

**DEVELOPING AN EVENT SAFETY RISK TYPOLOGY: A
QUALITATIVE STUDY OF RISK PERCEPTION AMONGST EVENT
PLANNERS AND VENUE MANAGERS IN MALAYSIA**

by

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Abstract

This study explored the significance of risk and safety and the need for proper operating procedures in identifying the link between the types and categories of event safety related risks from the perception of event planners and venue managers within the event management industry in Malaysia. Event management is an emerging profession in need of methodical tools to ensure the success and safety of all stakeholders within this field. Despite a plethora of literature confirming that risk and safety is fundamental in event planning and management, a thorough literature review has exposed the insufficiency of research within general risk and safety management areas and, more specifically, the lack of research relating to event risk management and safety. This empirical investigation started by exploring the concept of risk and risk perception and adapts this approach in the field of event management. This has been taken in order to investigate the perceptions of event/venue managers in Malaysia towards risks and safety issues in planning and managing events. Due to the lack of empirical studies in this area, a qualitative exploratory case study approach using semi-structured interviews has been conducted aiming at exploring the importance of this topic, and identifying (and justifying) several important themes within the research context. The sample participants were recruited based on purposive and snowballing sampling technique comprising 33 event/venue managers from various event related organisations in Malaysia. The data were analysed using both inductive and deductive approaches by adopting a typology outlined in the literature. A pragmatic approach of thematic analysis focusing on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour has been adopted. A post positivist paradigm with the use of a reflexive approach in analysing data in that the researcher became an important instrument of analysis for the research. The findings identify seven major themes focusing on important types of risks associated with the safety of event employees and event attendees from a Malaysian perspective. These safety risk categories known as: crowd safety and crowd control; technical and logistics hazards; alcohol-related risks; security risks and issues; environmental health and safety; financial risks and insurances and; emergency services. Thus, this research attempts to enhance the current understanding of Malaysian event risk management practice by proposing a generic

typology focusing on important risk factors based on a Malaysian perspective. The empirical outcome in the form of an event safety risk typology answered the need for an analytical tool in order to improve the management of risk and safety within the event management domain, and also provided an avenue for further research within this emerging field.

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1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Setting the Scene

Event risk management and safety is one of the most important pillars in the multi-disciplinary nature of event management and planning (Tarlow, 2002; Silvers, 2005; Fallon and Sullivan, 2005; Silvers, 2008; Mallen and Adams, 2008; Robson, 2008; Jennings and Lodge, 2009). Being a lecturer and Head of Program for an undergraduate program of Bachelor in Events Management (Hons) at Universiti Teknologi Mara Malaysia exposed me to the nature and multi-disciplinary tasks of planning and managing events.

Prior to the establishment of the program in July 2006, few lecturers had completed the industrial attachment program to make themselves aware of the event management industry in Malaysia. During a tenancy of over six months between June 2005 and January 2006 I was attached to three different event organisations in Malaysia: Tourism Malaysia, Tiga Events (a subsidiary of TV3 Malaysia) and Pak Ngah Productions. During the attachment, I was directly involved in planning and organising various types of special events such as Citrawarna Malaysia 2005, National Day Parade, Closing Ceremony of Malaysian Independence Month, 12 Girls Band and Peter Pan concerts, Disney World on Ice Tour in Kuala Lumpur and ‘Jom Heboh’ carnivals in Kuantan, Pahang and Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur. It was from these experiences that I noticed that most event management organisations involved did not take measures towards risk and safety issues, especially in their planning stages. In other words, the risk and safety aspects have not been taken seriously by the various parties involved. It was the moment that first triggered me to investigate this specific area of inquiry.

The initial work towards writing a research proposal later found that there is a significant gap in addressing risk and safety issues in the field of event management. Silvers

(2005) acknowledged that there is a scarcity of information available in the event management literature regarding this aspect. Nevertheless I have to agree with Fallon and Sullivan's (2005) view that due to its nature, there is no best practice for managing risks at events. Moreover, this study will also attempt to set minimum standard requirements in terms of risk and safety for major events organised in the country. Fortunately, the preliminary study has justified the importance of this subject matter from the eyes of event practitioners themselves.

1.1.2 Reported Safety Incidents and Accidents in Malaysia

The literature has confirmed that risk and safety is fundamental in the event management discipline, however, it was also important to put the Malaysian context in this research. The area of inquiry in this study was regarded as scant from this specific domain. According to Abbott and Geddie (2001) the need for research in this risk and safety area can be found in the potential that events possess for personal harm and the legal and other costs (including the cost of goodwill) associated with such harm. Malaysia has been fortunate in the sense that no major disaster has been recorded resulting from any event and tourism activities. But according to Mykletun (2011), the absence of serious adverse events during the event operations does not present a firm evidence of the effectiveness of a festival risk management regime in this country. The positive effects observed might also have happened by chance, or otherwise be the result of experienced organisers and successful management (*ibid*, 2011).

Based on this argument, the researcher had undertaken to identify whether such incidents have ever been recorded in this area (and within this particular domain). An electronic search in the Malaysia newspapers databases has produced several such cases. Various newspaper articles were also examined and searches on websites undertaken to obtain further evidence and reported safety incidents pertained to the event management industry in Malaysia. The first and most serious disaster was the Bright Sparklers fireworks disaster in 1991 that killed 26 people and injured more than 100 victims. In that incident, the Bright Sparklers fireworks factory in Sungai Buloh, Selangor caught fire and caused a huge explosion. The government

immediately set up an inquiry into the tragedy and the findings reported that the company management breached the statutory regulations and rules of the country through the installation of the firework factory on agricultural land, and operated the factory without manufacturing licenses and some other misconducts (Shaluf et al., 2002). There was also another fireworks incident related to the 2006 New Year celebration at Bintulu Explanade in Sarawak that caused injury to 26 spectators, with 13 of them having to be hospitalised. It was reported that the cause of that accident was the technical failure during the launching of one of the fireworks which exploded on the ground (Bernama, 2006).

The biggest high profile safety incident that made the news and headlined worldwide was the death of Marco Simoncelli from a horrific crash at the Malaysian Motorbike Grand Prix in Sepang International Circuit on 23rd October 2011. The accident occurred on the race track in which Simoncelli's bike veered across the track into the path of two other riders resulting in him having severe injuries and being pronounced dead in less than an hour after the accident (BBC, 2011). The investigation of the tragedy concluded that it was the result of motor racing activity rather than the failure of safety and risk management procedures. But the same circuit has also recently seen another fatality on 21st September 2013 that caused tragic deaths to a young rider and a race marshal. The incident happened during the final practice session when the rider suddenly lost control of his bike and crashed onto the race marshal. The chief executive officer of Sepang International Circuit was quick to deny any negligence and stressed that the incident was a result of racing activity and claimed that it has been endorsed by the Federation of International Motorcycling (FIM) (Malaysiakini, 2013).

Another safety incident took place last year during the National Youth Day celebration in which a drag race crash resulted in four men between the ages of 18 to 30 sustaining injuries and being hospitalised. In the incident the car involved in the drag race event crashed into the safety barricade and climbed onto the divider hitting some spectators (Malaysiandigest, 2012). The incident was obviously an act of negligence from the carnival organiser in terms of crowd handling as they themselves admitted that those spectators were in

fact not supposed to be on that side. There was also another minor incident in which a paratrooper was injured when he landed on a drain during the closing ceremony for a Road Transport Department event in Ayer Molek, Malacca (Utusan, 2011).

There were several safety incidents involving crowd control and crowd safety for some sporting events and musical concerts in Malaysia. There were rioting incidents that happened occasionally during football matches and concerts, such as football riots between Selangor vs. Kelantan on 7th April 2009 and between Terengganu and Negeri Sembilan on 27th September 2011. There were also crowd incidents on concerts, among them the Indonesian Pop Concert and “12 hours concert” at Bukit Kiara Equestrian Resort Indoor Arena in 2008. These incidents involved riots and uncontrolled crowd behaviour. But it was fortunate that until now, none of the incidents reported any fatalities, with most cases only involving injuries that sometimes needed hospitalisation.

On the other hand, there were numerous safety incidents that happened worldwide, one of the most famous ones reported by Helbing and Mukerji (2012) was the Berlin Love Parade in 2010 which killed 21 music fans and injured more than 500. There were other safety disasters in events listed by Mykletun (2011) such as Roskilde festival reported by Fuglehaug (2005), where nine people died of suffocation because of crowding during concert performance. Solbraekke (2000), cited in Mykletun (2011), meanwhile reported two safety incidents in musical events, first in Cincinnati, Ohio where 11 of the crowd died in a concert by “The Who” and secondly in Minsk, Russia which killed 54 spectators during a concert performance by “Mango Mango”. The biggest safety disaster maybe was the one that occurred in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Grosvold (2010), cited in Mykletun (2011), highlighted that panic and crowding was the main reason for the 345 fatalities and 410 injured crowd which attended that event. Hence, all these safety incidents and disasters that happened all around the world were clear evidence that emphasised the significance of risk and safety in the organisation of successful events.

All the above incidents were hard evidence that risk and safety was indeed a major concern for the event management industry including the Malaysian domain (refer figure 1.1). In addition to these high profile disasters, there are likely to have been many more incidents and near misses that were unreported or did not receive as much media coverage (especially on large scale government events as media is comparatively tightly controlled by the government in the country). Such incidents and near misses have the potential to develop into something much more serious and tragic. These are avoidable if lessons from past disasters are learned properly, hence, the purpose of this study is to improve the risk and safety management and practice.



Figure 1.1: Map of Malaysia

1.2 Event Management Introduction

Events and festivals have been extensively promoted as a valuable form of tourism, providing a productive approach to regional development, particularly since the 1990s (Dimmock and Tiyce, 2001). The industry is global in its reach and an extensive generator of tourism for the host communities and countries (Bowdin, et al., 2011). Though there is little available international data on the special event sector, global statistics indicate an escalating growth rate (Hede, 2007). However, it was only during the 1980s and 1990s that certain seminal

events set the pattern for the contemporary event industry of today (Allen et al., 2005; Mair and Whitford, 2013). In recent decades or more, event management has shifted from being a field of dedicated and resourceful amateurs to one of trained and skilled professionals. There now exists a much greater body of research, and a larger number of academic conferences, courses and texts in this developing field. An ever increasing body of knowledge is developing around the structuring and functioning of events, the processes involved, and how they can be enhanced, leveraged and evaluated (Allen et al., 2005).

Events and festivals including the MICE (Meetings, Incentives and Travels) industry have become important catalysts for the emergence of the tourism industry as one of the major revenue generating businesses in Malaysia (Freydouni, 2010). The fact that events and festivals in Malaysia attract tourists is well established (Yusof et al., 2009). Prominent examples include the Formula One Grand Prix, 1998 Commonwealth Games, 2007 OIC Conference (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation), 13th Non-Aligned Movement Summit, 10th Islamic Summit Conference 2003, XVIII FIGO World Congress of Gynaecology and Obstetrics 2006, 17th Congress of Commonwealth Education Ministers 2009. The government has recently identified the need to establish Malaysia as a leading business tourism destination globally, and plans to increase business tourism arrivals from five percent to eight percent of overall tourist arrivals, which translates to an increase from the current average of 1.2 million to 2.9 million by the year 2020 (ICCA, 2010). In 2012, Malaysia attracted 25 million international tourists, hence, 2014 has been declared as “Visit Malaysia Year” with a target of 28 million tourists, while 2015 was declared as the ‘Year of Festivals’ (Ping et al., 2013). Thus, the event management industry has grown significantly to become an important sector within the country’s tourism realm. Consequently, the focus of this study is vital in the sense that any calamities at events and festivals hosted in Malaysia will become a disaster for the country’s rise as a popular event location and business tourist attraction.

Prior to the study, the researcher made several online searches related to private and public event organisations in Malaysia and none of the websites referenced any items relating to event safety and risks. For the most part, websites focused solely on marketing upcoming events and the development of company profiles leaving safety risk management to be provided by venue providers such as convention centres, hotels, stadiums and so forth. By way of contrast, there is more evidence of good practice in event safety and risks in event organisations based in the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. Most of these organisations have their own published guide and manuals pertaining to the safety and risks involved in handling events. Compared to Malaysia, Western society reveals a cultural desire to tame chance and effect security through institutions increasingly organised around risk management (Garland, 2003). Furthermore, legislation regulates these organisations and actively promotes a more responsible approach to the safety of event attendees and organisation employees. It shows the contrast between Malaysian context and the approach to best practice in the UK as illustrated by The Event Safety Guide by HSE; Risk Assessment by North East England Festivals and Events toolkit, AF&E Exeter City Council's Health and Safety policies, Music Not Mayhem Safeconcerts which reflect a range of risk management policies and safety guidelines in the UK.

As there is a lack of studies related to the event industry, this study has initially been inspired by the process approach to project risk management in construction project management used by Greene (2000), drawing on that study's approach/method to investigate the safety risk issues associated with the perceptions and practices of event practitioners based within a Malaysian context. Evans (2009) also highlighted the need for an industry perspective in this focused area of investigation. In addressing an organisationally-based problem (in this particular case the problem of event safety risk management), an understanding of the context in which the research takes place is vital (Frosdick, 1999). The unique feature of this research is that it will only focus specifically on Malaysian event planners and venue managers involved in the Malaysian event industry. This context will therefore yield a specifically Malaysian cultural

perspective. This is significant for as Frosdick (1999) has observed, cultural analysis has an important role to play in the study of management in general, including the management of public safety and order.

This project is based on research into the multi-disciplinary nature of event management and focuses on event safety risk aspect as its specific area of enquiry. The study investigates the Malaysian event practitioners by specifically focusing on event planners' and venue managers' perspectives and practices regarding this issue. No prior research has addressed this subject matter from a Malaysian point of view. The purpose of this study is to explore the risks and safety issues from the perspectives of event management planners and venue managers involved within the Malaysian event management industry. In this context, this study explores the link between the types and categories of event safety related risks from the perception of event/venue managers and other event practitioners within the Malaysian event management industry.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Event risk management, safety, and security planning are complex and collaborative processes that involve various experts and vendors from multiple fields who need to work closely with the event manager to create safe, secure, and successful events (Singh et al., 2007). The lack of risk management study on safety in event management is an important aspect (Robson, 2009). Specific legislation in the form of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 does not address these safety issues. Hence, it is important to ascertain the level of awareness among event planners and venue managers towards the act, as the law is of course useless unless it is seen to be enforced.

Based on the above scenario, it is suggested that inadequate management of risk by the event planners and venue managers may be a major source of problems in event project management. The reason for a lack of attention to this matter may be because risks might only

exist in our scholarly knowledge through speculation (dire predictions of the future), that is, they might or might not actually occur (Toohey and Taylor, 2008). Therefore, this research is an exploratory investigation into the perceptions of event planners and venue managers on risk and safety issues pertaining to the planning and execution of an event project.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose/aim of this study is to explore the risk and safety issues from the perspectives of event planners and venue managers involved within the Malaysian event management industry.

The proposed outcome of this study is to develop a typology on important risk factors by investigating the risk perceptions on risk and safety issues faced by event/venue managers in Malaysia.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives are:

- (i) To critically review and understand the concept of risk and risk perception and adapt this approach in the field of event management;
- (ii) To investigate the perceptions of event/venue managers in Malaysia towards risks and safety issues in planning and managing events;
- (iii) To identify and examine the types of risks associated with the safety of event employees and attendees and,
- (iv) To propose a typology of risk categories by identifying significant risk factors faced by the event practitioners in the Malaysian event management industry.

1.5 Overview of Research Methodology

1.5.1 Qualitative Research

It has been argued that qualitative methods played a significant role in British leisure research from its beginning in the 1970s (Veal, 2006). Hence, the nature of leisure research was more suitable for qualitative methods according to the opinion of Kraus and Allen (1998, p.36) who stated that: “in such an individualistic and diversified field as recreation and leisure, there ought to be a place for research of a more deeply probing, intuitive, or philosophical nature”. As there is typically a scarcity of literature available in relation to the area of study, this research project undertook a qualitative approach with event planners and venue managers from various types of Malaysian event related organisations. Qualitative data are generally expressed in the form of words and provide a means for developing a deeper understanding of a particular phenomenon within a specific context (Mallen and Adams, 2008). Creswell (2009, p.201) interprets qualitative frameworks as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting”.

As there is a lack of theory and past research into this topic generally, including none from the Malaysian perspective, the researcher undertook a preliminary study to gather primary data for the identification of the problems. These preliminary interviews with event practitioners were important to gather the primary data based on the respondents’ experience in the industry particularly on events’ risk and safety issues as well as to investigate the views and perceptions from the industry point of view. In this preliminary phase, the researcher carried out semi-structured face to face and telephone interviews with a total of six event practitioners/planners. To be precise, three respondents were from private event management companies, two were from government event management agencies and one from an event venue provider. The overall description of the qualitative approach for this study is illustrated in Appendix X.

1.5.2 Methods

A pragmatic approach of thematic analysis focusing on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour has been adopted. The procedure for performing a thematic analysis outlined by Aronson (1994) was implemented, focused on the typology of risk categories identified by Allen et al. (2002) and Fallon and Sullivan (2005). The researcher also paid particular attention to new and emerging themes from the analysed data. Over the course of reading the interview transcripts, the researcher analysed the statements that reflected the respondents' views and actions. There were some cases in the transcription stage when it was necessary to add words in order to make sense of a sentence or phrase. However this editing process has been done with the intention that the meaning was not changed. At least one quote or translated quote from each participant transcribed interview has been included in these analyses. The preliminary findings were used to further expand the interview schedule for the main study and also develop the conceptual framework used throughout the study.

The interview scripts were analysed using constant comparison methods. This method was originally developed for use in grounded theory methodology, however it is now applied more widely as a method of analysis in qualitative research (Janesick, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). It requires the researcher to take one piece of data (one interview or one theme) and compare it to all other pieces of data that are either similar or different. This method of analysis is inductive as the researcher begins to examine data critically and draw new meaning from the data (Dye et al., 2000).

Sampling for this qualitative study was purposive and sought to achieve maximum variation in relation to types of event related organisations represented by the informants. The researcher was required to actively select the most productive sample to answer the research question and this strategy was based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area and the available literature and evidence from the study itself.

1.6 Thesis Structure

There are seven chapters of this thesis including this introductory chapter. All the chapters are briefly described below:

Chapter one give an introductory background to the study focusing on how the scene has been set for this research project. The significance and importance of the chosen area of investigation has been explained by explicitly outlining the purpose and objectives of the study. The chapter also addresses the gap in the literature on risk and safety aspect for the event management industry, especially from a Malaysian context. An overview of the research methodology is also described in this chapter. The whole thesis has been structured by the use of headings and sub-headings to provide additional focus points for all the topics/sub-topics and themes/sub-themes discussed throughout.

Chapter two explains the literature background for the study on risk and safety within the event management scenario that originally emerged from the realm of tourism. This chapter also presents significant literature on risk studies, including the concept of risk and risk assessment as well as risk management, with special emphasise on the risk perception context as the major focus for this study. There is also some discussion on the legislation and litigation aspects of risk and safety within the Malaysian domain. The conceptual model of the event risk and safety framework is presented at the end of this second chapter.

Chapter three explains the details of the research methodology adopted for this study by outlining all the procedures from the initial proposal phase until up to the final stage of data analysis. The ontological and epistemological stance of this study is highlighted with a post positivist stance as the study's main philosophical assumptions. The exploratory nature using both inductive and deductive approach entails the justification for choosing the qualitative approach. The final part of this chapter details out all the necessary ethical procedures undertaken in both data collection stages.

Chapter four starts by presenting the initial findings found at the pilot phase in which the identified key themes emerged from the pilot data, which later explored in the main data collection phase. The preliminary findings justified the importance of this area of inquiry and were used to answer all the research objectives outlined in chapter one. It also signifies the importance of the pilot study towards the more in-depth undertakings at the main stage – presented at the second part of this chapter. Brief descriptions on the background of participants focusing on their experiences and social backgrounds were also presented here. Among important themes regarding risk and safety emerged in this chapter were negligence and ignorance attitudes, taking a reactive rather than a proactive stance, lack of government initiatives, priorities and enforcements, tension between cost of risk and profitability, and divided responsibilities among various parties organising events.

Chapter five marks the beginning of a different dimension for the findings and discussions of this study, in the sense that it provides an empirical finding on important risk factors/categories related to the safety aspect as perceived by the research participants. These risk categories were used as sources for the risk and hazards identification, and the development of an event safety risk typology for the Malaysian event management industry. But there were only three major important themes discussed in this chapter which is related to the crowd safety and crowd control, alcohol related risk and the technical and logistics hazards.

Chapter six is actually an extension of the findings and discussions started in chapter five, due to the lengths and complexity of each risk factor which emerged from the sample data. The risk identification process continues in this chapter by the discussion of the remaining major important themes related to event risk and safety. Among the emergent themes were environmental health and safety, security risk and issues, financial risk and insurances, emergency services and other safety risks. A comprehensive thematic network for event safety risk typology was presented at the end of each major theme discussed. The second part of this chapter then briefly explains the current legislation aspects in the country's event management sector pertaining to the risk and safety practices.

The final chapter seven mainly focuses on the conclusions and some major contributions made by this study in the area of event risk and safety to the general body of knowledge as well as specific recommendations within the event management sector in Malaysia. There were some prescriptive descriptions related to the emergent themes in the proposed event safety risk typology. Here the study also attempted to generate a risk triangle model for risk and hazards identification to be used within the specific domain investigated. The author's reflexivity approach reflecting on this research journey was personally narrated through an interesting "seatbelts story". The research limitations and future recommendations have also been highlighted before its concluding remarks underline the hope for this study's outcome to be adopted by event planners and venue managers in the Malaysian event management industry.

2 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Event Management

The roots of event management, considered in many studies as a prerequisite for modern tourism, go back to the era of Ancient Rome (Korstanje, 2009); however, it was not until the mid-1960s that this sophisticated industry began to undergo phenomenal growth with events and festivals being extensively promoted as a valuable form of tourism (Dimmock and Tiyce, 2001; Mallen and Adams, 2008). According to Mair and Whitford (2013), it was particularly during the 1980s that governments globally began to realise the potential for events to generate positive impacts. Events have been described as “one of the most exciting and fastest growing forms of leisure, business, and tourism-related phenomena” (Getz, 1997, p.1). Though there is little available international data on the special event sector, global statistics indicate an escalating growth rate (Hede, 2007). The industry is global in its reach and an extensive generator of tourism for the host communities and countries (Bowdin et al., 2006).

The event management field is rapidly growing and transforming all over the world (Goldblatt, 2002). In the past decade or more, event management has shifted from being a field of dedicated and resourceful amateurs to being one of trained and skilled professionals. There now exists a much greater body of research, and a larger number of academic conferences, courses and texts in this developing field (Allen et al., 2008). Event management research emerged as an area of tourism management in the mid-1970s, and since then, a number of research streams have emerged in the literature, including event management and operations, event marketing, event evaluation, and research issues (Hede, 2004; Robson, 2008). According to Reid and Arcodia (2002), event management research has attracted increased recognition within academic literature over the last decade, but much of this research has been descriptive in nature and lacks a strong theoretical underpinning or foundation. Several event management

authors have emphasised the need for more formal approaches to festival and event planning and management (Getz, 2002). Thus, this empirical research will attempt to reduce the gap of event studies especially in the area of event risk management and safety.

The existing tourism academic literature has been dominated by four key topics, one of which is about the examination of the management of actual events which is relevant to this study (Moscardo, 2007). Kennelly (2005), cited in Toohey and Taylor (2008), stated that implications drawn for sport management have primarily been associated with crowd control, risk management and athlete management. Event management is a profession that encompasses management of meetings, conventions, expositions, festivals, sport, and other special events (Singh et al., 2007). In fact, the profession has many interrelated disciplines which have and continue to act upon it, shaping both its history and future direction. These include the hospitality industry, tourism related industry, sports management, leisure management, hotel management, etc. Robertson et al. (2007) listed risk among uniqueness, repetition, commemoration, image, passion, knowledge and business, as words that always appear in conjunction with festivals and events documentation. Significantly, Lynch and Brown (1999) outline a list of research priorities in regional, national and international leisure research agendas where interventions research on safety, cost-benefit and need assessment etc. has been listed as one of the main priorities in the Ontario Recreation Research and Evaluation Strategy 1992. The latest exploration of events research by Mair and Whitford (2013) also reveal the emerging trends focusing on risk management and safety as among the most important topics for event academic researches around the globe.

Event management is the process by which an event is planned, prepared and produced. An event manager's job is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event, including researching, planning, organising, implementing, controlling and evaluating an event's design, activities and production (Tassiopoulos, 2005). Event management is a field complex with so many interpretations, but the value of a common terminology for event management has been identified by Getz (2008) who stated that event management in general is the application of

management practice of project management to the creation and development of festivals and events. By definition, a special event is a one-time or infrequently occurring event outside normal programs or activities of the sponsoring or organising body (Getz, 2002a). On the other hand, Shone and Parry (2004) stated that special events are the phenomenon arising from those non-routine occasions which have leisure, cultural, personal or organisational objectives set apart from the normal activity of daily life, whose purpose is to enlighten, celebrate, entertain or challenge the experience of a group of people. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) meanwhile defines a ‘special event’ as a ‘non-routine activity within a community that brings together a large number of people’ (Emergency Management Institute, 2005). Within the context of tourism, the term special events refer to festivals, major events (both hallmark events that are associated with destinations) and mega-events, including the Olympic and Commonwealth Games (Jago, 1997). Getz (1997) argues that the magnitude of festivals and other events justifies recognising them as a major tourism attraction. Jago and Shaw (2000) proposed a typology of special events which included minor events (community and local events), festivals and major events (mega events and hallmark events). However, Gaynor (2009) argued that there are no formulas or charts that will definitely identify which event meets the ‘special’ mark, stating that ‘national’ figures and sheer size of attendance should not be the main criterion for determining ‘special event’ status. But in tourism event management, Getz (2008) has identified that perspectives are closely related to the dimensions of the management tasks in planning and managing events which includes the task for managing risk and safety. This argument has indeed justified the chosen risk perception investigation explored in this study.

2.1.1 Event and Project Management

Event planning and management are complex business processes requiring coordination among multiple experts (Singh et al., 2007). Like a manager in other project-based industries such as construction and information technology, the manager of an event must control various areas and disciplines of the event project itself. According to O’Toole and Mikolaitis (2002), the central concepts of the baseline plan and the event project life-cycle are critical

considerations for event managers. Therefore, basic project management methodology must be mastered by event managers. In relation, Fruhauf (2001) stated that a project is a way of organising working activities for an endeavour with unique properties and specific risks. Another description by the Construction Industry Council (CIC, 1996) defined project management as the overall planning and co-ordination of a project from inception to completion. According to Greene (2000) each project is a unique undertaking and operates temporarily within a unique, dynamic environment which has not before been encountered by the participants of the project. Event management actually is identical to the project management area of study. In fact, event management is the application of the management practice of project management to the creation and development of festivals and events.

On another note, event management in nature is very much similar to project management in that it is actually the application of management practice of project management to the creation and development of festivals and events. The phases which include initiation, planning, implementation, the event and closure were merely derived from the traditional project management terminology (PMI, 2000; O'Toole and Mikolaitis, 2002). Fruhauf (2001) exposed an intertwining between project planning and risk management: certain project risks will require specific actions, i.e. activities will be planned according to risk assessment results. This statement justified that a study on possible risks in the event project planning is vital. Turner (1999) also agreed that because the work in project management (or event project) is unique, it involves a level of risks. Hence, safety aspect is one of the most important major considerations when planning and organising an event. According to Delaney (2004), the safety aspects of an event should consider everyone involved in the event, including the event organisers, the suppliers of services needed for the event and to those attending the event. In fact, William O'Toole's Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) has originally begun in 1999 as a comparison of project management methodology to event and festival management (Robson, 2008). Silvers (2005) who later enhanced the applications of EMBOK into the multi-disciplinary

fields of event management claimed that the study is actually one of the most comprehensive efforts that have ever been made within the event management academia.

2.2 Risk, assessment and management

Risk is a common term, yet risk means different things to different people at different times (Slovic, 1987; Robson, 2009). The concept of risk relates to the Italian expression of ‘ricicare’ used in the 13th century to denote the opportunities and dangers that merchant vessels were exposed to along foreign seashores (Bernstein, 1996). According to Eisenhauer (2005), ‘risk’ is variously defined and is characterised by its subjectivity, multidimensionality and complexity, which makes it hard to operationalise, especially within different fields and of course, dimensions. Regarded as among the most prominent scholar in risk studies, Beck (1992, p.21) defines risk as “a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernisation itself.” It is “a mode of thinking about potential negative events in the future which calculates their probability and the severity of their effect” (Levitas, 2000, p.200). Indeed, risk has been technically defined elsewhere as the product of the probability and the severity of the event in question (Adam, 1995).

Renn (1998, p.50) warned that those “talking about risks faces immediate danger that everybody talks about something different”. Therefore, it is essential to look into several other definitions of risk. Hence, risk may also be defined as “the combination of possible consequences and related uncertainties or the combination of the probabilities for an adverse event to occur and the consequences of that event” (Aven (2007) and ISO (2002), both cited in Mykletun (2011, p.344)). Renn (1998, p.51) meanwhile refers risk “to the possibility that human actions or events lead to consequences that affect aspects of what humans value”. According to Aven and Renn (2009, p.1), “risk refers to uncertainty about and severity of the consequences (or outcomes) of an activity with respect to something that humans value”. Risk is also defined in

the consumer behaviour literature as “an individual’s perception towards uncertainty and an exposure to the possibility of loss or injury” (Richter, 2003, p.342). So, there are three major components identified in “the risk construct which is loss, the significance of loss and the uncertainty associated with loss” (Trimpop, 1994, p.6). The reality, however, is that risk is part of everyday life and of every decision that is made (Trimpop, 1994), including in the event industry (Robson, 2009). This study focuses on the safety risk aspect which been described by Rose (2006) as a measure of probability and impact, leading us towards the concept of risk.

There is no universally agreed set of rules applicable to evaluation of risk acceptability, hence neither is there a single, agreed set of definitions of risk (Chicken and Posner, 1998). However, risk can be technically defined as “a combination of the probability, or frequency, or occurrence of a defined hazard and the magnitude of the consequences of the occurrence” (Royal Society, 1992, p.4). A fundamental proposition regarding risks is outlined below:

$$Risk = Hazard \times Exposure$$

Thus, hazard is defined as “the way in which a thing or situation that can cause harm”, (Chicken and Posner, 1998, p.7) while exposure is “the extent to which the likely recipient of the harm can be influenced by the hazard” (*ibid*, p.7). A more comprehensive hazard definition with relation to risk been given by Yeung and Morris (2001, p.172) who explained that “a hazard is an event or occurrence associated with an activity or process, which can result in negative consequences and thereby provide a source of risk to a receiving environment or population.”

There are also other literatures explaining the general terms of risk and risk management. According to Giddens (1998) risk refers to dangers that we seek to actively identify, confront and control, while Beck (1992) considered risk as a systematic way of dealing with hazards. Chen (2006) gave a more comprehensive definition when he stated that an integrated risk management in general involves managing various kinds of risks such as

volumetric risks, price risks, physical supply/delivery risk, operational risks and financial risks etc. The Australia New Zealand Risk Management Standard (1999) defines risk management as the term applied to a logical and systematic method of establishing the context, identifying, analysing, evaluating, monitoring and communicating risks associated with any activity, function or process in a way that will enable organisations to minimize losses and maximise opportunities. In short, risk management is as much about identifying opportunities as avoiding or mitigating losses. Though, according to Greene (2000), any definition of risk is likely to carry an element of subjectivity, depending upon the nature of the risk and to what it is applied and as such there is no all encompassing definition of risk.

Early theories of risks equated the magnitude of impact to the number of people killed or injured, or to the amount of property damaged (Slovic, 1987). Funk (2012) supported this by stating that the definition of risk as a combination of severity and probability. However, Rose (2006) argued that the risk measure that depends on reported accidents and incidents is not enough especially in measuring the operational safety, highlighting the need to provide a measure of safety that does not rely on accidents. For instance, the collection of valid and accurate data to measure crime is nearly impossible (George, 2003), and this prevents researchers from providing substantial evidence that directly links crime rates to tourism demand (Fujii and Mak, 1980). As the professions developed, the categories of hazards were generally divided into hazards to people, goods and the environment (Keith, 2001). In addition, much of the literature on risk management is presented in the context of insurance coverage and legal liability – loss prevention and loss control (Silvers, 2005). This loss perspective justified that as in any other fields, it is critical to put the risk management practice in the proactive context of the health and safety of those who come together to create, operate, participate in, and attend these public and private assemblies (*ibid*). As such, a good event/venue manager must possess the ability to look into two variables; the probability of a disruptive event occurring and the severity of its consequences (Krugman and Wright, 2007), the former which is referring to the context of this research study.

Risk assessment and management has become an important aspect of the leisure industry primarily for the reason that events, like any other (commonly one-off) projects are usually exposed to the nature of the uncertainty surrounding them (Koller, 1999). According to Cowell et al. (2002, p.879), “risk assessment is rooted in two analytical approaches: probability theory and methods for identifying causal links between adverse health effects and different types of hazardous activities”. Thus, the basic principles of assessing risks are essentially identifying hazards and then evaluating the risks, such as the likelihood of the hazard arising and the harm it could cause (Upton, 2008). This initial process of risk assessment is vital for identifying potential hazards (undesired outcomes) as hazard identification is fundamental to good safety management (Carter and Smith, 2006). Risk assessment and management, in which the approach is to actively identify, confront and control these threats and/or harm, is a systematic way of dealing with hazards (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1998). But it is not the intent of this research to address the whys and hows of the assignment of risk ratings (issue of risk assessment). But nevertheless, it is important to look at some of the key concepts and difficulties that it involves. Before any assessment to be made, this study argued that an initial process of risk and hazard identification must be undertaken. Vick (2002) stated that risk has been described as a construct and a concept and as such is not a quantifiable entity. Thus, risk and safety is much more of “a personal judgement than a finite measure, hence, does not lend itself to being reliably measured” (Rose, 2006, p.26). Cummings et al. (2013, p.1288) also stated that “there have been a plethora of articles speculating that heuristics and biases are the main basis for formulating and maintaining risk perceptions”. Therefore, this study has undertaken a qualitative approach focusing on risk perception to identify all safety risk relevant in the event management sector as been perceived by the event planners and venue managers in Malaysia.

Despite the millions of public and private events successfully organised each year, the event industry is being defined by its disasters (Silvers, 2005). Evans (2009) carried out a research looking at how such a disaster could impact the economic well-being of the Australian events sector and identifies the need for industry participants to develop a systematic approach to

disaster risk management. The author has then identified the importance for public and private organisations and enterprises to apply a systematic approach to the management of disaster/consequences. According to Evans (2009, p.60), Oxford dictionary defines a disaster as: “a sudden accident or a natural catastrophe that causes great damage or loss of life” and “an event or fact leading to ruin or failure”. A clear instance can be seen on the risk and safety practice related to crowd safety and control. Due to the rapid increase in events popularity, crowd management and crowd control has now becoming important issues in the events management industry (Abbott and Geddie, 2001). Upton’s (2008) research into musical concert crowd related accidents/incidents reveals 147 fatal accidents in thirteen separate countries over a thirty-year period which is not very high in terms of percentage, but is still unacceptable as the leisure and tourism industry rely heavily on maintaining a good image and reputation which can be jeopardised by any unpleasant incident. A classic example was the recent safety incidents of Berlin’s Love Parade in 2010, a tragedy that involved the death of 19 people with 342 injured, which has prompted the authority’s decision to ban this annual event (Helbing and Mukerji, 2012). Some other examples include the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster which claimed 96 lives and ‘The Who’ concert at the Riverfront Arena in Cincinnati in 1979 which turned out to be the worst concert disaster in the history of rock ‘n roll with 11 people losing their lives (Upton, 2008). The review of a recent study and past disaster reports by Au (2001) acknowledged that the current practice is inadequate, and there has been a lack of appreciation of crowd safety risks and planning is generally insufficient. Consideration of risk and safety is crucial in event management yet it is surprising that little attention has been given in terms of empirical research to this topic, not only in Malaysia, but also all over the world.

Based on its vital consequences, event planners and venue managers cannot afford any safety incidents or accidents as they trigger media attention, which later can turn into a disaster for the organising team. For example, in any inquiry into crowd-related accidents, lawyers for the victims will seek to establish blame because blame equals compensation (Au, 2001), and in most cases the event planners and/or venue managers will be held responsible.

Therefore, a risk management plan needs to be developed to ensure potential risks are identified, analysed and treated (Eisenhauer, 2005). This plan is essential for organisation's survival and continuing operation (Wood, 2009). Hence, the purpose of risk management is to employ a process to identify risks, set an agreeable level for risk, and take appropriate steps to keep risks at an acceptable level (Standard New Zealand, 2004). Although the importance of the risk aspect is a core competency in event planning, few event specific resources exist to fully prepare and assist event organisers on this aspect (Silvers, 2005).

Risk assessment and management is driven by what the business objectives are, such as prioritisation of potential threats, and the probability and the impact of their occurrence (Wood, 2009). As such, event professionals are responsible for the safety and security of all event stakeholders including event attendees, volunteers and employees. It is critical, therefore, that event planners gain an understanding of possible risks and what can be done to mitigate their impact (Smith and Kline, 2010). In other words, event practitioners particularly event planners and venue managers need to possess a certain degree of knowledge, skills and understanding of risk assessment and management in order for them to successfully predict, assess and manage all associated risks. Success will depend on accurate identification and assessment of risk impact (Wood, 2009), probably achieved by reducing errors in executing risk and safety management. According to Reason (2000), error management is limiting the incidence of dangerous errors, but since this will never be wholly effective, event professionals must strive to create systems that are better able to tolerate the occurrence of errors and contain their damaging effects. But event planners and venue managers should also aware of the the cyclical nature and iterative nature of the risk management plan which is reflected in both crisis management and business continuity plans, because the effectiveness of all three depends on their flexibility and anticipation of changes in either the organisation itself or the threats to it (Wood, 2009). It is hoped that the attempt made by this study (in the form of an event safety risk typology framework) can assist event managers and venue managers in Malaysia to mitigate most of the threats related to the event planning and management.

2.3 Event Risk and Safety

Events of all types are produced every day and all basically involve risks of some kind. Some events make only small ripples; others make larger ones. An event itself is a speculative risk and as such, its production incurs liabilities but is nevertheless, potentially economically and/or socially rewarding (Silvers, 2008). Event planners and venue managers must ensure a safe environment which according to Goldblatt (2002) is the one protected from any harm, meaning that hazards are eliminated from the environment. Risk management for the events industry has been regarded as a core competency in most event management training and educational programmes, but there is a limited amount of literature and a scarcity of resources available for this specific area of interest (Berlonghi, 1990; Tarlow, 2002; Eisenhauer, 2005; Fallon and Sullivan, 2005; Silvers, 2005; Mallen and Adams, 2008; Silvers, 2008; Robson, 2008; Toohey and Taylor, 2008; Evans, 2009; Jennings and Lodge, 2009; Leopkey and Parent, 2009; Smith and Kline, 2010; Mykletun, 2011). Thus, event organisers are still lacking tools to help them manage risks associated with the safety of events stakeholders. As such, this effort is just another proposition in line with Toohey and Taylor's (2008) call for more field-based research to explore these risks and safety issues across different events, countries and contexts.

The literature reveals various definitions of risk and risk management in relation to the event management function. According to Getz (2007, p.291), “risk management can be defined as the process of anticipating, preventing or minimizing potential costs, losses or problems for the event, organisation, partners and guests.” Bowdin et al. (2006, p.318) has given a working definition of event risk as “any future incident that will negatively influence an event”, whereas Silvers (2008, p.4) comprehensively defined risk as “any condition or occurrence that might affect the outcome of an event or event activity and might expose an event organisation to loss measured in terms of probability and consequences.” However, it is Robson’s (2009, p.13) research that has provided a specific definition of risk in the event context, in which she has defined risk as “anything that could potentially impede, threaten, influence, or interfere with the successful outcome of an event.” The article has actually been produced as part of her PhD

dissertation titled ‘Perceptions of risk at meetings and conferences: an event planner’s perspective’. Her effort has provided a foundation for event risk assessment and most importantly has reduced inconsistencies in terminology.

According to Mykletun (2011), events and festivals involve social gatherings that constitute significant safety challenges such as seen in the recent festival disasters in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, and Love Parade in Duisburg, Germany (refer chapter one). Smith and Kline (2010) meanwhile stressed on the importance of enhancing event practitioners thinking about safety and security in the industry, mainly because in order to control and observe risks, the event/venue manager needs to possess a degree of familiarity with the concepts of risk assessment and risk management (Fallon and Sullivan, 2005). Thus, an in depth qualitative approach was employed to investigate the perspectives of the event professionals involved, by which claimed to enable a relatively sophisticated understanding of the risk assessment and risk management strategies and practices employed on their organised events, festivals, meetings, etc. Risks in this context may be connected to environmental characteristics at the event site where the event’s activity going on, to the type and manner in which any event’s equipment is handled or to the individuality of the participants involve in that event (Hogan, 2002). It is anticipated that this attempt would help them to observe all risks objectively, and minimising the natural tendency to mainly perceive risks that are already familiar to them are less than those that are unfamiliar (Greene et al., 2000).

Risk management, risk assessment and risk communication have become central concerns in the event industry, where event professionals nowadays have had to take on the all important role of a risk manager (Robson, 2009). However, the findings demonstrated that event practitioners in Malaysia are still mainly unaware of the (international) guidelines for risk management in events and festivals, legal issues and safety standards. They also appear to lack knowledge of the legal environment to a certain degree, which may be due to the absence of accepted national standards for management of risks in event projects and to the heterogeneous nature of the event industry. MACEOS (Malaysian Association of Convention and Exhibition

Organisers and Suppliers), which is currently the only association related to events and meetings industry in Malaysia, does not even have any guidelines pertaining to risks and safety to be shared among its members, contrary to the sharing of ‘good practice’ among the communities of practice and professionalism among international associations such as ISES (International Special Events Society), IFEA (International Festivals and Events Association), MIA (Meetings Industry Association), AEME (Association for Events Management Education).

There is a significant gap in the literature giving coverage and emphasis on managing event risks and safety (Silvers, 2005; Toohey and Taylor, 2008; Mykletun, 2011). Among the few works focusing on these aspects are studies by Kemp (2009) at the Australian Centre of Event Management (ACEM) Summit 2009 and the text by Tarlow (2002) in which he defined seven variables as major concerns for event risk management and safety, namely size of crowd, size and nature of event site, time of day, nature of the event, consumables, age of crowd, weather conditions and location of the event venue. Berlonghi (1990) concluded that every part of event management has potential risks, the main area of risks being categorized into administration, marketing and public relations, health and safety, crowd management, security and transport. Research by MacLaurin and MacLaurin (2001) proposed a risk management system based on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) approach that is specific to food safety. Another is the study by Singh et al. (2007) which introduced a knowledge management system known as eSAFE (an online knowledge-based system for Safe Festivals and Events. Mykletun (2011) highlighted the significance of risk estimation and risk evaluation in event risk management while on the contrary relates safety to freedom from risks that are unacceptable or harmful. Silvers (2005) also claimed that the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) can be used as an holistic framework to provide a logical and systematic approach to the management of risks surrounding events. Eisenhauer (2005) investigated the risk and safety management strategies for sporting events in New Zealand whereas Robson’s (2009) research focusing on meeting planners’ perception of risk at meetings and conferences in Canada. Silvers (2008) on the other side concluded that risk management (also known as loss

prevention) generally can be understood in terms of organisational control theory including setting goals, gather and interpret information, and act to influence human behaviour and physical structures. These efforts (and others not mentioned here) have significantly justified the need for safety considerations for event planning and coordination.

