



Efforts in Promoting the Cultural Event “*Pesta Damas*” in Kinabatangan, Sabah

Abdul Karim Kiflee^a, Muhammad Dannial Bin Abdul Mutalib^a,
Siti Audadi Maradhia Binti Amir^a, Lau Ai Kee^a
and Shaik Azahar Bin Shaik Hussain^{a*}

^a Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Malaysia.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/102395>

Original Research Article

Received: 08/05/2023

Accepted: 11/07/2023

Published: 25/07/2023

ABSTRACT

This research focuses on the efforts in promoting the cultural event *Pesta Damas* in Kinabatangan, Sabah. *Pesta Damas* was an annual event held and organised by the Sabah Association of Bangsa Sungai (SABAS). An effort to promote this cultural event is needed to be done holistically. The association needed more private and nongovernmental organisations' (NGOs) involvement. This study aims to highlight the promotional effort that can be made to promote the cultural event and to analyse the importance of the involvement from the private sector and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). In addition, to suggest a strategic way to get a sponsor and promote from private and corporate organisations for this event. This study used methodological techniques involving a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews with informants from SABAS. The findings show that the promotional effort, such as using different social media platforms and promotion

*Corresponding author: E-mail: shazahar@unimas.my;

campaigns broadcast media with the help of the private sector and nongovernmental organisations, can promote this event widely. Overall, this research can help improve the promotional effort of the *Pesta Damas* in the future.

Keywords: *Efforts; Kinabatangan; promotion; cultural event; Pesta Damas; Sabah.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Pesta Damas is a cultural event organised and held by the Sabah Association of Bangsa Sabah (SABAS). *Damas* means a traditional boat for the Sungai ethnic group, which has become a main means of transportation for them to earn a living for generations. The main purposes of these events are to introduce Sungai's ethnic culture to the local community, especially to the young people from the ethnic group. *Pesta Damas* was first held in 2015 and then became an annual event. This event is usually held in September in Sukau, Kinabatangan. There are a lot of events in *Pesta Damas*, such as the decorated boat competition, traditional costumes, traditional dance, traditional music, and an exhibition of houses, clothes, and traditional handicrafts. *Pesta Damas* is a new and unique tourism product in Sabah. This event had help from governmental agencies such as MOTAC and Tourism Malaysia. Additionally, a cultural event is an event that not only preserves culture but also promotes the culture to local and foreign tourists [1].

Efforts to preserve the culture of the Sungai ethnic in the state of Sabah have been carried out by the Sabah Association of Bangsa Sungai (SABAS). Therefore, the involvement of various parties is needed to promote this cultural festival. In addition, according to Muhamma [2], in a published article, efforts to promote culture-based products must be made holistically with the cooperation of government departments and agencies. Efforts to preserve the culture of the Sungai people through the *Pesta Damas* require support in promotion and sponsorship. Moreover, according to Muhamma [2], more private and corporate companies hope to sponsor and promote more cultural programs. Therefore, *Pesta Damas* needs support in sponsorship and promotion to raise the event in Kinabatangan, Sabah.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The initial goal of this study is to discover the potential promotional efforts that can be made by SABAS toward the cultural event '*Pesta Damas*'

in Kinabatangan, Sabah. Next is to analyse the importance of the corporate sector and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) in promoting this event. Finally, this research recommends a strategy for obtaining sponsorship and promotion from private and corporate groups for '*Pesta Damas*'.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher use a literature review to gather all the information or data related to the topic. *Pesta Damas* is a Sabah Association of Bangsa Sabah (SABAS) annual event. Moreover, this event consists of traditional costumes & music competitions [3]. The "*Pesta Damas*" highlighted the expressions of local culture, especially orang sungai culture, with most of the activities originating in this custom. In addition, Kunjuran, Hussin, & Che Aziz [4] mention that *Pesta Damas* can be considered cultural aids for preserving cultural traditions, particularly for the orang Sungai tradition.

Cultural events such as *Pesta Damas* can significantly influence economic and cultural growth. Furthermore, Bob, Swart, Gouden, Gumedde, and Nkambule (2019) demonstrate the effects of celebrations and events on neighbourhood economic growth and residents' quality of life. These are critical activities for identifying cultural traits and interests and acting as a marketing catalyst for locations. According to academic documentation on promoting an event by Muhamma [2], cultural-based product promotion must be done holistically. These issues require the attention and cooperation of the corporate sector and nongovernmental organisations (NGOs). This relevance to it is intended that more private and corporate organisations would finance and promote cultural programmes such as *Pesta Damas*. [2].

Conforming to Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat [5], promotion is any action made to promote or increase the sale of a product. In comparison, Belch and Belch [6] define promotion as the coordination of all seller-initiated efforts to establish channels of information and persuasion to sell goods and services or promote an idea.