2.4

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 6: Origin**

<b>Origin</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Sabah	156	93.4
Sarawak	7	4.2
Others	1	0.6
Foreign countries	3	1.8

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 7: Companion**

<b>Companion</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Alone	10	6.0
Friends	129	77.2
Family	28	16.8

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 8: Accommodation**

<b>Accommodation</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Hotel	6	3.6
Motel	7	4.2
Guesthouses	17	10.2
Home	137	82.0

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 9: Days of Visit**

<b>Days of visit</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Two days and above	33	19.8
One day	134	80.2

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

#### **4.2 Promoting Domestic Tourism**

The descriptive statistical analysis suggested that the majority of the respondents agreed that BSD would be able to attract the interest and participation of the youth and teenagers ( $M = 4.45$ ). The survey also suggested that the event was able to attract the youth's parents, family and friends as their supporters ( $M = 4.27$ ). It can be one of many activities that could enhance the current domestic tourism ( $M = 4.40$ ). This result is summarized in Table 10.

**Table 10: Promoting of Domestic Tourism**

<b>Items</b>	<b>M</b>
Organizing an event like this is able to attract interest and participation from the local youths and teenagers.	4.45
The organizing of this event is not only attracting the interest of the local youths and teenagers but also their parents, family and friends who come to support them.	4.27
Overall, the organizing of this event is a good way as a promotion to boost domestic tourism in this state.	4.40

Source: Borneo Street Dance, (2012)

#### **4.3 Benefits of the Event**

The survey suggested that the BSD could attract the youth's interest to occupy their free time ( $M = 4.43$ ) and create opportunity for the youth to communicate and socialize with the others ( $M = 4.43$ ) while potentially curbing social ills among the youth today ( $M = 4.42$ ). Furthermore, this event could help to highlight and develop hidden talents ( $M = 5.11$ ) and creativity among the youth ( $M = 4.57$ ). This result is summarized in Table 11 and 12, respectively.

**Table 11: Beneficial Activity**

<b>Items</b>	<b>M</b>
The organizing of this event can attract the local youths and teenagers' interest to fill their past times with useful activities.	4.43
The organizing of this event opened a space for the local youths and teenagers to communicate among each other.	4.43
The organizing of this event will benefit the youths and to curb the negative social among the local youths.	4.42

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 12: Talent and Creativity**

<b>Items</b>	<b>M</b>
The organizing of this event can polish the latent talent among the youths and teenagers in this state.	5.11
The organizing of this event allows the youths and teenagers to showcase their talent and creativity on the right platform.	4.57

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

The majority of the respondents agreed that this event could build and foster good relationship among the youth regardless of the differences in race, religion and background ( $M = 4.44$ ). On top of that, the respondents also suggested that the event could enable the youth to share and exchange their ideas and views with each other ( $M = 4.37$ ). Organizing this event could also create healthy competition among the youth ( $M = 4.40$ ) and creating a strong sense of friendship ( $M = 4.39$ ). This result is summarized in Table 13.

**Table 13: Build Relationship among the youths and Teenagers**

<b>Items</b>	<b>M</b>
The organizing of this event can build and foster relationships among the youths and teenagers regardless of race, religion and background.	4.44
The organizing of this event allows the youths and teenagers to share and exchange their views and ideas with each other.	4.37
The organizing of this event creates healthy competition among the youths and teenagers.	4.40
The organizing of this event creates a feeling camaraderie among the youths and teenagers.	4.39

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

The survey suggested that this event could create better integration among the youths and teenagers ( $M = 4.32$ ) and provides exposure to the diversity of ethnicities to the youth in Malaysia ( $M = 4.48$ ). As BSD is a joint event between the state of Sabah, Sarawak and the Federal Territory of Labuan, it is suggested that the event could foster tolerance and understanding about the diversity of ethnic groups among the youth in Sabah, Sarawak and



Labuan ( $M = 4.37$ ). Furthermore, this event may disclose ethnic diversity among BIMP-EAGA regions ( $M = 4.37$ ). This result is summarized in Table 14.

It is interesting to note that this event is one of the Federal Government’s contributions to the tourism industry under the Sabah State Ministry of Tourism Malaysia especially for the Malaysian Borneo region ( $M = 4.34$ ). Such event could assist in enhancing the state’s tourism image to the youth as a medium ( $M = 4.38$ ) and at the same time, it can open up a new dimension in domestic tourism through events ( $M = 4.36$ ). This event also can be used as an annual event to promote domestic tourism for Malaysian Borneo region ( $M = 4.41$ ). This result is summarized in Table 15.

**Table 14: Ethnic Integration**

<b>Items</b>	<b>M</b>
The organizing of this event can create inter-racial integration among the youths and teenagers.	4.32
The joint program organizing also allow the youths and teenagers exposed to ethnic diversity in the state of Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan F.T.	4.48
Through joint program organizing it also promotes tolerance and understanding of different ethnic groups among the youths and teenagers in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan F.T.	4.37
The organizing of this event may disclose ethnic diversity in the region of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines-East Asia Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA).	4.37

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

**Table 15: The Federal Government’s Contribution**

<b>Items</b>	<b>M</b>
The organizing of this event is one of the federal government’s contribution under the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia State Office to help develop the tourism industry in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan F.T.	4.34
The organizing of this event will help to raise the state’s tourism brand image and taking the youths and teenagers as a medium.	4.38
The organizing of this event will open a new dimension as an initiative to promote domestic tourism for the state of Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan F.T.	4.36
The organizing of this event can be used as an annual event to promote domestic tourism for the state of Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan F.T. among the young tourists.	4.41

Source: Borneo Street Dance (2012)

## **5.0 DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study clearly indicate that this event was able to attract interest and participation among the youth to fully utilize their free time and as a medium to display their

talents and creativity using the right platform. Such activities could minimize potential social ills that affected the youth today. Moreover, this event also could build and foster the relationship among the youth regardless of race, religion and background. Through this event, they were exposed to other ethnicities especially in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan and this could foster better understanding and tolerance among them. The federal government through the Ministry of Tourism will continue to organize and promote the Borneo Street Dance competition as an annual event mainly to promote domestic tourism especially within Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan among youth.

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