According to Fallon and Sullivan (2005), there is to date no events management sector-wide standardised policy or procedure for managing risks at events, as any policies and procedures tend to be unique to particular events and they appear to vary based on location. For example is the Event Safety Guide (also known as Purple guide) produced by Health and Safety Executive which is a guide to health, safety and welfare at events and music festivals unique to the UK environment (HSE, 1999). The argument justified the need for the development of an event risk and safety framework unique to the Malaysian context. This research attempts to examine types or categories of risks that were commonly unique to Malaysian events and festivals by adopting a topology proposed by Allen et al. (2002). This topology which has been enhanced by Fallon and Sullivan (2005), focused on the following categories of risks namely: crowd management and control; financial risks; alcohol-related risks; communication; environmental risks; emergency services and occupational health and safety. Although the qualitative interviews were carried out based on this topology, the thematic coding structures were left open in order to inductively allow new themes to emerge from the data itself.

Event risk management, safety, and security planning are a complex process; hence an effective risk management relies on engagement at each juncture throughout the life of an event project, from inception through to completion (Silvers, 2005). This is because modern events such as the ‘Formula One’ sustain especially high risks and require broad risk assessment, planning, management, and control (Goldblatt, 2002). Krugman and Wright (2007) concluded that the top priority of the event’s organising team is protecting the safety and security of attendees and staff, as well as safeguarding property, proprietary information and the financial investments of event stakeholders. In order to implement this, the event management sector has to increase their budget in recent years for risk and safety purposes (George and Swart, 2012).

These were vital responsibilities for any managers involved in the planning and management of events, meetings and festivals. The requirements for risk and safety also encompasses those working as venue managers in all types of event venues based on Au's (2001) views that good planning is essential to a safe venue operation as failure to do so will lead to tragic consequences. For example, in order to avoid any calamities involving the crowd, a crowd safety assessment was conducted largely based on experience and on feedback from previous operations (*ibid*).

In short, risk management means identifying the risks/hazards, assessing, quantifying and strategising to counter them, and finding solutions to some levers to diminish or even eliminate the possibility of developing or their consequences, risk is associated with uncertain situations and opportunities (Rodica and Petronella, 2013). Thus, the initial process of risk identification undertaken in this study can be regarded as the first process towards a more comprehensive plan for event risk assessment and management later on. This study indirectly answered the call by other authors insisting on having this process of risk and safety hazards identification before the execution of any type of events. For instance, Eisenhauer (2005) proposed that a risk management tools may include standard forms for identifying and assessing risks with maybe the use of computer databases to help organise relevant data and information. Other methods which help to identify and assess risks among all include a SWOT Analysis, a Risk Analysis Management System (RAMS), a Safety Action Plan (SAP) (SNZ, 2004) and also keep the risks 'As Low As Reasonably Practicable' (ALARP) (Royal Society, 1992). However, all these management tools were quite generic and need to be improvised before it can be incorporated into an event management context. It is expected that the outcome of this study aimed at the development of a safety risk typology specifically for the event management domain would address this problem. The second steps in the risk assessment process then will involve identifying the risks/hazards/threats related to the activity that event organisations and its members are facing in order to plan effective safety measures (Allen et al., 2002; Mellor and Veno, 2002). It is the responsibility of event planners and venue managers to analyse how often

risks are likely to occur and the impacts they would have on stakeholders and the organisation itself (SNZ, 2004).

2.4 Risk Perception

2.4.1 Insights into Risk Perception

The study of risk perception began as an exercise in individual psychology and this perspective continues to develop through the study of mental models and affective processes (Slovic, 2000). Over the last five decades, social sciences researchers have studied risk perceptions of a wide array of hazardous events (*ibid*), such as how the public perceives risks associated with a variety of environmental health and safety (EHS) hazards (Cummings et al., 2013). Similar to risk, risk perceptions vary – reflecting biases based on exposure to information as well as other sensitivities (Sjoberg, 2000). The most basic understanding by Dake (1992) stated that general attitudes towards the world and its social organisation are instrumental in determining people's risk attitudes and perceptions. According to Garbarino and Strahilevitz (2004, p.768), many researchers agree that "...perceived risk is a combination of the perception of the likelihood that something will go wrong and the perception of the seriousness of the consequences if it does". Short (1984) stated that response to hazards is mediated by social influences transmitted by friends, family, fellow workers and respected public officials. These influences constitute within one self as intuitive risk judgements, typically known as risk perception, which most human beings rely on (Slovic, 2000). There have been a number of researches on the concept of risk perception as a multi-dimensional phenomenon with the overall risk subdivided into various losses (Kaplan et al., 1974; Mitchell and Greatorex, 1988; Mitchell, 1999; Mitra et al., 1999; Tse, 1999; Ho et al., 2008). Most of these conventional studies generally adopted the two-component model of risk perception comprising the probability of a loss occurring and the magnitude or seriousness of the loss once it has occurred (Yeung and Morris, 2001). This has led Yeung and Morris (2001, p.180) to conclude that "the greater the

perception of risk in terms of either probability or consequences, the greater is the likely action to reduce the risk”.

Psychological theory seems to be dominantly used as the foundation of individual risk perception research. Most of the early studies of risk perception have been carried out using quantitative approach of psychometric paradigm pioneered by Starr (1969) and later enhanced by Fischhoff et al. (1978). This approach was particularly critical for the justification of risk-benefit analysis known as ‘revealed preferences’ which is based upon the assumption that through trial and error, society has determined an optimum level of risk for a given activity (*ibid*). Revealed preferences assumes that the market correctly reflects the optimal risk level and discounts the possibility that some risks are accepted because one is ignorant of the potential for harm or the potential for elimination of harm (Wilson, 2011). Hence, the psychological research on risk perception is originated in empirical studies of probability assessment, utility assessment and decision-making processes (Slovic, 1987). This has significantly led to the discovery of a set of mental strategies, or heuristics, which people employ to make sense out of an uncertain world. This mental process results in perceived risk – a collection of notions that people form on risk sources relative to the information available to them and their basic common sense (Jaeger et al., 2013). As such, it may also lead to large and persistent biases (Slovic, 1987), resulting individuals becoming ill equipped to make valid assessments about risk.

The theory of availability cascades is a fundamentally normative explanation of risk perception advanced by Kuran and Sunstein (1999) which explained public panics as a result of availability cascades. According to the theory, availability cascades result when cognitively available examples of an outcome lead people to overestimate the prevalence of a risk or the likelihood of a negative outcome, creating a ‘snowball’ effect that can exacerbate this phenomenon (*ibid*). Based on this effect, this theory called for “a smaller role for the public in risk management and advocate for a bigger role for the expert in risk decisions” (Wilson, 2011, p.124). Another theory that is not widely accepted by risk perception researchers is the cultural theory pioneered by Douglas and Wildavsky (1983). This cultural evaluator model viewed

emotional reactions to risk as manifestations of culturally shaped expressions of underlying worldviews (Kahan, 2012). The theory outlines four ways of life known as hierarchical, individualist, egalitarian and fatalist, in which each corresponds to a specific social structure and has a particular outlook on risk (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983). The ways of life are arranged according to grid and group with each grid categorises the degree to which people are constrained circumscribed in their social role, whereas the group refers to the extent to which individuals are bounded by feelings of belonging or solidarity (Thompson et al., 1990). The ‘knowledge theory’ introduced by Holdren (1983), cited in Wildavsky and Dake (1990) is the most widely held communication theory related to risk perception. It states that perception of hazards should accord with what individuals know about the risks. According to Renn (2004), people generally create and construct their own reality and assess risk according to their subjective perception. In particular, risk perception researchers have investigated how judgements about perceived risks and their acceptability arise, and how such judgements are related to risk ‘heuristic’ (e.g. the memorability, representativeness, and affective qualities of risk events) and the qualitative characteristics of risk (Pidgeon, Kasperton and Stovic, 2003). Another popular approach to risk perception is the ‘personality theory’ (Wildavsky and Dake, 1990) which suggests that some people like taking risk while others are risk averse and seek to avoid risks. As staging an event is a risk (risky effort for something rewarding), event practitioners can be regarded as risk takers.

Research on risk perception has identified a range of perception theories/models used by society in perceiving and assessing risk (Renn, 2004). Slovic (1987) suggests severity of consequences, control over risk, immediacy of effect, voluntariness of risk, knowledge about risk, newness, chronic-catastrophic and common-dread as important risk characteristics. The author also suggests three attributes that influence risk perception which are ‘dread’, ‘unknown’ and ‘number of people exposed to the risk’. The ‘dread’ factor reflects that risk perception is shaped by the severity of the consequences more than by the probability of occurrences. The ‘unknown’ factor relates to the variables of that are not observable, whilst the number of people

exposed to the risk referred to the extent of its consequences (Slovic, 1987). These factors motivate Kasperson et al. (1988) to modify or amplify the social perception of risk, leading towards the emergent of the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF) which describes how psychological, social, cultural and political factors interact to amplify and/or attenuate risks. The framework “predicted that individuals would experience increasing (amplifying) or decreasing (attenuating) concern depending upon potential for events to trigger concern over possible future harm” (Wilson, 2011, p.124). It typically models the impacts of an unfortunate event such as direct harm to victims for example deaths, injuries and damages. An unfortunate event can be thought of as analogous to a stone dropped in a pond, creating ripple effects that would have several level impacts on mental perceptions (Kasperson et al., 1988; Renn et al., 1992). Although this paradigm has its own assumptions and limitations, it encompasses a theoretical framework that assumes risk is subjectively defined by individuals who may be influenced by a wide array of psychological, social, institutional and cultural factors (Slovic, 2000). An important element of this framework is the assumption that the perceived seriousness of an accident or other unfortunate event, the media coverage it gets, and the long-range costs and higher order impacts on the responsible company, industry or agency are determined, in part, by what that event signals (Kasperson et al., 1988; Kasperson et al., 1992; Renn et al., 1992). In short, SARF underlined that:

“Risk events interact with psychological, social and cultural processes in ways that can heighten or attenuate public perceptions of risk and related risk behaviour... [and that] behavioural patterns in turn generate secondary social or economic consequences... [and] may act also to increase or decrease the physical risk itself.” (Kasperson et al., 1988, p.178, cited in Wilson, 2011, p.129).

According to George and Swart (2012), crowd and spectators attending an event are influenced by their perceptions of the risks associated with the event. Thus, the basic assumption underlying the importance of risk perception is that those who are responsible with risk and safety aspects need to understand the ways in which people think about and respond to risk. It is

essential that this study undertake an effort to investigate the perceptions of these risk takers (event planners and venue managers) in terms of event risk management and safety. This research may help event planners and venue managers to view categories, or factors, of risks that display most risk perception markers among individuals recruited in this study. Besides, this research would aid in effort to design a risk and safety policy for the event management industry in the country.

2.4.2 Risk Perception in the Event Industry

One of the most critical areas to consider in relation to this specific area of inquiry is how to enhance thinking about safety and security in the meeting and events industry (Smith and Kline, 2010). Hede, Jago and Deery (2003) also identified this topic as an important area for further research and study. But in fact, risk perception in the context of the event industry has actually never been specifically researched (Robson, 2009). It is hoped that the empirical studies in this research will provide important assessments and insights for the next stage of framework creation for event safety and risk management for Malaysian event organisations.

It is unfortunate that the profession currently still lacks the standardisation tools and reporting procedures necessary for the provision of empirical data that would enable event stakeholders to make informed decisions (Goldblatt, 2002). Mykletun (2011, p.343) highlighted that “no empirical studies of festival risk and safety management have been published, and therefore, no empirically-based lessons can so far be learned within this area.” Barker et al. (2003) enhanced this view by stating that one of the common weaknesses in the literature was a general failure to identify visitors’ and event practitioners’ perceptions and concerns for safety. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) also stated that at base, further research is needed on the affective/qualitative dimensions of meeting planners and event managers relative to unstructured perceptions. It is plausible that the ‘perceptions’ of event managers play a vital role in this documented lack of preparedness plans. As there is no empirical data available, the researcher needs to look for the primary data by investigating the perceptions and practices of event project

teams responsible for the safety aspect. Greene (2000) recommended that to enable the project manager (event manager) to manage risk effectively, a firm understanding of the nature of risk, the stakeholders and the (event) management team's perceptions of risk must be attained. Therefore, the rationale of this approach is to assess and explore the belief systems and perceptions of how Malaysian event planners think regarding the need and importance for an event risk and safety framework in this particular domain.

Although this is not a study about the theory of perceptions, it is important to lay the conceptual groundwork for understanding perceptions in the context of the risk perception among event practitioners in relation to risks and safety issues that they commonly face in the profession. In general, Smith and Kline (2010) cited the definition of perception as the 'awareness of the elements of environment through physical sensation' (Merriam-Webster, 2008) which simply put, indicates that perception is 'the way in which individuals analyse and interpret incoming information and make sense of it' (Pearson Education, 2004). As such, studies of risk perception examine the judgements people make when they are asked to characterise and evaluate hazardous activities and technologies (Slovic, 1987). In this case, a qualitative approach has been designed to explore those professional views within the outlined context.

Subjective perceptions require the interpretation of derived data in personal terms. The subjective assessment on the probability of an undesirable event and its seriousness can be called 'perceived risk' (Michalsen, 2003). If event planners are characterised by undeveloped or under-developed strategic perceptions about the seriousness of risk assessment and management, the information in their environments does not get translated into plans or activities leading to secure and safe event venues (Smith and Kline, 2010). In general, experience of dramatic accidents or risk events increases the memorability and imaginability of the hazard, thereby heightening the perception of risk. Direct experience can provide feedback on the nature, extent, and manageability of the hazard, affording a better perspective and enhanced capability for avoiding risk (Kasperson et al., 1988). In short, the greater the perception of risk in terms of probability or consequences, the greater the chance of action being taken to reduce the risk

(Yeung and Morris, 2001). It is anticipated that the respondents who had faced or experienced safety incidents and/or accidents would give richer data for analysis. Wildavsky and Dake (1990) likewise warned against the fact that the more familiar the event to participants, the less risk is perceived may result in misperception. However, according to Michalsen (2003), ‘risk’ can relate both to an objective reality and to a subjective way of interpretation, so what is perceived as harmful by one event manager might be differently interpreted by another.

This research attempted to develop techniques for assessing the complex and subtle opinions that people have about risk. The basic assumption underlying these efforts is that those who promote and regulate health and safety need to understand the ways in which people think and act about and respond to risk, as without such understanding, well-intended policies may be ineffective (Slovic, 1987). Therefore, an understanding of the event planners’ and venue managers’ experiences, as they relate to safety is an invaluable framework for this research as it provides a holistic perspective of how perceptions of safety and risk within this environment affect the preparedness towards event risk and safety contingency plans. Their perceptions and responses concerning the importance of risk management and safety were discussed. Determining and communicating the risk of such safety incidents and accidents appears to be a crucial component within the effort to reduce safety incidents on every planned events and festivals.

According to Brown (1995, p.20), the central aspect to good risk management is not the format but judgement, and that “the basis of ‘sound’ judgement is knowledge and experience, which has been subjected to reflection”. To describe this, the major themes on important safety risks has actually emerged from the participants’ judgement or from their personal perspective before been later analysed using the reflexivity approach by the researcher (Stronach et al., 2013). A risk perception theory known as the social amplification risk framework (SARF) by Kasperson et al. (1988) has been adopted to examine the perception towards risk and safety by Malaysian event planners and venue managers, based on the notion that “the investigation of risks is at once a scientific activity and an expression of culture”

(Kasperton et al., 1988, p.177). The framework requires for a careful selection of respondents based on their knowledge as well as social and cultural background including personal experience within the area of investigation been described in chapter four (refer 4.2.4 Participants' Experience and Social Background). The framework also was suitable based on the nature of event management involving a wide area of disciplines and also due to its interdisciplinary approaches (Renn et al., 1992), a case study approach was chosen as most feasible to investigate this matter. According to Slovic (1987), one broad strategy for studying perceived risk is to develop taxonomy for hazards that can be used to understand and predict responses to their risks. Hence, this study has answered the call by developing an event safety risk typology for hazards identification based on Malaysian perceptions.

2.5 Legislation and Legal aspect

When discussing risk, one has to discuss legislation or the legal aspects as these two aspects are very much interrelated, as according to McLaurin and MacLaurin (2001), failure to mitigate risk can expose the meeting and event planners to undesirable legal and negligence liabilities. Eisenhauer (2005) highlighted legal compliance as key risk category for all event organisers in which any case of non-compliance may result in risk litigation, fines and sanctions. As such, Gaynor (2009) insisted that part of ensuring due diligence for the risk and safety aspect in planning and organising events is getting the lawyers (or those responsible for legal matters) to agree with planning concepts early in the planning process. However, event managers need to be aware of the fact that “different laws and standards apply for different events especially regarding the location (venue or outdoors) and therefore they comply with different authorities” (Eisenhauer, 2005, p.36). Based on its context, this study identified that the main legislation that governed the safety and health aspects of employees in Malaysia is the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 – Act 514. This act provides the legislative framework to secure the safety, health and welfare among the Malaysian workforce and to protect others against risks to safety

or health in connection with the activities of persons at work (Laws of Malaysia – Act 514) (Legal Research Board, 2007). This Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 (Act 514) was approved by the Parliament in 1993 and was gazetted on February 1994 (Malaysia, 1990). All organisations in the country regardless of government or private sectors are subjected to the jurisdiction of the act, and this includes the event management industry as well. In the event management context, this act in particular requires the event planners and venue managers to assess all risks involved and implement controls to minimise those risks. Thus, all event planners and venue managers are responsible for the health and safety of all stakeholders involved in event projects such as the events' audiences, contractors, suppliers, volunteers, participants, and so on. The establishment of this act has enhanced the establishment of several other organisations pertinent to the health and safety regulations in the country. In terms of the general risk management and safety, the Malaysian government has established the Department of Occupational Safety and Health and the National Institute of Safety and Health, both under the umbrella of Ministry of Human Resource (Johnny, 2013). Both of these agencies were responsible to protect and safeguard the health and safety practice across all sectors and industries including the event management industry.

Another act that is also very relevant to safety and health aspect is the Employee's Social Security Act 1969 (Act 4) which was established to further safeguard and protect all employees in Malaysia (Ahmad, 1999). The government has established the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) in 1971 under the Human Resources Ministry to implement and administer the social security schemes under the Employee's Social Security Act 1969 (Act 4) which regulates the Employment Injury Insurance Scheme and the Invalidity Pension Scheme. Under this scheme, workers are protected against industrial accident including accident occurred while working, occupational diseases, invalidity or death due to any cause (Laws of Malaysia – Act 4) (SOCSO, 2010). According to this act, it is compulsory that all employers and employees of public and private organisations including event organisations to contribute a certain amount from their remuneration as compensation in any unwanted accidents that happened at workplace.

To further enhance this aspect the government also has launched the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in an effort to promote the occupational safety and health and to also serve as the backbone in creating a self-regulating occupational safety and health culture in Malaysia (NIOSH, 2010). The function of this safety organization in Malaysia is quite similar to the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) in UK which act as a chartered body for health and safety professionals (The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health, 2010) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) USA which is a federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related injury and illness (NIOSH, 2010). Hence, these two acts (Act 514 and Act 4) are critical to uphold the safety and health aspects of event stakeholders based on Eisenhauer's (2005) views that occupational health and safety was a major legal compliance for all event organisers. However, the question remains on the implementation and enforcement within the service industry, particularly the emerging leisure and event management sector in the country.

Apart from these two major acts, the event management organisations in Malaysia were also governed by other relevant acts (wherever applicable) such as Factories and Machinery Act 1967 (Revised 1974 - Act 139), Fire Services Act 1988 (Act 341) and Food Act 1983 (Act 281), as the legislation pertaining to food safety is so significant to the event industry. The principal food law in Malaysia is the Food Act 1983 and the Food Regulations 1985, which are developed and amended by the Food Safety and Quality Division (FSQD) of the Malaysian Ministry of Health (Malaysia Food Act 1983 (Act 281) and Food Regulations 1985 (Malaysia, 1990)). According to Mellor and Veno (2002), most of the legal liabilities that event planners and venue managers might be subjected to can be transferred through insurance. “An insurance policy is a contract that establishes a binding legal relationship that is regulated by both the common law and the legislation” (Eisenhauer, 2005, p.49). Arcodia and McKinnon (2005) also particularly mentioned the importance of public liability insurance for the event management industry. But Callander and Page (2003) warned that even if an event planner or a venue

manager takes a precaution of having insurance to cover public liability, complete with extensions including punitive and exemplary damages, their duties to the insurer must be met as failure to take sufficient risk and safety precautions could potentially put them at risk of having the claim refused. However, the compliance to the requirements of insurances and specific legislations do not signify that the safety issues will not escalate in the country's event industry hence a specific model/guideline for risk and hazards identification is indeed very much needed. The outcome of this study is very important to ascertain the level of awareness among Malaysian event planners and venue managers towards these acts, as the law is of course useless unless it is seen to be enforced.

2.6 Summary and Conclusions

The literature confirms the existence of a very limited number of efforts focusing on risk assessment and management for the event industry; however, there is much that can be learned from established professions such as medicine, law, construction, accounting, and some closely related field of communications and public relations (Goldblatt, 2002). The risks and challenges that these professions faced and overcame may be used as a model for the emerging field of event management industry in Malaysia. The study has supplied explicit evidence that despite numerous events being organised by various organisations in Malaysia, there is no standard procedure for identifying the associated risks. This research is therefore important for helping event planners and venue managers to familiarise and form a better understanding about the importance of risk and safety in managing an event projects (Fallon and Sullivan, 2005). The current research study, of which this literature review is part, is set in this context.

The development of the event management industry within the tourism realm all over the world has not bypassed Malaysia. “Malaysia tourism sector is also rapidly emerging as a premier destination for events with its proven track record of successfully hosting many

prestigious events” (Rahmat et al., 2011, p.47). The uniqueness and diverse culture or tradition offered by this country forms the secret ingredient to attract tourists (Ling et al., 2010). The emergence of tourism sector as the second largest contributor to the country’s economy development (Hanafiah, Harun and Jamaluddin, 2010) was largely facilitated by the events and meeting industry (Freydouni, 2010). In September 2010, the Prime Minister has announced that a government funding of MYR50 million (EUR12 million, USD16 million) has been allocated for the business tourism sector for 2011 (ICCA, 2010). Consequently, the focus of this study is critical in the sense that any calamities at events and festivals hosted in Malaysia will become a disaster for the country’s reign as a popular event location and business tourist attraction.

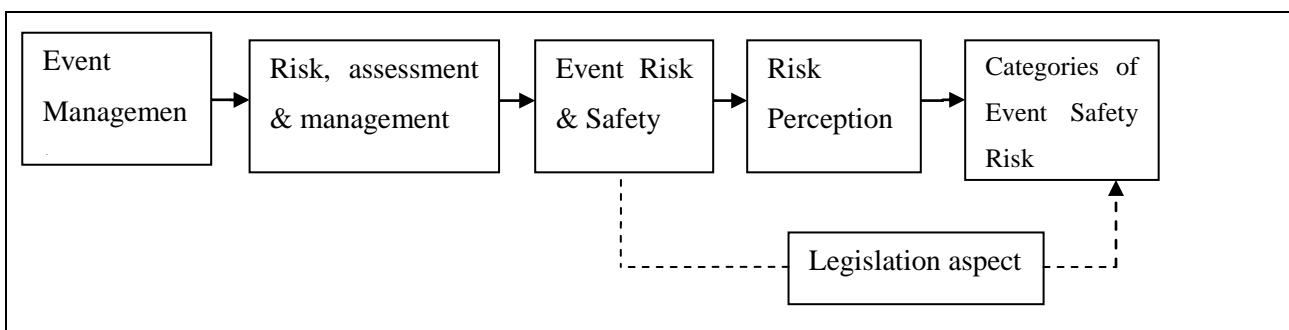
The literature review chapter has constituted a background for understanding what risk factors that events and festivals normally face, and then explorative case study was applied to this investigation for the purpose of revealing insight into a phenomenon (Yin, 1994). Thus, a case study approach was chosen as most feasible to identify how risk and safety aspects been perceived by the event planners and venue managers in the Malaysian event management sector. The study explores their perception for the need of an event safety risk framework to be used for the identification of threats involved within such domain. This research attempt is in line with the government policy as according to the Minister of Tourism Malaysia, the business tourism industry is expected to contribute MYR3.9 billion (EUR9 billion, USD 1.2 billion) in the incremental Gross National Income (GNI) and create 16,700 additional jobs to the nation by the year 2020 (ICCA, 2010). This will once again put the tourism sector among the third largest source of income in this country in which case meeting and events industry will consequently become vital components for business tourism growth in Malaysia.

A large part of this chapter discusses how risk management in general has become an important aspect for the event management field in terms of its attempt to decrease losses and exposures and expand the desire to make the event management industry safer. The event management discipline itself is loaded with inherent risks, as planning and organising an event itself could be regarded as a risk taking effort. Hence, it is impossible to completely eliminate all

risks and dangers associated to an event being organised. Due to the heterogeneous nature of event management area, there is no risk management strategy which fits all (Eisenhauer, 2005). Therefore, “conceptual models for risk management need to be interpreted and adapted by event organisers to their own event”, and this highlights the difficulty of not only assessing event risks but also to adequately mitigate risks (Eisenhauer, 2005, p.56). Thus, in an event context, risk management may be understood as the process of anticipating, preventing, or minimising potential costs, losses or problems for the event, organisation, partners and guests (Getz, 2005). As been noted by Silvers (2008), risk management is the way uncertainties are properly identified, judiciously considered and addressed in order to reduce or eliminate the risks anticipated (Tarlow, 2002). This study which focuses on the identification of safety risks is important because it is imperative that all event stakeholders (especially the event planners and venue managers) to have a clear and detailed picture of all the risks involve before deciding the measure to counter such risks.

Drawing on a review of research literature, this research works towards a conceptual model which links the antecedent factors which shape event planners’ and venue managers’ perception towards the risk and safety aspects. The preceding review of research literature can be used to construct a conceptual model for event risk management and safety framework, described in Figure 2.1 below.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model of Event Risk and Safety from a Malaysian perspective



3 CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

“.....many arrows, loosed several ways, fly to one mark.....”

- William Shakespeare, Henry V

(cited in Crotty, 1998, p.1)

In general, the choice of research methods should be determined by the research questions and not by the preferences of the researcher himself (Marshall, 1996). In order to address the research questions and achieve the research objectives, this study employed a qualitative approach and used semi-structured in-depth interviews with event planners and venue managers from several event related organisations in Malaysia. In other words, the nature of the research problem is a valid reason for choosing qualitative methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The rationale for choosing in-depth interviews is that it allows the researcher to comprehensively investigate the research questions, and then to propose an interpretive framework of event safety risks typology based from the perceptions of Malaysian event practitioners.

Risk management and safety has been identified as one of the five knowledge domains necessary for the management of an event by The Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK 2006) (Silvers, et. al, 2006). However, there is still a significant gap in the literature regarding the aspect of risk and safety in relation to the event management discipline. Singh et al. (2007) acknowledge that the identification and management of knowledge is especially difficult within the event management domain due to its interdisciplinary nature and wide variety of applications borrowed from diverse fields. Accordingly, this research was built by using information extracted from risk, safety and event management literature as well as from various relevant websites and individual organisational documents. Thus, this research is multi-

disciplinary in that research from a number of disciplines is used (Veal, 2006). As there is a lack of theory and past research into this topic especially from the local perspective, I had begun this investigation by undertaking a preliminary (pilot) study to gather primary data for the identification of problems.

The research began with a review of the literature, whereby a critical analysis on event risk management has been conducted. The literature review has also provided a strong connection between the nature of risk management and the event planning functions. The piloting stage was designed to establish concepts, to develop further research questions and enhance the research objectives. As the research itself is exploratory, the piloting stage was very crucial for me to explore this research topic because I have indeed begun this study at the stage when its variables and theory base are unknown. Robson (1993) stated that exploratory studies are usually based on qualitative methods, and researchers should use it to explore a topic when the variables and theory base are unknown (Creswell, 2003). Thus, the preliminary interviews with the event practitioners were very important to gather primary data based on the respondents' experience in the industry and also to secure any documents related to event risk and safety issues as well as to initially investigate the event safety risk views and perceptions from the industry point of view. So, the preliminary stage was designed particularly to identify the initial themes (important emergent themes) that were later explored during the main data collection phase. The tentative thematic codes were developed to capture those themes (Lacey & Luff, 2001), focused on seven categories of risk by Fallon and Sullivan (2005) and Allen et al. (2002).

In general, the data collection has involved formal in-depth interviews with a total of 33 event practitioners from the two classification organisational categories, comprising event management organisations and event venue providers. The aim is to develop a deeper understanding and an interpretive framework as a means to investigating the Malaysian events management organisations in terms of safety and risk assessment/management. The selection of interviewees was based on the researcher's judgement and was preceded by snowballing/convenience sampling techniques pursued until the stage of data saturation, which

ultimately signalled the end of the data collection process. This chapter is some sort of a ‘hinge’ between the literature review and discussion sections. It is intended that this chapter will justify the link between my epistemology and philosophical stance on my topic, my personal and professional experience, and the methods, techniques and procedures that I have chosen throughout this entire research project. A large part of this chapter describes the process of inductively deriving meaning from the data, especially with regards to the development of important themes/categories – as related in the data analysis section. Hence, the structure and/or main objectives of this methodology chapter can be summed up as follows:

- Explain my epistemological stance as it relates to data collection (post-positivist)
- Explain and justify how I have approached the problem, issue or research questions posed.
- Describe and offer a rationale for my choice of specific methods/techniques used for collecting data (semi-structured interviews)
- Outline the procedure used for analysing and interpreting data
- Discuss conclusions about methodological issues, throughout the whole research process (such as my personal reflection throughout all the methodological process from research proposal stage, preliminary stage and main data collection phase until the final writing up)

3.2 Epistemology and Ontology: A Post Positivist Perspective

“Philosophy provides principles that can act as a guide when procedural advice does not address a particular issue”

(Ryan, 2006, p.12)

This section outlines the philosophical thinking behind this study, or basically the assumptions that I came to make about the world when conducting this research. It also discusses the background and assumptions for many of the techniques and methodologies used throughout the entire project based on the chosen philosophical paradigm that guided me in carrying out this research. Generally speaking, a ‘paradigm’ denotes the set of beliefs, procedures and working practices that informs a dominant world-view and which shapes the context of a modern science (Kuhn, 1996).

Whenever I thought about ‘research’ words such as facts, statistics, figures, objective, science and logic came to mind. Like many novice researchers I initially believed that there was a single, correct set of procedures for investigating phenomena and presenting findings, based on a scientific model of research. I had previously been using a quantitative style in judging the validity of my students’ research according to scientific criteria such as: how big is the sample; what was the minimum number required; how representative were they, and so on. This approach to research was based on an implicit positivism which in social research normally but not exclusively belongs to the quantitative camp.

The positivist paradigm of research originated in the late nineteenth century and was introduced by Auguste Comte (1798-1857). “Comtean positivism argued for the unification of the sciences and thus gave historical sanction to the idea of a common paradigm, employing a single method in order to achieve certified knowledge.” (Crook and Garratt, 2011, p.212). The positivist argued that the overall purpose of such a scientific approach is to stick to what we can observe and measure. According to Crook and Garratt (2011, p.213) “this narrow view of science takes social reality for granted and dismisses the meaning of human activity.” Perhaps it would be more circumspect to point to its reductive nature in relation to intersubjective worlds. Moreover, positivism also undermines the subjective role of the self in the discovery of new knowledge and/or in the process of making predictions about the world, because it views science as an ‘objective’ way to get at the truth, to understand the world well enough so that we might predict and control it (Trochim and Donnelly, 2006).

Positivists discuss meaning in apparent congruence with my proposed empirical study on event risk and safety, and usually hold to versions of empiricism – the idea that observation and measurement is the core of the scientific endeavour. So why didn't I choose positivism as my philosophical lens to investigate this study then? Apart from realising that this epistemology wasn't the best way to address my research questions, I came across persuasive criticisms lodged against the positivist philosophy, among those enduring ones that were associated with positivism as the burden of 'proof' or the verification of knowledge as well as the problem of sustaining a distinction between the researcher and that which is researched (Garratt and Piper, 2003). As a result, I have shifted away from positivism towards another views of science originated since the middle part of the 20th century, introduced by Sir Karl Popper (1902-1994), known as post-positivism (Philips and Burbules, 2000). Post-positivism emerged as an attempt to provide an approach that can accommodate and embrace the complexities of the positivist paradigm (Ryan, 2006). This philosophical assumption positioned scientific reasoning and common sense reasoning as the same process, and emphasises the importance of multiple measures and observations. Post-positivist views anticipate that a scientist or a researcher from Malaysia doing research on a Malaysian context will be inherently influenced by his cultural experiences, world views, and so on. This is in accordance with the conceptual framework of social amplification of risk framework (SARF) which outlined the importance of human values, cultural identity as well as experience in studying risk perception (Kasperson et al., 1988; Kasperson et al., 1992; Renn et al., 1992). In reality, it is impossible for me to totally neglect my prior knowledge, perceptions and cultural beliefs on the researched area of inquiry, as they are largely influenced by cognitive and cultural biases (Wilson, 2011). Hence, I definitely cannot be 'purely objective' and have 'zero effect' throughout the whole process of this research investigation.

I actually decided to adopt the post-positivist approach as my epistemological stance after I had finished the first round of analysing my preliminary data collection phase. It all started when I was sifting through the information I gained on the pilot stage (data collection)

and kept wondering about their level of importance for my study. I was drowning in the piles of data, trying to decipher mostly obscure meanings embedded in those interview sessions. With the help of my supervisor and some colleagues in the reflexivity session¹, I then became aware of the multiplicity of lenses that I needed to use in analysing the data, the multiplicity through which I had previously encountered and viewed the world. In other words, I studied the matter from the participants' point of view, but in doing so, I also reviewed my own existing wealth of knowledge and experiences in ways that allow for new insights (as it is impossible to totally disregard my existing knowledge and experiences in the researched area (Strauss and Corbin, 1990)). Thus, the discipline of a post-positivist approach has enabled me to encounter and challenge afresh what I already know and later combine/relate them with fresh data grounded/gained from the fieldwork, recognising that "the researcher's motivations for and commitment to research are central and crucial to the enterprise" (Schratz and Walker, 1995, p.1-2).

The philosophy indicates my epistemological shift away from the old stance (positivist) towards something more sophisticated and arguably less naïve (post-positivist), which is now very much related to my qualitative approach and best suited to answer key research questions posed in the proposal. This is because in inference, positivism presupposes a kind of realism that claims to uncover the truth in a proven way whereas this research is based on a post-positivist stance in which the knowledge is more concerned with a critical realistic approach (Trochim and Donnelly, 2008). This research project portrays how I have investigated the event practitioners' perceptions on risk and safety issues in Malaysia, and the result showcased my perception within the researcher-as-learner position of the subject matter as inherently imperfect, because perception and observation are fallible. According to a post-positivist perspective we can never achieve objectivity perfectly, so the best we can do is only to

¹ The group comprises two faculty members and five doctoral students of the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure, Liverpool John Moores University

approach it (Trochim, 2006). Hence, I assume that my individual research project is scarcely ‘definitive’, and constitutes orienting points on a trajectory of inquiry. My research participants are only pointers as to where to probe more tellingly in the future, and yet they might assist me in unfolding a problem. Any outcome from this research is not claimed to be definitive as it will lead to further investigation into the area later on. This post-positivist approach affords me (the researcher) the position of a learner whose task is to interpret the meaning of my encounters in this study rather than trying to establish any universal truths. This argument is based on the post-positivist (most post-positivists are also constructionists) view that we each construct our view of the world based on our perceptions of it (ibid, 2006). In short, the three main reasons for me choosing the post-positivist epistemology was firstly because its legacy places a pressure on researchers to be reflective (rather than prescriptive) about their methods, in which case reflexivity has been widely attempted and deployed in both my data collection and data analysis stages. Secondly, the paradigm highlighted the relationships between me and my participants in the study, and finally it offered a conceptualisation of the context in which that research is located, in this case explaining the importance of event risks and safety that is unique to the Malaysian domain.

3.3 Research Design

In the beginning, I was really struggling with the qualitative nature of the study and the methodological design of it. The reason was maybe because I was so rooted in the quantitative style of research thus making it difficult for me to accept the qualitative style and change my theoretical perspectives as well as my attitude towards this new approach to doing research. To design a qualitative case study is very challenging since unlike other research methods, there is no possibility of a ‘recipe’ detailing a comprehensive ‘catalogue’ of research designs for case studies (Yin, 2009). Quantitative researchers usually want to relate their findings to generalisations, but I wanted to stick with the particular context of the research and say less by

way of generalisation. Therefore, I observed qualitatively and recorded interviews as the best ways to conduct my study, as qualitative design generally is holistic and it looks at the larger picture (Janesick, 2000), whilst “case study focuses on holistic description and explanation” (Merriam, 2009, p.43). Case study, with the Malaysian event industry as the case and the description of perceptions and/or reported experiences of Malaysian event practitioners as the data source (data-constructing process) became my preferred way/method to investigate the topic, focusing on their current existing practices on risk and safety as well as its surrounding issues. Due to the exploratory nature of this research inquiry, the choice (of qualitative case study) was even more appropriate, and confirmed that this approach has strengths in developing exploratory inquiry/study (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009).

So now I recognise that this study is in fact a qualitative case study. This research project attempts to investigate the risks and safety issues within Malaysian event management industry as well as providing an insight into the important risk factors that are pertinent in managing and organising events from the perspectives of Malaysian event practitioners. According to Stake (2000, p.435) “case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied”, and is not defined by methods of inquiry. Therefore, case study was chosen as the best approach to investigate this matter based also on Merriam (2009) who argues that determining to use case study largely depends upon what the researcher wants to know. Although Yin (2009, p.37) basically maintains that case study can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory, he justified the rationale for exploratory study, where “the existing knowledge base is poor, and the available literature does not provide any conceptual framework or hypothesis of note” (ibid, 2009, p.19). Thus, this research itself is justified as an exploratory study because there is certainly a lack of empirical research on the subject of event risk and safety at the time of writing. The reasons detailing the exploratory nature of this study are thus summarised below:

- There are no studies or research on event risk and safety within Malaysian event management context.

- In-depth interviewing of participants in Malaysia is unusual in the research scenario, as most social researchers have been more inclined towards the quantitative or mixed-method approach.
- There are very scant empirical and/or qualitative studies on event management topics, all of them coming from outside Malaysia.
- There were reports on safety issues, incidents and accidents coming into existence in the Malaysian event management industry but no efforts had been made thus far to improve the situation (refer chapter one).

3.3.1 Methods

Merriam (2009, p.43) defined a qualitative case study as “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system,” in which she also argued that “it is the unit of analysis that determines whether a study is a case study” (*ibid*, 2009, p.42). Creswell meanwhile claims that case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) through detailed, in-depth data collection through multiple methods. Thus, this research is bounded within a Malaysian context and focusing on Malaysian event/venue managers as its unit of analysis. The search for in-depth data was engaged through semi-structured face-to-face, one-to-one interviewing, a method that has been employed in this empirical research exploring the participants’ views and perceptions on risk and safety related issues among the Malaysian event management organisations. As such, my case study research aims to provide an initial understanding on the importance of risk and safety issues in this event management domain and also attempt to provide an insight on significant risk factors according to the perceptions of those event practitioners themselves, and incorporating my own reflections on the topic as according to Stake (2000, p.445), “the brain work ostensibly is observational, but, more basically, it is reflective.” Following his advice, perhaps the simplest rule for qualitative casework is to extensively focus on the thickness of data and what’s going on around it. Thus, this qualitative research attempts to be as close as possible to the data by giving particular attention to what has

been said (and not been spoken) by the informants but at the same time being quite flexible in the interpretation and communication of the data itself (Geertz, 1973).

The pilot study had been designed for me to basically introduce myself to the qualitative approach of research as well as to sharpen my interviewing skills especially for my methodological choice of face-to-face, semi-structured interview. I had developed a research instrument or an interview schedule: an ‘interview guide’ consists of a list of questions and topics that the interviewer will be asking the respondents (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). I had followed the guide but not in a rigid sequential way. On the methodological part, the piloting has provided me some sort of pre-testing of the interview schedule developed (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The study has been carried out in two phases:

Phase I : Identifying Key Themes

- i. Preliminary Study (exploratory/pilot study) – semi-structured interview with six respondents.

Phase II: Exploring the Identified Themes

- ii. Data collection for main study – semi-structured interview sessions with 33 face-to-face interviewees as a representative sample from the three categories of event organisations.

3.4 Sample Selection

Sampling for this qualitative study was purposive and sought to achieve maximum variation in relation to types of event related organisations represented by the informants. “Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2009, p.77). The researcher was required to actively select the most

productive sample to address the research question and this strategy was based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area and the available literature and evidence from the study itself. In other words, I (as the researcher) had become the tool/instrument for choosing the most knowledgeable informants according to my own personal judgement in accordance with Janesick (2000, p.386) who stated that "qualitative design requires the researcher to become the research instrument."

3.4.1 Sample Size

The population of the study consists of the total number of all event planners and venue managers from events related organisations that are based or located within the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Klang Valley is the most developed area in the country comprising Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, the former being the capital city of the country. This location has been chosen to portray the general view of Malaysian case study (Malaysian context) because most event management organisations (as well as most businesses, social and political activities) are based here; a good comparative metaphor of Kuala Lumpur to Malaysia is like London in relation to the UK. Hence, the population sampling would refer to the event practitioners who have direct involvement on safety issues in the event project planning. Event practitioners consist of those working in the event industry ranging from the event planners/managers to all the heads of department related to the event management field such as event coordinators, event executives, project coordinators, health and safety personnel, safety officer, etc. These include the event entrepreneurs who run event management companies and those who are employed in various governmental and private organisations related to event business. Others that are also transcending in this definition are venue managers from event venue providers such as conference and exhibition centres, stadiums, hotels, tourism boards and local councils who own parks and dedicated spaces for public and private events. This is supported by Sweeney (2005) as well as Beaven and Laws (2007) who observed that venue managers and hosts are responsible to keep their venues safe and secure within a broad risk management perspective because similar to event organisers, these host organisations are also subject to any liabilities and legislation

aspects of an event been organised. The study focuses on researching organisational facets based on the view from Shrivastava (1995) who stressed that ‘other than to optimise production and maximise profits, corporations must manage risk variables, such as....public safety.’ A list of selected organisations was obtained from the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia and its subsidiary Tourism Malaysia, Ministry of Information, Communication and the Arts, Malaysia Association of Convention and Exhibition Organisers and Suppliers (MACEOS), Registrars of Companies (SSM), convention and exhibition centres.

Most qualitative undertakings cannot pre-determine a specific number of respondents as noted by Marshall (1996, p.523) who argued that “an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research question”. Although the initial estimation stated in the proposal was to obtain approximately 40 – 45 participants for reaching the stage of data saturation but in this case, the researcher managed to recruit a total of 33 representative samples of interviewees, selected from various event organisations within the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The sample of informants came from various types of event-based organisations such as event management companies, cultural performance companies, exhibition and trade fair organisers, concert organisers and promoters, professional conference organizers (PCO), professional exhibition organisers (PEO), conventions and exhibition centres including hotels, meeting planners, auditoriums and halls, tourism boards and government event-related agencies/divisions. Interview participants from these broad organisations were stratified according to two main classifications which were categorised based on organisational types and functions, namely event organisations and event venue providers. To be more specific, the sample was drawn from event planners and venue managers who had direct involvement with risks and safety issues in event project planning.

