

DOES TECHNOLOGY AFFECT EVENT MANAGEMENT IN MALAYSIA? A CASE STUDY OF STAIR CLIMB SPORTING RACE

***Mazlina Mahdzar, Mohamad Hafizam Muhammaddin, Zaimm Zulhazziq Zulkivly Zulkepli**

Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Puncak Alam
42300 Bandar Puncak Alam, Selangor.

*Corresponding author's email: nina@salam.uitm.edu.my

Submission date: 15 July 2017

Accepted date: 30 Oct 2017

Published date: 30 Nov 2017

Abstract

This paper investigates and compares the effects of technology in event management in Malaysia, a case study of stair climb sporting race. In a multiracial society, male and female participation in sports have different in their decisions when it comes to pursue sporting events of interest. Generally, sport activities require physical strength and risk taking, thus attracting only male participation. This study is concerned with the gender differences and their experiences with the event and particularly on the use of technology. The quantitative approach has been employed to perform the statistical analysis relies on numerical evidence. The results reveal significant differences between the effects of technology and event management by gender on the stair climb race event. This study makes a significant contribution to the event management and technology's effects and adds contribution to the on going literature by comparing male and female gender. It also provides insights to the event operators in preparing strategies to tap the sporting events market.

Keywords: Technology, Event Management, Gender

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The definition of technology varies among researchers; hence, this further shows a need to be explicit about exactly what is meant by the word technology. Established studies have illustrated the dynamic nature of technology that has led to numerous definitions and concepts of technology which are closely related to technology transfer.

A considerable amount of literature has shown that the term technology has been notoriously hard to define (Reddy & Zhoa, 1990). Hence, it can be concluded that a generally accepted definition of technology is lacking. Blomstrom and Kokko (1998) states that the process of understanding and examining technology is very challenging considering that it is an inherently abstract notion. In relation to this, technology does not stand alone because it is a system that requires approaches and action to be closely associated with implements and artefacts, especially those concerning the organization framework in general.

Events is considered as an extremely reliable sector of the Malaysian economy, which further develops event management as one of the related occupations in the current era. The development of humankind has built and further enhanced the importance of events, which include its major economic – social – cultural role in business framework as well as outside sector. Event management is the design and coordination of an event. The whole purpose of event management is to supervise the plan and arrangement of an event, which can be realized by employing a management framework that further elaborates the five stages of event development (Yeoman et al., 2004). On top of that, events are important in the sense that one needs to be familiar and passionate about it. Therefore, the overall aim of this thesis is to contribute to the large and growing body of literature by attempting to achieve full understanding of the development of technology and examining the outcome of technology on event management in Malaysia, particularly concerning the perceptions on the related outcomes based on gender.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Event Technology

Widely varying definitions of the term technology have emerged from numerous established studies. The definition of technology has been a matter of ongoing discussion among scholars, and this terminological confusion has influenced the research design and results, including the deal relating to transfer and government guidelines (Reddy & Zhoa, 1990). Sahal (1981) elaborates that technology can act as ‘configuration’, which further suggests that technology is highly dependent on the assigned tasks and outcomes.

Events industry emerged as a powerful tool and has attracted considerable attention which has caused it to be largely expanded. Hence, events industry has a huge possibility to stand on its own without being associated with other fields such as tourism, hospitality, and sports. In addition, future modernized change plays a big role in assisting the growth of events development (Jago & Deery, 2010).

Furthermore, patrons tend to expect more outcomes such as social engagement and organizational value from attending an event. The current means of communication is largely influenced by technological advances which has made it broader and easier. The rapid development of technology plays a major role in human interaction; hence, it is crucial to be aware of its possibility in ensuring that event patrons are able to receive the best experience. This is especially important as it involves better social and technological transition, with the emphasis on various internal needs and external responsibilities (Talwar et al., 2010).

Unlike the conventional means of communication, the newly emerged communication tools and media have made it possible for event planners to engage easily with their patrons on network or the other way around. More interestingly, the use of social media, email, mobile, and other platforms enable the messages to be better delivered throughout the duration of the event. Several means that offer better experience for patrons to attend an event include online registration and management system which is more interactive and less time consuming. It is important to get familiarize with the patrons to ensure that the communication will get across and able to engage the patrons. On top of that, actual interaction at the event allows crucial information to be gathered in order to provide the best experience to the patrons. Social media is closely associated with event as it plays the biggest role in attracting more attention from targeted patrons.