3.4.2 Sample Strategies

Being an exploratory study made it quite difficult as the “sampling strategies can only be guessed, and the researcher at the very least makes the procedures and criteria for

decision making explicit” (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p.104). Before the interviewing process commenced, I identified a number of criteria on which I wanted data – from respondents who were involved directly in planning and managing the overall operations of an event and/or respondents who are responsible for the risk and safety aspect for any particular event. “One needs to learn as much as possible from those who know most. The fact that they may also be the most misinformed and most misinforming does not rule them out” (Stake, 2004, p.111). According to Stake (2004), choosing the right person to ask is actually one of the first steps. In this case, the event managers and event venue managers were asked important key questions in relation to the research objectives: (i) identify the risk concepts and theories that can be applied to event management functions; (ii) explore how Malaysian event practitioners perceive the importance of risks and safety in event project planning; (iii) identify the type of major risks involved in event management that can affect the safety of event employees and attendees. Hence, it was also equally important for me to learn their perceptions of risk and safety concerns based on their daily job in the event management industry in Malaysia.

There were also other factors to think about in the process of selecting and recruiting the data sources (respondents). Hence, I also chose data sources partly on the basis of a presumed high likelihood of cooperation (Stake, 2004). This was necessary as Malaysians are quite sceptical about interviews and the interviewing process. This was also one of the reasons I opted for face to face one-to-one interview as I would not have enough time to organise any focus group interviewing or to conduct participant observation (although later I managed to organise one focus group interviewing session). Another concern was due to the intermittent nature of event management work itself. It was just not a daily basis job, a factor that automatically mitigated against participant observation.

Thus, I have adopted judgement sampling, also known as purposeful sampling (or convenience sampling), as my sample strategy to recruit my participants for this study. This strategy required me as the investigator to actively select the most productive sample to answer the research question (Marshall, 1996; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). According to Marshall

(1996), this strategy is based on the researcher's practical knowledge of the research area and the available literature and evidence from the study itself, something that seems pertinent based on my previous experience as Head of Department and lecturer for Bachelor of Event Management (Hons.) at Universiti Teknologi Mara Malaysia. Although I was more like an event academician rather than an event practitioner, I did have substantial professional knowledge on the risk and safety aspects from my experiences and involvement in both event management academia and industry as well as my initial work towards preparing the proposal, and also my on-going effort to engage with this specific area of inquiry that has become my long term commitment of mine since 2008. Apart from that, I have also utilised (or taken advantage of) the interviewees' contacts by extending the sample through snowballing technique which invited them to introduce me to the next respondent at the end of each session (Yin, 2009). I subsequently found that recruiting respondents was relatively easy, compared to my pilot phase.

3.5 Data Collection: Methods

This section will discuss the two kinds of assumptions about knowledge and information that I have adopted for both of my data collection phases (pilot and main study). It will describe how I have operated with different techniques for collecting data from the participants during the data collection phase. These models of data collection will serve to illustrate how the method for collecting data has operationalised the epistemology and the stance that I have taken. In brief, the models that were adopted in data collection derive from an information-extraction and shared understanding model based on Franklin (1997), cited in Ryan (2006). The author has introduced three models for data collection: information extraction, shared understanding and discourse. However, only the first two has been chosen for this study based on their prescriptive nature, although model two is less prescriptive than model one. First, the information-extraction model has been chosen for the preliminary phase as at that stage the data was still mostly 'cut and dried' (Ryan, 2006). At the later phase, the researcher has moved

into the shared understanding based where the aim was “to obtain rich, nuanced, descriptive material that reflects the interviewee’s understanding of his/her world (or part of it) and lends itself to the qualitative analysis in one or more modes” (*ibid*, p.77), for example, the identification and categorisation of central/global themes or important risk and safety factors for event risk management and safety. The reasons for adopting these two models are discussed in the following section of data collection procedure.

3.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews

“Qualitative design is concerned with the personal, face-to-face, and immediate” (Janesick, 2000, p.385), so interviews are the most common method used in qualitative inquiry, in which case “the best interviews is face-to-face where people honour each other with patience and consideration” (Stake, 2004, p.148). As such, I have chosen semi-structured face-to-face interviewing and adopted reflexive procedures as my main approach/method for this study. It was felt that semi-structured interviews using some axial coding based upon the categories of risks proposed by Allen et al. (2002) would be of use, combined with a quantity of open coding to allow for other risk categories not currently referred to be included and incorporate the ability of emergent issues to be coded prior to the main data collection stage.

I have employed altogether 33 individual semi-structured face to face interviews and one group interview, as well as one telephone interview. I agree with Creswell’s (2007) view that most case study employs in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information, but my attempt to employ documentary analysis has come to no avail because documents pertaining to risk and safety have been regarded by most participants as their organisation’s intellectual property and been treated as ‘strictly private and confidential to their members only’. There was an occasion when one of the participants agreed to show me his company’s risk and safety guidelines but he needed to have permission from his top management that never materialised. Another respondent asked me to look into her organisation’s website to get the documents on safety and risk management, but later I found out that the relevant

documents were not offered for public view. Efforts to contact her later on also came to no avail, including an email to the company's contacts asking for the materials. However, there were some documents that I have analysed pertaining to the legal and safety aspects such as all the Malaysian legal acts relevant to my topic. I have summarised those laws and acts mentioned by my participants in the interviews (refer to chapter 6). Other than that, I have also examined a number of risk and safety documents, including guidelines related to event management disciplines from various other organisations outside Malaysia, particularly the Purple Handbook (UK), HSE (UK), and other safety guidelines provided by the Australian and US based organisations.

Meetings were arranged at places of mutual agreement and mostly the interviews were held at the participants' place of employment. There were also several cases in which the face to face interview sessions were held at cafes and restaurants within the city of Kuala Lumpur and its surroundings. In such cases there was a bit of minimal noise interference. All interview sessions were digitally recorded using a Dictaphone (voice recorder) and later transcribed verbatim post-interview by the researcher. The purpose of this practice was to ensure that everything said is preserved for later analysis (Merriam, 2009). Prior to data collection, a number of selected informants were approached for formal in-depth interviewing sessions that were held face to face at a time and place most convenient to the respondents. From the total number of 33 interviews, 32 have been engaged in face to face one-to-one sessions, while one agreed to a telephone interview session. The remaining two requested a joint interview on the basis that they both belonged to the same organisation. The languages that were used were the preferred language of the respondents resulted in a large mixture of Malay and English languages. To be precise, approximately a third of them favoured English, whereas all the others remaining preferred Malay which is the national language of Malaysia, or a mixture of both (only 11 out of 33 opted for English). A careful process of translation was then been undertaken for these participants and this process has been done based on the personal interpretations of the researcher as the main instrument of the data analysis.

Each interview was conducted using the same process of introduction, focusing on a brief discussion of the research and the participants' important role within it. Participants were always notified verbally and in writing of their right to remove themselves and their data from the research at any point if they wished so, and were guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality with regards to their own identity and that of their organization. There was even an occasion where a respondent requested to go off-record on some cases of sensitive issues that he revealed to me, triggered by the notion that respondents have the freedom to respond to questions and develop ideas in their own terms and in their own words. The interview schedule includes ad-hoc questions that have been used to probe and expand topics that arise during the interview sessions. This included responses to the set questions, but importantly, also to issues that arose in the course of the interview which I did not anticipate prior to the interview.

The semi-structured interview sessions have been divided into two parts in relation to the objectives of the study, but this has not been done sequentially or in a formal structured way. The first part is focusing on respondents' reported experiences and their perceptions towards the importance of this research attempt (refer to the findings in Chapter 4) while the second part is focusing on identifying the important risks and safety issues relevant within the event management industry in Malaysia (refer to the findings in chapter 5 and 6). The recursive approach (Veal, 2006) was adopted as in most cases the informants were allowed to speak freely and willingly on their own with minimum interference from the researcher. But I also combined open-ended questions to elicit free responses with focused questions for probing and prompting. The interview schedule (refer Appendix VII) was used as a guide to ensure that the expected information or topic of interest is covered, meaning in most cases the questions asked were not in a particular sequential order. It was in the later part of data analysis that important themes were selected and analysed by leaving out what seemed to be less significant ones.

The in-depth interview is one type of interview that is common to case study in which the interviewer “can ask key respondents about the facts of a matter as well as their

opinions about events” (Yin, 2009, p.107). The study’s research objectives can only be accomplished through the informants’ experiences and their perceptions towards the researched subject area. Interviewing was also important to describe the current situation of their practice on risks and safety as well as obtaining their evaluation of current practice. Stake (2004) argued that the best interviews are those that can get at description, perception and evaluation.

I have to admit that my interviewing at first wasn’t good, it was too wordy, but it was not unproductive. The following illustrate some wordy questions that were asked in my interview sessions mostly at the beginning phase of data collection:

“Ok, in your opinion who are normally exposed, most exposed to the hazards of risk and safety in your events? Who are normally most exposed to it?”

“I want to talk about the responsibility... responsibility and reliability. When you organise events, being the event organiser yourself... or when you asked the EO [meaning: event organiser] to organise the event for you for example, the safety concern or risk management and safety aspect will come under whose jurisdiction? I mean will come under whose responsibility? Whose will be liable for that if anything happens in your events? Normally who will be responsible for it?”

“Ok, other than that... are there any other major risks involved in organising events, other than the safety of the VIP’s? What are other things that you can recall, that you can be aware of? I mean the risks involve... that involving safety in organisation of events... other than that I mean, other than that?”

However, it did improve later on when I became quite used to those sessions and succeeded in being more precise towards later interview sessions. It really helped that the interview was field-tested in the preliminary phase. Although it was a semi-structured style it included as many open-ended questions as possible, and some of the questions were quite specific such as questions related to their perceptions about the importance of risks and safety in their job, as well

as questions pertaining to important risk factors that they anticipated in their daily job of managing and organising festivals, meetings and other events. Some participants provided me with a ‘vicarious experience’ in narrating their story and in most of the interview sessions, I had a feeling that my respondents would always have ‘something’ they want to say that is relevant to my inquiry. It is their perceptions, views, opinions and experience that matter most. So, it is up to me to probe those ‘somethings’ from them, and most often, they gave me those ‘somethings’.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

3.6.1 Models of data collection

Being somebody who originally came from the quantitative background and socialised to positivist views, I began by adopting the information-extraction model for my data collection in the preliminary phase. This model of interviewing actually is based on the rather positivist assumption that there exists a one-to-one correspondence between a question and its answer, or between a phenomenon and its cause (Ryan, 2006).

As there is a lack of empirical research on this subject matter in Malaysia, my pilot study was very much empirically grounded, and was established to provide me with some theoretical lens into the proposed researched areas. So, in this preliminary phase, I took an active role of questioner, and the respondents taking part in my research played a more passive role as informants, based on Franklin’s (1997), cited in Ryan (2006), information-extraction model. “This ‘traditional’ model assumes that ideas, feelings and knowledge reside in the person and come forth in the interview with varying degrees of completeness and truthfulness” (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000, p.30).

However, as the process of data collection progressed, I came to realise that my participants tended to look on me as somebody who could provide information and reassurance. I really struggled to continue being that third person and avoided engaging with the interviewees,

as they also occasionally asked me questions and tried to provoke my opinion on the subject matter as well. As a result, I departed from the information-extraction model that I began with and engaged with the respondents in a more ‘open’ and flexible way by responding to their queries and discussing the subject in a more responsive manner. So, I started adjusting myself towards another model, also promoted by Franklin (1997), cited in Ryan (2006), known as the shared-understanding model of collecting data which uses interviews as its most popular technique or method for collecting data. “Here, the interview is seen as a situation in which the interviewer attempts to gain understanding of how the interviewee experiences aspect of her/his own life and/or the world of objects and other people, by actively engaging with the interviewee” (Ryan, 2006, p.77).

Compared with the earlier model, this model of data collection was more appropriate to a post-positivist stance as the session is construed as an interpersonal situation and my characteristics, sensitivity and other qualities have been recognised and indirectly affect what has been said in those sessions. My presence and participation in the session was not viewed negatively, in fact it further enhanced interactions and encouraged participants to invest themselves more in the conversation resulting in me obtaining rich, nuanced, descriptive material that reflected the participants’ understanding of the investigation. Sometimes I even made provocative comments to extract deeper responses from the participants. This was done in order for the informant to provoke a better understanding of the topic as well as helping them to clarify and/or reveal sensitive information (Franklin, 1997, cited in Ryan, 2006). The model chosen also helped in my data analysis, particularly in the identification and categorisation of the basic and focused themes as well as the development of emerging themes. It helped me to understand the matter from my participants’ point of view because the major theme of this kind of interviewing is the idea that the interviewer understands the interviewee from the interviewee’s own perspective – “the texture and feeling as well as the facts” (Franklin, 1997, p.103, cited in Ryan, 2006).

To sum up, my interview sessions began in information-extraction mode, with a standard pre-formulated set of questions that I prepared in my interview schedule, somewhat close to the questionnaire approach of a quantitative style. However, as the interviews progressed it then departed from the standardised questions to a more semi-structured style of interviewing and ‘opened-up’ by giving the participants opportunities to offer new lines of thoughts.

3.7 Data Analysis

“Like Klondike gold miners, we dream of discovering “the nuggets” – those rich and telling data, the observations (or participants) that tell us just what we want to know.”

(Stake, 2004, p.110)

Janesick (2000) suggests research on qualitative design demands time in analysis equal to the time in the field, but I found it much more than that, even maybe three or four times more. Most qualitative researchers admitted that the entire process of analysing qualitative data was the most difficult phase in the qualitative journey (Crotty, 1998; Huberman and Miles, 2002; Silverman, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Merriam, 2009; Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Marshall and Rossman, 2011). It required an on-going analysis of data through a process of reflexivity. Sometimes I was left feeling uncertain and undecided whether the analysis has been done satisfactorily. Even when I started writing-up, there were occasions when I had to go back and forth to the data analysis, and check and rewrite my analysis.

When I started working as an academic (lecturer/researcher) back in 2001, my thoughts were rooted in empirical social science and management, where both depersonalisation and objectivity were valued. But gradually, enticed by the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990) – the first qualitative book that I ever read, I found grounded theory as a very good aid in analysing

data. Thus, this casework approach for the analysis of data draws basically on grounded theory, based on Eisenhardt's (1989) view that grounded theory is the best way to approach a case study. The classical approach is Strauss and Corbin (1990) but I am using a looser type of approach for data gathering influenced by Stake (2004) and known as interpretive data gathering. Seeking interpretive data, I find the statements or episodes that gave insight to the research's main issues – issues pertaining to the event practitioners' perceptions on the research topic, as well as issues pertaining to most significant risks and safety categories related to the event management field. I hoped to get unique perceptions on this specific area of inquiry by analysing and synthesising all those interpretive contents.

In short, the grounded theory approach used in the study was concept based rather than methodologically determined. For instance, this study employs both an inductive and deductive approach while, on the contrary, grounded theory aimed to focus solely on the inductive approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Charmaz, 2006). I began the analysis process by using a grounded theory style of data analysis based on Charmaz's (2006) method of line-by-line coding and focused coding. However, I found it quite difficult to use her approach in its entirety so I have modified it into sentence-by-sentence rather than the Charmaz's line-by-line approach (refer Appendix VIII). Although I had some basic ideas on important themes identified during my pilot phase, I had kick-started the main study data analysis inductively, taking an interpretative stance (Malterud, 2001). Similar to the preliminary stage, the coding was iterative and informed by the accumulating data and continuing thematic analysis. The deductive approach then applied towards the end of this interpretive process in which these emerging thematic categories were compared with those identified themes during the pilot stage, tested and re-tested until the data saturated (see chapter 5). Overall, the analysis of data initially started with an inductive style and proceeded towards a more deductive approach which became substantially important towards the end.

I went back to Malaysia for the intensive data collection phase, meaning that it was impossible for me to carry out the collection and analysis simultaneously as in the traditional

style of grounded methodology. While designing the study and gathering the data, I postponed most of the interpretation until all the data had been collected. However, during the data collection I kept an individual log and jotted down interesting themes that I felt might be useful for my data analysis later on based on the chronological record of a log mentioned by Stake (2004), to be used as a powerful ordering of memory. This technique has helped me in the later transcribing and analysing process. This style of data collection departs considerably from the conventional data collection technique proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Transcribing was the first stage in my data analysis, one that I undertook as soon as possible after the completion of each interview. Transcribing was carried out with the transcript checked against the aural record constantly throughout the process. I found transcribing exhausting and indeed time consuming, but it was such an important process because “transcripts can be the tail that wag the dog” (Stake, 2004, p.149). This hard work of transcribing verbatim was necessary because I found it quite difficult to interpret subtle meanings by only listening once to the voice recorder. Repetition was necessary. It was critical in the sense that I did recover some of my ideas and refresh my mind on particular aspects crucial for the analysis phase. There were many occasions when the memory and small details of the interviewing sessions kept coming back to me during the transcribing process as well as during this repetitive and active listening. Thus, I actually started doing the analysis simultaneously with the transcribing process. I had kept track of my thoughts, musings, speculations and my hunches while preparing the transcriptions for analysis, based on Merriam’s (2009) advice. That’s why I did most of the transcribing myself but had a few transcribed by a paid typist. However, all transcripts were checked (and re-checked) and the language clarified by me before coming to a final version, ready to be analysed. There were some cases in the transcription stage when it was necessary to add words in order to make sense of a sentence or phrase, however that was done without the meaning being changed. Now, I will start by

describing how the analysis was done at the pilot stage before proceeding to discussion of the main data analysis.

3.7.1 Pilot Data Analysis

The preliminary data collection was initially designed as grounded and started inductively based on the rationale of this study, based on a lack of empirical research and limited literature focusing on its topic. At the same time, the analysis of the interviews also was deductively carried out using coding structures based on the typology on categories of risks proposed by Allen (2002) – (not empirical research) and Fallon and Sullivan (2005) – (an empirical research based on Australian context), and at each stage the codes were related to the interviews and how these themes were addressed by the respondents. Their work has the most common risk factors similar to the ones emerging from my piloting phase. In fact, Fallon and Sullivan (2005) adopted the theoretical framework proposed by Allen et al. (2002) in their paper. Besides that, Allen's typology of risks also has been adapted as our text for the event management degree program at Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia, for which I used to be the chairperson of the committee for the program's curriculum development. A pragmatic approach of thematic analysis focusing on identifiable themes and patterns of living and/or behaviour was adopted. The procedure for performing a thematic analysis outlined by Aronson (1994) was implemented, influenced by the typology of risk categories identified by Allen et al. (2002) and Fallon and Sullivan (2005). However, the option had always been kept open because I also paid particular attention to new and emerging themes. However, little in-depth analysis occurred at this initial point as the main focus was to identify broad themes or relevant risk categories from the perceptions of the domain participants' context. The preliminary findings were used to expand the interview schedule for the main study and also to develop the conceptual framework that was used throughout the study (refer the initial findings discussion in the pilot/preliminary study section in chapter 4).

3.7.2 Main Study Data Analysis

Analysing data in the main study became a much more daunting task when these voluminous piles of interview transcripts were analysed verbatim (word-by-word), using a reflective approach with the help of QSR NVivo packages (to be specific: NVivo version 8.0 for pilot study and version 9.0/9.2 for main study respectively). These software packages were specifically designed to facilitate the management, organisation as well as the analysis of qualitative data. Initially, this involved the development of preliminary codes in NVivo to capture the emerging themes. This involved identifying thematically similar sections within and across the transcripts and placing them in their designated codes. “Coding is a technical name for sorting or grading data to be aggregated or filed, it is a procedure that pulls the story together” (Stake, 2004, p.130). As the main study analysis began, I adopted a more open coding style in order to identify and capture new themes and concepts. Initially, I had largely adopted Charmaz’s (2006) approach of line-by-line coding, slightly modified by my sentence-by-sentence approach. This allowed me to reduce the data by retrieving only those sections of the text that related to each of the themes (Welsh, 2002). The data analysis at this stage was primarily inductive and comparative (Merriam, 2009). The QSR NVivo software package also allowed the researcher to place memos (or ‘databites’ as NVivo refers to them) alongside the data to record analytic ideas as they arise – a similar process to the conventional note taking that can be done in parallel with data analysis. Although the larger part of analysis been done by myself through a reflective process, I found that this NVivo software had in some ways helped me in managing as well as analysing part of the data, particularly at the initial stage when I had to code and encode all themes found in the data (because at this stage everything can be coded) before selecting only the important themes/categories to proceed with more detailed analysis. These important themes were later identified as focused themes (Charmaz, 2006).

The data analysis then proceeded to another level in which the analysis becomes more focused on the important or significant themes that were identified. The process of grouping these open codes known as axial coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008), or analytical coding as defined by Richards (2005, p.94) as “coding that comes from the interpretation and

reflection on meaning.” But my axial coding was mostly descriptive coding rather than the more extensive analytical coding. After that, the interview scripts were analysed using constant comparison methods focusing on the selected focused themes, where data were coded to generate frequencies and correlations (Stake, 2004). This method was originally developed for use in grounded theory. However it has now been widely used as a method of analysis in qualitative research (Janesick, 1994; Strauss and Corbin, 1998), without building a grounded theory (Merriam, 2009). It requires the researcher to take one piece of data (one interview or one theme) and compare it to all other pieces of data that are either similar or different. This method of analysis is inductive as the researcher begins to examine data critically and draw new meaning from the data (Dye et al., 2000). Although my role in the research process now became more prominent, I still relied on the QSR NVivo software package to organise and manage data, and data presented illustrate only significant themes drawn from the perspectives of Malaysian event management practitioners – I have thus applied a mix of manual, mental, and computer management. As the work progressed, a coding framework (thematic network) was developed to capture the core themes that came out in the interview transcripts. These tentative core themes have been further tested in the later stage of data analysis to see if they hold significance across all the interviews. The objective here is to identify those themes that hold true across the entire set of interviews, rather than being specific to just a sparse few (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The end product of this process delivered more robust and substantiated themes while separating out and setting aside the weaker ones. The aim of this process is to capture the global themes that would become the core findings of the research. The most difficult part at this stage was to construct important themes or categories that captured some recurring patterns that cut across my data because the process was still highly inductive at this stage (Merriam, 2009).

This data-driven analysis was continued until the researcher finally identified all (or probably most) significant themes from the two main aspects focused by this research. The first scope was related to the risk and safety issues emerged from the participants’ point of view, while the other aspect was focusing on major important risk factors that constituted on the

proposed risk typology for event management industry in Malaysia. In the final analysis stage, the constant comparison method adopted was been improvised/supported by the use of Kasperton's et al. (1988) SAR (social amplification risk) framework to help in enhancing the researcher's understanding of participants' perception and to help in writing up the discussion part (refer findings and discussions in chapter 4). On the other hand, "the iceberg model of threats to an organisation" drawn from Rose (2006, p.27), which originally introduced by Smithson (1990), and has been used to describe the emergent of important risk categories on the proposed event safety risk typology based on a Malaysian perspectives (refer the development of the thematic typology in chapter 5 and 6).

3.8 Ethical Considerations / Procedures

I have considered many implications of my research for the participants recruited for my study. I have tried to act in an ethical manner towards all of my respondents by following the basic guidelines for matters to attend to before data collection, based largely on Bell (2005). Furthermore, as a researcher in Liverpool John Moores University, I have also followed the ethical recommendations provided by the university's Research Ethics Committee and subjected myself to the UK Data Protection Act 1998. In fact, I have been personally helped and guided by one of the committee members, Professor Marion Jones, prior to the submission of the ethical approval application. Hence, a written consent for all confidentiality issues has been secured before the entire interview sessions commenced, whilst documentation and ethical approval had been granted by the university's Research Ethics Committee prior to the data collection phase (refer attached appendices).

On another aspect, I have also obtained written permission from all of my research participants through the consent form that needed to be signed and authorised before each interview was conducted. Most of my correspondents stand by their reflections in which

case they also gave their consent to be mentioned in my work. However, my final decision was to provide anonymity around certain issues in order to enable the issue to take precedence over where and with whom it occurred. Last but not least, I remain responsible for any errors in judgement regarding this matter, and take full responsibility for any ethical issues that might arise from the undertaking of this research project. The following are the basic ethical guidelines that I subscribed to, based on Bell (2005):

Upon the endorsement of my research proposal with the supervisory team, I submitted the research proposal together with the ethical approval application for my research to the LJMU's REC (Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee), and the submission was approved on 5th June 2009. I also cleared the official channels for doing research in Malaysia from the Research Unit at the Prime Minister's Department who act as a gatekeeper for all foreign research conducted in Malaysia. My work was considered as foreign research because I was based in the UK and representing LJMU. An approval from the department has been obtained with a formal letter granted to carry out the research on 28th April 2009 with a three years permission for data collection to take place (refer letter ref. UPE: 40/200/19/2435 dated 28th April 2009 – refer attached Appendix I).

- I have formally contacted and personally spoken to all potential participants after been channelled to them by the management and mostly by my personal acquaintances. All participants have been clearly notified of their rights and were asked to officially grant their written consent prior to all interview sessions. I also reminded them of their right to withdraw throughout the course of the research.
- I promised to protect their identity by giving an assurance of their anonymity and confidentiality in writing (participant information sheet), and verbally before any sessions were commenced. No real names have been used in the interview transcripts as well as throughout the report writing process. I have substituted their names with labels such as P1, P2, P3, and so forth. This labelling process not only portrays my goodwill in carrying

out the research but also has enormously protected the anonymity of all my participants in line with Data Protection Act 1998.

- I was required to submit a report on my data collection process to the Malaysian gatekeeper's office, which is the Research Unit at the Prime Minister's Department, before leaving Malaysia upon completion of the data collection stage. The research office also required me to provide them with three copies of my PhD dissertation which I intend to submit to them upon its completion. A number of selected participants involved in the preliminary study also have been given a copy of the conference article which describes the findings and discussions on that stage that were distributed at ATHE Conference 2010.
- Prior to the data collection phase I prepared a written outline of intentions and conditions under which the study will be carried out. This has been approved and endorsed by the LJMU's REC. In other words, all participants has been approached by a formal letter and been given a set of ethical procedures containing participant information sheet and consent form before any interview was conducted. These documents detailing the purpose and objectives of the study as well as participants' rights are in accord with the Data protection Act 1998.
- Before each interview session, I briefed the respondents about the implications of their participation and how the information obtained from the session would be used, namely only for the sole purpose of this research project. Data will be destroyed upon completion in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. I also offered to submit a copy of the findings/final write-up to them, which will occur upon request.
- To the best of my ability, I have acted sincerely and professionally in carrying out my role as researcher/interviewer in all those sessions. This behaviour also is a way of showing my appreciation and gratitude towards all participants for helping me to complete my study. Although the research indicates its main purpose is to fill a gap by providing a framework for risk and safety for the event management industry in

Malaysia, I have been truly honest with all the participants by also revealing its hidden and more important purpose of getting me a PhD qualification!

(*Please refer to Appendices 1-VI for all ethical documents used for data collection purposes)

3.9 Summary and Conclusions

In the beginning at the preliminary phase, I was sufficiently naïve in anticipating that I would be the only one asking questions, and expected that all answers will come from the interviewees. I did not realise at all the answers (or some answers) will come from my own head. But in fact, I had to put the data together to make answers, to get subtle meaning. I became so much more engaged in the interviewer-interviewee relationship that I sometimes even got so familiar with the process of sharing experiences (and my own perceptions) with so many respondents. And the answers came back, of course, with description, interpretation, opinion, and feeling all mixed together. As the main agent in the research process, it was then up to me to tease out what is defensible description and interpretation from what is merely unsubstantiated opinion. My own perceptions too had to be recognised as subjective, in choosing the data, in interpreting findings, and in reporting the conclusions. These perceptions had also to be challenged and revised in the light of the data. At the later part and towards the end of the analysis stage, I began synthesising all data extracted from the interview sessions, putting them together using a version of the constant comparison method (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and thematic network analysis (Attride-Sterling, 2001) in order to establish subtle meaning within the context of my investigation. This process involved a reflexive approach in analysing data in that the researcher himself became an important tool or instrument of analysis for the research. In fact, the process of refining and revising the analysis actually continued throughout the writing up process of my research findings.

But above all these arguments, being a novice researcher did not give me a substantial amount of expertise to handle certain situations when respondents chose not to speak the whole truth. I cannot do much if they decide to hide information from me. Although I have a little experience doing face to face interviews I still cannot say that my interviewing skill was particularly good. It was true that the pilot phase has given some sort of confidence in doing the face to face interviews, but to a certain extent I faced some on-going difficulties. For instance, I can only prompt on certain areas when I felt that they have not given me honest responses but not when I did not realise they have not told me the truth. To solve this, the epistemological stance of post-positivism was adopted in which according to this perspective we can never achieve objective reality and thus, the absolute truth can never been achieved (Trochim, 2006). This approach acknowledged that a reality exists, but holds that it can be known only imperfectly and probabistically by recognising the possible effects of biases (Colin, 2002). Thus, I would like to stress that this research is a study which engaged in presenting the perceptions and not any objective reality. The case study approach has been chosen as its method of investigation, with the use of both inductive and deductive approach in analysing the data. This methodology chapter has therefore, detailed out all the process involved since the initial data collection in the preliminary stage until up to the completion of data analysis at the main stage. In addition, a complete summary of research methodology undertaken in this study is been presented in Appendix X.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND FINDINGS 1

PART ONE: PILOT STUDY

4.1 Pilot Study: Identifying Key Themes

This chapter presented the initial findings found in the pilot phase as well as the first aspect of findings from the main phase on important risk and safety issues as perceived by the sample recruited by this study. Data collection for this research started by an initial preliminary investigation among various event-related organisations within the Klang Valley area in Malaysia. It is worth noting that the preliminary data collection phase in the pilot stage has been undertaken in October 2009 and lasted for about 20 days, hence, the responses given were assumed as central at that particular point of time. It is believed that it was an authentic pilot study, as reported and argued for at the time, and/or relevant within that particular time frame.

The aim of this pilot study was to investigate the significance of the proposed research topic by seeking primary data on targeted subjects. But aside from establishing this significance, this pilot test has helped in identifying and addressing certain issues and/or themes that were relevant to this research. As such, the pilot also was rather useful for the researcher to sharpen the qualitative skills in such face to face in-depth interviewing sessions. Thus, the preliminary phase, as well as the literature has resulted in the identification of important themes to be explored further at the main study stage. The findings for this study were divided into two parts – the first is discussed in this chapter focusing on the perception of participants as well as their experience and background related to the event and safety business, whilst the latter examined important risk factors that were relevant to the Malaysian context which will be discussed in the next two chapters (chapter 5 and chapter 6).

The most important objective in carrying out the preliminary study or piloting is to address the issue of feasibility of the proposed topic. The pilot study is like a small experiment designed to test logistics and gather information prior to a larger study in the PhD phase (Altman et al., 2006). Gilbert (2008) stated that through pilot interviews, the researcher will be able to gather basic information about the topic and also predict the respondents' inclination towards the sensitive issues of risk and safety in their organisations. The findings in the preliminary study can reveal deficiencies in the design of the proposed research, and if the preliminary study does not lead to any modifications, the data might be suitable for incorporation into the main study (Altman et al., 2006).

4.1.1 Initial Findings (Findings from the pilot study)

This section discusses the initial interviews in the preliminary phase that were conducted, details some of the processes followed, the issues and topics covered within them and the conclusions drawn from them at this initial phase. Initial contact with potential interviewees was made prior to the interview sessions. It had been determined in the research proposal that up to ten participants (or a minimum of four participants) would appear to be a reasonable number with which to garner enough data, hence, this number of potential participants were contacted. Of the ten, four never replied and one could not schedule any time for the interviews to take place. The researcher later managed to recruit three replacements but during the interview process it was found that two participants, although very willing to take part, were not suitable, either through mere duplication of data or irrelevance (i.e. non-Malaysian experiences). Their data was removed from the study and this brought the total number of participants involved in the pilot study to six.

Six (of the total eight) semi-structured interview sessions conducted from the pilot phase gave the researcher insight as to the most appropriate candidates to further include in the main study. Some of the key informant sample in this stage even suggested useful potential

candidates for the main study which was very useful, and in keeping will the prescriptions of relation to Marshall (1996) and Merriam (2009).

The following presents findings which identified key issues (categories of risks) according to the typology by Allen et al. (2002) and Fallon and Sullivan (2005). These were found after a lengthy process of reflective reading which involved reading and re-reading the responses of all participants with help from the software package QSR NVivo (version 8).

The first part of the analysis generally aims to investigate the background and experience of informants, who were event planners and venue managers responsible for risk and safety aspects. In some cases they were known as safety officers working in event management organisations. The current practice of respondents' organisations on safety and risk aspects was also explored. All selected participants had between four years to over thirty years of experience in the event management field, with all of them still actively involved in organising and managing between four and ten large scale events annually. Four of the interviewees (P1, P2, P4 and P6) had previously encountered safety incidents with some of them even witnessing a fatal incident such as P4, who stated:

“It was in Johor, I’m not sure of the events [name] but it was in Johor. This boy rigged the spotlights without wearing a harness [a safety equipment], and all out of a sudden he plunged to the floor with his head bumped on the stadium’s floor...at the Dataran Bandaraya...and he died! This guy died on the scene!” (P4)

Accordingly, these informants had experienced fatal cases throughout their work and therefore appreciated the potential importance of this study. As for P3 and P5, although they had never encountered any fatalities, both agreed that the risk and safety aspect is very much a major concern in all events project planning and management.

“Safety aspect is important, very important! Safety is something that we cannot expect and can never predict, so we need to always improve [the safety measures] as now we are actually quite exposed to hazards, threats, and such things.” (P3)

Another significant issue explored concerned the current practice of risk assessment and safety management employed by the participants’ organisations. Most of them admitted that they have taken certain measures in ensuring the safety of events workers and attendees, but only at the minimum level. They were not satisfied with the current level of practice among various event management stakeholders in Malaysia and stated that they still had considerable room for improvement P2 noted:

“....Now currently in Malaysia we don’t have a risk assessment standard for event organiser in the country at the moment, but because we dealing with international and we are part of the international association we had to comply. So, it’s a beaten war game because you are internationally affiliated and I’m actually the first vice president of the international meeting association, you know....” (P2)

When asked to give their opinion on the proposed study, most informants gave positive comments with some even claiming that no such study has been made in the event management sector in a Malaysian context. P1, P2, and P4 were very keen on this study attempt, with very interesting responses such as:

“To me this is something new as now people are more focused on risk and safety in the construction industry and so on. There’s nothing yet in theatres and events. Though I am quite new in the industry I can see that something needs to be done regarding this aspect, do something so that people can at least have a guideline to refer to.” (P1)

“Actually for events there are no such things, nothing for events. So, what you’re doing is filling a...you know...there is a gap there so you are filling the gap!” (P2)

“I think this study is good because in the future, event management companies like us can at least have a kind of guideline to refer to especially on how to look after safety aspects and manage the risks related to our work.” (P4)

The second segment was more important in which the researcher developed this qualitative inquiry from the perspectives of Malaysian event practitioners. Several important themes that emerged from this preliminary analysis are further investigated in the main study. The researcher focused on risk perception aspect by questioning not only the informants’ view on the importance of this issue but also went further by probing them about several important hazards or risks related to the event business. The identified risks/hazards have become the core themes or pivotal elements that were analysed throughout the remaining part of this study.

The initial analysis of risk perceptions began when each participant was asked to give their personal perception on the importance of risk and safety aspects in relation to event management functions. In line with the literature, respondents agreed that risk and safety is among the most crucial aspect in event project planning (Toohey and Taylor, 2008; Silvers, 2008; Smith and Kline, 2010). One typical response was from P5 who stated:

“From my personal opinion safety context is very important, even in our daily life also we stress on its importance... From the event management context it is something that you must have, especially if the events involved the public as crowds.” (P5)

Among the important safety aspect stressed by participants was related to the occupational safety and health and its legal concerns, which has been largely addressed by Berlonghi (1990) and Silvers (2008). Under this category of risks, negligence and accidents at work has been identified as a major aspect towards risk and safety incidents, mostly involving accidents in the technical area of the job. Some respondents felt that the main reason for this problem is because of the divided responsibility and/or ignorance and negligence among various parties involved in organising events, as were those of P6 and P5:

“Workers were those who always neglect this aspect... maybe because they feel that they work for the contractors and we are only the event organiser, so they don’t have to listen to us as their own companies never said anything about these safety concerns.” (P6)

“So, that is your negligence at the workplace in handling the equipments, and you have to also look into public vandalism.” (P5)

P3 and P5 also gave similar answers, with P2 going further in expressing some concerns over the legislation aspect of the matter in Malaysia. This aspect was agreed by P1 who stated that there is at the moment not even a position of health and safety officer among Malaysian government’s civil servants scheme, not only in event and tourism field, but also across all sectors and industries. Their views were very much in contrast to the legislation practice within most developed nations discussed by Bowdin (2006) and Silvers (2008), probably based on the consideration that Malaysia is still a developing country. The following statement indicates the lack of government initiatives and priorities:

“First of all, is government aware of this? The government themselves don’t do this sort of safety within their own events. The government have many events you know... so, the government is not looking in at safety, how do you expect that the other private operators to look at it.” (P2)

There were also various comments pertaining to the implementation and enforcement of laws regarding the risk and safety aspect in the country as such by P1 and P3 who agreed they took a rather reactive rather than a proactive stance dealing with safety and risk aspects:

“So, in terms of monitoring and enforcement for our theatres and events is very much less compared to our neighbouring country, Singapore. The government is now started to look into the construction industry which has higher risks compared to theatres” (P1)

“We generally took things for granted...we actually took things for granted regarding this safety aspects... If something happen then only we take actions but if not we will do nothing, not even take any preventive action whatsoever, we are just living in our comfort zone.” (P3)

Another category that has emerged with similar importance according to Kennelly (2005), Keith (2001) as well as Toohey and Taylor (2008) was related to the environmental risks and hazards such as been observed from P2:

“It may not have bodily harm of anybody but because of SARS or earthquake or a tsunami, we had the whole thing cancelled....that to me is also a big risk.” (P2)

Krugman and Wright (2007) have clearly stressed the importance of protecting any risk pertaining to the financial investment of any events organised. Hence, the financial risks and insurance was the third significant theme identified from this pilot stage. All five but one participant (P3) stressed on its importance with some interesting responses:

“....that’s why every time we want to organise any special event the project holder [event planner/manager] must make sure there will be no incurred cost in terms of losses.” (P5)

As the owners of private event management companies, P2 and P4 went further by stressing the effect of financial risks, especially to the continuity and sustainability of their organisations. Their statements reflect the tension between the costs involved in establishing risk management exercises and the profitability issues of the company.

“But there is another insurance when you have cancellation because if the event is cancelled now we have spent two to three years of work, half a million, two million dollars down the road. Now this is also risk for management because if you don’t buy you go loss! There are a lot of people will be out of job and that’s why you have to buy.” (P2)

“What I mean is that for example if something happens [i.e. accidents] during the events and lots of parties or participants make enormous claims it can actually resulted in the company go into bankruptcy!” (P4)

Another similarly important element mentioned by almost all participants was the emergency services and logistics, which actually has been anticipated elsewhere by Berlonghi (1990), Fallon and Sullivan (2005) and Silvers (2008). Hence, it is not too extreme to speculate that the subjects in this preliminary investigation did realise that this essential element depended on their risk and safety plan/procedures with reference to the following quotations:

“Other than the production team we also have other committees such as safety committees to take care of the event’s safety aspects comprising of the Fire Brigade, Rela [meaning: Volunteers of Malaysian People], ambulance and the Police.” (P4)

“We also have external consultant. So, basically we have four parties involved regarding safety aspects consists of the organizer, external security companies, JPA3 or National Defence [agency] and the Police.” (P6)

The next core theme emerged concerned crowd control and/or crowd management which relates to the crowd safety at events and functions. This has been addressed by some researchers previously but focused on different contexts (Hui and Bateson, 1990; Boghossian, 2001; Helbing, Johansson and Al-Abideen, 2007; Kemp, 2007; Upton, 2008;). In addition, this preliminary analysis also had justified the study made by Au (2001) who acknowledged that crowd safety and control is an important issue that needs to be addressed in events planning and management. P2, P3, P5 and P6 all gave typical expression regarding crowd control:

“The safety committees’ main tasks involved monitoring the whole event’s site, the traffic control as well as the crowd control.” (P3)

“The most difficult to control is human being, I mean crowd control! Sometimes they don’t follow instructions, and then this crowd control is quite a major risk...” (P6)

Alcohol and drugs have been mentioned by most western literatures as common risks for events and festivals, such as Tarlow (2002), Fallon and Sullivan (2005), Bowdin (2006) and Allen et al.(2008). However, prior to the pilot phase the researcher had anticipated that alcohol-related risk would not be a major concern for the Malaysian events industry on the base that Malaysia is an Islamic country which prohibits the public consumption of alcohol, especially among the majority Muslims in the country. But to my surprise the pilot has proved me wrong! At least three respondents had highlighted hazards contributed by the use and consumption of alcohol that had previously affected their events, meaning that this risk had emerged as another core theme to be addressed in the main study.

“There were some isolated cases when the crowd had been intoxicated with alcohols which become common cases for events in Sabah and Sarawak.... They consume alcohols and got drunk... then tried to create trouble in the events so the Police had to take fast action [to avoid the problem being escalated].” (P3)

“There were incidents, some incidents like... drunk, getting drunk... they got drunk and some even fainted or caused some uproar, such as having a commotion and caused some injuries resulted from sharp objects...” (P5)

The final theme that emerged was related to the communication aspect of an event project planning function. Although it was not very obvious in the beginning of the analysis it was becoming more important towards the end, being only identified after consistently reading and re-reading the transcripts. It was only through the reflective reading that the researcher found that this element has been indirectly mentioned by most informants in their responses. But some of them gave explicit indications on the importance of communication element in managing risk and safety:

“It was well...you know, the client was very happy that we were on site reporting for them every hour of what took place. So, you need to communicate very strongly what is happening... So, there is no gap there, they want to know what is happening, the family wants to know what is happening, the operator overseas wants to know what is happening, the embassy locally wants to know what is happening. So, you have to keep everybody informed and you got to have one spokesperson or else it'll be very difficult.”
(P2)

It has been found out that briefings (in particular safety briefings), meetings, discussions, rehearsals and direct communications (formal and informal) were among the vital components mentioned by most participants regarding this communication aspect, a finding supported by Allen et al. (2002), Bowdin (2006), Silvers (2008) and Mallen and Adams (2008).

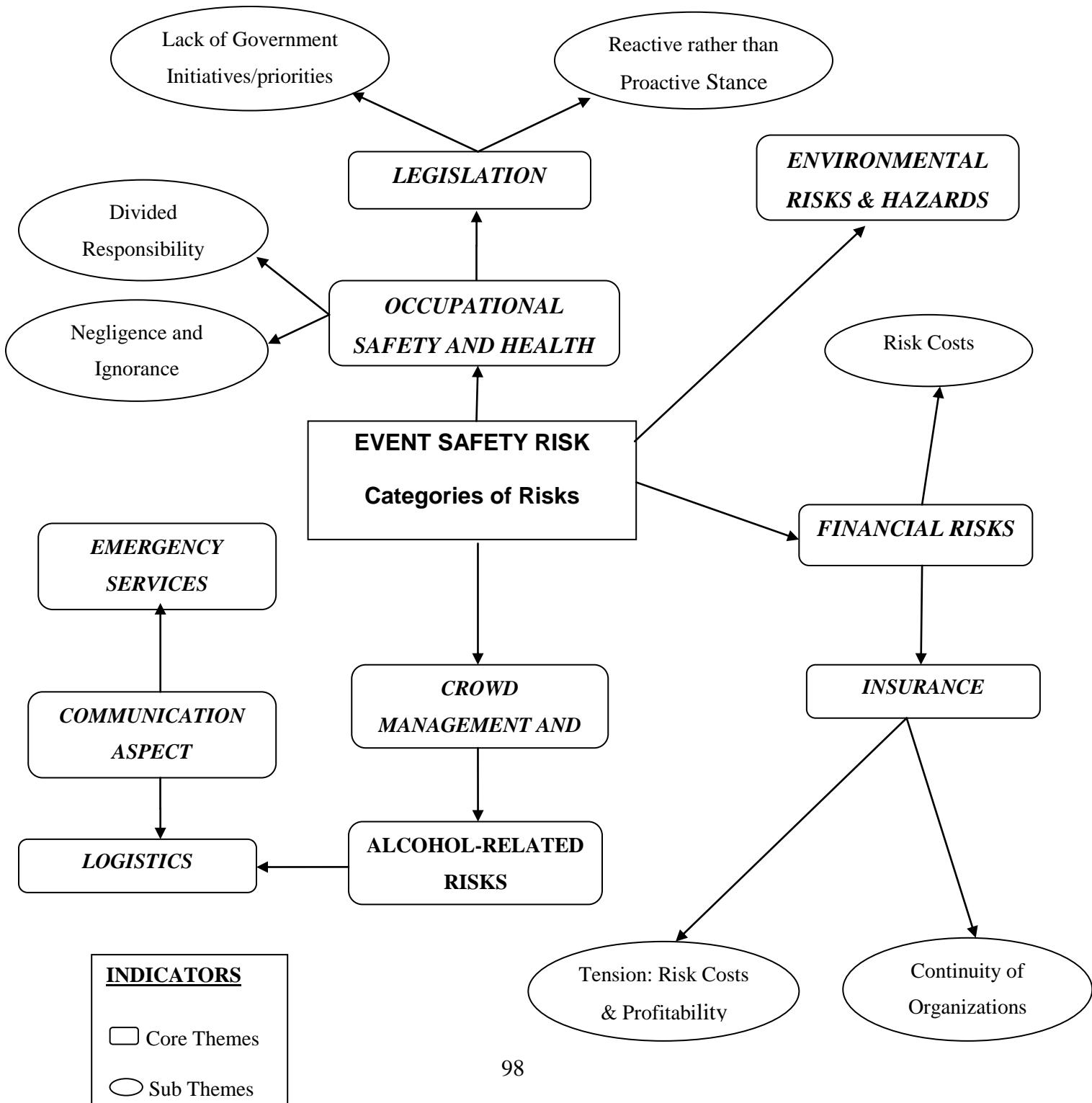
As the interviews progressed, other key themes in terms of categories of risk emerged. As a result, the seven identified categories of risk (core themes) identified in this preliminary phase were, in no particular order: crowd management and crowd control; financial risks and insurance; alcohol-related risks; logistics and emergency services; environmental risks; legislation and occupational health and safety aspect; and communications.

4.1.2 Summary of Pilot Findings

With the completion of the interviews, an initial coding framework was developed to capture the core themes that came out in the preliminary analysis and coding phase. These important key themes referred to the important category of risks mentioned by most participants. The significance of these themes derives from their salience across the interviewees' testimonies as well as the researcher's interpretation of them as substantial and worthy of further investigation at a later phase. These thematic categories were developed using the thematic network approach for qualitative research introduced by Attride-Stirling (2001) – refer Figure 4.1.

The event management literature confirms that there is still a significant gap in the empirical study on risk and safety in this discipline. Thus, these preliminary interviews with event planners and venue managers were important in gathering the primary data based on the respondents' experience in the industry, as well as to investigate the views and perceptions from the industry point of view. In this phase, the researcher carried out semi-structured face to face and telephone interviews with six event practitioners consisting of private companies, event venue operators and government agencies. The data were then analysed and managed with the help of the QSR 'NVivo' package. The findings were used to further expand the interview schedule for the main study and also helped to develop the conceptual framework that has been used throughout the study (refer to chapter two: Figure 2.1).

Figure 4.1: Thematic Network of Pilot Study: Preliminary Phase



PART TWO: MAIN STUDY

4.2 Main Study: Exploring the Identified Key Themes

4.2.1 Introduction

This chapter continues with the results and findings of the main study from 33 informants from event management practitioners within the whole different range of event management organisations, mostly located within the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia. This also includes the initial data from the six participants recruited in the preliminary phase but at this stage the data has been re-visited and engaged in a more thorough analysis. Thus, this chapter examines in more detail the subject of event safety and risk according to Malaysian perspectives. The identified key themes emerging at the preliminary phase has been further explored in an in-depth analysis. The first part of the study discusses the background of recruited participants in terms of their experience and involvement in the event management industry. In the second part of this section, the findings detailed their perceptions towards risk and safety issues by further exploring the important key themes identified at the pilot stage. All detailed information regarding the risk and safety aspects were critical for the development of a risk typology based on important risk factors proposed by Malaysian event practitioners which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

I will start this section by reflecting on my dilemmas and some uncertainties that I had faced before started the main data collection phase. This includes issues such as the selecting and choosing of participants, the time-frame, access, gaining trust, self-presentation, etc. These issues are quite important in order to understand the context that this research has embraced as well as to avoid important data being overlooked. This study of risk perception has largely adopted the Social Amplification of Risk framework (SARF) which underlines the

importance of participants' values and attitudes as well as their technical experience and cultural background related to the area of inquiry (Kasperson et al., 1988; Kasperson et al, 1992).

4.2.2 Main Study Participant

Initial contact with potential interviewees was made prior to the interview sessions. Purposive sampling that was adopted in the pilot study been further continued in this main phase where the selection of participants was based on the researcher's judgement and some of them were also based on participants' reference (snowballing technique).

The participants were initially approached through a formal letter sent four weeks before the data collection commenced. However, the response rate was not encouraging since after more than 30 letters had been sent, only three were returned consenting for the interview to take place. Of these three, one never came back with a reply leaving me with just two participants for my PhD research. So, a change of plan was needed! I then started using my personal contacts and scheduled appointments with two respondents who participated previously in my pilot phase. I was quite lucky in the sense that both of them turned out to be key players in the event management industry in Malaysia. One of them was the former president of the Malaysian Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers (MACEOS), whereas the other owns a very important event management company with a huge reputation in the Malaysian event sector. Through their personal contacts (and some of my friends and former students too), I have managed to recruit 27 new participants (actually 28 but one data has been accidentally deleted due to technical error on the recording device) for this phase, making it a total number of 33 informants altogether for this research project.

As the study refers to the Malaysian event management industry, there was a need to investigate the risk perceptions from various kinds of event management organisations within this context. Thus, the event practitioners recruited in this study were divided into two different categories consisting of event venue providers including convention centres and hotels, as well

as event related organisations comprising event management companies, event contractors/suppliers and so forth. There were seven event venue providers recruited comprising four convention centres, two cultural event venues and a hotel. The four convention centres involved were among those prominent in Malaysia and were very popular event venues for various types of indoor events, namely conferences, conventions, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, festivals and weddings at both the national and international levels. These convention centres consist of one government owned and three privately owned centres and they were established between 1997 and 2011, namely the Malaysian International Exhibition and Convention Centre (MIECC), the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC), the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) and the Shah Alam Convention Centre (SACC). But one of these convention centres is highly regarded by most event industry players in Malaysia, especially in terms of their risk and safety practices. Some even suggested KLCC as a major benchmark for risk and safety management and practice in Malaysia, evidenced from the following interviews in which participants really acknowledged the reputation of KLCC in terms of risk and safety:

“...I used to organise some events at KLCC, it was really great in terms of occupational health and safety practice. You will be fined even if you’re not wearing your nametag!”

“...I want to tell you my experience going to KLCC, you need to be a registered contractor before you can enter their place. Before you start your work you need to attend a half day briefing session on the safety aspects by their OSH department...”

“Our large events, we normally say if we stage it at KLCC, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre for conferences and events. The convention centre is very strict on the part of people that you use... [...], that means if electrical people involve, like big people (VIPs) they involve they actually specify this all has to be licensed and certified.”

The above recognition is believed to originate maybe from their previous involvements and past experiences handling events at this venue. The researcher had previously attempted to get

through to KLCC for data collection since the pilot stage but every effort had come to no avail. That is why I was so happy when I finally managed to get the data from this convention centre during my main data collection phase. A quick search from the venue's website found numerous acknowledgements and awards enhancing its reputation as Malaysia's most prominent convention and exhibition centre to-date. Among the accolades and certifications received were 'Best Print Advertising Campaign (Gold)' by Meetings Industry Marketing Awards (MIMA) 2012, 'Best Convention Centre in Asia' by MICE Report Awards 2012, 'Best Congress and Convention Centre – Asia' by Business Destinations Travel Awards 2011, 'Best Convention & Exhibition Centre' by TTG Travel Awards 2011, The Brand Laureate for Country Branding Awards 2010-2011 and lots more (KLCC, 2013). It was from a session with an informant from this convention centre that I managed to identify many risk and safety issues at the local and international standards, including those related to litigation and legal aspects. The lengthy discussions regarding safety and legislation can be found in chapter 6.

The category of event venue provider is vital in this research because the venue can be regarded as the host when events are held at their place. As a host venue, they are responsible for providing a safe and secure environment for all event employees and event attendees (Au, 2001). Hence, there is an urgent need to investigate their perceptions regarding these aspects. There was a tendency that event planners/organisers even left the matter of risk, safety and security totally in the hand of the venue provider such as:

"Yeah, if you're talking about ok, safety of the participants and all that, I mean like...because everything is done like close by where is accessible. So if there is somebody hurt or sick, or anything happen is actually accessible to whatever helps is needed, usually is in hotels so facilities are there. [...] ...yeah, because they're the one who does the services."

"As far as I am concerned, the safety pertaining to the venue which is done by the hotel. We as the event manager it's not under our responsibility...that's why to be frank with

you, one of the people that you want to interview is the PWTC [meaning: Putra World Trade Centre], have you make an appointment?...”

“Let say if we organise indoor events, let say at the mosque, or stadiums, or hotels, so these things are indirectly indoor so they already have built-in security measures. Basic fundamentals [of safety aspects] are already there, the mosque already has basic things, stadiums also have let alone the hotels definitely will have theirs, right.”

The views of all the event planners above were supported by another respondent from the event venue provider category:

“Basically yes, because I could see the trend now especially in government agencies, or private agencies also. During the opening ceremony they would like to have a safety officer from the centre, or the venue provider to give a short briefing of the safety procedure if there is any emergency case. For instance, we have Maybank [meaning: Malayan Banking Berhad], we have ‘Jabatan Kesihatan Keselamatan Pekerjaan’ [meaning: Department of Occupational Safety and Health], all these agencies are requesting safety officer from the venue to give a short briefing of safety procedures if any emergency happen.”

There were also venue providers who were at the same time becoming event organisers and planners for some events organised at their venue such as:

“So, things currently around 2008 or so the management decided to revamp and brings more events here. That’s why they created this new department, last time it was only sales and marketing department whereby they just worked with another event organisers to create event here, but now they want to create more so they’ve created this new event management department, to create the events. So then we start along exhibition, starting 2009.”

“.... But like PWTC they only rent their halls, they don’t organise events, they don’t do anything else. They just rentals... [...]... We organise the event. Last year we have SELPEX, Selangor Lifestyle Property Expo 2010, and this year twice we organised Selangor Lifestyle and Property Expo 2011, and we focused for the lifestyle and property. And then, we have ‘A Night with Anita Sarawak...’.”

This kind of informant was able to give useful differing perspectives on risk and safety aspect from the planners’ eyes as well as from the event venue managers’ standpoint. Thus, the involvement of respondents from these organisations (event venue providers) is critical for the focus of this investigation.

On the other hand, the second category consists of 19 event related organisations, such as event management companies, conference organisers, event contractors and suppliers, as well as seven informants from government event-related agencies. I have put the event organisers/planners together with event suppliers/contractors in the same category based on both responsibility in providing a satisfying experience to event audiences and attendees. Robson (2009) recognised both types of organisations as part of the event industry and that they work together in concert to uphold the standards and reputation of the industry. Among those recruited was an event supplier whose task or job is very critical in terms of risk and safety practice. This particular company is well known in the event business for fireworks and pyrotechnics, and their expertise includes special effects for action movies. In fact, they are the only company in Malaysia who has been given a ‘bonded’ area by the government of Malaysia after the explosion of the fireworks warehouse in Sungai Buloh on 7th of May 1991 which caused 26 deaths and 83 injured (Shaluf et al., 2002). A bonded warehouse actually refers to a building or other secured area in which dutiable goods may be stored, manipulated, or undergo manufacturing operations without payment of duty to the local government (Cornell, n.d.).

“Blastmaster and Exploblast provide these services, and we also provide storage of explosives where we have our own magazines down in Bentong, where we store and we

have licence from the Malaysian government to keep explosives, and we also have bonded warehouse. Bonded warehouse in Bentong where you don't need to pay duty, [...] So, we managed to convince this business to bring it from Singapore to Malaysia. That is when I managed to convince the Deputy Minister to give us a bonded warehouse."

Apparently, the recruitment of this reputable company has undoubtedly given a significant impact for this study. They have been involved in this high risk business related to the event management industry not just in Malaysia but also as a player in the international market.

".... And my pyro-technicians even recently went all the way to Dhaka to do the...what do you call...they had this cricket is it, the cricket... we did the World Cricket the opening and closing, there's the gentlemen... [...] ...we have gone international. We've just came back, ~~xxxxx~~[deleted for anonymity] is one of my manager who did the World Cricket, ...yeah, the recent one, in Dhaka. We did in Dhaka the opening of that, we did the fireworks there."

Another aspect that is worth mentioning is the ability of the researcher in recruiting several companies that deal with aviation (air) events such as air carnivals, hot air balloon festivals, para-motor and para-gliding flying activities, RC sports air tournaments and so on. As is well known, aviation is the most highly risky kind of event, the highest order in terms of risk and safety in any event industry (Wilf-Miron et al., 2002; Rose, 2006). I have been able to involve as many as six participants from the aviation related events through my personal acquaintance, including a long lost childhood friend whom I co-incidentally met on the flight during my travel back home for the main data collection phase. He has referred me to some of his colleagues who have been actively involved in various types of aviation events, those playing different roles right from the planners and organisers up to the regulatory bodies. In fact, there were six of them in total that were involved in air related events including one participant who is now acting as the President for Malaysian Sports Aviation Federation (MSAF). Besides the

aviation and air sport events, some of the participants in this category were also involved with other types of events such as exhibitions, trade fairs and so forth. This set of data on aviation events participants can be further explored as a different case study for my future research later on (refer to the final chapter). Some examples of the high risk nature of the aviation events (and aviation industry) are been portrayed when I started asking their perceptions regarding the importance of risk and safety.

“Safety is the utmost important! [...] Because, having an aviation sports, the priority has come.... first priority would be safety, because we are flying passengers, (and) it involves life. So, as a pilot, as the event organiser I will take strict measures, even if we have to cancel the event we'll do it, if we found that is no more safe, safe to fly a balloon. [...] That is the most important it is not money, it's safety number one. So, if we find the condition is not right to fly a balloon we'll cancel it then. [...] Aviation, we are very strict, for aviation we are very strict!”

“It's very, very important! Important in the sense that especially on aviation, coz aviation is actually a high risk event. Because any technical, or any mistake can cost life! And as you know the air space is open, so like what we say that the first thing is before you do any air aviation we have to get approval from the Department of Civil Aviation which we call it NOTAM, Notice to Air Man. It's the first safety aspect! Notice to Air Man means that we block the area, the air space, in terms of longitude, latitude, ceilings, radius of the event.”

These different kinds of event organisations provided diverse understanding of the whole scenario of risks for the event management industry in Malaysia. The differing perspectives that event venue providers and event organisers bring on these issues is believed to have enhanced the understanding of not just the risk issues but also gave greater impact to the identification process of major themes or important risk factors that is crucial for the development of a risk typology for the Malaysian event management industry.

On another note, the researcher would like to underline that this study would not in any way be taken from a gender perspective as from the total recruitment sample of 33 respondents, only five of them were female event professionals. Hence, this small ratio cannot be taken into consideration maybe due to the scenario that Malaysian event management industry continue to be largely dominated by males, very much in contrary to the industry literature suggested by Grimaldi (2005). However, the small recruitment numbers of female event practitioners was not an issue as the literature also suggested that male event planners would have a greater confidence in the policies and procedures that are in place to protect people from harm resulted from “their greater involvement and control within the social structure of that they have historically influenced” (Robson, 2009, p.97).

4.2.3 Findings from the main study

Before I proceed, I would like to stress again on the reflexive approach that I had undertook in analysing this qualitative interview data. This reflexive approach which is common among qualitative researchers has been applied by me to gain deep understanding of the matter and enhanced myself as the main instrument tool of analysis for this research project (Stronach et al., 2007; Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2008). In fact, there was an abundance of data and I was ‘in the state of limbo’ on ways to extract in-depth knowledge from it until I engaged myself with a doctoral session chaired by a professor (who also happen to be one of my supervisors) who initially paved the way for me to use this approach as a way getting out of my predicament (trouble). We had even produced few articles discussing about reflexivity together with some other doctoral candidates and fellow colleagues at the faculty (Stronach, Frankham, Bibi-Nawaz, Cahill, Cui, Dymoke and Mohd Khir, 2012; and Frankham, Stronach, Bibi-Nawaz....Mohd Khir, 2013). The initial collaborative work towards the publication of these journal articles has enhanced my understanding of this reflexivity approach and indirectly paved the way for me to further analyse the data. Thus, reflexive methods applied together with the use of ‘Subjective I’s’ uncovered by Peshkin (1988), has helped me to reflect on my own subjectivity as an intercultural self so that I have utilised it for my data analysis at this main stage. I even authored

a paper (still unpublished) about my experience using this reflexive approach and subjective I's mainly for the purpose of addressing the reliability and validity issue of my research undertakings.

Now we returning to this chapter's discussion on the analysis of the first part of the qualitative data involved. The analysis further acknowledged several major concerns on important issues related to the risk and safety practice in Malaysia from the perceptions of those involved. Following are important themes that will be the major focus of discussion in this chapter:

- Negligence and ignorance among individuals involved
- Taking a reactive rather than a proactive stance
- Lack of government initiatives/priorities, including lack of enforcement
- Tension between the costs of risks and profitability
- Divided responsibilities among various parties organising events

4.2.4 Participants' Experience and Social Background

Most informants in this study have various kinds of experiences in relation to this wide area of multi-disciplinary event management. As a novice researcher, I did come across a big dilemma – I used to question myself and have doubts whether I have chosen 'the best candidate' for my study. I was even thinking of some issues regarding the validity and reliability of this study at that particular point of time. I began reflecting on my journey in this qualitative inquiry and suddenly realised that I should not let myself continue to be engaged in that sort of quantitative path. The demographic form describing participants' background and experiences has been used to aid in this purpose (refer Appendix XI). Thus, that feeling and negative thinking rapidly disappeared when I started transcribing and began analysing the raw data. I started gaining some confidence through the discovery of so much rich and nuanced data from

these informants. In fact, it is not too extreme to say that all of them actually met the basic criterion stipulated in the research proposal, which required participants who were either responsible for the planning and managing events, or those who engaged in the safety and risk management aspects of events been organised.

All interview sessions were designed in a way that the informants can tell of their experience in the industry with some particular attention on their relevant experience on risk and safety aspects. This has been done in relation to the social amplification of risk framework that has been adopted in studying the risk perception for this study (Kasperson et al., 1988). Here I have a very large gap in comparison of their experiences and involvement in the industry, with the higher end of over 30 years of experience whereas the lowest end was only about a year of involvement in this challenging profession, such as illustrated below:

“My experience in the event management field is quite long, I was working at ‘National Cultural Complex’ from 1977 to 1992. We were organising most government events and festivals because at that particular time there were not yet involvement of private event management companies to handle government events.”

“I have about 10 year experience on safety background but mostly in the construction industry, my involvement in the event industry only began about approximately one year ago as a safety officer stationed mainly at Istana Budaya because the government started to be aware of its importance in this industry as well...”

However, a large proportion of these participants have an average of between 3 to 18 years of experience involved in event management industry. But why are the years of experience so influential in this study? Why has the experience and the technical background of respondents become an important theme (aspect) to discuss in detail? In risk perception theories, background and experience were considered as an important factor in shaping the perceptions of the subjects under study. Thus, this study has adopted the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF)

to examine the event planners perceptions towards risk and safety. According to this framework, what human beings perceive as threats to their well-being is influenced by their values, attitudes, social influences, and cultural identity (Kasperson, et al., 1988). Several respondents had much experience involved in the event industry but unfortunately, they still rather gave unconvincing statements regarding safety practices. We could even sense the naivety of some respondents regarding this topic even though they had been around for some time in their current job, as shown in the following excerpts:

“Until today...until today it never really occurred to me because actually we are very occupied of the flow of the event and all that but we never really thought about risk management in terms of safety, honestly I have to admit.”

“I think aaaa....but when aaa.... but when ‘Masrur’ [meaning: researcher’s name] explains the topic, I didn’t expect and never thought that this aspect is so complex and has a very wide coverage. My knowledge actually is not very good and so did my little experience in this field...”

Each of the above respondents has between 3 and 8 years of experience in the event management field. Therefore, besides the humble opinion of the second subject, those participants actually have direct involvement on the aspect of risk and safety. Hence, this nature has in some way enhanced the validity and reliability aspect of this study. They were either involved as event managers/organisers/planners who were responsible for overall aspect of planning and management of various kinds of events, or they were employed as venue managers or specialty officers dealing with risk and safety management for events and meetings organised by their respective organisations. So, when I preceded by asking specific questions related to risk and safety concerns in their work, most were able to give rich nuanced data regarding this matter.

“How far... emm... Ok, it’s very important... [...]... Risk assessment plays a major role. At that time most of the organisers or contractors they were not aware of all these. Last

time if you see contractor come they would just construct any booth or whatsoever and that's it."

"If you ask my personal opinion regarding this OSH, the context of safety is actually very important, even in our daily life we have to always consider the safety aspect, it's readily basic in our life. From the context of event management and event planning you have to have it, even if it is not there you have to make sure safety consideration is there, because this job is related to the public [safety], and the mass crowds."

Five of the six participants in the pilot phase experienced safety incidents with three of them involving fatality, whereas twenty one out of twenty seven participants in the main study faced comparatively similar consequences. Therefore, there were twenty six participants altogether from the total thirty three respondents recruited for this study who admitted that they had direct experience involving safety incidents and accidents in their job previously. This number constituted more than 80 per cent of them having more or less significant experiences regarding the risk and safety issues. Although this number or percentage cannot be taken to be representative for this qualitative undertaking, it would enhance the reliability aspect for this research as according to Stake (2004) choosing the right sample (informants) was equally important. In other words, rather than managing to recruit the right candidates, I was also able to address the issue of respondents' experience and their professional background in terms of event management and planning with relation to the theoretical foundations of the Social Amplification of Risk Framework, which promotes the integration of the technical assessment and the social experience of risk (Kasperson, et al., 1988).

4.2.5 Initial investigation/discussion on the importance of risk and safety

The interrogation of their perceptions on risk and safety issues was begun when I explored their views on the importance of this subject matter from their personal point of view. But being a Malaysian myself I did have a feeling that these respondents expected that I was

looking for an objective answer, some maybe even expecting that I was looking for the best answer possible, or a perfect answer that can satisfy me. So, to avoid this and also as an attempt to ease the situation, I did stress to them that I was not looking for any right or wrong answer but only wanted to know their opinion regarding these topics. This is because the study of risk itself is very subjective as risk is a common term and means different things to different people at different times (Trimpop, 1994; Fischhoff et al., 2004; Robson, 2009). That was the reason why I stressed so much the word ‘perception’ in most of my questions such as on several following instances:

“So, I come to the second part of my interview that is your perception regarding the area of concern of my study. It’s your perception, so there is no right or wrong. What is your perception or opinion regarding the risk management and safety in organising events as a whole? So, means that your general perception, if you say whether it’s important or not or what? Or if you have another opinion?”

“How do you perceive the importance of risk and safety in organising events? ...[...]...From the perception of a Malaysian event manager how do you perceive the importance of this aspect?”

“....this aspect for you, this is your perception, do you consider this aspect of risk and safety important in organising events?”

I did realise that the risk and safety aspect was a serious matter but it was quite tricky to be discussed in the interview sessions before I began my initial data collection phase. Therefore, I never expected that I could get straightforward answers to each question that I was looking for. The preliminary phase has equipped me with some interviewing skills for me to ‘dig down and break the strip’. When I presented my pilot findings in December 2010 at the annual conference of the Association of Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE) in Christchurch University of Canterbury, Kent (Mohd Khir, 2011), I did have a lengthy discussion with an

audience member who was also a well-known professor about the notion that my participants would most probably take the stance of hiding the facts or even lying and choosing not to tell the truth because of the sensitivity and controversial nature of this topic as well as avoiding the tendency ‘to tarnish their own or their organisations’ reputation by telling the truth.’ In other words, these participants would rather avoid giving controversial statements that can put their organisations’ reputations on the brink. This has been proven true when there were some occasions when participants asked me to go ‘off-record’ before revealing some controversial sensitive issues:

“...So, if we want to follow there must be supervision and enforcement. The problem is how to make enforcement if we don’t even have a standard procedure? The most important is that we must have safety committee but only top management who have the authority to do so... I actually have something to tell you something but you have to go off-record first...”

However, the good thing is that because I had anticipated this issue right from the beginning I was able to deal with it quite effectively. A lot of traces can be found when I elicited or obtained confessions about some information regarding their experiences in relation to their past experiences dealing with safety incidents and accidents. Most of them actually started by telling me that they never had any safety incidents in their work previously at the beginning of the interview sessions, but somehow I could encourage them to give up more as the interview progressed. Maybe they indirectly did it without realising or maybe they decided to disclose those issues only after gaining some trust with me as the investigator. Whatever the reason, the main focus here is that I had successfully been able to let them reveal those incidents themselves, which normally came towards the end of the sessions, probably when they were not aware that they had given the contradicting statements before, such as on these cases below:

Earlier statement:

“For events that I had organised, ‘Alhamdulillah’ [meaning: thank God], we never had any incidents...of course the first thing that we stress upon when planning events is public safety...”

Later statement:

“We never had any injuries, except on one occasion when we had the use of animals for our street parade, in this particular case we used elephants....”

This was another respondent’s initial responses when asked whether he has previously been in any safety incidents and accidents:

“So, thank God, until today everything is very smooth. Nothing happen, I mean we have not gone to that kind of level ‘lah’[meaning: a slang], you know, you understand. But I would like to emphasise, [in] this industry you have to know the business, and it is also is very late to say sorry if there is an incident. And you know in China, in US and so many places we never say it can’t happen. In this business we always must take note that if it happens, what if it happens? The question should always asked, if it happens? What is your precaution, that is very important, you see.”

Later statements contradicted earlier statements, resulting from me asking the same question but only this time it was asked towards the end of the interview:

“Let me be honest with you. I would thank God and touch wood, we didn’t have any major incidents, but we have minor incidents like for example the curtain burnt for some reasons....”

“Thank god no, there’s no any catastrophe, have not... but all minor incidents yes, we have. Sometimes the curtain burns, sometimes the... aaa....”

Finally, I would also like to expose that alcohol related risks had emerged as another core theme to be addressed in the main study draw attention to one particular respondent who did gave a conflicting statement when asked the same question at different times, firstly at the beginning and later towards the end of the face to face interview session:

“Ok, from the organising aspect of the event including the technical part, we do not have any incidents since I am here, nothing at all, ‘Alhamdulillah’ [meaning: thank God]!”

Even when I approached the issue with him several times this particular informant kept repeating that no safety incidents has occurred whatsoever:

“Nothing at all up to now, ‘Alhamdulillah’ [meaning: Thank God) [...] We do not have any safety issues or incidents because I am the person in charge of monitoring all the technical aspects, and I was always on the site to carry out the inspections.”

What was surprising is that towards the end of the interview session, the same participant suddenly revealed not just one but three safety incidents that he had previously encountered:

“... I’ve just remembered an incident at a festival last year in Labuan Water Festival when we have appointed a new contractor and something happened when the LCD screen fell on one of the audience who was watching the event displayed on the LCD.”

“.... And also there was an incident that I feel quite bad for me happened at Melaka when a local villager come over and tried to hit me... [...]actually he was mad because I was blocking him watching the stage performances. So, he started shouting and cursing me and threatened that I was at his place.... [...]he actually wanted to climb the VIP stage [to have a clearer view of the performance] but when we stopped him, he came back after a while bringing some of his friends to beat me, but luckily I was unharmed because...”

“The worst case occurred was on this one particular incident, [...] ...we have a fatality case in Melaka when a boy passed away! But again, this was beyond our control. The boy went to the parade and when he was parading he suddenly fell and died, he died at the scene.”

However, there are also instances when informants seemed to be honest right from the beginning. They openly admitted that risk and safety was not really a major concern for them, albeit expressed their personal dissatisfaction towards the matter. And there were also those who openly admitted that this issue had never crossed their mind hence they did not see it as very important. Below are some ‘honest’ responses from informants who perceived this subject matter as comparatively less-importance:

“I would say to be frank... at times hotels don’t see it that much compared to an event management company. Because for us as a hotel yes... no doubt we have to provide a safe environment, but to go as details of in a way whether you can do this, whether you can do that, whether you can do that kind of things is sometimes is a bit out of our way.”

“Ok, let me be very honest with you in respect of the industry. I think in Malaysia nobody cares a hoot for the safety!”

The responses above were considered as the starting point that triggered me to identify a major important theme that will be further discussed in this chapter. Their perceptions on risks and safety issues were believed to contribute significantly to this important factor that had begun with an in-depth investigation on this topic, mostly related to the human error that will lead to negligence and ignorance in managing risk and safety issues. This notion of negligence and ignorance sensed from the participants when they were asked their personal opinions on the importance of this topic in their day to day job in planning, managing and organising various types of events. The question on risk and safety importance was asked in the beginning phase of the interviewing sessions, mostly when I started introducing the scope that I will focus

throughout the sessions. Next we will see how this major theme has helped to enhance the discussion of this thesis.

4.2.6 Negligence and Ignorance

My pilot study found out that participants who had personally faced safety incidents and accidents previously in their job would regard risk and safety as more important compared to those who never experienced it before. But this pilot conclusion has not always been confirmed. That is why when I entered the main study data collection stage I was a bit surprised to learn that some participants, even those that had previous experience of safety incidents still did not seem to have a strong feeling towards this issue. It was strange to find that they still regarded risk and safety as a ‘foregone’ issue, and took this serious matter quite lightly indeed, such as described below:

“I think if you ask me even though safety and risk is talked about I think safety and risk management in the Malaysian context probably is the area that is seen as a forgone issue. Forgone meaning people don’t take it as serious matter, take for granted...”

“We actually aware that we need to take more attention to the risk and safety aspect before organising big events especially. But maybe this awareness has not been taken seriously for us to pay more attention to, so we never undertook any precautions to face these issues.”

I could understand their views as I am myself a Malaysian. But living in a different society now, the way I perceived the event risks and safety issues was completely different from my informants which are all Malaysian based. I was somehow in a position where I could considerably recognise their views by being a Malaysian myself, but also be able to further extend my understanding after being in a country/community that is comparatively more risk-averse (Cornish, 2010). That is why I was occasionally distressed when some respondents gave

negative derogatory comments towards the community in which I am both living and researching now, such as from two respondents below:

"I think partly it has got to do with the mentality in Malaysia whereby safety is something that has been around but we are not as jittery as people in the west. I am talking on the post 9/11, we are not very nervous about the whole thing. We are not easily intimidated by the events."

"....take for granted partly because maybe it is good in one sense because we are not behaving like western people who are knee jerk, knee jerk meaning they over respond to the issues pertaining to terrorism."

These responses were maybe based on the risk perception study by Slovic (1987) who acknowledged that Western culture has long been accused of being dominated by risk aversion or on the quest to eliminate all hazards in order to achieve a zero-risk society (Beck, 1992). On the contrary, after getting deep into the interview sessions I noticed that a few respondents did not really regard risk and safety as the most important aspect of their deep concern. Some of them described the scenario with astonishing statements such as:

"Because it's always on perception that we always be safe. And we are, 'Alhamdulillah' [meaning: Thank God], in a very safe country, so far so good. So that's why if in other countries sometimes they have like a lot of... you know... social unrest for instance, but in Malaysia we're quite OK in that sense, so maybe we don't really see the importance of it."

"No, no, no.... we have not come across it, we have not come across it! Maybe you are... our country is safe actually, I think that is the reason... I think, you know... We don't think of that way of any...what do you called... we don't seek of any sabotaging during the events, you know... We never, I never thought of that because maybe we are a safe country!"

The above two extracts really left me perplexed over the issue of risk and safety in Malaysia. I was disappointed at their attitude regarding this aspect but somehow was able to control myself because as a professional researcher, I cannot let my anger and personal feelings affect my study. Although I did not professionally agree with some of the informants' views and I made my opinion known in some instances, I largely restrained myself so as not to be biased in this investigation. Within the process I kept reminding myself that I am still the analysis tool for this study, based on Smithson's (1990) suggestion that what is rational and how people perceive ignorance must be carefully accessed. In fact, there were many statements revealing the vulnerability of risk and safety issues among the participants, portraying their negative attitude and negligence on this aspect in their day to day job.

I started to investigate their perceptions that have led to this negative attitude of negligence and ignorance. According to Smithson (1990) ignorance is primarily a social creation, and ignorance was generated and used by real people in real institutions. That was how I started to understand the context that the participants were speaking about. When I re-read the transcripts I found that most of them were focusing on the Malaysian context, and on the notion that risk and safety is not such a serious matter because 'we are living in such a very safe country.' Participants gave the impression that we do not really need to pay so much attention to safety because we are comfortably living in a safe country. This scenario was supported by the social amplification of risk framework useful in examining risk perception and which agreed that social influence and cultural identity were significant to understand the participants' standpoint (Kasperson et al., 1992; Renn et al, 1992). Thus, the cultural context of the country entered into the perspectives of safety. The tourism literature also confirms that the South-East Asian region, in particular Malaysia can be regarded as a safe travel destination (Munan, 2002). This is based on the reputation of the country which is ranked ninth in the world as a popular tourist destination (*ibid*, 2002). Since the last two years, CNN reported that Malaysia has been ranked as the fourth most popular destination for shoppers, after New York, Tokyo and London and at the top in terms of value for money (The Star, 2013). From the context of the events and

meeting industry (MICE), Malaysia is known to be a popular business tourism destination, and the government is working very hard to increase her reputation globally (ICCA, 2010). The country also never had previously encountered serious incidents related to the tourism and event industry (except some smaller incidents discussed in chapter one – refer to the section: setting the scene). This fact has largely influenced the respondents' opinion on these issues. Another aspect is that the media in Malaysia was largely controlled by the government and thus will downplay (or hide) certain problems for the reason of protecting the country's image both nationally and globally. This was done maybe based on the importance of media in shaping the public's risk perception which has also been acknowledged by SARF (Kasperson et al., 1992). The tourism world generally had a view that any disasters would severely jeopardise host countries' reputations (Mykletun, 2011). Most safety incidents were characterised by fatalities and not by near-miss cases (Rose, 2006), and so in this sense Malaysia was quite lucky because we never had any high profile incidents reported, with an exception being the tragic death of Marco Simoncelli at Malaysian MotoGP in 2011 ([Dailymail, 2011](#)).

The human factor is believed to be the most important theme that contributed to the lack of efforts towards managing risk and safety in the event management organisations. According to Masys (2004) human error is often cited as a major contributing factor for the cause of incidents and accidents, and this includes the field of event management. Thus, negligence and ignorance discussed here is one of the contributing factors to this human factor. Most of the respondents acknowledged that this human failing based on negligence and ignorance is a major factor towards the emergence of risk and safety issues in carrying out their duty as event planners and venue providers. This view is supported by Cox and Flin (1998) who found that personal responsibility and attitudes to hazards were important factors in problems of safety management. Hence, in order to avoid their personal responsibility, it can be noticed that several respondents' responses were like putting the blame on other parties such as in the following responses:

“Yes, this is human negligence, human problem, human! One more is the behaviours, the attitude...attitudes of people also we can’t.... “huh, safety is nothing [not important], I’ve been working here so long but never faced any incidents whatsoever.” For me it’s very easy, in my briefing I will tell them, you do know your date of birth but do you know your date of death [the day that you will die]? Do you know when will you be in accident, right?”

“It is more towards attitude. [...] Mainly on human attitude, and then... [...] Ok, attitude is for example, we already informed that they cannot fly at this level at this time but sometimes when these pilots they got a good aircraft they will just forget everything. Ha, that’s the attitude problem, but to me that was very confined because it will not affect the whole system. But this problem can still cause fatalities and so on.”

The last opinion from a respondent involved in aviation (air) events is very much in line with the aviation context, as, according to Wiegmann and Shappell (2014), human factor which referred to pilot error was identified as the root cause of approximately 70 to 80 per cent of reported accidents in the aviation industry. This human negligence factor was also similar in the event management field as the events’ organisers, managers, planners, as well as the venue hosts would be the most important parties responsible for any incidents in any kind of events (Au, 2001). However, this one informant had a totally different view than anyone else in citing that personal factors such as family problems and fatigue could also be regarded as the reason for human negligence.

“Yes, most accidents happen are actually, what you call... in house. Most accidents happen family, family issue in the house. People they just negligence so if they have accident, we don’t have any major accident at the moment but it can happen. I mean, usually like chef cut the finger very deeply while cutting some fish. How do you go about that it, she is cutting the fish [and] she [accidentally] cut his finger?”

The in-depth investigation into the aspect of human failure in managing risk is further explored by interrogating the participants' views on this topic from their own perspectives, sometimes by the use of prompting and provoking questions to dig out a deeper answer from them. As this is a kind of perceptual studies, the researcher was not in the best position to decide whether those factors tended to be true or not in the real situation so the best way is just to 'let them speak the truth from their heart,' synonymously with 'let the data speak for itself' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). As a result, the researcher managed to receive honest responses from the informants, some even openly admitting their mistakes and weaknesses, such as the lack of planning and preparation on the risk and safety.

"No, no, no... it's actually because we never planned, we never planned the risk and safety aspect actually, we never did! Let say if the stage collapse, what we should do, what actions we should take, we don't have any plan whatsoever."

"Let me tell you frankly, in my meeting about 20 times prior to this program the issue of safety has never been a big issue. Just to tell you the level of awareness in Malaysia. But there was an agenda, but probably the agenda number twelve."

Although most informants agreed with the literature that risk and safety is crucial in planning and managing events, some of them were giving various differing perspectives. Some responses above portrayed a lack of concentration on the topic was may be to the fact that those involved in events' planning and implementation were pre-occupied with other issues (Au, 2001). Some respondents admitted that they do not have any assessment plan and analysed the risks just along the way, a puzzling behaviour reflecting how such a critical aspect been gradually analysed throughout the progress of an event. Another was tackling risk and safety issues by depending on human instinct. These behaviours could have cultivated a significantly extreme view of popular ignorance towards this important aspect, as the human instinct can be referred to as an act of ignorance introduced by Smithson (1990, p.210) known as untopicality, which refers to "the intuitions people carry with them and negotiate with others about how their

cognitive domains fit together.” For most people planning is done at the last minute, most likely inside their head without asking for feedback from associates, and this drive-by planning method is a recipe for disaster especially when charged with protecting crowd safety (Gaynor, 2009).

“Well... to be frank no, because it’s just along the way we just analysed what are the risks.”

“We actually just follow our own instinct... Honestly I am telling you that we never had, never had any safety plan...”

However, the good part is that this similar respondent towards the end of the interviewing session later on suddenly realised and admitted to me that it was not proper for him to merely depend on his instinct and luck towards the safety aspects in organising and managing events.

“That’s what I’ve been mentioned about the instinct just now. First of all, whoever destined to die will die, whoever lucky will survives then, and then they will be there... It’s not proper actually!”

The absence of safety incidents were identified as the main reason for the lack of measures undertaken, at least from the reasons and excuses given by the participants. However, according to Rose (2006), the absence of accidents does not necessarily imply a high level of safety. Although the context might be different, I tend to agree with his idea that waiting for an accident or incident to determine that we are not safe is clearly not an acceptable way to manage an events operation, in contrary with the views below:

“Yes, but if only I am able to see those things [safety threats], sometimes it never happens, so if happens even once then maybe we will pay more attention to it...”

“....Because we never had any big incidents yet in Malaysia. Because the norm in Malaysia is that if it happens then only we will take the precautions, it always likes that...”

I was in a dilemma when I was repeatedly caught in the iterative process of analysing the interview transcripts. I am not going to make any conclusions yet, but from the aspect of professional practice, I do believe that Malaysia still had a very long way to go. Msafiri (2010) warns that ignorance is a disaster, and as such, I was left a bit frustrated by a few of informants below who made their ignorance known by openly admitting that this topic was not really an important part in planning and managing events, a notion that is clearly contradicted with the event literatures' understanding that risk management and safety was definitely an important core fundamental in event project planning (Tarlow, 2002; Fallon and Sullivan, 2005; Silvers, 2008; Robson, 2009).

“We are quite satisfied, I think safety and risk in Malaysia probably there is no awareness as yet, but having said what I see it's not a big issue, it's not a big issue...”

“....maybe when somebody sues us to the court, but I think so far we never had one. So, we depend on luck and we were fortunate that we never had any [safety incidents].”

“Yeah, I feel that safety is very important, but naturally being... I don't know, because I actually think positive, so we don't really aspect that, that such... I mean like a chronic event would happen at that point of time.”

4.2.7 Taking a reactive rather than a proactive stance

The negative attitude discussed above later expanded to another sub-theme that is also related to negligent and ignorant attitudes of event/venue managers. Such negative behaviours resulted in most respondents taking a reactive rather than a proactive stance in managing risk and safety in their work. This reactive measure was due to the risky nature of the

safety incidents and accidents, as according to Masys (2004), it is this source of latent conditions that pose a significant threat to the safety of a complex system, such as event risk management and safety. Rose (2006, p.26) argues that “administration describes ‘safety risk’ as a measure of probability and impact”, so it is a matter of uncertainty and prediction. One would argue that we need not put too much focus on things that are not apparent or visible, and may not happen, so it is still a matter of probability. It is believed that this concept was mistakenly regarded as the cause of them not taking proper action, such as described by an informant below:

“So, like when something occurs for instance, the person who is nearest to the incident area will normally take prompt action such as bringing the victims out, or pull them out, or whatsoever. From then he will try to get medical help and so forth.”

A few participants were even putting the blame for the weak management of risk and safety in their organisations on management faults. They claimed that as employees they did not have any authority and as such it was the management who should be taking a more proactive stance indeed.

“The most important now is that we have to form a safety committee, this safety committee must be established and it will comprise the top management. It has to be from the top management and his committee members...” [...] This needs to be done by the top to bottom management because the authority is with the top management, they have the authority. We as the middle and low level officers don’t have the authority... [...] so, now we have to form a safety committee chaired by the top management the director general and its members comprises all the head of departments, all the head of departments must be in the committee then only this thing can come into force...”

“Because there are so many event management companies in Malaysia, lots of them. So, all these (risk and safety practice) depends on the management of the companies themselves whether they are really aware about it...”