2.2 Event Management

Northouse (2004) describes event success as achieving the desired, planned, or attempted outcomes following the organized event. In other words, every event has its own targeted outcomes; for example, if an event aims to collect benefits and it manages to do so during the event, only then the event is considered successful. A recent published study has examined the motivations, expectations, and career aspirations of graduates from festival and event management course from a post-92 university in Scotland. The interesting findings of the study expressed that the graduates were academically prepared for real-life work in the industry, but they are lacking the necessary practical skills (Barron & Knight, 2017). The emphasis of event management is on the whole process that takes place before, during, and after the implementation of the event. Meanwhile, successful event operations refer to the need of managing several critical issues including marketing, ticketing, budgeting, transportation/logistics, human resources, facilities and participant management, public relations, time management, and risk management (Kose, Argan, & Argan, 2011; Getz, 2008; Hales & Nightingale, 1986).

On top of that, event management acts as a value chain management that links the co-ordination of numerous suppliers and business partners which include information and booking services, accommodation, venues, catering, transportation, logistics, leisure activities and entertainment, and insurance companies (Soteriades & Dimou, 2011). Events have become a critical success factor for both destinations and tourism firms alike. More importantly, the success of destinations is strongly assisted by events in terms of increased number of visitors, better demand seasonality and visitor flow, strong destination development, and reinforced destination image (Soteriades & Dimou, 2011).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

The aim of research approach is to develop the methods and framework of a study, which involves broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Generally, there are three types of research approaches that are commonly employed by researcher in conducting their study, whereby the most suitable approach will be selected according to the objective of the study (Cresswell, 2003). This study uses a quantitative case study approach to investigate the objective of this study.

3.2 Instrument Development

This investigation takes the form of a case-study through the adoption of questionnaire in order to examine the effect of technology on the participants of stair climb event. The design of the questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section measures four items described as follows: (1) technology plays a huge role in event marketing, (2) appropriate technology is employed in the event, (3) efficient technology helps participants in paying fees via online means instead of cash, and (4) application of technology helps

participants to easily access the information about the event. In this section, a 5-point Likert scales were used with 1 being indicated as strongly disagree to 5 as strongly agree. Meanwhile, Section 2 accumulates the demographic details of the participants which include the information on gender, age, level of education, and nationality. The questionnaire was reviewed by a lecturer with expertise in tourism research to ensure that the expression of each item was clear and accurate. Following the review, minor changes were made to improve the clarity based on the suggestions provided.

3.3 Study Site and Sample

This study was conducted at UiTM Pucak Alam which is in the District of Kuala Selangor, Malaysia. The location of the study site is approximately 20 kilometres in the Northwest direction from Shah Alam known as the state capital of Selangor. UiTM Puncak Alam is one of the newest UiTM campuses that started its official operation on June 1, 2009. The campus covers an area of 1,085.75 acres which was designed to accommodate 20,000 students' surplus of UiTM Shah Alam campus. The study was carried out at the stairs of UiTM Puncak Alam and was named 'Step Up'. The calculation states that there are approximately 219 stairs from bottom to top.

The survey was conducted in May 2017. The sampling frame was a homogenous purposive sample of students who take part in the 'step-up' event. The targeted sample size for this study was 100 participants. According to Hill (1998), a total of 30 respondents or above and less than 500 is deemed adequate for all study. The questionnaire was distributed in the form of online survey (Google Form) which requires the participants to answer it after they have completed the 'step-up' event. However, only a total 91 respondents managed to complete the survey, which comprises of 42 males (53.88%) and 40 females (46.2%).

3.4 Data Analysis

Data management and analysis were performed using SPSS which is known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Apart from that, the descriptive analysis looks at the mean score and standard deviation obtained from the relationship between variables, which is then used to answer the research objectives. The independent t-test, an inferential statistical test that determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means in two unrelated groups is also applied in this study.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Results and Discussions

The result of this analysis has revealed several important findings. The first finding states that technology plays the biggest role in promoting this event. As indicated in Figure 1, higher mean values are detected

among female participants (4.73) compared to male participants (4.40) regarding their perceptions towards the use of technology in promoting Step-up event. The result indicates that female participants are more supportive regarding the role played by technology in promoting step-up event.

The second finding reveals that the participants agreed that the technologies used in this event are appropriate. The mean values of the participants' perception regarding the appropriate technology used in Step-up event are found to be higher among females (4.50) compared to male participants (3.98). This result seems to suggest that female participants tend to agree more with the utilisation of appropriate technology in step-up event.

The next finding of this study discloses that technology has helped the participants to pay the fees through online means instead of cash. Figure 1 illustrates higher mean values among female participants (4.67) than male participants (4.44) regarding their perceptions towards the practicality of technology to pay fees via online means instead of cash in Step-up event. This result suggests that female participants tend to agree more with the practicality of technology in step-up event.