The explanation given by the first informant explicitly stated that it was the responsibility of top management to ensure the implementation of a proper risk and safety procedure in any organisation. His views are supported by Cox and Flin (1998) who found that a ‘management commitment to safety’ was an important emergent theme for their research. Their later research, drawing on Guldenmund’s (2000) analysis, also found that the three important core themes in safety management comprise of ‘management, risk and safety arrangements.’ However, talking from an owner’s perspective, the second participant above challenged this argument by stating that it was up to the organisations themselves to have such an awareness of this issue and to take precautions accordingly.

A good event practitioner would always prepare to be proactive and avoid putting themselves in a passive response mode when facing safety threats. This is because an untreated risk can possibly turn into a disaster. But most respondents above were actually putting themselves in jeopardy by taking the reactive stance as they may face the feelings of uncertainty, missing information and mistaken perception when coming to the time to act or make decisions (Smithson, 1990). That was the reason why the author stressed that we “not indulge in the opposite convention of crying total ignorance by way of justifying inaction in the face of any kind of uncertainty” (*ibid*, 1990, p.207). This state of uncertainty towards responsibility issues concerning the implementation of the risk and safety is accompanied by the emergence of another major important theme, namely lack of government initiatives and enforcements.

4.2.8 Lack of government initiatives, priorities and enforcements

The tourism industry, which includes events and festivals as well as the MICE industry has been regarded as one of the most important sectors in Malaysia and has become the third largest source of income from foreign exchange for the country. In a recent report, Malaysia’s Tourism and Culture Minister claimed that the country is on track to achieve the target of MYR\$65 billion in tourism revenue for 2013, a huge growth of 30.7 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2012 (NST, 2013). But compared to the more established field of tourism

and travel destinations, special events and festivals including the meetings industry were not regarded as important catalysts for the tourism sector previously. It was not until 1998 when Malaysia was appointed as host for the Commonwealth Games '98 that a huge turnaround occurred, creating a significant impact on the special events industry in Malaysia. Since then, the event management industry has witnessed a tremendous growth by the establishment of various government agencies and event management companies throughout the country.

Any government is responsible for safeguarding its citizens in all kinds of activities including the event industry. The establishment of the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) and the National Institute of Safety and Health (NIOSH) has a main purpose of enforcing risk and safety practice in the country through the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 (Act 514). However, this exploratory study has resulted in the emergence of a new theme concerning the lack of government initiatives and priorities in terms of enforcement of the law in the context of the events management industry in Malaysia. To understand this, let us start with some introduction on two of the most important government agencies responsible for the implementation and enforcement of risk, health and safety concerns in Malaysian governmental and private industries.

In Malaysia, the Department of Occupational Safety and Health has been based under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Human Resources, and their role is to uphold the main legislation regarding the Malaysian Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994: Act 514 (detailed discussion on this act is in chapter 6). Thus, this department is responsible for ensuring the safety, health and welfare of people at work as well as protecting other people from safety and health hazards arising from the activities in all sectors, except the army and naval forces. This has been described by this informant:

"Because this (act) 514 is not only for the construction, but covers all occupations except two that are the army and navy, they don't use that."

As a government agency, the department is responsible for the administration and enforcement of legislation related to the occupational health and safety of the country (DOSH, 2010), and this includes the tourism sector of events and meetings industry. In 1994, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) was established for the purpose of generating new knowledge in the field of occupational safety and health (Johnny, Yapat and Janius, n.d.). But government rules and institutions rarely are crafted and never operate solely for the benefit of the general public (Rodriguez et al., 2005). And more unfortunately, “the problem is that the world is largely ruled by pseudo democracies and socialist republics that might seem to offer universal participation, but actually thrive on ignorance” (Msafiri, 2010, p.320). Both of these agencies were criticised by several respondents for not carrying out proper implementation and enforcement of the legislation pertaining to the safety in the event-related organisations including the event venue providers. Their frustration at the lack of government initiatives regarding this aspect was clearly portrayed:

“...But the problem is a lot of local people are only doing it locally, so they don’t care and there are no hard rules, you know.... The government has no such strict rules because we’re still developing country, sometimes it’s not.... Human Resource [ministry] is not really looking at it seriously.”

This critical statement made by the above respondent accusing the Malaysian government in particular the Ministry of Human Resources of negligence might be emotionally expressed but his opinion was supported by another participant who had a vast experience of over 10 years in the field of occupational safety and health.

“So, we can see a very lacking of the monitoring and enforcement aspects for the theatres and event industry. Nowadays government is going mostly to the construction sector, the construction industry got some government enforcement as the safety risk due to the higher risks involve actually compared to the theatres.”

The researcher later on did some research on the department's (DOSH) websites and found out many databases regarding safety accidents, most of which occurred in the manufacturing and construction sectors together with agriculture, forestry, logging and fishing (DOSH, 2010). Hence, it can be confirmed that the services industry particularly the tourism and events management sector has not been properly addressed by government agencies. This exposes some issue of neglect on the enforcement aspect as the objectives of their establishment clearly stipulated that the agencies were supposed to look into all sectors and cover all aspects of safety in all occupations and across all industries, as noted by this respondent:

“.... All other works must use [Act 514], the act binds all including sweeping floors, staging and theatres, singers and everything, all legally binds by this act!”

Lots of examples can be found in the main data regarding the implementation of OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Act) in the event management industry but I will defer that discussion until the next two chapters (chapter 6).

Both of the following interviews shared a similar argument that the government was not very serious in the implementation and enforcement of risk and safety aspects in the event management industry. The second informant was more lenient in saying that the government was now looking more at the higher risk industries such as the construction sector. Here I would like to narrate an interesting response given by an informant relating to his experience faced with the top management of the NIOSH (National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health), highlighting the lack of implementation and enforcement issues. This participant narrated to me his experience while attending a conference on occupational safety and health, in which the highest authority of the department that is the Director General of DOSH himself was confronted by conference attendees regarding this important topic:

“....So, now I want to ask the Director General of the Department of Occupational Safety and Health. The department largely made the enforcement for safety aspect at

construction sites which were mainly private construction companies. We at the government agencies also is expose to the risk and safety hazards, but why the department of safety doesn't enforce it towards the government agencies? What was his answer? What his answer? What was his answer? He said that we had only just started to implement the risk and safety towards the government agencies and we are moving towards it now. He said they only started implementing into the government agencies....”

If we looked into the history we will find that the establishment of the Department of Occupational Safety and Health was way back before the Malaysian independence in 1957, some 120 years of establishment to date (DOSH, 2010). So, the reason given by the Director General was unacceptable. But to be fair to him, the tourism service industry in particular the event and meeting industry has not been around for too long in the country, not until the last two decades (Abbott and Geddie, 2001; Allen et al., 2005; Hede, 2007; Korstanje, 2009).

As mentioned, the reason for the establishment of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in 1994 was to promote and educate Malaysians regarding risk, safety and health implementation. Their main objective was conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related injury and illness (NIOSH, 2013). However, this particular respondent was sceptical of its (NIOSH) roles and functions:

“....So, if you talk about health and safety law, many [say] “I don’t do it...”, there is not enough people, at least got people... that should has developed tools, the human resource curriculum, you know. HRM should offer it and make it compulsory for companies to go through. If they don’t make it compulsory then people are not aware. If government make it compulsory, agree that everybody must go to certain courses, renewal of licences, and then there will be policing. Then we will be much better. Because if there is no compulsory course that is required then people don’t bother...”

However, the implementation issue as to whether the institute had fulfilled its roles and functions is not going to be debated here. This thesis is not an avenue for discussing such matter, and hence the researcher, also does not intend to stand between the authorities and other organisations' claims. But on the other hand, the researcher did find several other important themes emerging from this debate. These themes will be addressed as sub-themes that will further develop this perspective on the lack of government initiatives and priorities into the risk and safety aspects in Malaysia.

In general, the government through various authorities were charged to protect the people and the individuals whose lives might be affected by certain hazards. Data relating to the lack of enforcement by the authorities in the event management industry in Malaysia brings me towards the discovery of no safety officer post which was found in my preliminary investigation, and later was confirmed by the findings in the main stage.

“Haa...the post is not there, but we insist to have it because this safety and security officer will be in-charge of fire-drill, because on our side...because it's an contractual obligation between the contractor and JKR [meaning: Public Works Department]. So, on our side we insist to have a safety and security officer.”

The above scenario made me to conclude that if the government was taking the issue seriously they would have established the post of a safety officer in all event venues owned by the government. If there was a fixed post (safety officer) in all government agencies there would definitely have been enforcement of safety. Although there may be some other officers looking into this aspect on a temporary or ad-hoc basis, it was insufficient as the organisation would not be able to make it mandatory and the monitoring might only be done in an informal way. In most cases these organisations only have a security officer to look into the safety aspect which I personally felt was not sufficient, as in the instance below.

“On our side we only have a security officer, but security means security per say, security of the building not of the events. [...] No safety officer, no! Security officer yes.”

So, it is not too extreme to conclude that the Malaysian government or the Ministry of Human Resource is not sufficiently serious about risk and safety aspects, especially in the event management industry, in which case I have to agree with the above respondent.

The discussion related to government efforts later escalates into another issue. Another sub-theme emerged from the data particularly focusing on the inefficiency of certain government departments related to bureaucracy (red-tape) problems. A significant number of participants complained about this matter, as instanced below:

“I want to say....in Malaysia we have red-tape issues all the time. The government they are supposed to give priority.... actually they have to put priority on safety angle first, and also licensing as the major concern. But most of the times they wanted to combine these aspects, they put more attention and focus on tax payment and collection!”

This participant narrated his experience in dealing with many government agencies that were only concerned with tax payment rather than on safety and licensing requirements. We would agree that tax collection is very important for any government because that will be their main source of income but we would not agree to neglect the issue of safety for tax purposes. A similar issue regarding government inefficiency was related to the process of licensing applications. There must have been certain time limits for the application process for licensing and approval towards certain events, based on the authorities' responsibilities to scrutinise and study the application before any approval or endorsement needed to be made. But in the following occasion I noted that it was quite a rare circumstance for a ‘special interference’ by top government officials to speed up the application process towards getting the approval and licensing requirements for certain events and/or festivals. Another participant highlighted the

issue of double standards practiced by government authorities in managing the application processes.

“And the government need at least three weeks to process this, it’s not overnight, except unless you’ve got a special, special approval [...] Yeah, for example like today...at end of the days they are the heroes!”

“...this is my perception actually, Malaysian is double standard anywhere you go... Why? Because we’ve done our education exhibition locally and we have been treated differently [meaning: poor treatment compared to international event companies] by the [local] authorities, ok.”

Both these situations highlighted an element of incompetence relating to the lack of government initiatives and priorities on event risk and safety. The words ‘red tape’ and ‘double standards’ specifically elicit government institutional weaknesses that are closely associated with it. In fact, the literature suggested that red tape actually can make corruption possible as corrupt bureaucrats may increase the extent of red tape so that they can incentivise/extract additional bribes (Mauro, 1998). There were some evidences in which participants reported their dissatisfaction in dealing with incompetent government authorities.

“And even the authority doesn’t look into the details before even issuing a licence, you see. Where they store, where they keep, they never study the background of a company.”

“You have to ask if the police are working properly here in this country. If the police do not work properly do not talk of rubbish...”

The attitudes towards the government initiatives for risk and safety have escalate into another problem that has been identified as another sub-theme for this discussion. Some gave a very provocative and revealing comment:

“Even the police also been paid. [...] ...it’s unrecorded...[...] It’s actually money, bribe...but you don’t put it into writing...you don’t have to write as bribe, ok!”

“Ok, you wanna do outside show, let say at a stadium. Stadium have their own rules and regulations, are you a charge man, are you authorise, right... are you authorise, show me your licence. Ha, these is somethings good but yet, you paid only fifty dollars then can be appoved, hahahaaa.....[laughing]”

Both of these statements do not discuss government incompetence in terms of bureaucrats’ red-tape or delaying times in application processes but they were suggesting something that was much more crucial, claiming corruption and abuse of public office. Corruption is typically a result of government regulations, especially where public officials have discretion in allocating resources, such as certain associated licences that civil servants give to those entrepreneurs willing to pay bribes (Mauro, 1998). These informants gave shocking statements regarding corruption among government officials in handling risk and safety procedures. The first informant was claiming bribery in relation to the police, a shocking revelation since the police force are the most important authority responsible for safeguarding domestic affairs. He was telling how he had to use bribery to get approval for permits on events that he organised. In Malaysia, there is a law prohibiting the gathering of people at public places without the approval of the police, as has been mentioned by another respondent below which referred to the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012: Act 736 (Malaysia, 2012).

“For public security I still, whatever I’m going to have here I have to get permits. Permit from the police, permit from the ‘Dewan Bandaraya’ [meaning: city council], see? And permit for gathering, you know. So, I have to inform the police whatever I want to do here.”

As events and festivals by their nature are gathering audiences, I had an impression that this particular respondent had been in such a desperate situation to get the approval, noting that all

his other means has come to no avail. That seems to have forced him to offering bribes to the authorities and confirmed Mauro's (1998) viewpoint that corruption can prove effective in getting around bureaucratic impediments. Although these sensitive statements might somehow spark quite a controversy for this research, I have decided to face all the consequences because for me, it was the data that inductively shaped my report writings. This research might not be looking at the objective reality (real truth) so I cannot put that perspective here, but I felt that being a professional researcher it was essential for me to ethically report what have been elicited from the data itself. Mauro (1998, p.11) suggested that "corruption is more likely to take place when civil servants are paid very low wages and often must resort to collecting bribes in order to feed their families". Rijckeghem and Weder (1997) on the other hand suggest that there will be less corruption when the civil servants are paid better, compared with similarly qualified workers in the private sector. Hence, a quick look into the salary scheme of the Royal Police Force of Malaysia found out that the police forces were among the lowest paid among Malaysian public servants prior to 2012, when the government had decided to re-structure the police and army salary scheme (please note that the data collection for this study has been carried out in 2009 and 2011 respectively). As with the second participant the scenario was not so bad since he was only giving money (may be interpreted as a form of bribery as well) to the stadium authorities, also owned by the government. The act of the second participant here (and also another informant below) is in line with Mauro's (1998, p.13) advice which stated that "entrepreneurs know whom they need to bribe and how much to offer them, and are confident that they will obtain the necessary permits for their firms."

"....So we want the cooperation from the locals we have to employ Rela meaning: Volunteers of Malaysian People], meaning that we have to pay Rela and the locals including the leader of that place and his subordinates. Then we have to pay for the site, payment for the site... [...] ... The site actually we rented from Indonesian workers although that site was gazetted for graveyard [meaning: the vacant land has been

allocated by the Land Office of the local city council for future graveyard area]. We even have to pay one thousand dollars to the police.”

“For example is like the Police, the Police was such like... because we all know that our country is ‘the most developed country’ [meaning: the most bad country – speaking in the opposite manner] country in terms of authorities and everything. Meaning that sometimes we do have permits but still they come over and disturb us. OK, that is one thing. And then the local authority, local authority can be divided into two, the first is those who approved the permit and the other one is the enforcement team. So, the risk that we had to take is that the one who approved will produce the permit but the other team of enforcement will still come and harass us...”

Corruption is not something that we can get rid of easily, as a corrupt system often reflects a norm practiced for generations. Thus, I have to conclude by saying that once a corrupt system is in place and the majority of people operate within that system, then the individuals involved have little incentive to try to change it or to refrain from taking part in it, even if everybody would be better off if corruption were to be eliminated (Mauro, 1998). The country does have an anti-corruption agency known as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission but their job was made difficult by various problems and constraints, such as because “the experience of operating in a corrupt environment is substantially characterised not only by the amount of corruption but also by the uncertainty associated with corrupt transactions” (Rodriguez et al., 2005, p.383). Thus, this issue related to the bureaucratic corruption can be regarded as another important theme (sub-theme) that has emerged from the lack of government initiatives and priorities including lacking of enforcement towards risk and safety aspect in the event management industry in Malaysia.

4.2.9 Tension between the cost of risk and profitability

The preliminary investigation in the pilot phase identified a core theme that was crucial to explore further in the main stage. This theme was previously been under the category related to financial risk. However, in the main findings there was a need to put this important theme as a theme emerging from the participants' perceptions, a theme which was closely related to their personal point of view in relation to risk and safety practice. This theme was later improvised and re-introduced as the tension between cost of risk and profitability. In simpler terms, this part of the discussion was about costs related to risk and safety aspects versus the revenue or profits generating.

The first instances of this theme emerged in the preliminary findings when the theme was been explored as a financial risk associated with the importance of insurance. However, at that particular time only two out of the six participants mentioned the risk related to financial issues that can make their companies become insolvent – this aspect will only be discussed further in chapter 6 (refer to the financial risk and insurance). For now, we will be exploring another dimension of ignorance that was particularly based upon financial and cost matters. This section will examine the participants' opinion on the importance of risk and safety practices when, being challenged by the question of operational cost, or when money becomes an important consideration.

So, I had anticipated that this theme of financial risk would become an important issue here. The two participants in my pilot findings were actually from a similar background, both owned an event management company. Since I had noted its significance, I have decided to explore the theme further in-depth in my main study. This move was found to be productive as because my final data was largely dominated by event entrepreneurs who run and owned event management companies. Although I had planned to ask specific questions related to their cost/budget constraint and/or impact towards the risk and safety practice, I was surprised that it was these event entrepreneurs who kept stressing on the cost of risk that challenged their profit/revenue generation. So, the following quotations in this section were mostly elicited from

informants who own or operates private event management companies, or best known as event entrepreneurs.

Before we proceed, let us have a brief definition of the term ‘entrepreneur’ and try to rationalise why these specific groups of people put revenue or profits as a major concern in their work. The Oxford Dictionary defines entrepreneur as “a person who makes money by starting or running businesses, especially when this involves taking financial risks” (Oxford, 2004, p.220). In laymen’s terms an entrepreneur is actually a business person, and as a business it is understandable that the biggest risk for them in their work is of course the business or financial risk. From an event perspective, an event practitioner who owns and/or runs an event management company is regarded as an event entrepreneur. In one of the interviewing sessions, we were actually discussing the safety risk involved in event operations, but somehow I could actually sense the tension of this informant who actually was hoping that I would touch on the financial or business risk in our discussion, but I had just let the theme emerged from the data itself.

“We have spoken in the past, in the last half an hour issues pertaining to physical risks, talking about fire risks, talking about personal risks. But people like me, when I do seminar that sort of risk is number five in my list, number four. My number one risk is business risk. I was given a task to bring in 1500 people, if only 500 people come we might make a loss of half a million, that is the biggest risk that I had. So, I think having said all your risks and your area of your research, I think you have to mention somewhere the biggest risk is the business risk actually.”

Although this business (or financial) risk does not have a direct effect for the matter that is being discussed in this section, it has in some way portrayed the thought held by these entrepreneurs when dealing with these matters. It was no coincidence that all entrepreneurs (including event entrepreneurs) deemed their main task was to generate as much profit as they could, but safety concern must never been neglected at any cost! And some of

them seemed prepared to maximise profits by ignoring or minimising the cost needed for safety purposes, in line with Cornish (2010) who stated that some event organisers treat their event as a method for income generation but displayed reluctance to adhere to certain risk and safety procedures. In an event context, an event entrepreneur will try his best to squeeze his budget as much for undertaking risk and safety measures in order to get the highest profit margin that he could achieve. It was because the temptation was omnipresent for not just event entrepreneurs, but also other arena/venue and event managers/planners to ignore dangers and underestimate challenges in their efforts to maximise profits and minimise costs (Abbott and Geddie, 2001; Wood, 2009). That is why in various instances we could see their desperation and reluctance in the cost cutting exercises.

“Sometimes we had parents at the management meeting and planning stage as well. I told them about the cost and most of them felt that it was just not worth it. We also had to pay for other expenses such as football pitch and ground facilities’ rentals, also lots of other things. So, if we have to pay three to five hundred dollars only for the ambulance to be put on standby there it was just not worth it. It’s better to have one parent on standby to send any injured players to the nearest clinic, that would be much better for me in terms of cost concern.”

“I know it’s dangerous.... That’s why I mentioned just now it all depends on awareness... If the ministry put it [safety precautions] as compulsory maybe it will increase our cost!”

The risk and safety concerns can never be subordinated to anything, let alone the profits/revenue because any untreated risk can escalates into a disaster, and in too many cases places ignorance and disaster remain locked in a death grip (Msafiri, 2010). Maybe this is another form of ignorance, looking at matters in terms of money, resulting maybe from their lack of knowledge regarding risk, safety and its consequences. Another perspective from an event venue provider was about the insufficient number of people that had caused the delay and/or

elimination of certain safety measures. He cited that a large manpower was needed in order to implement a proper safety management plan, and that was not possible as more manpower would have cost more money and again, less profit. My interpretation was actually based on Smithson (1990, p.209) who agreed that ignorance usually was “treated as either the absence of distortion of true knowledge, and uncertainty as some form of incompleteness in information or knowledge,” in which he also implied that uncertainty was a synonym for ignorance.

“Maybe because it is open, so we cannot control the people [i.e. contractors] who is doing their job there, so we have to.... we need more manpower actually to monitor such places.... [...] ... but sometimes the tricky part is when sometimes we put more manpower more cost! So, sometimes we have to measure and identify, I mean... [...] ...Yes, cost concern, so we have to suggest again, if we want to put more [personnel] then, that’s a cost involves.”

Now, I want to give attention to a similar case but a little different in the sense that this event entrepreneur was putting the blame on other entrepreneurs in the industry. When the question regarding cost versus risk/safety was put to him I was not very sure why he had originally started pinpointing and putting all the blames on other companies rather than his own. My assumption at that time was that this particular respondent, maybe due to his status as an important player in the industry was actually trying to protect his reputation and/or the reputation of his company. That was perhaps the best explanation for his attitudes as described in a couple of quotations below.

“Revenue! They only interested in that, because when you are talking, I have also emphasised to one recently, to one so called big event company, and his very well known to this industry on safety.”

Another of his remarks blaming other organisations not fulfilling their responsibility towards risk and safety was:

“...and I have been emphasising every meeting, every time to all the event management people, because we are very young in this industry and we are still growing, you see. Everybody is in only there to make how much they can make, the money!”

However, a good interviewer will always be able to let the data reveal as much as possible, likewise a good researcher who is normally able to stimulate the informants to expose themselves, rather like ‘hitting two birds with one stone.’ At the later phases and towards the end of my interviewing session, this same respondent has finally admitted that his major concerns towards putting proper risk and safety precautions in place was again dependent on their total budget for the event operation.

“But to be honest with you sometimes we are also tight. [...] To be honest with you, so when we are tight we try to minimise the risks. [...] Yeah, it’s budget also, it’s important, but is also depends on budget.”

It has been expected that other types of respondents (other than those involved in event business) would not have given a rich nuances regarding this matter. This lack of contradictory findings may be because the cost of risk was never meant to be a big factor for them, apart from a government servant who declared that he had foreseen some mishaps by several event suppliers and contractors in producing certain event equipment that was not according to the specifications stated in the invoices. However, he declined to provide more details when I tried to investigate further what were the actions taken against these non-compliance contractors, citing the reason that the matter was strictly confidential.

“Yes...there were times when the contractor didn’t use the specifications that we required, they put it in the invoice those equipment with expensive costs but they actually didn’t use the exact ones.”

There was an informant who did value the importance of risk and safety matters but his individual belief has not been shared by the organisation that he was attached to, so his sort of

personal stand did not correlate with organisational goals. He explicitly described his manager's effort in implementing the objective of the organisation to focus on cost-cutting rather than the safety concerns.

"Ha... but sometimes the tricky part is when we put more manpower it'll involve more cost!"

The researcher then began to test his reactions by asking more specific and pointed questions on whether the cost cutting measures and the revenue generating objectives were more important than safety aspects, to which he replied:

"Aaaa... as it depends also on the project itself. [...]... if we don't have any problem with the project and the budget is OK then we will...but probably when there is a limited budget then he or she has to work within the budget. But sometimes can compromise so so actually, you know..."

However, this final respondent who was an employee to a convention centre (event provider) acknowledged his personal opinion, only that his perception was maybe not shared by the management because of their paramount concern for cost cutting and revenue generating.

"In my personal opinion I do feel that safety can never be compromised, because it involves people's well-being and their lives, including our own staffs, general public or even contractors, you're obliged to all it's actually the same no matter who. So, you can never compromise, it's only that I have never been on the spot when the events choose to... But also, I can say it out loud here but if you ask the manager maybe he has a different view actually."

All excerpts in this section offer evidence that not a single entrepreneur including the event entrepreneurs really divert their attention from profit making and revenue generating. Smithson (1990) argued that it was the contrast between individual and organisational responses

to the aspect of risk, safety and disaster that has probably led their responses to mundane ignorance and /or risk. Some event organisers even treat their event as a method for income generation for which they welcome a large audience, but with no control measures adopted to cater for the inherent dangers and risks that this has generated (Cornish, 2010). In fact, their ignorant perspectives of concentrating on maximising profits can never be considered more important than the safety and risk aspects at all.

4.2.10 Divided responsibilities among various parties organising events

The event management field is very complex due to the multi-disciplinary functions involved in planning and preparation of various types of events and festivals all over the world (Getz, 2002; Allen et al., 2005; Singh et al., 2007). The organisation of an event is similar to a unique project which involves multiple phases like initiation, implementation, execution and the closure (Fruhauf, 2001; O'Toole and Mikolaitis, 2002). Because of its complex nature involving many areas of disciplines, multiple functions and many phases, there were usually many parties involved in the planning and preparation of an event project. This basic feature of events resulted in the emergence of the final important theme for this chapter.

Among all the important areas involved in organising an event, the literature confirms that the risk management and safety has been regarded as one of the most important disciplines in event planning and management (Tarlow, 2002; Eisenhauer, 2005; Silvers, 2005; Mallen and Adams, 2008; Robson, 2008; Jennings and Lodge, 2009). Therefore, based on its importance, it was such a norm that there were also many people representing different organisations and different parties in planning and executing the risk and safety measures for any particular event. A high ranked government official who often led the planning and organisation of large scale event projects (mega events) for the government admitted the need to transfer some of the risks involved to relevant authorities.

“You go for that, that’s why you as the... you have certain things that you have to limit your responsibility of that and you distribute your risks to the relevant parties.”

His predecessor who is now working at another government agency also supported this view, citing that there were actually many government departments and civil agencies involved in organising the government’s mega events, so the ‘G to G’ (government to government) relationship was vital for the success of such events. This respondent specifically detailed the involvement of the police force for matters related to risk, safety and security in all government events.

“.... on the event safety risk assessment, since we are in the government, so all our event we involved the security like the police to come in...[...]... police will do all the safety.”

The study identified that the two most important parties who are usually accountable were the event organiser/planner and the event venue providers. In most cases the responsibility regarding event risk and safety that is being organised is shared between these both parties (Au, 2001; Abbott and Geddie, 2001). However, there were vague interpretations here, meaning that the authority and responsibility regarding the risk and safety was not properly divided between the two parties. As a result, there were instances when the event planners themselves were not very clear about who should be responsible for this important aspect, something that according to Smithson’s (1990) framework is referred to as self-attributed ignorance.

“As I say it from the start, it was not something very clear but if we actually mention, for example like the case of Brand Entrepreneurs Conference where it’s already there and we are the project manager so we are the one who’ll be in charge. If it spelt clearly from the starts, it depends on who actually hold the responsibility.”

“Yeah, I don’t think we have it for events... Once in a while I still remembered, once in a while I heard the organiser was telling about the insurance and everything is handled by

the ministry. But it's only once in a while actually, not every time! [...] So, if let say these things [safety incidents] happens, maybe I'll have to get back to the ministry to claim the liabilities and so on."

Risk and safety business is something that can lead to disaster if not properly managed so it was normal that those involved in planning and preparation of an event tended to avoid taking responsibility and pushed the liabilities on to others. Cornish (2010, p.10) suggested that there were also evidence that the agencies and individuals "turning a blind eye of what is going on, partly because there was an element of confusion as to who should take the lead in such matters." Therefore, this aspect could tend to lead towards conflict among various parties involved. Thus, the discussion here is about the emergent theme of divided responsibilities among various parties involves in organising events regarding the aspect of risk and safety management and control. As such, the study indicates that the most visible tension was between the event organiser/planner and the event venue provider. In most cases the event planners usually depended on the venue providers such as the hotels or convention centres to provide necessary facilities and assistances such as been described by the following quotes.

"One more, the venue is the most important... [in terms of] the capacity, at least we should have an architect or an officer from the city council to inspect from the aspect of...from the department, an architect to check the safety of the building. If we organise an indoor event we have to check the safety of the building, can it afford certain numbers of crowd? So, that safety is the utmost important."

"Overseas yes, but usually we'll engage...because as I said we would do it at the hotels, so all the emergencies and in fact it happens, sometimes there were participants who had high blood pressure, so the hotel will actually assist us. So, these are the things where we do anticipate but that were actually be informed to, because sometimes when we arrange, and then we actually tell the hotels please be prepared for these kind of things, so they would just be on that [standby mode]"

Hence, cooperation and coordination between the event venues and event organisers was vital towards the execution of a risk and safety plan (Silvers, 2008; Smith and Kline, 2010). Numerous interviewees from the event planners/managers/organisers category said that they were very reliant on the expertise of the events' venue management especially for the coordination of risk and safety procedures.

“We mostly depend on the venues actually, because the venues would know better...in terms of the locations and other facilities provided at their place.”

“From whoever who was actually experienced the venue or the locations, or sometimes we just asked the hotels for example, if this happens what would be done. Sometimes hotel themselves will actually provide us brief on where, how far is this, how far is that and all that, so actually we will have you know, we would know how to coordinate ourselves.”

According to an informant, there was an incident in which one of the audiences at the event that they had organised had an attack of hypertension syndrome and was in need of immediate treatment. This respondent was so grateful that the venue or hotel that they were staying had taken safety measures towards saving the life of this particular audience.

“So, he has hypertension. So he couldn't get up so that's where we actually had to have the hotel to actually help us, because they were the one who with access of getting services and all that. So, this are one of the experiences where we actually... but even before that we actually prepared the hotel to actually provide certain services where we have requested for them to have doctors on call, just in case.”

Halls, auditoriums, stadiums, sport arenas, public spaces, convention centres as well as the hotels are popular venues for events, festivals, meetings and expositions. There were several discussions about the importance of venue as the host for events (Abbott and Geddie, 2001; Sweeney, 2005; Beaven and Laws, 2007; Smith and Kline, 2010). One of the informants

who has a vast experience in the hotels industry for more than 15 years acknowledged its importance as a venue provider, although in some instances the hotel was not organising the event and only acted as the venue provider. His argument was that as the venue host, it was the hotels which had to provide necessary facilities and thus, to be responsible for all risk and safety requirements:

“Because if you do not put too much of concentration in this aspect, if there were to be any issue or problem occurred on that particular day, we as the hosting hotel or as the venue will be more or less responsible because we are providing the facilities to them. But I’m not sure how as a hotel we can actually give too much of protection in terms of this kind of risk management and so forth, because it may varies in different-different aspects in terms of the events, it may varies of the requirements.”

“At the moment... no, we only have like say for example, you park in the hotels, they will still say the hotels are not responsible or liable for bla...bla...bla... that’s quite basic. So when it happens in the hotel for example, no doubt that we do have insurance to cover certain² incidents, but we do not have like a say or a contract kind of thing that we will issue up to our event organisers [such as] OK, if you would have it here these are the things and so forth that you have to agreed upon. I do not see anything there on my part as of now, but maybe that will be better to have it, but then again when you have that kind of contractual thing with your event organisers, I’m not sure about the implication of status or replication of reputation that you gonna do...”

However, the tendency was still high for the event planner and event venue provider to come into conflict regarding risk and safety issues. For example, in a case of non-compliance of the venue’s rules and regulations the venue managers would not accept liability. The following was an example when the venue management refused to take responsibility for a client. Although this was not an exact example featuring the event manager as the client, it can

at least give us some impression that the venue management would not hesitate to take similar action to non-compliance event planners/managers.

“....So it was quite a very heavy downfall, and also the heavy rain and so forth. And happens that actually the tree fell on top of the car. So, of course the owner of the car would like to put the hotel to be blamed because we do not up keep the trees. So at again we do have an insurance to say that it is act of nature.”

The theme related to divided responsibilities among the parties organising events been further discussed on an occasion where a particular company questioned the responsibilities held between his organisation and the hosting organisation. In this case the event management company owned by this respondent was given several contracts as the event manager for some government events. So, his argument basically was that those events were still owned by the government and he was only paid to run the event on their behalf. He insisted that the government or ministry still acted as the organiser whereas he was only the appointed event manager. So, this respondent was basically putting the responsibility for upholding the risk and safety on the government, although he himself was relatively not sure when I asked some related questions to him. His feedback regarding this inquiry was rather unconvincing, exposing his uncertainty and vagueness displayed because of a divided responsibilities between him (and his company) and the ministry who was representing the government. This informant was not able to draw a clear line on matters pertaining to the risk liabilities, as well as accountability issues related to the topic discussed.

“Is it [I am responsible for safety]? Is it not the ministry who held the responsibility? Is it not that our company itself was also part of their responsibility? That was actually my thinking actually, ...[...]... yes, we also was not been told.”

I did try to provoke him by asking if he was being irresponsible by putting all the risk and safety matters on the government alone, whilst he had been given the job and been paid for it. This triggered his reactions below.

“No, you cannot say that I was putting all the responsibilities to them. You must understand that I was only responsible for the production works. Matters related to risk and safety normally was managed by the organiser such as the ministry or whoever organiser who appointed me to manage their events. The normal practice is that we only responsible for works related to the production, meaning that works related to the stage performances only.”

On another note and in a different circumstance, there was an informant who claimed that he was always caught in a dilemma in his effort to implement safety measures in the events and festivals that he was involved. This respondent actually was working with a government agency organising government events. However, much of the job in the event planning and operation was been carried out by several external organisations, such as event management companies as well as event suppliers and contractors. He was having difficulty in implementing the required risk procedures since for most of the time the workers were not directly under his command.

“This is not an issue of implement or not, we have already instructed but seemed that they did not listen. This is because the contractor was their big boss, so even we asked them to they will not follow... [...] ... They actually did lots of high risk jobs! Especially when assembling the thrust and marquee tent that was so high, I cannot remember how many feet tall... they climbed even without wearing harness, and only using sandals to climb the pillars. But maybe because they so used to it they felt that they are the experts, even when we warned them they will just smile at us...”

Although he was not satisfied with the reactions of the contractors and their workers, this specific respondent admitted that it was indeed not his job to ensure the safety of those who were not directly under his command. Hence, he finally resolved that the contractors would have to take full responsibility in the case of any safety accidents or incidents occurring. Thus, the scenario would be another example of how such a divided responsibility regarding this aspect has caused a conflict between two (or more) different organisations involved in the preparation and operation of an event.

It is common in human nature that nobody will like to take the blame and responsibility on safety related matters, so the emergent theme of divided responsibilities on this aspect among different parties organising and managing events should have been anticipated earlier on. Even different individuals in the same team for organising event would always have the tendency to avoid taking responsibility and put all the blame on others. To solve this, Rose (2006) advised that all parties involved should be able to divide up the risk, requiring each threat/hazard to be appropriately classified for cause and other factors. This classification process requires the selection of the type of each risk and safety threats from “a set of classifiers or descriptors that explain what the risk was and what its likely cause was” (Rose, 2006, p.28). Risk and safety threats may involve several causes and areas in an event’s operation so each threat may have several classifications in which each party would be responsible for each safety threats/hazards involved.

4.3 Summary of Findings and Discussion 1

The second part of this findings chapter started with some discussion surrounding the experience and background of event practitioners involved in the study. It detailed their significant involvement in the events industry as well as the role they played within their respective organisations. The analysis phase for this chapter adopted a particular framework in

studying risk perception known as the social amplification of risk framework (SARF) which underlines the importance of individuals' values, attitudes, social influences, and cultural identity. Thus, a major focus has been given to the informants' experiences related to several safety incidents and accidents that some of them had encountered previously. It is believed that personal experiences played a major role or had a big influence in shaping their perceptions towards the importance of risk and safety in managing and planning events.

Traditionally, the study of uncertainty and ignorance normally has been represented via probability theory but such an approach is prescriptive rather than descriptive, and ignores psychological, social and cultural factors (Smithson, 1990). On the other hand, this study has taken a different path and attempted to be more descriptive by adopting SARF as its framework of analysis which stated that experience, technical, cultural and social factors are important in studying risk perception (Renn et al., 1992). Human error in terms of negligence and ignorance towards the implementation of risk and safety aspect has been identified as a major factor that has contributed to the findings based on the respondents' perception in this chapter. According to Smithson (1990), ignorance is itself a social creation and we cannot talk about ignorance (and negligence) without referring to individual standpoint/perspectives. Hence, ignorance, like knowledge, is socially constructed and negotiated (Smithson, framework 1989), cited in Smithson (1990). Negligence and ignorance towards risk and safety issues have resulted in the emergent of other important themes namely taking a reactive rather than a proactive stance; lack of government initiatives/priorities and enforcements; tension between the costs of risk and profitability or revenue generation; and divided responsibilities among various parties involves in the event planning and operation. A special focus has been given to perceptions of government inefficiency in terms of bureaucratic red tape and corruption. Mauro (1998) insisted that there was a consensus emerging that corruption is a serious problem and several bodies in the international arena have begun to take policy measures to curb it, and this should include event organisations as well because "corruption is everywhere, to be sure, but it is not the same everywhere" (Rodriguez et al., 2005, p.383).

5 CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS 2

EVENT SAFETY RISK TYPOLOGY (Part I)

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we have discussed important risk and safety issues related to event and venue managers but this chapter will bring a different dimension to this investigation. It will focus on the research participants' perceptions on important risk factors or important risk categories related to the safety for the event management industry in Malaysia. The results and/or findings in this chapter would lead to the development of an empirical event safety risk typology in a Malaysian context – each individual thematic network typology is presented in this chapter as well as the next chapter. The following are the emergent major themes that were pertinent to the event industry in the country, in no particular order: crowd safety and crowd control; technical and logistics hazards; alcohol related risks; security risks and/or issues; environmental health and safety; financial risks and insurances; emergency services and other safety risks. All these important themes and sub-themes reflected the important risk factors as been perceived by event/venue managers in the Malaysian events industry. This chapter and the next chapter six will present the core findings of this research project in the form of an “Event Safety Risk Typology” proposed within the Malaysian context.

Events are part of a booming industry that continues to grow both domestically and internationally all over the world (Abbott and Geddie, 2001). In Malaysia, event management activities have been making a significant contribution to the tourism industry which has become the third most important revenue generating income for the country (Munan, 2002). As the events' popularity and profile increased, it was expected that the risk and safety aspect, which was fundamental to event project planning and management, were also coming up to a

certain standard. To accomplish that, this study carried out an exploratory study by investigating important risk factors as perceived by the event/venue managers involved in the industry. This study on risk perception is an initial effort towards establishing a more substantial effort involving the assessment and management of the identified safety risk categories for the event management industry in Malaysia.

According to Rose (2006), perception differs, so it was natural that some participants would report more than others. Even people from the same organisation had different attitudes and would vary in what was reported. There are respondents in this study originating from within similar organisations but their attitudes and responses were not that similar. Another important factor to be considered was that some maybe choose to or engage in protection of reputation and thus, expressed a drive to reduce the ‘perceived’ risk in the investigation by reducing the quantity of reports/responses given. In effect, “you are only seeing, and now measuring the risk of, what people (participants’) choose to report” (Rose, 2006, p.27).

In studying the important risk factors perceived by the event/venue managers, the researcher has adapted a model drawn by Rose (2006) who proposed that one way to visualise the problem (risks/threats) was to consider the variation of the iceberg model known as the ‘Iceberg model of threats to an organisation’. In this context, we “can see the significant events (risks/threats) as they are above the waterline and cannot be hidden, however, this is the tip of the iceberg, much of our threats (risks) lie below the waterline and is not obviously visible” – refer figure 5.1 and 5.2 below (Rose, 2006, p.27). On the other hand, we could possibly raise the iceberg in the water to gain a better view of the total risks or threats, but it would still never be perfect. Thus, in the measurement of the risk, we could obviously only rate the part of the iceberg we could see and by using it as an overall measure of risk or safety, we might created a fallacy of false precision (Smithson, 1990). According to this model, we are actually basing our measure on what we can see (i.e. what is reported by the participants) but do not know what we cannot see (what is not reported by the participants). Therefore, we actually could not be too

sure which was the most important risk (largest variable) and how the perceived risks (variables) changed over time (figure 5.2), or effectively speaking, ‘we don’t know what we don’t know’ (Rose, 2006; Smithson, 1990). Hence, it was significant to understand this ‘iceberg model of threats to an organisation’ in order to understand the risk factors as perceived by participants in this research undertaking.

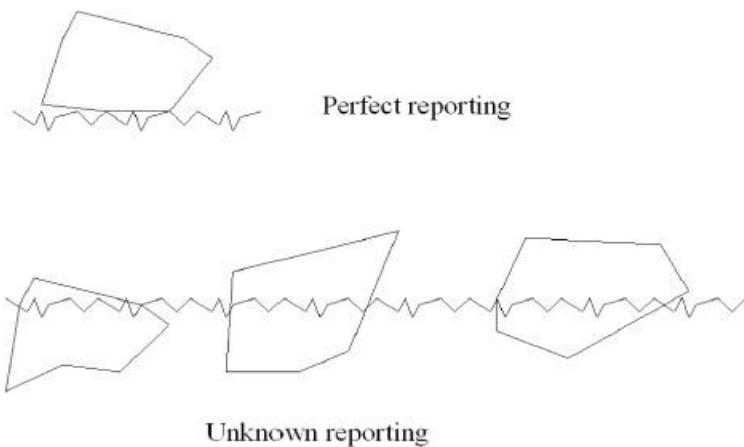


Figure 5.1: Reporting iceberg

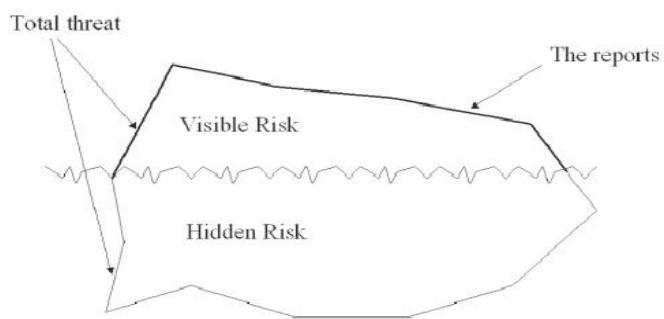


Figure 5.2: Variation of the reporting iceberg

(Figure 5-1 and 5.2 above on the ‘iceberg model of threats to an organisation’ adapted from Rose, 2006, p.27)

Before proceeding to the next section, I would like to explain the concept of ‘data saturation’ mentioned in the methodology chapter. As explained earlier, although the study itself was exploratory and grounded by its nature, I would like to stress that this study has not taken the exhaustive approach to grounded theory introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later by Strauss and Corbin (1998). As I have not taken solely the original grounded theory approach, the concept of data saturation also slightly differs from the data saturation notion proposed by them. It will be recalled that the methodology chapter actually discussed this in detail but I personally felt that there was a need to stress it again here. There are two main reasons for these slight changes from the original grounded theory approach: the first was because unlike the original grounded theory which is extremely inductive in its nature, this study used both inductive and deductive methods as its methods of inquiry – inductive approach from the pilot/preliminary data but at the same time also used deductive approach from the risk typology introduced by Allen et al. (2002) and Fallon and Sullivan (2005). The second reason was that the sample for this study has not been collected according to Strauss and Corbin (1998) but instead opted for the case study approach suggested by Stake (2004) (see sample strategies section in chapter three). Thus, the data saturation concept here was focused on the potential safety risk and hazards mentioned by all the participants. In this respect, all the risks and hazards were inductively elicited from the respondents with a minimum of interference from the researcher until the state of data saturation – the stage when there were no more new themes related to the safety risks and/or hazards emerged from the data. Also bear in mind that as this was an exploratory study to a new domain, so the researcher focused more effort on identifying as much as possible the risks and potential hazards rather than exploring each of the safety risks in a detailed way. It might take a rather different doctoral thesis to discuss each of the risks involved in a detailed manner, such as by Au (2001) who explored crowd control and crowd safety issue in detail for his PhD thesis. However, this thesis itself has not been lacking the required in-depth investigation as the

researcher has undertaken a considerable effort to collect and analyse all potential safety risks and hazards perceived by event practitioners involved in the Malaysian event management industry. The rigorous in-depth data analysis was metaphorically undertaken in a horizontal way rather than vertical direction, aiming for a preliminary breadth rather than depth. This chapter will explore how these perceived risks/hazards/threats contribute to the identification of risk categories (risk factors) that will be the basis for the development of an event safety risk typology from a Malaysian context.

5.2 Development of Risk Typology: Important Key Themes (risk categories identified)

5.2.1 Crowd Safety and Crowd Control

Crowd safety and crowd control was identified as the first and most important major theme towards the development of event safety risk typology from a Malaysian context. The risk issues pertaining to the well-being of the crowd and event attendees were mentioned by almost all the subjects under study, with some of them discussing this at length. A crowd can be defined as a large number of persons collected into a somewhat compact body without order (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1993). The issue of crowd control and safety has been regarded as the most important safety risk perceived by the participants as only three out of the total 33 participants did not cite it as the main cause for safety. However, they did acknowledge its importance in the event management context, only that it was maybe not so crucial for their organisation at that particular of time.

“Aaaa....crowd, crowd, the public itself is the hazard, because... let say the ground [venue] that we have prepared didn’t make any assessment in terms of hazards...”

“That’s why now when we organises concerts for example, we are going to control [the crowd], especially like our organisation’s events... [...] ...so, when you enter [the event

site] we will have our enforcement staff or security to standby at the gateway entrance to make sure you didn't bring drinks, bottle drinks, food, and so on."

Kemp et al. (2007) and Upton (2008) both agreed that crowd management was a fundamental issue in achieving the safe and successful organisation of events, festivals, meetings, and so forth. However, a review of the literature found that there is a significant gap on the issue of crowd management and crowd control, with most of the literature regarding this aspect were only published in the last ten years or so. As a matter of fact, Au (2010) who did his doctoral thesis in 2001 confirmed that there was hardly any documented information in the public domain on how crowd safety is assessed. There was some sort of similarity between the issue of crowd management and crowd control with the booming industry of event management that continues to grow both domestically and internationally in the last twenty years. Thus, the increase in events popularity "has led to larger and more diverse attendees, making crowd management and crowd control a necessary and an integral part of the planning process for any event" (Abbott and Geddie, 2001, p.259).

The findings of this study suggest that crowd control and crowd safety are the most important safety risk factor that need to be focused on by event organisers and planners as well as event venue providers. A look into the raw data displayed its numerous occurrences and immense lengths of discussion. It is not reasonable to conclude that the findings of this study are in line with the literature, confirming that crowd management and crowd control have now become a very important issues in the event management industry (Au, 2001; Abbott and Geddie, 2001; Clayton, 2010). In fact, respondents also confirmed that crowd control was one of the major risks related to safety in the events that they managed and organised.

"Yes, there were certain times that they didn't follow the instructions. And then, this crowd control is quite a major risk, especially if we organise events such as at Labuan [meaning: the name of a city located in East Malaysia]"

The above view was supported by another informant below.

“Because it involves not just the safety of the organising teams but also the public as well, and you should also consider that any outdoor events like that will involve diverse range of public and communities, local tourists as well as foreign tourists. And if anything bad incident will be giving a bad impression not only to the organiser but to the event and also to the country.”

But according to this informant, apart from the safety of the indigenous events’ crowd and attendees, the safety of tourists was also crucial for protecting the reputation of Malaysia as an event venue host. His opinion on identifying tourists as an important stakeholder in crowd safety maybe resulted from his working exposure/background, as this particular respondent works in an organisation that is fully owned by the government, that sought to promote and safeguard issues pertaining to the Malaysian tourism industry.

According to Abbott and Geddie (2001), crowd management and crowd control are actually two distinct but interrelated concepts. Crowd management deals with the “facilitation, employment, and movement of crowds” while crowd control comprises “steps taken on once a crowd (or sections of it) has begun to behave in a disorderly or dangerous manner” (*ibid*, 2001, p.259). Hence, the discussion in this section will focus more on the latter rather than the former, based on the nature of this study which focuses on the risk perception rather than the risk assessment and/or risk management context. In other words, the focus here is to identify the safety risk and potential hazards so the crowd control and crowd safety context is more relevant as the crowd management will involve more on the process of risk assessment and risk management. But Clayton (2010) on the other hand referred to this aspect as crowd safety and security. Thus, I came to the conclusion that the focus discussed in this chapter ought to be identified as crowd control and crowd safety – the first major theme of event safety risk typology.

With the growing significance of this issue within the realm of event management, event/venue managers must develop procedures for efficient and effective crowd management and control (Abbott and Geddie, 2001). Event attendees and audiences including crowds were the most important stakeholders for any events as without them the event would not have been successful. Clayton (2010, p.50) defined that “crowds are not a group but, rather, are a collection of individuals that for a time choose to follow a similar path for the benefit of the individual and not for the crowd itself.” He added that crowds are built on a spectacle that has only a limited life-span, and this refers to their attendance in any kind of events. Participants especially those involved in the event operation acknowledged that audiences and event crowds were the most important stakeholders for them, and as such has assigned specific tasks and personnel to handle this issue.

“We as the secretariat for safety and security responsible for the security for the whole event area, traffic control as well as crowd control. [...] crowd control, this is the jurisdiction of the secretariat’s committee members, our tasks and responsibilities. [...] security control, traffic control and crowd control, that’s it.”

“OK, safety for me, we would have a secretariat to handle audiences or guests who attended the event. We will take care of their logistics, including signage and so on. One more, the most important is that we have to liaise with the security [department].”

There was a respondent who stressed the importance of this crowd control and crowd safety aspect. He described it by the two statements below:

“I personally stressed that we really monitor the safety aspect, especially when we have VIPs for the events we will have the cooperation from the Police to take care of the VIPs, JPA 3 [meaning: civil defence services agency] and national defence to look after the crowds. And on our side we will appoint our own Marshall from the private company to monitor.”

“But then on the arrangements for the crowd control, protocol for the VIPs and the surrounding area we will definitely monitor. That one we will appoint ourselves as the security Marshall for the crowd control with the help of JPA 3 [meaning: civil defence services agency] and so on.”

However, there was another interesting response from an experienced event planner, having been in the industry for more than 18 years. For him, the level of safety in relation to crowd control was determined by the size of the crowd attending an event. According to him, when there are bigger crowd there will be a higher level of safety required and vice-versa. As such, the crowds' total numbers attending an event will justify the level of risk and safety required for crowd control. The literature could not confirm his statement but I personally feel that this particular informant had made a point here, his argument did make sense.

“....the Chief Minister of Selangor came and whereby in this particular...yes we have within the protocol we have the police escorting him as well. But this one is not 1500 people coming, this one is only 350 to 400 people come, so therefore the amount of safety and level of risks was lower.”

This was his earlier response when he was having a tight safety and security measures compared to the one mentioned above. We can clearly see here the difference as the one mentioned above got between 350 to 400 attendances whereas the one been described below got more than 1500 crowds who attended the event.

“Secondly, we liaise with the hotel because it was a big program, 1500 people, there was lot of VIP's, political VIP's, there was issues concerned about the movement of the VIP's and we have at least from the safety point of view, we have at least two police patrol cars there, we have the Head of the Chief of Police of Kuala Lumpur actually came because the Deputy Prime Minister was there, and we got at least 10 police officers in charged, stationed for two days.”

Thus, we can start this discussion with an important statement referring to the level of importance for the specific area of crowd control and crowd safety. All participants in this study agreed with the literature and confirmed that this particular aspect was very important and regarded it as a major risk for safety in event planning and management, hence, a specific individual/team needs to be given the task for handling aspects related to the crowd control and management (Janowski, 1996; Au, 2001; Abbott and Geddie, 2001; Cornish, 2010; Clayton, 2010).

5.2.1.1 The Prominence of VIPs safety

The second aspect discussed in this section is related to the treatment of the crowds and audiences attending an event. The study found out that there were some differences in relation to the treatment of the distinguished guests compared to the ordinary audiences. It is really important to put this in a Malaysian context. As this is a study is related to the Malaysian perceptions, it can be assumed that compared to more developed Western countries, Malaysia as a developing third world country would culturally appreciate certain elites and leaders in the society more than those in the West. In the event management context, there was indeed a special term referring to this special category of crowds which known as the VIPs or ‘Very Important Person (s)’. A ‘VIP’ is defined as “a person of great influence or prestige” who is accorded special privileges due to his or her status or importance ([Merriam-Webster, 2013a](#)). But in Malaysia, the term has been modified to heighten its influence in crowd management, commonly referred to as ‘VVIPs’, which carried the meaning of ‘Very Very Important Person(s).’ Of course it was not idiomatic in terms of the mainstream (English) language, however, it was quite essential to understand that English was only the second language in Malaysia so it was not an official language and the usage also was not that wide. So, it was necessary for the researcher to explain ‘VIPs’ and the ‘VVIPs’ as terms used in some of the interview quotations. But we were not going to discuss the essence of language here. We are going to discuss the different treatment received by these distinguished guests compared to the normal event spectators.

Although the VIPs can be regarded as important person(s) in the community, some respondents did question the special treatment that they received while attending events. One respondent argued that in the crowd control and crowd safety context, it was improper to differentiate between the VIPs and the ordinary people. He even questioned the behaviour of most event/venue managers who mostly attended to the VIPs compared to the normal event attendees.

“But in terms of safety measurement people always not have a proper looked on the... especially for the crowd, they always focused their attention to the distinguished guests and took extra cautions for them, but the normal crowds were always been overlooked.”

This opinion was confirmed by another respondent who was coincidentally from the same organisation with him, but is holding a much higher post. He was the head of an event department division whereas the first respondent above was only at the managerial and operational level. The second respondent gave a very clear indication on the risk and safety priorities for events that they organised.

“What can probably happen is OK, one is about this, what to say.... stage actually, the safety at the stage including performance stages, VIPs stage, OK that's number one. Number two is from the crowd control aspect!”

Other respondents from different organisations also confirmed that the VIPs' safety was a top priority compared to the safety of other crowds.

“Yes, we were just afraid that the thing [stage] might collapse. The one that we worried most was the VIPs', then only we will start looking into the civilian public which related to the traffic flow for the pedestrians.”

“But I think when people are talking about safety and risks probably the thing that people would first say is something that deals with the safety of VVIP's that are our guests

during the program. [...] The other is safety of the personnel, the soft side, the safety of the delegates, the safety of VIP's and this is normally done through the Police."

Even the literature does not specifically distinguish between these elites and the 'normal' crowds. Most of them agreed on the importance of crowd management and crowd control to general event crowds without stressing on any special safety requirement for VIPs. In fact, I have not come across any articles or research specifically discussing the importance of this set of people although in the real world it might turn out to be true. These VIPs mostly consist of leaders of states/countries or at the very least important figures in society, so it was sensible to approach their safety quite differently to the normal event attendees. It has been argued that the VIPs (or VVIPs) status implies a more hierarchical, elitist approach compared to Western norms. However, it is worth noting that UK Royalty is of course an elitist institution, subject to considerable safety and security measures, including crowd control. Nor would a visit by Prime Minister David Cameron to Liverpool, for example, be attended to without intense security. One respondent who often engaged with the task of safety and security for the VIPs and crowds described how he often faced this dilemma in most events hosted by his organisation.

"Our leaders often take it too easy by directly confronting and be very near to the crowd maybe based on our 'people friendly' concept, so they often be too close! But we have to consider the safety [and security] issues as well. We are too exposed, too complacent... Leaders, such as the PM [meaning: Prime Minister] can easily shake hand with audiences, so he was very exposed [to the danger]. But we cannot say anything since this is also related to politics [political survival] and so on, but that's the situation...."

There was an interesting issue emerging from the data in relation to the issues of VIPs safety. The study found out that the level of safety measurement and precautions for events organised was actually dependent on the types of guests or crowds attending the events. If at the beginning we mentioned about the size of the crowd now we are looking at a different perspective. Several event practitioners revealed that their effort towards risk and safety

practices had been influenced by who would actually be attending the events. They were saying that if there were higher ranking guests attended the event, the safety measures taken would be at the top level, and vice-versa. So, the safety level for crowds was determined by the VIPs who attended the events. For example, if Her Majesty the King of Malaysia or her official name ‘Yang Di-pertuan Agong’ as the head of state of Malaysia was attending an event the safety and security would definitely be at the highest level compared to when the event is attended by an ordinary MP (Member of Parliament). The Prime Minister as the Chief Executive of the government and his cabinet members would normally require top level safety precautions as well, as been described by several informants below:

“Yeah, depends... if Agong [meaning: the King] is there, if Prime Minister is there, the risk is very high. [...] Of their safety I mean... [...] Yeah, VVIP’s safety actually, because you don’t want to see if anything happen whatsoever right, so...”

“So, sometimes this is where the risk management will be there because high profile VIPs would definitely require security and safety, so that would fall under that.”

“Yes, [meaning: it depends on] what’s the activities. If the event is related to the persons such as the VVIPs such as the Prime Minister for example, the first part that we will think off is of course the security for the VIPs, and then about the location of the events and facilities such as their toilets and so on...”

Although the study concluded that the safety to VIPs has been prioritised over normal event attendees, it has revealed to be significant to general aspect of crowd control and crowd safety in terms of its implementation in the Malaysian event industry. This aspect has been regarded as the most important (a major theme) by most participants in the study and is worthy of detailed discussion. Before this happen, I would like to leave a quotation from one of the informants as the concluding remarks for this introductory part.

“Actually to me every time we organise an event that thing [crowd control] would be the most crucial and the most critical aspect, because most of our events especially the mega events organised by the ministry would involve distinguished guests of the states, including the VIPs and so forth. We can say that every time we will invite them, and the highest scale would be the Yang Di-pertuan Agong [meaning: the King of Malaysia], it will be up to that level of the Yang Di-pertuan Agong!”

5.2.1.2 Crowd management

The other emergent sub-themes in this category were related to the planning and management of the crowd. It refers to measures taken by the event planners and organisers in handling and controlling the crowd. According to Abbott and Geddie (2001), crowd management is concerned with effectively organising the logistic movement of crowd, largely referred to the importance of crowd control, evacuation procedures and safety barrier (SNZ, 2004). Two respondents who used to organise special events on a large scale shared their experiences in the management of crowd logistics for large number of event participants.

“It was a very big event because logically to move 6000 students to the beach [is actually] a challenge, because Langkawi [meaning: name of an island] don’t have that of many buses. Now this one is...but we got the help from all the authorities, the police, the ambulance, the rescue people squad, they are all there.”

“... For example like when we organise the ‘Independence Day’, it will involve up to at least 5000 [people] like that...the biggest that I handled for the Independence Day Celebration was 8000 participants. Ok, so it involved many factors, the first regarding the participants’ logistics, their transportation, their movement from the school for instance to the stadium and things like that, these are all risks involved.”

Thus, the crowd movements also involved certain safety risks that need to be considered. Berlonghi (1994) stressed that a crowd management plan should involve

consideration of a number of key matters and the need to specifically review the potential crowd's sociological behaviours. Among the key matters suggested were seating arrangements, transportation, time, parking, weather conditions, demographics, size, box office and concession stands. Now, we are going to look into some of the measures taken by the participants of this study in the preparation and management of crowd.

The most important element in the management of the crowd is related to the communication aspect. Most literature on crowd management and crowd control discussed the importance of communication in managing the movement of crowds and event attendees (Berlonghi, 1994; Au, 2001; Abbott and Geddie, 2001). Some participants did mention the crucial aspect of communication mostly involving safety briefing or safety meeting in planning stages and also a communication system during the event day.

“From the beginning! When I do it... when I do it I know from A to Z, I know where the cables lay from where, where the power come from, where is the water come from, where the ambulance station, I as the event director must know. And you must have your own team with proper delegation of power and communication.”

“And normally during program, but this is very normal now as a requirement of all the hotels or the venues of the program whereby the safety manager of the hotel would be giving about 20 minutes briefing on the procedures, safety procedures mostly related to fire safety, and so on...”

The event management profession involved many different parties working together in a common effort for the successful planning and organisation of an event, and that includes the planner/organiser, the venue and also the crowd themselves. As such, effective communication should lead to successful coordination between those parties because an effective crowd management plan entails adequate communication among employees, guests, and between management and guests (Abbott and Geddie, 2001). The following participant who had more

than three years of experience in organising the ‘Malaysian Hot Air Balloon Fiesta’ at Putrajaya confirmed that it was vital for them to be having safety briefings with all event staffs especially the pilots involved, at least once a day held at the beginning of the day throughout the duration of that event.

“.... So, these are among all, and of course, the main thing is of course, are they following instructions, because every morning, before every flight there will be a pilot briefing, what do you expect... [...] ...Yes, before every flight there will be pilot briefing.”

The briefing session was actually important to identify any problems or incidents that need to be addressed before any event’s operation (Au, 2001). But other than the safety briefing, there was also another vital communication aspect highlighted during the day of the event itself. This sort of communication system was mostly intended as a means to control the crowds.

“And then, each and every staffs that has been appointed as event marshal will be supplied with walkie-talkie, but if there is not enough walkie-talkie we will.... some sort of doing it like a tag team, one equipped with walkie-talkie and the second one don’t have [walkie-talkie], they will each other be near side by side. So, if anything happen [emergency] they will push a button at the walkie-talkie that will produce a loud ‘beep’ sound just like a siren, when somebody click on that button everyone will be alerted to that side then...”

“Most of the time [throughout the event duration] we will communicate through the walkie-talkie, let say if crowds come from this side we will straightaway inform the other side....”

The next aspect that we are going to discuss is also a form of communication and was equally important regarding the movement of the crowd and is related to the signage for entry and exit as well as around the event’s area. As events and festivals normally would involve a large crowd, this form of communication is believed effective to reach the audiences. Among

important features that signage could serve was to warn, to instruct and also to direct a crowd (Abbott and Geddie, 2001). Several respondents mentioned the importance of signage in managing the crowd, described below.

“From that aspect is OK, first in terms of the control, safety, preparation of security control, signage, sign posts, signboards for audiences’ routes and what we call.... early information alert. For example, where to go, where to park, where to come from, how to come...”

“Oh, yeah, yeah...we have the signboards saying them...we have a... I already told you the sign board, what are the do’s and don’ts of watching a firework. We’ve printed out and put it in four, five sites around the fireworks.”

Hence, this emergent sub-theme from the findings of this study confirms both Abbott and Geddie’s (2001) and Berlonghi’s (1994) claims that in most cases signage fulfils the requirement to advise crowds and spectators of potential dangers and risks in relation to crowd control and crowd safety. But in order to do so, signage “should be clear, concise, unambiguous, well written, and must be readily recognisable for maximum effect” (Abbott and Geddie, 2001, p.261).

The next sub-themes that emerged were issues related to the entrance and exit to and from an event site including the assembly area. This entrance and exit in relation to an event area is widely known as ‘ingress’ and ‘emergency egress’ according to the event management literature (Au, 2001). Most respondents agreed that it was the event venue providers who should be responsible in providing adequate facilities for crowd management and crowd control purposes.

“Ok, in terms of security, in terms of security like aaa....the venue, venue. Venue is the most important because of what... because we need to know the exit doors, all entrance and exit doors must have our crew and the venue staffs as well. Because most venues in

Malaysia, [for example] the stadium have their own security. Because they are the one who will be in charge of the entrance and exit doors. So, we have to collaborate with them, the venue staffs. Even the venue staffs also will be in our team, and we will brief them.”

“For example, if they put up the booth to the extent that it blocks the emergency doors and the emergency routes, it will actually be the venue’s responsibility to warn them, because the venue belongs to them, right?”

Some of the problems related to venue revealed by the participants were also found by Au (2001) such as inadequate means of escape, blocked emergency routes and locked escape doors. But Abbott and Geddie (2001) suggested that it was the event managers who should consider appropriate measures for facility management from the initial planning of crowd control. However, the findings from this study related to the above responses, challenge this view as the event planners/managers were not those responsible for facility management at the event venue. Au (2001) however, agreed with the informants’ perceptions, stating that owners of strategic venues and high profile venues or events generally needed to pay more attention to the crowd safety aspect. Several respondents from the event venue category supported this view and were aware of their responsibilities regarding this vital aspect. These respondents consist of employees from the venue provider who explained certain measures that they have taken to ensure the safety of the crowd attending events at their place, mostly related to the emergency egress and assembly area.

“..... It is like one thousand, two thousand people we have the hall down there, so we come out with a plan, exit plan if any emergency situation happens. So, the nearest route to the assembly area. We come out with a powerpoint presentation and then we just present during presentation, I mean short briefing that’s been provided to us [before the event].”

“.... for example when they have a function going on, how and what we'll do in terms of the hotels, what is our action if there were to be any emergency happen? So, that would then goes back to the knowledge of our staff of where to direct the guests if there were to be any emergency issues, and how they overcome it and where are the emergency exit and so forth.”

The final respondent, who has over 15 years experience in the hotel industry, acknowledged the responsibility of hotel management as popular venues for events and meetings. By reflecting on the staff knowledge, this participant agreed with Abbott and Geddie's (2001) view that appropriate staffing and training was needed in order for venues to have a proper crowd management system.

“.... For example the staircase for example, whether it's been light up or not, whether there is a sufficient signage in the staircase if happens to be any emergencies going on that clear indicators where they have to exit, and then also the knowledge of the staff in the hotel. Whether they are aware of where they should go, where they should not do, what should they do when it comes to all these emergencies come in.”

Apart from the signage, the study found that the use of barricades (and fences) was felt to be efficient in events' crowd control and management. Abbott and Geddie (2001) also suggested the use of aisles and barricades to prevent the accumulation of excessive crowds. There were numerous occasions when the respondents referred to the use of barricades to control the crowds attending their events. Among others, the barricades were used especially to cordon the event site, to lay down differing routes and also for access control into the designated event areas.

“Cordon the area, you barricade, we have barricade especially international event because the.... of course the crowd would be like to get as near as possible to the balloons.”

“Use a barricade! That’s why I said when EO [meaning: event organiser] asked us we always ask for all these, whether you’ve barricades, what about your marshalling, how many people are you using....”

“And for the crowd, each event we will put barricades all around, and there will be one emergency route and the other route will only be for entry purposes, in case if anything happen... [...] We always prepared alternative routes. [...] In an emergency we will pull the victim out. And then the barricades need to be flexible because we have to always standby with the contingency plan. Let say we’ve expected event site A for evacuation, but suddenly that site A cannot exit, so we need to quickly remove the barricade on site B to exit first, so barricades always need to be easily removable.”

The next sub-theme emerging from the data regarding this aspect is the access control to an event site. Access control was essential in implementing a proper entrance and exit procedure to an event’s site (Abbot and Geddie, 2001). There were in fact some areas in the event site that needed to be controlled for risks, safety and security purposes. Some of the informants mentioned the control system that they normally applied in events’ sites.

“So, what we normally make sure is that there will be fences at the stadium. Meaning that we have to make sure the fences will separate between the spectators’ seats [areas] with the track and field area, because prior to this [event] we did not have that, we didn’t do that before this.... [...] Yes, it’s for the crowd, because it involves football match of course there will be lots of emotional spectators...”

“The other common risks are normally the...we talking about audience, when we didn’t cordon the spectators’ area, I mean the areas that were supposed to be accessible and non-accessible. We always overlooked these kinds of things. Even my first experience in 2004 also I did the same thing [forget to cordon the areas].”

There was an occasion when an informant having an experience of using some kind of scanner in order to control the access towards the area. This strict measure had been taken because this particular respondent was organising an air carnival which required a very high standard of safety and security. The event itself was very high risk in nature as it involved the use of multiple types of aircraft and been staged at a place which was relatively unknown to him, so he needed to implement strict measures to ensure the highest level of safety and security at this particular location. He even showed me a photograph of his team scanning the audiences as they entered the event site, and to my surprise the hand scanners used looked just like the one used by the police and security at airports.

“.... Spectators, when they come in they will be scanned whether they like it or not, kids or adults, even staffs or whatever, they were all needed to be scanned!”

The good practice implemented here was supported by Fried (2009) who implied that through screening patrons, an event organiser can reduce the number of weapons and projectiles such as bottles and fruits, and also reduce the threat of a terrorist attack.

Another part of crowd management discussed in the interview sessions was traffic control. The finding was supported by Abbott and Geddie (2001, p.265) who confirmed that “gate supervisors should communicate regularly with the control centre to impart the status of traffic flow” in which case they are actually referring to the traffic flow of the crowds themselves. But according to my findings, traffic control in crowd management can be divided into two – the traffic flow of walking crowd (pedestrians) as well as the traffic flow of the arriving crowds’ vehicles into the event venue’s location. Both were concerns. The statements below reflected traffic control situations for crowds inside an event area, with the first one putting more emphasis on the traffic control for the VIPs’ attendances. In establishing a traffic control system, this respondent indirectly confirms Janowski’s (1996, p.49) view that “a method for guests to exit the facility must be available throughout the event.”

“Yes, it’s before and after the event, and even during the event is going if let say something happen we normally had a special route that we have put on standby. [...] Yes, [the special route] for the VVIPs, the priority is for the VVIPs! We have actually standby the route and we will make sure the route is vacant from the beginning until the end of the event with lots of security patrolling throughout the route.”

“Huh, medic... and then if for the public it’s usually the traffic. If we execute SO [meaning: standard operating], we will justify how we are going to do it for the traffic flow [for the crowds], if there is fire and so on we would have a plan where to assemble this people.”

The importance of traffic flow been enhanced by some respondents who discussed the control of traffic for the vehicles and other related road transportations. Events and festivals are normally an occasion that will attract a big crowd and audiences, like a ‘mass gathering’ of people into a specific location. Hence, an effective management of road traffic needed to be put into place. Abbott and Geddie (2001), and Au (2001) highlight among others, the importance of road traffic flow, provision for parking, as well as ensuring a smooth public transportation system to and from an event site. Fried (2009) on the other hand suggests on establishing check points on major roadways outside the event venue. All these efforts need to be executed not just towards achieving smooth road traffic flow but more importantly, to minimise the risk of road accidents involving crowds.

“Most of our events needs the closure of at least half of the road in the area because of the excessive numbers of crowd, actually this was for the purpose of avoiding [road] accidents.”

“.... Secondly, what is the right way to control the crowd. Thirdly, is traffic, how is the right way to control the traffic? Can we allow people to park their cars here and there, right? [...] So, our focus is not just the event you know... let say in this ‘Kampung

Medan' [meaning: name of an area] area, if you do it here [the event] you will jammed [traffic jammed] the whole thing, jammed the whole place. Therefore, you must have a good traffic flow, right... because when it is jammed it can again cause accidents, right?"

The final emergent theme related to the management of crowd was unique that it was only mentioned by one participant. However, I felt that it was relevant since he has perhaps provided a different idea to be included here. Having been in the industry of supplying fireworks and pyrotechnics, this respondent revealed that the safety distance was quite a major thing that needed to be implemented when operating in this kind of business. I was a little bit confused when he first responded on this unique method for ensuring the crowd safety.

"Safety distance, the most important you have to take enough safety distance actually!"

That first statement led me to prompt further what he actually meant by safety distance, and he came out with the following lengthy discussion.

"Because it all depend on the safety distance, the calibre starts from 3 inch up to 18 inch you see, so that is very important. Whether there is a petrol station there, whether there is a pump station there, all that you have to know. Fire, you are playing with fire, Ok. So, that is very important. The same goes to pyrotechnics, that means at the stage. Special effects also the same, we have to know what is the height of the ceiling, where is the VIP going to seat, how far the people is going to stand, all these information must be laid out."

"And that will depend on the safety distance, that will depend.... Usually a best safety distance we look out for is 250 metres, away from the public. [...]that's why we will decide based on the safety distance and then only we see on calibre."

The safety measures taken by this respondent were actually supported by Miller (1997) who suggested event managers thoroughly investigate the areas hosting the event and take appropriate

protective measures. Fireworks and pyrotechnics were special effects involving the use of explosives, flares and some sort of blasts, so this respondent explained to me in detail why a certain kind of space (distance) was needed to ensure the safety of crowd who attended the show. In fact, a good safety distance was needed for both outdoor events involving fireworks as well as the indoor events using pyrotechnics, because both are indeed a dangerous business (Shaluf et al., 2002). He even described the way on which he normally measures the safety distance for pyrotechnics show in an indoor venue.

"So, any time two fellows will be watching, one fellow will be firing. And he will advise and see the crowd, how far the crowd, you know actually when we have all these what you call that...actors singing..."

The above excerpts illustrate themes from lengthy discussions with participants about various measures towards managing the crowd. Our next focus is on important risks that can potentially result in catastrophic incidents and accidents with regard to the crowd control and crowd safety.

5.2.1.3 Stampede – crowd safety

This section discusses potential safety risks that relate to crowd control and crowd safety. It is expected that the identification of these risk factors will help to develop successful crowd control plan. According to Abbott and Geddie (2001) crowd control actually represents the steps and procedures that should be taken once a crowd has lost control which unfortunately was beyond the scope of this study. In fact, this study will only focus on potential safety risk when a crowd is out of control. As such, the most popular safety incidents with reference to crowd control and crowd safety literature were related to stampede. Stampede actually refers to "an occurrence in which a large group of frightened or excited animals or people run together in a wild and uncontrolled way to escape from something, get out of a place" (Merriam-Webster, 2013b). In the event management context, stampede refers on an act from the crowds to rush out

from an event area resulting from fear, such as fire, bombing, shooting and so forth (Silvers 2008).

In his study, Au (2001) found that there was a difference in understanding the degree of appreciation towards crowd safety across the management hierarchy in certain event venues. His study found that “members in the front line staff who have to deal with the crowds regularly tend to appreciate the potential dangers more than the senior management” (*ibid*, 2001, p.77). A senior venue manager did indicate that stampede was a major risk in the event management discipline, but dismissed it as a major problem for his organisation.

“Stampede, I think we won’t be having this kind of issues because there is a limit for each event. [...] Stampede you know, which means too many people coming over the crowd, won’t be happening in PICC because we are looking over, we identified each event have their own limits, each halls have their own limits how many people coming over.”

The study found that the safety risk relating to stampede mostly emerged from event planners who organised special events that required a large crowd such as concerts, festivals, fiesta, parades and carnivals. A rich and nuanced data has been given by several respondents involved in these kinds of special events, particularly the concerts organisers.

“....they cut the plastic bottle to make it sharp, and then stampede to others....that’s why the security has to be well-planned.”

“... so, we are going to monitor every angle, such as security, what we most afraid is the stampede! [...] stampede from the audiences, that one are the most dangerous. And secondly, crowds sneaking in....”

“....for example let say there was a fire, because it has occurred before at concerts...saw one [concert] in Germany got fire incident, [and caused] stampede! This thing will result

in casualties. If such incident happens...we have to show how to let the crowds exit without panic..."

Statements from the informants above confirmed Berlonghi's (1994, p.224) argument that in order to avoid or minimise the risk of stampede, the event area must be inspected before the crowd gathers to ensure that "no explosives, fire hazards, or other panic-producing conditions are present." Hence, it was imperative for event planners especially those involved in event show business such as concerts and festivals to exercise robust inspection of the event site, doubled with the execution of crowd control rehearsals prior to an event been staged. However, the study found another issue in relation to the stampede problem that can also potentially become hazardous if not been treated properly.

"Well-planned meanings that at the entrance gate need to standby a certain numbers of securities, because we also did not want any danger to our security personnel if not enough people there... [...]we have to monitor properly, because if we wrongly execute (crowd control system) the danger can turn back to us and will harm our security personnel, they will be the victims then..."

The above excerpts were actually discussing the problem of not having enough security personnel (sometimes mentioned as events' marshals) to handle the issue of crowd control. Like most crowd safety and security literature, Au (2001) and Wood (2009) both agreed that the event organisers must have a sufficient number of people to manage crowds, but the formula to determine how many personnel are needed against a certain number of crowds has never been stipulated. Only Miller (1997) argued that effective positioning of the personnel was crucial in identifying, thwarting, or dissipating a dispute, as time is of the essence. An informant who used to organise a huge concert involving more than 800 personnel in the organising team recommended that Malaysian event planners, particularly concert organisers and promoters to look into several international cases involving stampede incidents such as in Berlin, Germany. He was referring to the crowd disaster incident at Berlin Love Parade in 2010 which caused the

death of 21 people and injured more than 510 in the crowd because of stampede (Helbing and Mukerji, 2012).

“This Berlin tragedy, [you know] why? Because not enough security [personnel], the tickets actually sold-out but the organiser wanted to push to the max...”

Based on the above statements, this study has perceived stampede as an important theme in relation to the issue of crowd safety and control.

5.2.1.4 Crowd capacity – venue

The next important theme in this category that we are going to discuss was related to the event venue, and as such it was anticipated that respondents from the event venue providers segment would give most of the input. The assumption was made based on Au’s (2001) findings from a venue manager’s perspective which found that pop concert organisers and major football clubs tend to be more aware of the dangers of overcrowding because of past problems and previous disasters. But on the contrary, the study found that almost all responses regarding this aspect have been led mostly by event planners and event managers who were not particularly responsible for the event venue and its facility. This part of the section will specifically highlight the potential risk related to crowd capacity at an event venue. Many informants in the event organisers/planners category have given numerous interesting responses regarding this issue.

“Let say our target crowd is 1000 people. Ok, in the 1000 people, can this building able to accept (contain) that capacity, that is first....”

“..... just now did you put the venue? Small venue but we put lot of crowds. [...] One more, venue is the most important... capacity, at least we have to have an architect or an officer from the city council from that aspect, to check the safety of the building. If we

do it indoor we have to check the safety of the building, can it contain a certain amount of crowds? So, that kind of safety is the most important....”

With relation to the crowd capacity, Abbott and Geddie (2001) identified its importance in crowd safety and specified that attendance must be checked daily in order to make sure that maximum capacity was not exceeded. Similarly, another informant agreed with Berlonghi's (1994) statement on the crucial need for site inspection prior to choosing an event venue. The second respondent suggested that event planners and venue managers implement effective crowd forecasting and subsequently limit the crowd capacity according to the maximum capacity that the venue can accommodate.

“When you decided to make an event at the hotel you must beforehand inspect the space, do an assessment, [such as according to] the space wise, let say you want to do it for the capacity of 1000 crowd. [have to determine] That 1000 is it for seatings, or standings....and then at the same time (have to consider the space) for setting up the stage and so forth...”

“In capacity, for example if you limit to 20 000 crowds, you have to provide facility for 20 000!”

Another respondent shared an opinion with Cornish (2010) that we can never compromise the aspect of risk and safety especially the crowd safety for the purpose of income generation.

“Although we wanted to generate income we cannot let the hall to be over crowded, until to the extent that can.... that can... disregard the safety issues. So, the safety issues must be our top priority from the aspect of... what people say... if fire incident occurs for example, where is the emergency exit, where is the entrance route, all these plays vital roles for the aspect of [crowd] safety actually, we need to pay attention to that.”

Still in line with the view of the above informant, the last respondent here convincingly argued that most incidents and disasters involving crowd control and crowd safety actually resulted from irresponsible organisers and venue providers allowing more crowds than a venue was supposed to hold. But Au (2001) argued that an experienced venue manager would be able to accurately perceive excessive crowd numbers attending an event.

“The reason is because the place is small, when the place is small... venue was too small but the event got too many crowds, the securities [personnel] were not there to look after the crowd.... For example, supposed [the venue] can hold only 20 000 crowd but suddenly more than 40 000 [crowd] moved into the venue!”

Thus, the findings of this study found that event planners and venue providers must always make sure that the forecasting of the crowd attending an event should be accurate so as to avoid the risk of overcrowding that can become fatal in terms of crowd control and crowd safety (Au, 2001; Cornish, 2010). By getting an accurate forecast, the risk and safety plan especially in relation to the crowd management and crowd control can then be adjusted to meet the needs of the event and potential crowd. Hence, it is crucial for event/venue managers to understand the dangers of overcrowding, and subsequently take measures to avoid potential safety risks that might lead to uncontrolled situations involving a crowd, such as panic, violence, injury, and ultimate liability (Abbott and Geddie, 2001).

5.2.1.5 Uncontrolled Crowd and Riots

According to Au (2001), lack of appreciation of the risks involved and insufficient pre-planning were factors that contributed to problems in crowd control and crowd safety management. This part will discuss another key theme that could cause personal injury to event attendees. There are several other sub-themes emerging from the data regarding the risks that can potentially harm the crowds attending an event, and in some cases the respondents of this study were able to describe this issue from their own experiences. Thus, the discussion here

focused on the uncontrolled crowd situation that can harm event attendees and organisers based on the tendency that events normally represent time out of ordinary time, and experiences shaped outside of ordinary social processes with room for fun and idiosyncratic behaviour (Mykletun, 2011). The first sub-theme that we are going to look into was related to fighting among crowd members attending an event. From the information given, the risk of fighting among the crowds mostly occurred in special events such as concerts and musical festivals or sporting events like football matches that involved a mass gathering of crowds. However, most event planners would often leave this matter in the hands of relevant authorities such as the Police and RELA (Rela Corps is a uniformed body normally engaged in crowd handling and crowd control) to manage these situations, based on the reason that they normally did not have the expertise to handle these matters. That was the reason why Berlonghi (1994) advised event planners to assess crowd conditions including their moods or emotions during the event day. They must also consider all event circumstances and potential risks that could lead to uncontrolled crowd situations such as cancellation, no shows, crowd congestion, lack of parking, the use of special effects and the presence of obscene or violent performing acts (Abbott and Geddie, 2001). The following were two similar statements representing two organisations that were involved in handling similar events, the first being an event manager appointed to handle an event hosted by the second informant below.

“Especially when there is fightings of whatever among the crowds, the Police or RELA they’ll... actually the Police and RELA engaged in crowd control and safety. Let say the crowd eager to stand, the Police and RELA will attend to the crowd control, we do not involve...we often handle at the stage areas only.”

“Yeah, we’ll leave it to the police, security. If there’s a riot or whatsoever they are going to handle....”

The study found that the risk of infighting among the crowd was a very serious risk as it can lead to the personal injury and sometimes resulted in fainting of the victims involved. It could also

potentially escalate matters further into uncontrolled situations such as riots or unrest in the events' vicinity. Abbott and Geddie (2001) warned that crowds who behave violently can result in the destruction of property, personal injury, and in extreme cases, death. I had a useful description given by an event planner specialising in concerts and stage performances, in which he illustrated certain conditions and calamities that could become severe and affect the crowd safety. Compared to others who would normally let the relevant authorities handle this matter, this particular respondent used to appoint his own security personnel to handle matters pertaining to crowd. He shared invaluable methods of how to manage uncontrolled crowds and highlighted important issues that could impede the crowd safety disastrously, such as not having a sufficient number of personnel in handling the crowd.

"If possible we can have more we will have more [security personnel]! Yeah, because if the crowds started fighting... when the infighting triggered at one scene maybe two or three or even five personnel would rushed to that particular scene, the gate will be left open without anybody to attend to. When the gate is open... or when that area got fewer personnel (security), that would normally cause personal injury to the crowd, [in] the place where we had least number of security would definitely had people injured."

"One more risk is regarding crowd sneaking in... [...] OK, some people would say that crowd sneaking into the concert zone [event area] wouldn't involve any risk at all. Actually, the risk is what you know.... It will result in fighting, because they came purposely to create trouble [havoc], and the fights would later cause injury to our security, OK..."

The uncontrolled crowd behaviours can create an unrest situation such as riots, and in some cases participants described that the crowds were throwing bottles and all sort of things in the chaotic situations. There was an example from a legal case analysed in Abbott and Geddie (2001), which found the negligence of a concert organiser by not adequately securing and maintaining the premise during a concert which resulted in the crowd's criminal act of throwing glass bottles

that injured other concert attendees. It was not uncommon to claim that crowd safety was a problem exclusive to certain venue types, such as football grounds and pop concerts (Au, 2001). This study identified a similar scenario in which concerts and musical occasions for young people and fanatical musical fans were the types of events that had these kinds of uncontrolled situations.

“We have like in concerts, in concerts for example when they do not satisfied with the sound system problem, and then the public will throw bottles and anything sharp objects or so...”

“From entrance of each venue even though we have checked and everything, their bags and everything no water or no weapon or whatsoever... but sometimes they themselves as a weapon. [...] Ha, when they started what to say....fighting for example... fighting inside that they will injured other audiences actually. Because, simple things... one they already high [drug influence], number two because they were not satisfied with the situation, sometimes when you see the crowd they put people on shoulders, then the situation turns into chaos...”

However, to say that only the younger generation caused this uncontrolled situation at events would be wrong. Apart from concerts, this research found that sporting events such as football matches, and carnivals, which both attracted a mass gathering of crowds from all sorts of generations and with differing backgrounds also became important catalysts for uncontrolled crowd behaviours such as riots. Abbott and Giddie (2001) argued that event managers must consider the condition of the event being hosted so as to predict fan behaviour and implement the appropriate security measures because fans act differently depending on the event.

“Events can also mean commonwealth games, can mean football you see...riots you know...these are some issues that I went to the football final between Kelantan, I am from Kelantan. Kelantan and Negeri Sembilan [meaning: name of states in Malaysia]

supporters especially the people in red, red is Kelantan, they behave like the riots in Manchester and Liverpool as well. There was an issue actually they throw fireworks and so on. I think they burnt down the plastic chairs and they invaded the pitch, and these are the issues that has got to be...”

“So, we do not know their thoughts, can they strictly follows the rules or not. They only wanted to see **xxxx** [name of a football team-anonymity issue] win. So when **xxxx** started losing, for example when **xxxx** lost the fan started to throw certain kind of things, throwing whatever things...”

Hence, it is important to understand basic crowd behaviour in order to assist event/venue managers in formulating effective plans as according to Abbott and Geddie (2001, p.260), “no two crowds are the same.” Several crowd safety incidents highlighted above justified the importance of risk and safety procedures to be adopted by Malaysian event professionals in any events that they managed. Thus, the findings of this study confirmed the literature on the importance of crowd safety in the event management (Berlonghi, 1994; Au, 2001; Kemp et al., 2007; Upton, 2008), including in Malaysia (Rahmat et al., 2011). Au (2001), proposed several other factors for risk and safety management pertinent to crowd such as safety culture, venue design, staffing level, staff training, roles and responsibilities, co-ordination, event planning, plans and procedures for crowd management, inspection and maintenance regimes.

5.2.1.6 Crowd’s Health Issues - illness and other physical risk

Event planners and venue managers must always take measures to ensure the safety of all those attending their events. This includes having a proper response and emergency services throughout the duration of their events (the specific theme of emergency services is explained in the later part of this chapter). Hence, this section in relation to health issues will lead us towards several sub-themes related to sickness and other physical injuries to audiences and participants of events.

The researcher found numerous occasions when respondents narrated their experiences in dealing with crowds and event participants who have different kinds of health problems, the most common ones were related to heart attack and hypertension. Severity varied from a relatively minor case of heart attack to major ones that involved fatalities. Among reported were five cases involving heart attack in which three resulted in fatalities, with a de-hydration case described below.

“.... For example, there is a participant of “Chloraton” [meaning: name of an event] last year if I have not mistaken in Malacca [meaning: name of a state], suddenly fainted because of de-hydration, so it was beyond our control actually.”