The final finding of this study reveals that event application has been very helpful in providing an accessible platform to obtain information about the step-up event. As can be observed in Figure 1, the mean values of female participants (4.58) exceeds the male participants (4.30) in regard to their perceptions towards the ability of the application to provide an accessible mean to obtain information about Step-up event. This result further implies that female participants tend to better acknowledge that event application has helped them to obtain information about the step-up event.

4.2 Technology Perception Differences Based on Gender

An independent-samples t-test was employed to investigate the participants' perception between the gender. A statistically significant difference was detected for three factors which include "technology plays the biggest role in promoting step-up event" ($t=-2.379$, $p=.020$), "appropriate technology used in step-up event" ($t=-3.061$, $p=.003$), "pay fees via online means instead of cash" ($t=-2.009$, $p=.048$), and "finding information about step-up event" ($t=-1.888$, $p=.062$). Hence, it can be concluded that perception varied significantly based on gender ($p<0.05$). Overall, this result shows that there are different views among the two genders towards the adoption of technology in the event. Figure 2 represents the results of the Independent-sample t-test.

Figure 1

Descriptive Analysis

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Technology plays the biggest role in promoting this event	male	43	4.40	.821	.125
	female	48	4.73	.494	.071
There are an appropriate technology used in this event	male	43	3.98	.886	.135
	female	48	4.50	.744	.107

Technology helped us pay fees via online instead by cash	male	43	4.44	.502	.077
	female	48	4.67	.559	.081
Event application helped in finding information about step up event	male	43	4.30	.773	.118
	female	48	4.58	.647	.093

Figure 2
Independent T-Test

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
technology plays the biggest role in promoting this event	Equal variances assumed	8.439	.005	-2.379	89	.020	-.334	.140	-.613	-.055
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.318	67.374	.024	-.334	.144	-.621	-.046
there are an appropriate technology used in this event	Equal variances assumed	.344	.559	-3.061	89	.003	-.523	.171	-.863	-.184
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.032	82.412	.003	-.523	.173	-.867	-.180
technology helped us pay fees via online instead by cash	Equal variances assumed	.217	.642	-2.009	89	.048	-.225	.112	-.447	-.002
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.021	88.997	.046	-.225	.111	-.446	-.004
event application helped in finding information about step up event	Equal variances assumed	.553	.459	-1.888	89	.062	-.281	.149	-.577	.015
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.869	82.308	.065	-.281	.150	-.580	.018

5.0 IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

The main goal of the current study was to determine the difference in perceptions between males and females on the effects of technology adopted in event management in Malaysia, particularly concerning a case study of step-up event. A large number of published studies have expressed different perceptions between males and females regarding the use of technology (Brown, 2016). In general, females have shown to possess more favourable attitude towards the use of technology compared to males, especially on the practicality of technology in promoting this event, adoption of appropriate technology for the event, payment of fees via online means instead of cash, and the efficiency of event application in helping

participants to obtain information about the step-up event. These findings indicated that females tend to possess higher level of attitude towards the use of technology compared to males.

However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous research. For example, Chen and Tsai (2007); Johnson (2011); and Price (2006) have provided the evidence that is contrary to the conclusion of the present study. On the other hand, several established studies have reported that males tend to possess more positive attitudes towards the use of technology in comparison to females (e.g., Chou, Wu, & Chen, 2011; Hasan, 2010; Jackson; Kay, 2009; Kesici, Sahin, & Akturk, 2009). Furthermore, a few past studies did not find any gender differences regarding the attitudes towards the use of technology (e.g., Imhof, Vollmeyer, & Beierlein, 2007; North & Noyes, 2002).

Technology has changed events and have a strong influence on the event industry. Therefore, the findings of this study may provide insight for future event organisers on the importance of technology, especially how it influences participants' expectations as well as how it can be utilised to create a winning event for both the organiser and the attendee. There are various benefits of event technology to event organizing which include the important role of social media in attracting more attendance, brand recognition, and loyalty, which is believed to add to the current knowledge of event marketing in both theoretical and practical way. On top of that, event organisers can utilised this knowledge to invite, outreach, and promote events. Apart from that, it is also beneficial in generating exposure, excitement, buzz, and participation support. Overall, it can be the most cost effective and efficient way for event organizers to market their event.

However, it is important to acknowledge the downsides to technology in determining the success of an event. In this case, the use of technology such as the Internet allows opinions, reviews, and interactions to be made public, which further emphasize the need to maintain a good reputation online in ensuring the success of an event. Finally, it is also important to surround an event brand with positive conversation, content, and human interaction.