The next informant, which is a senior manager in an event venue company supported this view by laying out his own previous case in which their event venue team had to quickly implement an emergency response procedure in order to save an audience’s life. But he was quite lucky in the sense that the event organiser had already arranged for a medical doctor to attend to such problems.

“It’s only about a guest who has...not to say heart attack, is more (or) less like... yeah, it’s like a minor heart attack. [...] In the event itself... So, that had happened when the guest was giving his speech, so he actually stopped and collapsed, but then at that time the event organiser had their own medical doctor because it involved a medical...”

The above case illustrated how an individual’s life can be spared if event planners and venue managers exercised proper risk and safety measures in relation to crowd control and crowd safety. But life was not too lucky for some other respondents who had to face fatality issues previously.

“So, of course we also had people dying along the way, you know...there was one chap on our car had a heart attack. He died in the vehicle with the wife. Of course these are things beyond our control....”

“One of the participants... one of the participants maybe due to sickness, we do not know that he has an asthma or whatsoever, what about that...sickness background of the participant I don’t know. So, he passed away on the way back home, during at the venue.”

“On the way to the buses... their school buses, this particular school boy suddenly died! And the worst part, he died was not actually our fault, we thought he was maybe... I don’t know, he was only in Form Two [about 14 years of age]. His heart stops pumping out of a sudden!”

There were some informants that reported events’ activities which caused minor physical injuries. They were actually involved in handling motivational camps and team buildings that required them to organise challenging activities such as jungle trekking and water activities for their participants. Two respondents narrated a case in which participants has been involved in minor physical injuries, although measures have been taken to rectify those problems.

“But these accidents are very minor whereby one of the participants actually had a small accident while playing water polo, water polo is part of the program. His eyes was hurt, but it was quite serious.”

“OK, safety risk in handling motivation for example, we had an experience when we conducted an adventure program, but there was a youth who taken part didn’t inform us of that he actually got some health problems... [...] So, he had a previous back injury problem but didn’t notify about it in the questionnaire, so when we did the tough activity... Pap! Halfway he collapsed! Huh, that’s it....to handle that really make us sweats, and tedious as well...”

The final theme that I am going to reveal was only mentioned by one participant from this research study but this particular respondent had taken quite a lengthy time in discussing this. The risk mentioned maybe was not generic to the risk and safety typology for

event management industry but it still has some relevance to the aspect of crowd safety. According to the respondent, the risk of ‘hysteria’ was quite common among female teenagers who engaged in spiritual activities such as in motivational team-building that were carried out mostly in the rural areas. Hysteria can be described as unmanageable emotional excesses in which people (normally female) who are ‘hysterical’ often lose self-control due to an overwhelming fear that may be caused by previous events (Wikipedia, 2013).

“..... Number three is hysteria, often happened to female participants. [...] Happened only to female students.... But hysteria played a very significant role in terms of safety because when someone got hysterical it will normally escalated into other students and affected other students’ emotions as well.... [...] ...we let this matter been handled by our “Ustaz” [meaning: a religious scholar]”

“Hysteria sometimes happen maybe because of ‘external disturbances’ [unseen]. Because for example, the women when they are in the menstruation state they are mostly vulnerable to spiritual disturbances and emotional stress. When we are at remote areas such as the jungle they tend to imagine weird and ghostly things whereas those things were maybe not even been there. There were maybe sounds of bat but she will imagine such like ‘something’ was following her and then started to scream. When she started screaming then the ‘real thing’ [meaning: spirits or ghosts] will enter her body...”

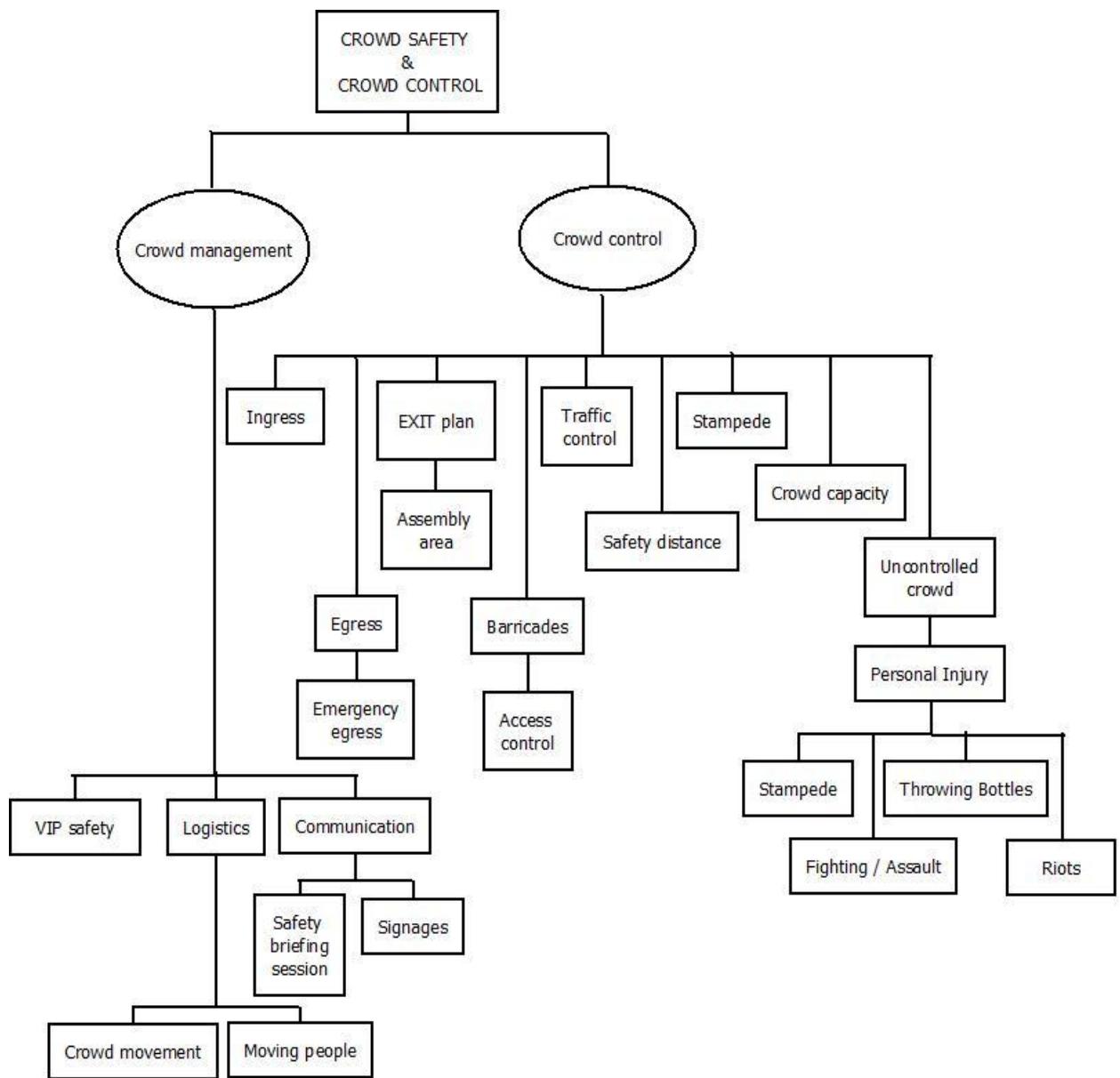


Figure 5.3: Thematic network typology for Crowd Safety and Crowd Control

5.2.2 Alcohol related Risks

The emergent of alcohol related risk was actually related to crowd safety in view of Kemp et al. (2007) and Connell (2009) who identified that alcohol and drugs were perceived as a major factor in determining crowd behavior in the event management industry. As has been mentioned (in chapter 4 – refer to the pilot study initial findings), it was not anticipated in the preliminary stage that alcohol related risk would become an important issue in Malaysia as the country was mainly Muslim majority and prohibits the consumption of alcohol among its predominantly Malay Muslim community. According to 2010 census figures, 61.3 percent of the population in Malaysia practice Islam (US Department of State, 2011). Sharia law, whose regulations applied to the Muslim community prohibited open consumption of alcohol in public places, especially by the Muslims (Ismail, 2008). Although the non-Muslim is not subject to such a law they too cannot consume it in open spaces due to the fact that Islam is the official religion for the country.

Before this discussion continues, it is imperative that we take a look at the geography and demographic population of Malaysia. Malaysia actually constituted of two geographical parts which is known as Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) and East Malaysia which comprises the states of Sabah and Sarawak (refer Figure 1.1 in chapter one). Malaysia is a multi-racial country with more than 70 identified ethnic groups, however, these ethnic groups were broadly classified into just four major groups namely the Bumiputera, Chinese, Indians and other races (Mahari et al., 2011). The Bumiputera (Indigenous) are divided into two categories which are the Malays and other indigenous. It was the Malays who make up the majority of the Malaysian population at 50.4% with other Bumiputera (the Indigenous) making up 11% from the total population (refer Figure 5.4). The Malays which are mostly Muslims occupied the Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) whereas the East Malaysia of Sabah and Sarawak was predominantly occupied by the Christian majority population. For all these reasons, the implementation of Sharia Law which has been designated to only Muslims population was rather loose in the Malaysia East (Sabah and Sarawak), including the consumption of alcohol at public

places such as events, concerts, festivals and other fiesta. Two of the following respondents illustrated that alcohol related risk of intoxication among the event crowds can hamper the peaceful operation of an event particularly in these two states (Sabah and Sarawak).

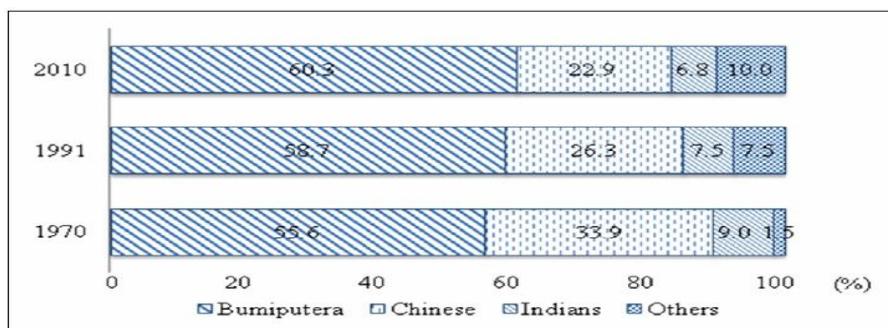
“.... They were actually event spectators and they became intoxicated so the Police and Rela [Volunteers of Malaysian people] would take certain actions on them... [...] They consumed alcohols and got intoxicated... and then tried to cause disturbances at the event, so the Police were normally have to take a very fast action.”

“....Labuan is actually a duty free port and a multi-racial city, more multi-racial compared to the Peninsular Malaysia. So, not to say that it's legal but the public just don't really care if you want to drink or consume alcohols even in open spaces. So they will drink and drink and drink... until they got intoxicated, then they started making troubles. It is OK if they create havocs among themselves, but the problem is when they started disturbing other crowds besides and around them and so forth, that was when we were called into action. That was among the risky thing that we have to face...”

In many cases, it was the small intoxicated minority in a crowd who were irresponsible and caused troubles for planners and venue managers. The situations described above was similar to Fried's (2009, p.75) statement that “inebriated fans may not only create safety concern for themselves, but their disruptive actions may also endanger others around them and create a crowd management nightmare.” The second respondent mentioned a similar case in Labuan, which is a small island located in the state of Sabah. Labuan has been given the status of a duty-free port for the last two decades. Hence, the price of goods including alcohol was comparatively cheaper than any other parts of the country. Malaysia has levied quite a high excise tax or import duty for tobacco and alcohol for some years now. But with the duty free status enjoyed by the city of Labuan, coupled with the predominantly Christian population, it was predictable that alcohol would be sold openly and cheaply all over the island, especially during events and festivals. Fried (2009, p.62) emphasised that “one of the biggest concerns

with selling alcohol is the impact intoxicated fans have on crowds”, particularly those sitting around intoxicated fans as been illustrated above. The selling of alcohols’ beverages at events could be largely influenced by financial reason as alcohol sales would “generate significant revenue and can make fans happy” as they want to enjoy alcohol while enjoying their events (Fried, 2009, p.67; Steinbach, 2004). But “the failure to control alcohol can generate significant liability” (Fried, 2009, p.71). According to the author, liability is predicted on the fact that the host should have known or that it was foreseeable that some who was drinking would cause injury to others. However, if the venue management has taken certain procedures or steps to reduce such concern, their potential liability can be greatly diminished (Ammon and Fried, 1998). So, the best is to ensure that the venue managements and its concessionaire do not promote a culture of intoxication by allowing alcohols to be sold in the area of event vicinity.

Figure 5.4: Malaysian demographic population



There was a need for event and venue managers to be concerned about alcohol sales at events due to the potential for inappropriate conduct by intoxicated individuals, ranging from swearing to fighting under the influence of alcohol (Fried, 2009). But according to the following informant and supported by Fried (2009), intoxicated behavior can occur even before the crowd enters the venue, which can impact crowd management procedures. It was normal

that the crowd would eat, drink and socialise before an event and they would often drink before an event and would be already intoxicated before they arrived there (*ibid*, 2009).

“Bear in mind that’s why safety when the public attended the events, you cannot control the public, right? They came in the state of intoxicated, stoned, you can control or not? You can’t (control), so who will control then? The Police. If they’re drunk and then they disturb people, and then committed vandalism, and then assaults, fighting among each other until becoming... that can lead to riots, raids and so on, and then someone might got raped, we never know the public...”

The literature confirms that the risk of alcohol was predominantly its influence in relation to the crowd control and crowd safety (Abbott and Geddie, 2001; Connell, 2009; Fried, 2009). An informant has given an astounding remark about the seriousness of alcohol related issues in the event management industry in Malaysia. Shocking statements such as how alcohol risk led to safety incidents with severe consequences such as suicide, self-inflicting harm with sharp objects, assaults and so on, such as described below.

“There are incidents, some incidents like... incidents such as... such as drunk, drunk, drunk! The situation was like...got drunken, and they were like fainted, or in the state of unconscious, or sometimes they started fighting with each other [because of intoxication], they got injured and intentionally hurt themselves with sharp objects, or they tried to commit suicide or did something that can harm themselves, that was...beyond our control.”

When I firstly encountered the above responses, I was quite surprised as I did not totally expect that the matter would be serious. However, there was some relief later on when I pursued the matter further and investigated whether this respondent spoke out the reality from his own experiences. It turned out that he himself never experienced such a fatal scenario related to alcohol safety risks and it was fortunate enough that the given statements were only based on a

hearsay. Thus, the reflexivity approach taken in data analysis has been exercised here. As a researcher who is very well-versed with the country, I would prefer to share a stance with another informant who downplays the issue by saying that although alcohol risk was still an important issue, the situation was not that bad and was still under control.

“.... (crowd) safety in Malaysia is not as bad as.... hmm.. drunk actually, drunken...
[...] ...Ha, crowd getting drunken, crowd intoxicated... and then, they will disturb especially the female fans, and maybe sometimes can lead to some assaults, but only all these kinds of things actually....not so bad actually...”

Thus, the crowd safety situation in Malaysia with regard to alcohol related risks was comparatively not too bad. Unlike the US and some other Western countries, events and festivals in Malaysia do not foster a culture of drinking, and that includes the event venues as well. Ammon and Fried (1998) conducted a survey among events and facility managers in the US and reported that alcohol related issues were the number one underlying cause for arrest by the police while alcohol abuse by unruly fans was the number one threat to fan safety at their major sporting events. Although the risk of alcohol consumption was not a frequent concern in Malaysia, event planners and venue operators still need to implement appropriate alcohol management solutions (Fried, 2009), and based on a Malaysian context, it will depend on the types and locations of the events been held. However, the study did find that the risk from intoxication such as crowd rioting and throwing of drinks were similar to the themes found by a survey in the United States (“Unprecedented Survey”, 2004, cited in Fried, 2009).

The previously discussed information has identified a considerable need for venue operators as well as event planners, to protect the crowd from the risks associated with the sales and consumption of alcohol, particularly at sporting and entertainment events in Malaysia. It seemed crucial that event planners and venue operators in Malaysia provided a specific procedure for dealing with intoxicated crowds attending any events. They have to work together with the authorities in attempting to control and monitor crowd activities especially those related

to alcohol consumption. But according to Fried (2009), this would best be implemented if efforts taken were supported by the law enforcement agencies and other groups in order to reduce intoxication incidents across all events and venues located in Malaysia. The finding of this study has nonetheless encouraged event planners and event venue managers to recognise that the consumption of alcohol can create significant crowd related concerns.

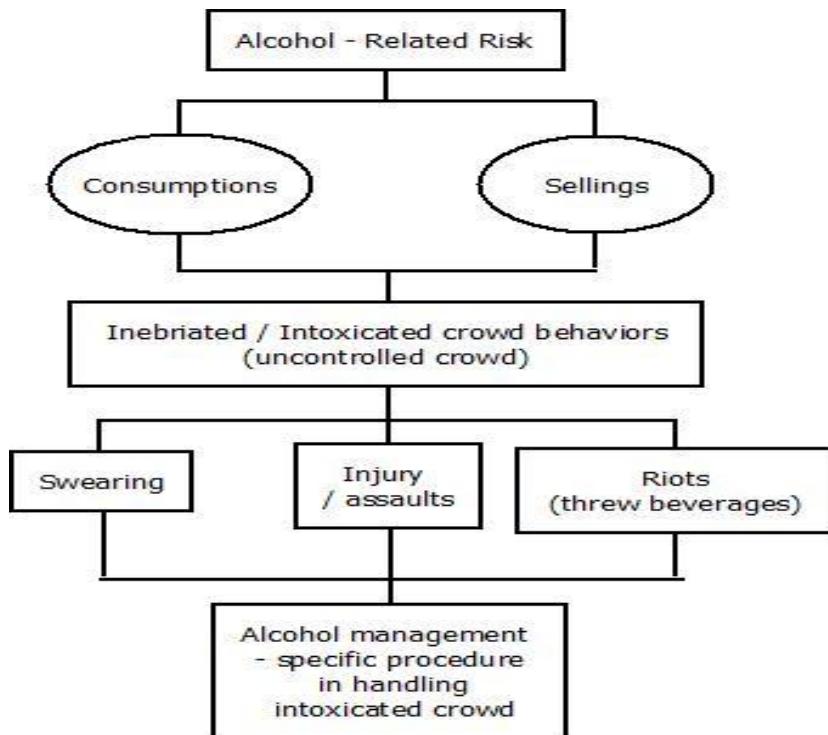


Figure 5.5: Network typology for Alcohol-related risk

5.2.3 Technical and Logistic Hazards

The event management discipline is a highly technical area, hence there were a lot of risks pertaining to technical aspects and logistics mentioned by participants. Mykletun (2011)

stated that other than the crowding which constituted safety risks, so does the building and taking down of events and festival equipment, and the logistics of travelling to and from events. Those emergent technical risks also were relatively varied in the sense that these participants were involved in different kinds of event management areas. The technical and logistics related hazards have been mentioned by all but one participant. The length of discussion in each interview session also was sometimes enormous making this theme the second most important after the crowd safety and crowd control.

There were obvious differences in terms of technical aspects discussed among the participants in relation to this theme. It was found that event practitioners who have a wide knowledge of technical areas such as those from the fireworks business and those involved in technical preparation for special events productions gave comparatively rich data. This was presumably based on their expertise in those technical areas. Among the technical and logistical hazards that emerged from the findings were construction risks, logistics and transportation hazards, fire and electrical risks, risks from height and flying activities, risk threats from some event locations as well as minor injuries from the normal slips and falls.

5.2.3.1 Construction Risk

The first ever respondent interviewed for this study way back to the pilot study in 2009 was a safety officer who had at that time only recently joined the event management industry. But this respondent had more than 30 years of experience in the construction sector and he brought all his construction experience with him to the event management field. Hence, the risks related to construction have been identified ever since the first interview session with him.

“When they first entered for bump-in they are going to make their props, for welding and so on. Welding actually has its danger, what its danger? [The danger] If you don’t wear

googles, gloves and so on, the danger of cables, the danger of electrics, right... So, the danger was when they manufactured and prepare the props and so on....”

This informant stated that some of the event production required manufacturing works that may bring certain dangers. According to Cummings et al. (2013), manufacturing risks are risks that are immediate causes and outcomes of production. Event's preparation involves much construction and manufacturing works that were undertaken prior to an organised event. Some of the works involve the construction of stages and pavilions, fittings of audio visual system and electrical items including the installation of lighting effects, sound system, projectors and much other equipment. Often these works were carried out by the appointed contractors and suppliers. The equipment used were also similar to that used in the construction sector such as trusses, scaffolding, construction towers, cables and so on. According to Mykletun (2011), installing and removing the material structures of festivals and events involved high risks for accidents, human suffering and damaged properties. As such, several respondents shared some of the near miss incidents happened during the preparation stage.

“Can you imagine that the [construction] tower that we built for the event fell down? This is another incident happened in xxxx [deleted for anonymity].... they fix the lightings at the tower. So, we have lots of towers actually, both at the right and left hand side of the stage we had like two or three towers to light up the audience. So, at that particular time there was a heavy rainfall and the wind was so strong, so the tower fell on the crowd's area. But at that time the show wasn't started yet so the audience hasn't arrived yet... [...] it was because they put... I was the vent organizer, luckily no one hurts... [...] it was a huge tower.... I think the height was maybe about 33 floors [feet] like that...”

“Even though the other day I organised with xxxx [deleted for anonymity].... we are not the event manager, we are only bringing in artist. Even in the hotel that they assembled a 40 footer truss... and it fell off! [...] Because the contractor's didn't lock, he didn't take any safety precaution, he didn't lock his trusses....”

“.... and at the back of the stage, at the backdrop they were doing the preparation set, OK. So, there was scaffolding going up and a worker was doing that job. When we were discussing suddenly the scaffolding fell! It’s about two-storey building in heights and the worker also fell together with it, and then we brought him to the hospital straightaway. ‘Thank God’ he wasn’t badly injured, he only sustained minor injury...”

Those incidents and near-misses indicated that risks relating to construction were significant as during the preparation stage, some event sites might be turned into a mini construction site. Carter and Smith (2006) stated that hazard identification was fundamental to construction safety management as unidentified hazards like the above cases present the most unmanageable risks. Hence, the incidents above might have been avoided if the event/venue managers have anticipated the danger earlier. We would never have imagined how much construction was needed to stage a huge mega event. But the constructions involved in events were quite vulnerable because most of the structures such as stage, pavilion and so forth were only there temporarily and would need to be dismantled after the event ended. Shangjun and Xinjian (2012, p.432) addressed the danger by stating that “the temporary work of building was always rushing, hardworking, complicated, and with great difficulties.” Accidents under construction and de-construction in events and festivals were among the most important aspect of risk and safety identified by Mykletun (2011). One would understand how fragile was a temporary structure compared to a permanent structure, through comments such as here.

“OK, like I said to you, events got two [safety] aspects. First is organising the event, the other one is actually on the technical part where pavilion is involve and everything. So, on the safety of the pavilion it was obviously... we afraid that the thing will suddenly... [...] So, sometimes we were afraid, sometimes we already put our expertise there but we would never know if suddenly there was things fell off, such like that, so people start to complain... In terms of safety, when the crowd is too many and then there’s no one to monitor, such as..... and then the pavilion was huge, we afraid that it might collapse if too many crowd...”

“The one that possible to happen, first is about the.... stage actually, the structure and safety of the stage, either the performing stage or the VIP’s stage, that’s number one. [...] Who are going to be there, if that’s the public facility then it will be the public who.... If you compromise in terms of the stage for instance, the main risk is the performers!”

Apart from the above discussion, other respondents highlighted that some of the workers appointed for the construction and events’ preparation work were not always competent. This was supported by Mykletun (2011) who also found out several technical flaws in his study such as poor anchorages to the tents and tarps thus compromising safety. They identified several issues that led to certain flaws. First was the awareness among the contractors involved in this industry. Most participants agreed that the awareness level for risk and safety was still low especially among event contractors/suppliers and their workers. The second flaw was about the inefficiency of certain workers with low technical skills and knowledge described by the third respondent below.

“We were having difficulties because the awareness level for the contractors and organisers was not there. So we had to train them, to have briefed them on all these risk assessment. Risk assessment plays a major role. At that time most of the organisers or contractors they were not aware of all these. Last time if you see contractors come they would just construct any booth or whatsoever and that’s it, incident or safety was... No any safety concern!

“Anywhere you go people won’t like safety because they would say that safety make life more difficult for them! Why we need to wear the safety helmet there is nothing fall on our heads? What is the need to wear safety boots if there were no nails down here? Actually we have given them safety boot, safety helmet but they didn’t want to wear.... If it was at the construction site we would have the enforcement, anyone caught on site would be given violation and fined 100 Ringgit [meaning: Malaysian dollars]. [...] But here we cannot do that because lots of constraints, we don’t even have a safety committee

so how do you expect me to make enforcement? It was just that the safety awareness level is still too low, sorry to say that...”

“.... for example, I want to give a very simple instance. Yesterday at the ‘National Youth Day’ celebration, they got lots of tent, and we know that area have strong winds. They anchored [the tent], but they shouldn’t have anchored on the ground because it will damage the tarmacs, but they should have tied both up and down sides because if you tied only the upper parts the tents would get folded. So, these kind of thing nobody was there to monitor...”

Besides all these negative remarks, the good thing was that the study also has found that there were efforts to educate all parties involved towards better practice with relation to the risk and safety. An employee from a convention centre that was regarded by many as the benchmark for risk and safety practice for event management in Malaysia stated that their venue management would require anybody who entered to do certain jobs at their place to exercise strict safety measures. The contractors engaged at that centre would also be closely monitored. Another venue manager insisted that they would advise the event planners/organisers on the selection of contractors to carry out works at their place. All these efforts were significant as according to Mykletun (2011), it was the technical manager or the contractors who were responsible for the risk and safety aspect related to the planning and use of space for the physical installations at events, such as the process of installing the tents and needed infrastructures.

“.... From there we will advise them. OK, backdrop...how are you going to construct it? What are your materials? We are not the expert but we are able to advise you for example the measurement, the height of the backdrop, how to come in and then how to actually build it in our place. Basically we do not allow them to build it from scratch in the centre, you have to do it outside and bring in only to assemble, with minimum... so it will minimise the risks. [...] Major one no [meaning: not allowed], only minor... only

minor construction. But if you see build up during exhibition it's like... consider like a construction site also actually.”

“.... So when it comes to exhibitions, we try not to go into the risky involvement say for example booths settles, I mean setting up of booths. Because setting up of booth it does give you a lot of commitments, because if you're not well versed of how and when and how to build up particular booth then you may be given different kind of perceptions to your client. So what we would normally do is we normally recommend the organisers to use a good or a well-known exhibitors so they will then provide all these equipment....”

This statement has been supported by another venue manager saying that their utmost concern was that all construction works done at their site must not involve structural works that could bring damage to their property.

“We only asked certain things like... this is what we normally do is we make sure that they do not do anything which will then more or less give a damage to our property itself. [...] Not much, it's only that sometimes when they want to set up like for example whatever to do with the ceilings, setting up they'll use ladder, this is something that we may find it a bit of concern, if they were to...you know, accidentally fell this is something dangerous. But then again to be serious, to be honest, for the past few years we do not see much of this issue, there is no issue regards to this, never.”

The discussion of matters regarding construction risk will be preceded by a discussion of the aviation's event category known as 'Foreign Object Particles' or FOP. FOP actually refers to any unwanted objects that could cause risk and safety issues especially for aircraft. People involving in managing an 'Air Site' (a ground site dedicated for the aircraft's parking and take-off/landing purposes) would go into detailed scrutiny to ensure that no unwanted objects will be on that site.

“.... And if we look at the Air Site itself, even called as FOP, FOP was called as foreign object... something actually... [meaning: Foreign Object Particles], it was like rubbish you know... this regarded as rubbish or unwanted thing because that thing does not supposed to be at the Air Site, that thing shouldn't be there. That means we are going to.... Make sure it's clear! ...[...]... For the ground we have to make sure even one piece of screw won't be there. Because one piece of screw can be sucked into the jet and can damage the engine. So, this is aviation industry... and when it comes to the crowd...because we know maybe some of them were smokers or anything, even that was a non-smoking zone... or maybe plastic of sweets all these is FOP, FOP cannot totally be there inside the Air Sight area.”

This concept of FOP is relevant to the general event management because similar to the aviation's 'Air Site', an event site also must be cleared of sharp objects that can harm performers, employees and sometimes the crowd too. In this case, it was felt that the event/venue managers should ensure that the event site was properly swept in relation to leftovers from construction in the preparation stages such as nails, screws, pins, buttons, wood, sharp pieces, etc.

“Stage would have lots of dangers.... [...] So, safety has to look from the aspect that maybe there were nails at the artist, although people wearing shoes. [...] that's the nails, sometimes the stage got few nails, like this![meaning: illustrate nail by his hand]. Even if we wear shoes also we are going to be injured... confirm will cause injury!”

“....there was also risk during the rehearsals, dangerous because when they go to the floor the floor might be slippery, got nails, screws, sharp objects or small pieces of wood that could harm them, right...”

An event manager specifically insisted that it was the job of the appointed contractor to make sure that the event site was cleared after the event was finished. This informant claimed that he

would personally ensure that the site been left in a clean state in all events that he was responsible for. His views was supported by Mykletun (2011) who confirmed that it was the responsibility of the event planners and/or technical managers to remove all equipment after the event and hand over the area to its owner in a clean and tidy condition when the event was finished, all must be done according to the risk and safety standards.

“Overall! And then, when bump out is back to the beginning or before the event, so it was back to the contractor to ensure that what we say... all the works was not dangerous during and after the event. [...] ... it’s safe, not left holes or whatever. That is how I practice in events that I organise.”

The next threat involved failures of some equipment in the event operation. But interestingly enough, all four respondents who talked about this issue were participants from the aviation events group. The aviation industry was a high risk industry so it was not surprising that those from this category stressed on the safety of all related equipment during flying activities in air related events, as otherwise, the event can turn into a catastrophe. Rose (2006) insisted on operational efficiency to ensure that aircraft operations were always managed and run efficiently. Some safety incidents can be seen below which resulted from the failure of machines and/or equipment especially the flying aircraft.

“The major risk is failure of equipment. Failure of the equipment will cause... [...] That is the main risk, so to say that they have to get the equipment checked thoroughly. [...] No, no, no...it doesn’t mean wherever it made. We have briefing every morning before the event that we always tell them please check your equipment before take-off. Every individual participant has to check because we can’t be checking everybody. But we always remind them.”

“Yes... the gas finished when he was up there flying the machine, so he has to make an emergency landing, right. He was forced to land but it was too low so he [the pilot]

couldn't find another area so he was stuck at the electrical cables, but luckily he was not electrocuted or injured whatsoever, but it was a good spectacle to the crowd.... [...] ... this para-motor, or motorised power glider although in the event when the crowd was there, although this was motorised but sometimes these technical things, the engines can break down...”

“There is one time where there is para-jump, where the main parachute not deployed properly, so they have to cut off the main shute [meaning: parachute], they have to go for the reserve shute. It's just the minor incident where an aircraft just landed one wheel just came off.”

It is true that the sub-theme of equipment failures does not emerge from any other event types, however, one could not assume that the general event management practices (other types than aviation events) would be immune from such threats. Various special events involving special effects and different kinds of special machines and/or equipment could result in safety incidents if they were not properly managed.

5.2.3.2 Logistics and transportation hazards

Large scale events need massive involvement from various kinds of event stakeholders including event employees, participants, volunteers, contractors, suppliers and also a large range of local authorities. The number of people involved in such events would normally lead to the emergence of another issue related to logistics and transportation, which could easily become a safety threat if not been efficiently managed.

“.... It depends on how big is the scale of the production that we are going to produce. For example is like when we engage for the Independent Day celebration, involved up to 5000 people.... the most that I ever had for Independent day was 8000 participants. OK, it will involve many factors, firstly was their logistics, their transportation and their journey from schools to the stadium and as such, these are all risks involved.”

“.... It was a very big event because logically to move 6000 students to the beach a challenge, because Langkawi [island] don’t have that of many buses. Now this one is...but we got the help from all the authorities, the police, the ambulance, the rescue people squad, they are all there.”

The threats discussed in this section also focus on the logistics of moving effects or items related to events. Venue managers in particular discussed about the threats that could possibly happen in the transportation process of moving event goods at the loading bay. In the case study of Stavanger Food Festival, Mykletun (2011) highlighted a near miss safety accident in which a huge lorry with a crane drove into the increasingly crowded area which imposed risks to the festival participants, but fortunately no serious harm was caused.

“The one manufactured outside were the smaller props. This is because of logistics factor, because it cannot enter the loading bay. Because the loading bay area was very limited, if they fully manufactured huge props cannot enter the facility, so they have to weld inside here. [...] and also, if they manufacture it at their place that would involve logistics issue and so on. So they will bring the raw materials and manufactured it here.”

“Haa... when loading... for example we have a book fairs, right. So they have the lorry of books for deliveries, so we don’t want up to 10, or 20 lorries came in at once, because that can cost our safety, risks also because of lots of lorries there is long movements inside the loading bay and is quite dangerous as well.”

“..... You set up the exhibition site you know, all sort of lorries coming in and out, accidents can happen. Last year, they don’t wear ‘hard hat’ [safety helmet] and they don’t wear sort of bright coloured shirt in out. In other countries, the minute an exhibition take place, you come in early they ask you to wear hard hat and you got to wear a very bright coloured shirt [safety jacket] so that people can see you and accident won’t take place. So, we are still very low in our risks area.”

Event employees, volunteers and staff members would also possibly involved in road accidents in doing their job. In the event management field, it was common practice that some of the job needed to be completed in a quick manner. Most event personnel would sometimes be in a rushing mood and therefore, increased the possibility of involving in road accident. This opinion was supported by the high statistics for road accident in Malaysia which reported that the country was ranked among the highest for such accidents.

“So far the risk... the safety risk was in terms of my movement, the logistic of my movement here and there. So, if anything happen maybe can cause my life possibly because sometimes I have to rush to the airport, sometimes I have to rush to the hotels, I have to rush here and there... Sometimes I use my own vehicle not even use the company’s transport. That was the safety threat that I could foresee...”

5.2.3.3 Fire and electrical risk

5.2.3.3.1 Fire risk

Risk related to fire has been identified as a major risk factor in planning and managing events. It could be regarded as major since most participants in the study mentioned fire hazards. Thus, I was about to put the threat of fire as a major stand alone risk category at the beginning but decided to change it later on after discovering that most of the threats came either from electrical equipment or technical failures. Hence, I have decided to put both fire and electrical threats (which are connected to each other) under the construction and technical risk category.

The risk of fire has been mentioned by risk and safety literature including those discussing on event management risk aspects (Silvers, 2008; Wood, 2009; Mykletun, 2011). According to Wood (2009), the incidence of fire is a direct loss that may cause a loss of revenues and also human fatalities with potentially incalculable losses to both event planners and venue managers. Hence, the first aspect revealed in this study was related to the significance of fire

risk as a major safety threat at an event venue. This important fact has been stated by almost all participants from both event planners and event venue providers categories. Maybe due to strict measures implemented by his company, one participant from the latter category claimed that he could not think of another potential risk that can happen to their indoor venue except fire.

“....so we have to take into consideration if fire incident occur for example, that would be the most important one. If there is fire, how we are going to manage such a chaotic and disastrous situation, it will definitely be quite complicated and I don’t think anyone can claim that they know everything about handling that...”

“Fire and all these.... maybe the crowd going to push each other rushing to the exit doors. But even if there is fire incident we have the safety curtain at the front that will automatically drop. [...] Safety curtain actually so it will drop and cover, so the fire would only be inside at the stage area and will not escalate into the audiences. It’s been called safety curtain actually, just like the door [safety door]”

“.... So, in other cases that risk that are besides this kind of situation, we can’t quite come out with the... we can’t identify what kind of risks coming over at **xxxx** [deleted for anonymity], I mean that will happen at **xxxx** [deleted] except fire.... [...] Yes, yes, yes! So, the major issue is about safety is about fire....”

During the analysis stage, the researcher found that that one particular respondent had given quite rich and nuanced data regarding fire hazards that could disastrously impede the operation of an event project. It was no surprise that the relevant respondent was the one specialising in the fireworks and pyrotechnics business. This kind of business is vulnerable to the fire hazards since it deals with explosives, flares and blasts. Shaluf et al. (2002) stated that fireworks industry is a dangerous business in which there has been no less than 15 safety disasters happened worldwide. According to Wood (2009), the risk can be accepted, as any conventional non-hardened building at the event sites could not withstand an explosion. The fire

threat from those activities could be mitigated by the provision of a cleared zone around the building or event site and by a strict access control system (*ibid*, 2009). The following were some of responses regarding the threats of fire.

“.... So, you must know the product and whether on the top they’re inflammable, are you working around situation of inflammable or non-inflammable, you see. All these things are very, very important indeed, OK. Fire... that’s all actually. [...] Basically the explosives right, you’re talking about that... damage on property and all that. [...] Yes, because... and they also must watch the fireworks. They [meaning: the technician] must watch to see whether if there is any ground burst they have to cut off.”

“..... curtain burns, or we have one experience during the Christmas they have a lot of cotton, you know when we did the small pyrotechnics one of the sparks hit the cotton [and] the cotton burns but as what I told you, my men were always observant. We take the fire extinguisher and killed the fire instantly, you see, that is important.”

But the risk of fire from fireworks and/or pyrotechnics was also expressed by those from the event venue category as well as the event organisers. The first informant below was a health and safety manager from a popular convention centre while the other was an event manager for an established event management company.

“For example the pyrotechnics, pyrotechnics is like a special requirement. Do you know that pyrotechnics require licence? So, most of the event organisers they are not aware of all these, so we are here to advise them, OK.”

“.... Such as when you want to have fireworks you have to have permits, you have to have licences involving local authorities, police permits. Even people who wants to carry the fireworks in must have the permits, licences from the police and have an official letter from them, all these you have to know!”

Apart from fireworks and pyrotechnics services, there was another specialised event that was often in danger of fire hazards. The organisation of aviation events required a very strict safety measures in terms of avoiding the risk relating to fire. All informants in this group described that handling fuels for aircrafts (various kinds of aircraft, including hot air balloons) was the most dangerous aspect that could easily spark fire incidents. The crew involved in such a process were required to follow very strict procedures in order to avoid fatalities.

“Gas.... the fuel, the fuel! [...] No, it’s a LPG [meaning: Liquefied Petroleum Gas]. So we have to be very careful, LPG, it is easily flammable of course! So, this one the way they do the re-fuelling of the gas, safety. [...] The main thing is of course when we do the re-fuelling, it’s not like when you are flying it’s already in the cylinder. When you do the re-fuelling you have to be away from the crowd, smoking, and then any spark, can be what we called it...can be dangerous.

“.... Because we are handling fuel, we are handling aircrafts, we are handling lots of things. Like the aircraft itself is made by aluminium actually, very fragile. So, we start with that.... [...] And then the cars, the cars that has been allowed to enter the area must have been fitted with the filter, I don’t know what they called but at the [car’s] exhaust we have to fit with a special filter so that there wouldn’t be any spark, haaa..... to that extent! OK, that is second.”

“After the event, for example like the case I mentioned just now, we already talked that at the event site near the air sight shouldn’t have any flame or anything that easily inflammable and so forth. But there was an incident not so long ago involved the Royal Military, they had burnt the smoke granite inside the area, right... On the other hand we already have our safety team to advise us all the time with the fire extinguisher and all that so luckily we managed to put out the fire very fast. But, that is not good actually.”

Based on the above findings, it can be concluded that the fire related hazards could be regarded as a major risk factor that was possible to happen in all event sites regardless whether they were indoor or outdoor. For that reason, Wood (2009) insisted for a compulsory requirement for fire prevention measures were in place in the workplace, including event venues or any other event locations.

5.2.3.3.2 Electrical risk

There was generally a lot of electrical equipment used for organising special events such as concerts, festivals, theaters, celebrations, musical fairs, etc. Some special events were categorised as show businesses and require a definite presence of audio visual elements such as sound systems, lighting and special effects as well as LCD screen projectors and so forth. Failures of these electrical equipment would result in certain electrical safety hazards that could be fatal. Albert and Hallowell (2012) established that the electrical contractors involved in the construction and maintenance of electrical related items were at extremely high risk of electrocution. Electrical risk was connected to the fire hazards in the sense that some of these failures may also cause fire incidents.

“Yeah, probably you are talking about electrical faulty you know... Exhibitions, all those things like I informed you all the contractors have their own...must have ISO certificates. So if you’re having exhibitions the contractors of the exhibitors must have [ISO certificates], exhibitors’ booth must have ISO. So, we must make sure all the cabling, electrical cabling are all taken care well, wired, so that’s the way we try to minimize the issue of electrocuted...”

“Like the cables, these [electrical] cabling..... Cabling is depends on organiser who installed those cables... [...] Yes, electric cables, contractors have to be well planned because we involve crowd. These crowd would stepping on the cables, and do lot of things at the cables so they have to cover. If possible, these cables need to be hidden

because there was an incident... electric cables. [...] It has happened that the thing [cover of cables] was opened and hit somebody! But luckily he didn't die, only fell off and collapsed."

It was fortunate that the study found an informant who had an in-depth knowledge regarding the aspect of electrical related hazards. He had vast experience as a concert organiser and promoter since 1991, and therefore, had worked with various local and international electrical engineers (including sound and lighting engineers) in the event management industry. Roberts (2012) clarified that managers and even safety professionals generally leave electrical safety to electrical professionals, believing these individuals to be the experts. Compared to the above responses which were quite general in their descriptions of electrical faults, this informant gave detailed explanations regarding the risk resulting from electrical failures such as power supply, earthing problem, electrical leakage, short circuit and charge-man. Though he was not an electrical engineer, this informant has a vast knowledge in this matters based on Roberts (2012) who argued that electrical hazards are not so unique that the risk associated with them needs to be managed differently than any other safety risk. He even sketched some explanations on a whiteboard during our interview session. But obviously there was no room for all those discussions to be included here since the focus of this study was more on the risk identification based on a Malaysian perspective.

"I'm talking about [in the] 90's, people are facing with event failure, why? They don't take safety as number one. To me, safety is power supply! When you have a power leakage here and there so you cannot perform, even though you have number one singer on stage, right? You have number one singer, but the power supply is not there, I mean is leakage up and here even though you have a good screen with 15000 insulation projector, but you have the problem with power supply leakage, you can't see the visual, forget about it! So, this is about event management industry, even if you run a carnival, you run whatever it is, it has to link with audio equipment and lighting."

“Ehh... of course! During that time, during that time if... what to say... during those time cordless mic is not that great yet in the industry, so all were using cable mic. So, what happen, when you have earthing problem, there’s a shortage actually between that mic and your... but not very high voltage, it considered a leakage. But these are the effects... [...] ... It started burning the equipment, you know... one whole mixer board got burnt with the spectrum, analyser was fortunately not burnt! So, this is the problem of our supplier, generator. [...] That’s what happens to us, burnt lots of our system, got burnt you know... Luckily the leakage didn’t escalate to guitarist or elsewhere, it’s dangerous! They can have electric shock, fatal! That’s why I said earthing is very important, those were the days.”

“So, even though we are facing with a few risk factors especially to us... to us the risk factor number one is from power supply, right. It’s not the main infra construction actually, is the power supply. [...] Yes, since the previous experience, because one thing is our power supply is not like the British or American. So, every time if we do at indoor or wherever... we are facing the problem with earthing you know... it’s related to our earthing system, earthing!”