References

- Barron, P., & Ali-Knight, J. (2017). Aspirations and progression of event management graduates: A study of career development. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 30, 29-38.
- Blomstrom, M., & Kokko, A. (1998). Multinational Corporations and Spillovers. *Journal of Economic Surveys*, 12(3), 247-77. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-6419.00056>
- Brown, E. (2016). *Obama outlines \$4 billion "Computer Science for All" education plan*. Washington Post https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/obama-outlines-4-billion-computer-science-for-all-education-plan/2016/01/29/3ad40da2-c6d9-11e5-9693-933a4d31bcc8_story.html
- Chen, R.S., & Tsai, C.C. (2007). Gender differences in Taiwan university students' attitudes toward web-based learning. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 10(5), 645-654.

- Chou, C., Wu, H.-C., & Chen, C.-H. (2011). Re-visiting college students' attitudes toward the Internet-based on a 6-T model: Gender and grade level difference. *Computers and Education*, 56(4), 939-947.
- Colley, A., & Comber, C. (2003). Age and gender differences in computer use and attitudes among secondary school students: What has changed? *Educational Research*, 45(2), 155-165.
- Collis, B. A., & Williams, R. L. (2001). Cross-cultural comparison of gender differences in adolescents' attitudes toward computers and selected school subjects. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 81(1), 17-27.
- Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Durndell, A., & Haag, Z. (2002). Computer self-efficacy, computer anxiety, attitudes towards the Internet and reported experience with the Internet, by gender, in an East European sample. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 18(5), 521-535.
- Durndell, A., Laithwaite, H., & Haag, Z. (2000). *Computer self-efficacy and gender: A cross cultural study of Scotland and Romania. Personality and Individual Differences*, 28(6), 1037-1044.
- Getz, D. (2008). Event tourism: Definition, evolution, and research. *Tourism management*, 29(3), 403-428.
- Hales, C., & Nightingale, M. (1986). What are unit managers supposed to do? A contingent methodology for investigating managerial role requirements. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 5(1), 3-11.
- Hasan, B. (2010). Exploring gender differences in online shopping attitude. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26(4), 597-601.
- Hill, R. (1998). What sample size is "enough" in internet survey research. *Interpersonal Computing and Technology: An electronic journal for the 21st century*, 6(3-4), 1-12.
- Imhof, M., Vollmeyer, R., & Beierlein, C. (2007). Computer use and the gender gap: The issue of access, use, motivation, and performance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 23(6), 2823-2837.
- Jackson, L. A., Ervin, K. S., Gardner, P. D., & Schmitt, N. (2001). Gender and the Internet: Women communicating and men searching. *Sex Roles*, 44(5e6), 363-379.
- Jago, L. and Deery, M. (2010), *Delivering Innovation, Knowledge and Performance: The Role of Business Events*, Business Events Council of Australia, Melbourne.
- Johnson, R. D. (2011). Gender differences in E-learning: Communication, social presence, and learning outcomes. *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, 23(1), 79-94.
- Kay, R. H. (2009). Examining gender differences in attitudes toward interactive classroom communications systems (ICCS). *Computers and Education*, 52(4), 730-740.

- Kesici, S., Sahin, I., & Akturk, A. O. (2009). Analysis of cognitive learning strategies and computer attitudes, according to college students' gender and locus of control. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 25(2), 529-534.
- Kose, H., Argan, M. T., & Argan, M. (2011). Special event management and event marketing: A case study of TKBL all star 2011 in Turkey. *Journal of Management and Marketing Research*, 8, 1.
- Lockstone-Binney, L., & Junek, M. R. A. O. (2013). Emerging knowledge and innovation in event management. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, 4(3).
- North, A. S., & Noyes, J. M. (2002). Gender influences on children's computer attitudes and cognitions. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 18(2), 135-150.
- Northouse, P. G. (2004). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ong, C.-S., & Lai, J.-Y. (2006). Gender differences in perceptions and relationships among dominants of e-learning acceptance. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 22(5), 816-829.
- Price, L. (2006). Gender differences and similarities in online courses: Challenging stereotypical views of women. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 22(5), 349-359.
- Reddy, N. M., & Zhao, L. (1990). International Technology Transfer: A Review. *Research Policy*, 19, 285-307. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0048-7333\(90\)90015-X](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0048-7333(90)90015-X).
- Sahal, D. (1981). Alternative Conceptions of Technology. *Research Policy*, 10, 2-24. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0048-7333\(81\)90008-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0048-7333(81)90008-1).
- Soteriades, M. D., & Dimou, I. (2011). Special events: A framework for efficient management. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 20(3-4), 329-346.
- Talwar, R., Hancock, T., Yeomans, G. and Padgett, P. (2010), “*Convention 2020: the future of exhibitions, meetings and events*”, fastfuture.com, available at: www.fastfuture.com.
- Yeoman, I. & Robertson, M. & Ali-Knight, J. & Drummond, S. & McMahon-Beattie U. (2004). *Festival and events management an international arts and culture perspective*, Publishing House Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.