Electrical hazards could cause severe injuries and fatalities, as the risk of a shock incident depends on whether or not an electrical conductor is exposed and whether or not a person is closer than a safe distance (Roberts, 2012). It was expected that the above-mentioned statements would help the identification of specifically related electrical hazards that were significant to the risk and safety area. But before I could concluded this section, I would have to reveal one more important finding exposed by this study. This might be quite controversial in the sense that it would jeopardise the reputation of a certain party in the local event management industry. To avoid this, I had maintained a strict anonymity so that the relevant parties could not be identified. The issue here was actually regarding a new event operator who has just recently established themselves within the events industry. What was shocking was that this new establishment has not been equipped with the required electrical infrastructure for the event

functions. It was really astonishing to know from one of its officers that they were having the problem of power supply whenever they had big function staged at their venue. This kind of problem should not have even existed since the contractors would have known the purpose of this building since its initial construction phase. This issue had significantly justified the claim of negligence and ignorance by certain quarters in chapter four.

“Among the problems was that when we organise dinner functions or staging concerts especially, most of the times we wouldn’t have enough power. Power supply meaning... because the use of high voltage speaker systems and so forth. [...] the danger of been tripped! And then, this [electrical] tripped actually could cause fire incident, that’s why when we have big concerts here we have to prepare plan B which is having external generator.”

5.2.3.4 Event venue and location

It was commonly accepted that the event management discipline would involve more field work and not like a day-to-day office job. Event managers and planners would often be required to organise events at different venues that they were not familiar with. Thus, lots of ground works needs to be done before the execution day, for example site visits and venue inspections. But staging an event at a certain venue sometimes could also bring risk and safety issues for event employees and its participants. Most literature agreed that the outdoor events generally would bring more risk and safety threats compared to an indoor venue (HSE, 1999; Au, 2001; Eisenhauer, 2005; Allen et al., 2005; Fallon and Sullivan, 2005). This research identified several issues that need to be highlighted in choosing and selecting an event venue based on risk and safety considerations. Participants had quoted some of high risk locations in terms of safety, such as water festivals held at the seaside, camping site near waterfalls as well as a street parade within the busy location of a capital city. Most subjects insisted on having an actual physical inspection or site visits before the final decision on choosing the event location been made.

“OK, the third factor was where the event will be staged. For example when we had a water festival, we are forced to call upon the fire brigade and rescue team to take care of the safety at the sea side, we also call upon the marines coastguards in that area... [...] The high risk would be the water sports because normally we would have to organize 100 events simultaneously! [...] Take an example of the water sports event, it was compulsory for all participants to wear life jacket even though he was such a good swimmer or whatever. If don’t want to wear we won’t let him joining in...”

“Because of the limit, the subject to the nature and location of the event. Nature, for example if you are talking about the parade performance . Ok, there’s a limit space of viewing. [...] Yes, so that one could cause crowd pushing among themselves, difficulties in their movements, OK. [...] Yes, and location actually, like I said just now about the location, nature and location.”

The next two informants which were both female cited that staging an event in a remote location such as in rural areas was also risky in terms of safety due to the travel distance that they had to make as well as unfamiliarity with the locals and geographical locations of that area.

“Meaning that see... if for example sometimes I have to go down to the rural areas, ok, down to **xxxx** [deleted name of place: rural areas] for example. [...] So when we have to have you know, when you do events you need to have the facilities. Sometimes when calamities would happens...”

“Local was like when we have to go to such area like **xxxx** [deleted for anonymity]... when it’s remote areas I was often be the first one for the front lining actually... [...]suddenly realised that the journey was more than three hours, Oh my God, why is it so far! And then we started wondering whether the delegation will complained later on, such was the conditions. The other one is actually, aaaa....in terms of safety it’s the journey...”

[...] OK, the first one is actually the ground work team. When they go for any groundwork, any new places, remote areas, so we will decide is it possible for the delegations to go? Because we are bringing a big people, a big group, so we decide first [especially in terms of their safety], so that is the first one the groundwork team.”

The study reveals that there were certain areas in the country considered as being sensitive areas for any event activities. Certain jurisdictions have to be made before events or any other gatherings can be made in such areas. A good example given by the respondents was the city of Putrajaya which is the capital centre of administration for the federal government. According to some informants from the aviation events, the regulatory bodies of the DCA (Department of Civil Aviation) and the NSC (National Security Councils) have gazetted Putrajaya as a non-flying zone and would have not allowed any flying activities within its vicinity due to national security reasons. Even the approval for ground events within that area falls under the jurisdiction of Putrajaya Holdings Incorporated, which is a subsidiary company under the Prime Minister’s Department. The second respondent talked about having good venue facilities in terms of infrastructures and support system in order to minimise any safety threats.

“Such as like the one I told you just now, the use of air space is actually under DCA. For example is like the case of ‘Putrajaya’, ‘Putrajaya’ is considered as a non-flying zone for Malaysia. We cannot easily fly in that area, because of the ‘JPM’ [meaning: Prime Minister Department], ‘JPM’ will decide whether we can fly or not. That’s why even DCA had informed us that for any other areas maybe we don’t have any problem. [...] But in ‘Putrajaya’, and any other few places. So, if ‘Putrajaya’, we have to have the approval from the Prime Minister Department to fly.... and another department, National Security Council.”

“Yes, first is we look at the location. Then, we will see its facilities. What facilities they have there? For example, if at the airport we called it as... ‘boozier’, for the re-fueling. [...] Infra yes, its support [system] also yes. OK, for example if we do it in big airport

they have ‘boozer’, so we won’t have problems in terms of fueling. But doing it in small airport we have to use manual pump.”

Before I end the discussion, I would like to highlight the opinion from an informant who claimed that making last minute changes to the event venue would also potentially hamper safety as the organiser and venue provider would not have sufficient time to properly measure the risk and safety threats. This was supported by Reason (2000) who agreed that time pressure was notable among the factors that could lead to the unsafe conditions. This informant also reported an incident in which a disabled citizen complained that event venues were not particularly user-friendly for people with disabilities. Such conditions would potentially invite incidents to occur. Reflecting on that incident, I have to admit that it was not just the case of event venue, in fact most buildings in Malaysia were not usually suited for the use for people with disabilities compared to those in the UK.

“OK, I would perceive the risk from a different aspect. If we see on the crowd who was coming to attend the event, sometimes the event venue would be changed at the very last minutes, that for me would be an important risk factor. When the venue changed it will bring the safety issues as well, right? For example let say the crowd is coming to this area and then suddenly they have to move into other place, that would created a problem for them...”

“..... this ‘OKU’ [meaning: people with disabilities]... There were some venue halls that how to say this...that was not ‘OKU’ user-friendly. So, we had an incident like the recent one happened but luckily he didn’t fell down, but he was quite sad and pretty disappointed, because he claimed that we didn’t prepare a complete facility for him. That’s normal, these ‘OKU’ people they are sometimes too sensitive, right?”

5.2.3.5 Height risk

The discussion on this category of risk will be divided into two parts which were firstly, the height risk for some construction works in preparing for an event and secondly, the height risk with regards to flying activities in aviation and air-related events. The risk of height in general was quite relevant in the event management context, in the sense that there were lots of technical works such as the installation of lighting and audio visual systems which needed the contractors and their workers to work at certain heights. Most of the risk in this category involved the rigging system and the use of construction tools such as trusses, towers, scaffolding and harnesses. One of the respondents even insisted that such high risk work made the technical department as the most likely to be involved in risk and safety incidents or accidents.

“...we have to look because the rigging system that we have now such as ball hall and point hall actually is enough for us in terms of its safety... [...] ... We have rigging system in which this rigging system deals with the hanging of event props and staging items. The hang of these items... the cables got safety locks, but if we wrongly put the safety lock it will suddenly “Tumpp!” [meaning: the respondent making a sound effect], dropped by itself... would be dangerous if there is somebody below it, depends on how heavy the item is.”

“.... But the department that is the highest in its risk is the technical part actually. The technical part for example was from the beginning of the preparation until when they rigged their equipment.... Rigging itself for example like installing lightings for instance, all these requires a very high safety measures. [...] This was the time...when we are at the technical preparation, such as setting-up the lightings and such. The setting-up of lightings actually involves heights and all that... height risk!”

An event planner who used to organise youth motivational camps and team-building activities talked about the use of scaffolding for abseiling activity. But being somebody from the construction industry made him aware of all safety requirements in carrying out such challenging activities.

“For example is when you go up into the scaffolding in the construction site....when you go up in the scaffolding you must wear [safety] helmet, you must wear [safety] jacket, and you must wear safety boot as well. So, it is just the same in the events maybe you don’t have helmet it’s OK, but you have to have belt, belt that tied to your waist [safety harness] [...] For example when you want to jump there is the belt. Shoes also, so not the safety shoes but a good sport shoes. After that, look into the equipment and tools, must have safety net at the climbing area in case anyone fell off. It is just the same scaffolding [in construction] have safety net here also we have safety net.... [...] ... The concept is the same [event and construction] only the location is different.”

The second part of the height risk was linked to aviation and air events in which the risk and safety issues were related to the flying activities inside those types of events. Among the most important risks highlighted by the participants involved in this field was the risk of air collision, the risk in landing, the height involved as well as the operation time for specific types of aircraft. But most importantly, all of them highlighted that the air aviation industry itself was very high risk, hence, any technical mistakes could cause catastrophe because of the heights involves. Reason (2000) acknowledged these views and categorised aviation into high reliability organisations which had fewer than their fair share of adverse events due to the high enforcement of risk and safety measures deployed in this sector. The lack of safety incidents from aviation perspectives was due to the fact that stringent control on risk and safety measures have been enforced by all stakeholders in the industry. According to Wilf-Miron et al. (2002), some reported aviation accidents inevitably resulted from errors derived from faulty system design and not from negligence. The President of MSAF (Malaysian Sports Aviation Federation) has given a stern warning of the risk involved in these flying activities.

“Important in the sense that especially on aviation, coz aviation is actually a high risk event. Because any technical, or any mistake cause the life! And as you know the air space is open, so like what we say that the first thing is before you do any air aviation we have to get approval from the Department of Civil Aviation which we call it NOTAM,

Notice to Air Man. It's the first safety aspect! Notice to Air Man means that we block the area, the air space, in terms of longitude, latitude, ceilings, radius of the event. [...] ... Avoid that particular area, otherwise it will be a collision. When air collision means disasters! Not like the events on the ground where you can see very clearly, but there is air...you're flying very fast. [...] ... This sort of things we need to go through because we are talking about aviation which I told you the high risk of aviation is greater than when you do event on the ground. Diametric fall from the sky you know... can make lot of disasters. So, we need to see that it has been done, people who is doing the demonstrations or the activities....”

“Landing, especially when we fly hot air balloons. The taking off is simple but when we come to landing there's lot of safety measures we have to take. So, if the pilot is not experience enough, then it might force injury to the passenger or even to himself.”

“We as the event organiser must know when is the time for the operation of fixed wing, when is the operation time of para-motor, when is the time for aero-model. Because if any glitch happen, it may cost fatalities! [...] So, meaning that...if like me, I would divide it between active and non-active, meaning that for the non-active aircrafts the spectator can come in, but the active ones [active aircrafts], I would put them at the back.”

5.2.3.6 Minor injuries from slips and falls

Event management basically involves much out of the office fieldwork in planning and executing events (Bowdin, et al., 2001; Getz, 2002). These meticulous and exhaustive processes of organising events involved all event practitioners right from the top, such as an event director to the bottom, like the event volunteers. Some large scale events or mega events involve hundreds or maybe thousands of employees working together towards its successful organisation. All these raise the probability that those individuals might be involved

in minor safety incidents such as slips and falls that sometimes require little medical or first-aid treatments.

“Of course, the other is of course accidents in any events. You worry about someone pinched over the carpet and breaking an arm, you worry about someone dropping down the staircase....”

“Organisation meaning....the risks is more on...coz we don’t have much machinery or whatsoever so most of the risks is during the event which is manual handling, slip and fall, those are our main risks for our employees “lah”[slang]. Slip and fall and manual handling, that’s the main. [...] For the event it depends... there are the risks which we really concern, is for example fire risks, slip and fall also happens... those are two main ones “lah”. [...] Minor, only minor we don’t have like major. Minor like slip and fall is a normal case “lah” [...] Yes, it does involved [some] injury.”

There might be some who would argue that these incidents of slips and falls which brings minor injuries would not be taken into consideration as they are not fatal and do not involve serious injuries. Their argument might be based on the fact that it is impossible for an event/venue manager to make sure that their events operations are incident or accident free. Mykletun (2011) addressed that slips and falls at the event site was common towards its preparation. However, looking from another perspective suggested that a responsible event/venue manager still has to ensure that none of their team, volunteers or crowd members would be involved in any safety incidents, hence, must try the best possible to avoid, mitigate or at least minimise the risk.

5.2.3.7 Other Technical hazards

The final part that would contribute to the identification of technical and logistical hazards comprises some brief descriptions from one or two participants regarding the other risks that have not been discussed previously. It is assumed that these technical risks were regarded as

minor since they were not been mentioned by many informants. The first one was regarding the risk of darkness and blackout which has only been mentioned by two venue managers. The first respondent here works in an arts/cultural facility that involves staging special events such as plays, theatres, concerts and other cultural stage shows which normally have been held with a very dark backstage.

“...and it was possible that the props goes in and out in the dark, the dark condition was the main factor [of safety]. When it enters, ‘Pump!’[meaning: the respondent making a sound effect], maybe someone have crushed to each other.... When the light is switched on those men [stage crew] were already on the floor...”

“Because, is basically the same as all the building. If there’s any fire, blackout here and there... So, the system is the same, people need to queue up to go to the assembly area....”

One of the respondents mentioned the risks posed by some technical equipment used for staging purposes, such as a smoke van, lighting and audio systems. He specifically showed that in some cases there would be safety risks posed by the lighting and high decibel noises used for stage performances.

“OK, for the smoke van or anything was actually not so much, just involving smoke or fog only. And then the noise, but the noise also normally they used the ear cover like the deejay radio wears [meaning: headphones], during the show they have to use that because the music was too loud. [...] for all the crew they would use that. But doing the performances actually not so long, the music starts and stops quite frequently and not continuous. If according to the safety [rules] when we exposed to the loud noise for eight hours continuously, of 80 decibels frequency for direct continuous eight hours then only it will effect...”

Other than the risks discussed above, three respondents suggested that the nature of the event itself can become a threat towards safety, meaning that the activities involved in such events were dangerous to its participants. Among the safety threats mentioned by the informants were injuries (and possibly fatalities) from playing football, drowning from water activities and those involved in adventurous sports such as the ‘Four Wheel Drive Challenges’.

“.... So, we have to identify whether event that we are organising involves the crowd or only the participants. So, if it involves both participants and crowd the safety aspect has to be a major concern. But if let say the event is only a spectator event... and this was a high risk event like I mentioned just now, ‘4 Wheel Drive.’” So, the safety is only to the participants, and with the limited coverage that is already under the certain limited coverage or insurance that we had...”

“When we play football, I think the risk would be to our whole body. [...] It was similar everywhere, playing football has all the risks.... [...] So, meaning that if we organise [a football tournament] we have to take into considerations all these things, it’s important, it’s really important! [...] But from the aspect of playing football I could always see the risks, as an example just recently one coach been involved in a friendly game but this [match] doesn’t involve the academy... so, his leg was broken into three, at the knee!”

“Number four, death because of drowning. [...] No, we never had but always possible to happen. That’s why when we have any program or water activities we will make sure that the water floats is enough, such as harness also must be enough... [...] Yes, that’s right! That’s why we can see some cases like.... they made adventure program near the river and some drowned to death...”

One particular respondent had a near-miss incident a couple of years back. He spoke of the safety risk that could happen from the use of certain animals in event production (an event show). The near-miss incident occurred when they were organising an event which

involved street parades. They have been using animals such as elephants, cows and horses on such occasions but had never realised that some of these animals, in particular the elephants could be affected by some loud noises. On that occasion, the sound of fireworks caused panic to an elephant who started to act aggressively, but they were quite fortunate that the situation has been handled by the ‘elephant’s shepherd’ (master) in a very fast and efficient way – the elephant was shot by ammunition and been put to sleep straightaway. Based on his bitter experience, this respondent insisted on having good technical backgrounds for all the elements that will be used in staging an event, in this case by knowing the characteristics and sensitivities that these animals might be vulnerable to. But the risk was not only pertaining to the use of animals. He reminded me that the event manager generally must be equipped with the technical knowledge regarding all performers and equipment that will be used in events’ performances. The following was an excerpt from the lengthy conversation that I had with him in the interview session.

“We never had injury, except on one occasion which involved the use of animal, elephants. The use of elephants.... One of them got angry at that particular time! So, that incident has been a big lesson for me in the use of animals... [...] the elephant got angry, the event was at xxxx [deleted for anonymity] square at that time... [...] so, we have to... but of course that thing... the elephant needed to be put to sleep, immediately by its shepherd... [person taking care of the elephant].... No, it didn’t involve injury but created a chaotic situation. Yes, it was havoc! Chaotic situation!”

“Actually the elephant was sensitive to the noise, load noises and suddenly it became panic! So, that one was another area that you must know the equipment and also the... performers. Equipment and also the performers. [...] Has to be tally, has to be able identify, know and aware the sensitivity of performers and equipment. So, in that case we didn’t aware, it was a miscommunication... [...] ... We had rehearsal, but shooting the pyro, the fireworks were not included in the rehearsal. “Woooooingggg!” [respondent making a sound of pyro/fireworks].... that sound the elephant can’t bear...”

One participant mentioned another risk that was maybe unique to his own context. This event contractor specialising in supplying fireworks services to the event management companies, and talked about the importance of putting the explosives and fireworks items in a safe place. Good storage was needed because all those items were highly flammable, otherwise the ‘1991 Bright Sparklers fireworks disaster at Sungai Buloh’ would have repeated itself (refer to chapter one – setting the scene). This informant also added that the quality of those products in fireworks and pyrotechnics supplies was also vital as cheaper products that were low in quality would have resulted in unwanted safety incidents. His view was supported by Shaluf et al. (2002, p.214) who confirmed that “there had been many disasters occur due to manufacturing and use of fireworks.”

“And even the authority doesn’t look into the details before even issuing a licence, you see.... Where they store, where they keep, they never study the background of a company. They never even study the background [of the company] where do they store. The most important I have been emphasizing to many many industry players, that you must know where do they store, where do they keep, what is their experience they have, you see... Any Tom, Dick and Harry can fire a firework, there’s no big deal, but you must know the repercussion of the industry.”

“.... What is your precaution, that is very important, you see. So, in fireworks, in pyrotechnics, the quality of product is also very important, because especially in pyrotechnics your safety distance is very limited.”

This final statement signals the conclusion of a lengthy discussion on various technical and logistics hazards in risk and safety that were perceived to be significant by event planners and venue managers in Malaysia.

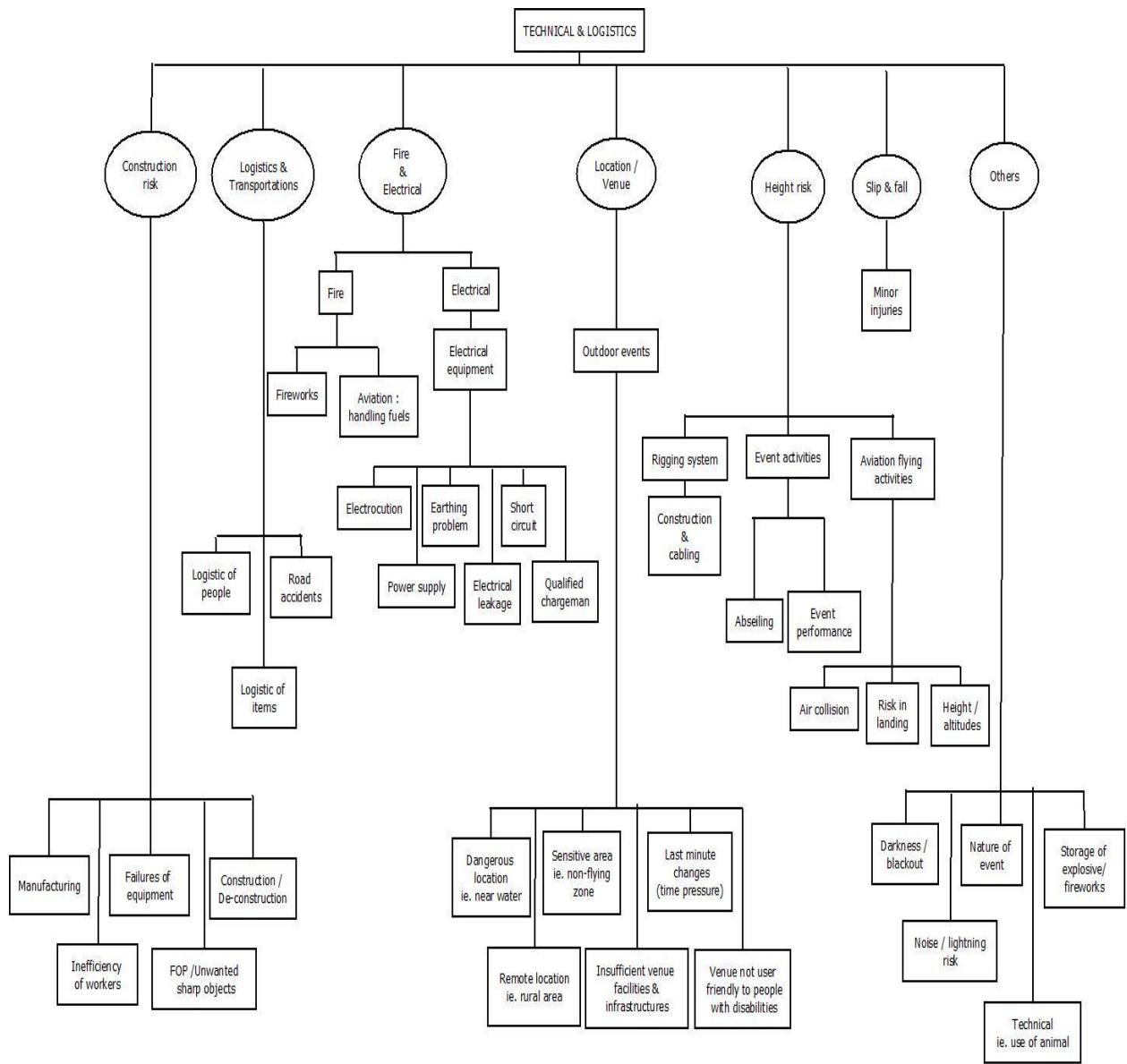


Figure 5.6: Thematic network typology of Technical and Logistics Hazards

5.2.4 Summary of Findings

The study explored the risk and safety of event planning and management from the perspective of event planners and venue managers producing various types of events in Malaysia. With a growing significance of this area within the realm of tourism, event planners and venue managers must develop procedures for efficient and effective risk management and safety control. Hence, this exploratory study for risk and hazard identification is the initial process to find, list and characterise safety hazards that may jeopardise the successful organisation of events, festivals, conferences, etc. The study findings confirmed that events can be affected by a large number of diverse factors. Thus, the study has elicited emergent themes for risk and safety such as: crowd safety and crowd control, technical and logistic hazards; alcohol-related risks; environmental health and safety; security risks issues; emergency services; financial risks and insurances; and other safety hazards.

The role of the researcher as the main investigator is important to determine the importance of the emergent themes and sub-themes for this study. There were two important criteria used in the justification. It was based on the number of times that the themes occurred in the verbatim transcripts and the consumption of time used (the length of time consumed) to discuss each of them in the interviewing sessions. However, all these processes were mostly interpreted based on the researcher's judgments based on the qualitative notion that the researcher was the tool of analysis for the study undertaken. In other words, although all themes emerged from the research participants, it was the researcher who finally decided whether such themes were pertinent to risk and safety discussed in this study. However, based on the post-positivist stance, the researcher has exercised control to limit personal bias and establish the findings merely from the participants' point of view. It was the data that shaped the knowledge and findings presented in this study. Although the absolute truth can never be found (or rather does not exist), this study seeks to develop salient knowledge that can serve to improve the area of inquiry proposed in this investigation.

It is worth noting that there is an obvious difference between the focus of the findings in this chapter and the findings and discussions in chapter four. It is true that both findings concentrated on themes emerging from the participants' perspectives, however, there was a slight difference in terms of the dimension of discussions undertaken in each chapter. The previous chapter (chapter four) focused on the relevant risk and safety issues as perceived by the subjects under study whereas this chapter focused more on the risk and hazards identified by those informants. This has resulted in the use of different supporting theories to analyse these findings. Chapter four used the Social Amplification of Risk Framework (SARF) which suggested that human perceptions was based on their values, attitudes, social influences and cultural identity which includes their experiences and professional exposures (Kasperson et al., 1988; Renn et al, 1992). As the focus has been shifted towards the investigation and/or identification of risk and hazards pertaining to safety this chapter has adopted the iceberg model of threats proposed by Rose (2006). Having said that, the perceptions given by participants might not have been perfect, but at least this investigation has contributed to a novel effort for the identification of risk and safety hazards for the first time in the Malaysian event management domain.

Crowd safety and crowd control has emerged as the first and most important safety risk identified by this research. All the research participants interviewed mentioned the importance of crowd safety in managing and organising events. This major theme was divided into two interrelated functions which were crowd management and crowd control. Crowd management was related to the task of handling and controlling the crowd attending events. The study found three sub-themes under the crowd management which were related to the crucial aspect of VIP safety, the logistics of crowd movement as well as the importance of communication aspects such as safety briefing sessions and the use of signage in managing and controlling the crowd.

The second aspect of crowd safety was related to crowd control which refers to the action taken to avoid the situation of crowds becoming uncontrollable. There were many

techniques described by the informants on ways to control the crowd such as the use of ingress (entrance) and emergency egress or exit into a dedicated assembly area at the event venue. Barricades were also mentioned as important tools to control crowd access. Next was traffic control which includes both the traffic of vehicles and pedestrians moving in and out of the event arena. The risk of stampede has been identified as the most dangerous hazard of crowd safety, hence, the organisers and venue providers must always make sure that crowds never exceed the capacity of the event venue. There were also discussions on the risks related to uncontrolled crowds that could cause personal injury to event attendees from stampede and unruly fan behaviour, such as throwing bottles, fighting, assaults, and rioting. There were also some brief discussions about some kinds of illness like hypertension, heart attack, hysteria and other physical risks suffered previously by some event participants and the audiences.

The next major theme that was very much related to the crowd safety and crowd control was the risk pertaining to the use of alcohol inside an event venue. The alcohol-related risk was on both selling and its consumption within the event arena which could potentially lead to uncontrolled crowd situations if fans became inebriated or intoxicated. These rowdy crowds would then be engaged in disruptive acts ranging from swearing to fighting, assaults and throwing beverages which could escalate into a riot condition. Although the condition was comparatively less serious in Malaysia, all participants agreed that a specific procedure on alcohol management was needed for the purpose of handling the intoxicated crowd from the use of alcohol.

Technical and logistics hazards emerged as the second most important risk factors in relation to this area of inquiry. First was regarding construction risks which related to the manufacturing, the construction and deconstruction processes and also the threats posed by unwanted hazardous items (such as sharp wood, nails, screws, etc.) or known as FOP (foreign object particles) in the aviation industry. There was also risk from the inefficiency of workers and their low awareness level pertaining to the risk and safety management. The second aspect of logistics hazards involves both the logistics of moving people and moving items that could

possibly encounter road accidents or other safety incidents from the transportation process of loading and unloading event equipment and materials. Next were the fire and electrical hazards which were actually connected to each other. Fire risk probably could occur in all events at any venues especially on high risk events of fireworks/pyrotechnics shows and particularly when handling fuels in the aviation-type events. Electrical hazards were mainly from the failures of electrical equipment which mostly resulted from power supply, earthing problems, electrical leakages, short circuits and the use of unqualified “charge-man” (electrical technician) that could cause the danger of electrocution and a fire incident.

The next sub-theme to emerge under the technical hazards category was the risk related to the location of an event to be staged. Most respondents basically agreed that outdoor events were more risky than indoor ones, however, there were also some other locations that pose higher risks in terms of safety. These include dangerous locations such as water festivals near the seaside, camping sites near waterfalls, street parades in a crowded city area and so on. Others included were staging events at remote locations or rural areas with insufficient facilities and lack of basic infrastructure. Sensitive areas such as the ‘non-flying zone’ of the federal government administrative city of Putrajaya were also identified due to it being a national security issue. An informant spoke about certain event venues that were not user-friendly to people with disabilities and could pose danger to them. There were also views that changing the event location at the last minute would invite risk and safety threats because there would not be enough time for the preparation of thorough safety measures.

Besides the location, another hazard identified in this segment was the risk of height which basically existed in construction works prior to an event such as the use of rigging systems, scaffolding, trusses, towers, etc. There were also some event activities which exposed height risks to participants, such as abseiling and aviation flying activities which could involve safety incidents from air collision, risk in landing the aircraft and related to the flying altitude. A few respondents highlighted some other technical and logistic hazards such as minor slip and fall, risks from darkness/blackout and from the use of other technical equipment such as high

decibels noises, lightings, smoke vans, etc. There was a unique perception given by an informant saying that the nature of high risk event activities could pose safety threats such as water activities and adventurous sporting events like the Four Wheel Drive challenges, Motorbike racing and so forth. Another informant insisted that event planners should have a sufficient technical knowledge for the organised events since he once experienced a near miss incident in the use of animals in an event show. Last but not least was the technical aspect from fireworks and the pyrotechnics business which required the use of high quality products and good storage in order to avoid any safety incidents and accidents.

6 CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS 2

EVENT SAFETY RISK TYPOLOGY (Part II)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is an extension of the previous chapter five on the discussion of the event safety risk framework proposed by this research. In the previous chapter we looked at three of the most important emergent themes as perceived by the sample of participants which were the crowd safety and crowd control together with alcohol-related risk as well as the technical and logistics aspects. Thus, this chapter will further explain all of the remaining major themes explored in this research comprising: emergency services; security risks and/or issues; environmental risk and hazards (environmental health and safety); financial risks and insurances; and other safety risks. Similar to the previous chapter, this chapter also uses the ‘iceberg model of threats to an organisation’ proposed by Rose (2006) and Smithson (1990) to interpret the findings. Hence, this chapter is the second part of the empirical findings that will result in the development of a comprehensive “event safety risk typology” presented at the end of this thesis (refer Appendix XII).

The second part of this chapter discusses the legislation and/or legal aspects and several standard operation procedures that have been highlighted by respondents in this study. These refer to the legal requirements that appear to be relevant to the event management sector. As this is a study based on a Malaysian context, most of the legal acts referred to were based on ‘Malaysian Act’ (also known as ‘Laws of Malaysia’). Although the implementation and enforcement of the law are minimal, some event organisations did adapt them to their risk and safety management and practice. Other than the Malaysian legal requirements, there were also certain standards of practice (international standards or code of practices) that have been

implemented, among them were the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Lloyd's Register and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA). These ‘best practices’ were crucial in uplifting the standard of risk and safety management especially to the event management organisations. A brief introduction of two regulatory bodies that are responsible in the enforcement and implementation of the occupational safety aspects across all public and private sectors in Malaysia have been included in the later part of this chapter. The Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) and the National Institute of Safety and Health (NIOSH), both under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Human Resources, were obliged to safeguard and uphold the law pertaining to risk and safety focused on by this inquiry.

6.2 Emergency Services

The major theme of emergency services was identified since the initial pilot study and many participants then continued to discuss it at the final phase of data collection. Hence, emergency services have emerged as one of the important themes to be discussed in this chapter and will later contribute to generate another fundamental aspect in the development of an event safety risk typology from a Malaysian context. As the focus of this study was the identification of important risk factors and safety hazards for the event management discipline, the emergency services theme here actually refers to various types of organisations involved in managing and mitigating those risks. There were parts within the emergency services that directly involved as emergency response system for safety incidents which happened within the event’s vicinity. The participants mentioned many types organisations responsible for emergency services, but for the sake of the discussion in this chapter, these parties and/or organisations were divided into four different sub-themes based on their purposes, functional activities and their responsibilities in relation to safety incidents.

6.2.1 The Police Forces

The first sub-theme that we are going to explain is related to the enforcement agencies involved in an event operation. Nearly all of the identified enforcement parties mentioned by the sample referred to the government authorities such as the Police including the Traffic Police, as well as the Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) which was also a department under the Royal Police of Malaysia. The relevance of the police departments to various types of event has been mentioned by the risk and event management literature and also by some of the respondents for this study (Abbott and Geddie, 2001; Connell, 2009; Fried, 2009; George and Swart, 2012). A good example of the importance of the police force in handling threats to events was reflected in the FIFA World Cup 2010 in South Africa in which the government deployed more than 44,000 police officers resulting in a very successful organisation of the mega event with limited safety and security issues (George and Swart, 2010).

“...Now we realise that every event we do we all must involve... sometimes we bring in the ambulance, we bring in the police, we bring in the city hall to look at where are the risks, so that at least we have taken all these precautions and if accident happens at least we have taken all the risks aspects so we will not be blamed.”

“.... Because that was our precaution, we took the public liability insurance as standby. And then, in every time [we organises] events the fire brigade and the police is a compulsory, hospital [also] is a must have!”

From a safety perspective, many would see the increase of police on site as high risk, as the police presence sometimes can lead to problems with guests trying to rebel against the authority (Fried, 2009). Nevertheless, Connell (2009) argued that most event managers agreed that police advice and guidance have to be taken seriously, but unfortunately there are still many inconsistencies and a lack of event industry standardisation in its management and roll out.

Fried (2009) claimed that an increased police presence would help in handling unruly fans at an event site. Most of the subjects who participated in this study also agreed that

the police was an important element in organising and managing an event, however, they differed in terms of the degree of the involvement of the police. Some event/venue managers were quite dependent on the force while a few others limit the police involvement to just a few supporting roles. Maybe these event planners and venue managers felt vulnerable and exposed regarding safety due to the escalating presence of police at events and the role they undertook (Connell, 2009). But this view has been challenged by Taylor and Toohey (2006) who concluded that putting security measures in place had neither enhanced nor detracted the crowd's level of enjoyment events. Having said that, several respondents particularly from the governmental organisations revealed that they would normally leave the aspect of risk and safety management to the police forces.

"It is very important, of course! very important for in organising and planning for the event, but since you touch on the risk assessment just now, or the event safety risk assessment, since we are in the government, so all our events we involved the security like the police to come in. So in terms of risk, so we leave it to the proper department, OK. So, for instance like we doing the... like the Water Festival, or shoes [carnival] or anything, when it come to the risk, we leave it to police department. [...] ... Yes, yes... police will do all the safety."

"....because the safety risk would expose us [to danger]. But we were thankful to the Police force, if they forecast that a certain event for example like they received reports that particular event would potentially incurred threats, they will put lots of the police personnel there... [...] ... Actually the safety plan is [from] the police, they developed it! [...] ... The Police would form their committee to develop it [the safety plan]"

All of the above excerpts described the attitude of some of these respondents in totally putting all risk and safety responsibilities to the police. But a larger part of the recruited sample preferred a balance in the cooperation between them as event planners and/or venue providers with the police department in ensuring the smooth operation for their events.

“That’s right, that’s right! So, he look at that and then of course he’ll work with police, everything is in order, with city hall, and all these is in sequel and running order and safety [meaning: safely] to look at.”

“Hah...we referred on how they undertook that, and also the security company, the venu, and we also went to the Police [to refer to]. Because the Police, FRU (Federal Reserve Unit), they were always present at concerts, Police, FRU and RELA (Volunteers of Malaysian People)”

On the other hand, there was also concern among event organisers who had the perception that the police working on site do not have event experience and may be unfamiliar with the crowd management strategies implemented to ensure safety (Connell, 2009). That was the reason why some informants claimed that they did all the preparation for risk and safety plan by themselves and only required the police to carry out inspections before the plan had been put into action. But I assumed that the role of the police was still considered vital although some respondents try to downplay their importance here.

“Yes, yes, we have to do [safety plan] ourselves, and the police will just come and check.”

“But now I think all been done internally, but if we have external police and so on they will only support. What I mean is that they will have a supporting role for example, like the ‘Karnival Jom Heboh’ [name of a carnival]. That ‘Karnival Jom Heboh’ was handled by project management unit, it was a mega one [meaning: a mega event] which every months had a road show, right.”

The Police’s most important role in the event management field as identified by the respondents in this study was in terms of the crowd control and crowd safety, and that includes the safety and security of the distinguished guests attending an event. The VIPs were

normally very important individuals in the country, hence, justifying the presence of police on these circumstances.

“Yes, the police team of the security for the King and the Queen will be there. I don’t have to engage a private... no, I don’t have to! That’s the only for the government, but I’m not too sure if the private sector I am not aware... because this is G to G [meaning: government to government], I never experience that [in the private sector]....”

On a wider note, the significance of police in crowd control and crowd management has been explored by Millie (2006) who argued that it was important to strike a balance between enforcement and prevention. The role of police was mostly on enforcement whilst prevention was under the responsibility of event organisers and venue managers. It was crucially important to ensure that those who attended events perceived them to be in safe environments in order not to detract from their level of enjoyment (Taylor and Toohey, 2006). Therefore, the police had a significant role in this aspect based on the notion that the main responsibility of the police force was to safeguard and protect peaceful environments in all situations and within all conditions (Millie, 2006; Connell, 2009; Andresen and Tong, 2012).

“They will ask what if there are riots and such things, [that’ll involve] injuries. So, I would explain to the officer that I’m gonna [meaning: going to] have FRU [meaning: Federal Reserve Unit] unit, Police, ambulance on standby, right. That means all the things that necessary gonna [meaning: going to] happen, Police, ambulance, FRU were already on standby.”

“Yeah, if there is any...like a quarrel, or disturb the harmony in the public the FRU might come in. It’s not my area of jurisdiction, it’s the police. That’s why we need the police. [...] Yeah, we’ll leave it to the police, security. If there’s a riot or whatsoever they are...[going to handle]”

The police responsibility in handling and managing crowd also involved ensuring a smooth traffic flow within the event vicinity. The study underlined that the police were actually tasked to look after traffic control of vehicles as well as the smooth traffic flow for pedestrians going in and out of an event arena.

“Yes, the police... and then if it is for the public itself normally it’s on traffic. If we execute SO [meaning: standard operating] we’ll make sure how is it for the traffic, what will the routes if there is fire incidents or whatever so we have a plan on where to put all the crowd in such situations.”

Most of the police responsibility discussed up to this point was related to crowd safety and crowd control. However, there was data which mentioned the crucial role played by the forces in terms of security aspects such as protecting the assets/valuables on an event site.

“Sometimes the Police I mean... because of what... insurance, or maybe lawyer, legislation aspect because if anything happen if the organiser was not prepared then it can escalates into a [legal] case. It can be a Police case for example the lost of items especially valuable and expensive items, or maybe the loss [missing] of children and cannot been found, that can resulted in a [legal] Police cases.”

“..... the Police on how they will handle the security for the VVIP (VIP’s), even for the security company also they have trained personnel for the security of all the things and equipments.....”

6.2.2 The Fire Brigade (BOMBA)

Now we are going to explain the second aspect of emergency services which main task was usually for the management of risk related to fire, but also was equipped to handle other emergency matters. Maybe we can start the discussion by understanding a unique term that was used by the Malaysian sample recruited for this study. It was important to know the meaning of

this particular word as it was very popular and has been ‘universally accepted’ within the Malaysian context. It has been mentioned by almost all the interviewed participants and is the term ‘Bomba’ which carries the meaning of a fire department agency. The similar word also been used to refer to the fire brigade or fire engine or even firemen by the Malaysians. The term of ‘Bomba’ was so popular that it has even been used generally by all Malaysians including these two respondents who chose to be interviewed in the English language, but still referred to the fire department as ‘Bomba’.

“OK, like Police, Bomba, you know... Bomba, Police, Bomba... so, we deal with the respective department.”

“There will be Bomba... especially Bomba ‘lah [a slang], Bomba is the main. Police, Bomba!”

We have seen earlier how fire related hazards emerged as an important theme under the technical and logistic of risk category. Therefore, it has been anticipated that the emergency services aspect focused on avoiding or mitigating this particular risk was of major concern for event/venue managers recruited for this investigation. In addition, Wood (2009) also stated that fire prevention measures were a standard requirement in any workplace including any events’ sites/venues.

“Then that must be the precaution, you never say it won’t happen. So, what is your precaution, what have you taken action? So, like what we have taken, we make sure the safety distance is there, the Bomba is there, we know what we are going to see, we make sure we rekey the place, you see...”

“Fire, in terms of it we have to have fire extinguisher, we always bring the fire extinguisher with us. That was why every time “Bomba” was one of the important components. Whether we will have it or not [fire incidents] they have to be there. We

have to standby because we are afraid of the electrocuted, the electrical risks is hard to control, such as short circuits and so on...”

Many of the participants were aware of the danger posed by fire and underlined the importance of having a fire department taskforce in their event management team. Some had even included fire department's personnel right from the initial planning of an event's preparation based on Mykletun (2011), who stressed that the presence of officers from the Fire Brigade was actually vital since the beginning of event planning stage.

“Normally we will ask them to attend the meeting, and often they will send representatives from “Bomba”, and JPA3 [meaning: Malaysian Civil Defence Force]... [...] ...but normally in the meeting we will ask the authorities either the ‘Bomba’ or JPA3 to provide some guidelines, and then we will base our preparation on their stipulated guidelines.”

“Yes, for example if we do event in... let say in ‘Negeri Sembilan’ or in ‘Kedah’ or in ‘Johor’ [all names of states]. So, during the organisation team, the steering committee during the planning, we called the respective state [such as] Fire department, the Police State department, the state JKR [meaning: Public Works Department], you know...”

But there were also occasions when the fire department was put as a special requirement or as a condition to get approval from the authorities. This study has managed to explore that this special requirement was needed by special types of event such as aviation-related events and by special types of events' suppliers/contractors dealing with fireworks and pyro-technics. This was important because once a risk of fire happened, those fire department's personnel were trained to establish a crisis management plan that would alleviate the impact of the event or safety threats (Wood, 2009). The aviation-related events in fact needed to have not only the fire department but also all other emergency services and response units such as the police and medical team to be on standby throughout the duration of these events.

“Anything above 500 feet you must get DCA (Department of Civil Aviation) approval, and you also have to apply for ‘Bomba’ [...] ...50 metres or 500 feet I forgot already, and you have to also have the Bomba. Bomba you need to have for fireworks, for pyrotechnics [...] ...Yes, stationed there for two hours before and after [fire engines], one hour before fireworks and one hour after fireworks there!”

“During the event we have our fire brigade, we have our ambulance, we have our command centre. We have our command centre, anything any landing reported to the command centre, any incidents or any accidents has to be reported to the command centre. So, they will disseminate the information like pilot go to the command centre, the command centre will go to all these ambulance, fire brigade, police and all these things.”

All the above transcripts referred to the respondents from the event managers/planners and event suppliers/contractors category. So, up until this point, we have not yet discussed the importance of the fire department to the event venue providers and operators. Although the discussion on this topic (related to fire department) was not quite obvious among the event venue managers, a few of them did give useful insights that are worth mentioning. The following venue manager confirmed the significance of fire department by his statement below.

“...by the...by the venue and also...normally the venue [management] will refer to the “Bomba” actually, we will submit everything [i.e. building plan] to “Bomba”, because they wanted to know and to make their job easier if something happen [incidents] they would know what to do, [such as] whereabouts the emergency exit...”

Even the first respondent was from the event venue category. The respondent explained about the ‘Certificate of Fitness’ (CF) required to justify the safety of the building in Malaysia (Buang, 2001). The CF can only be produced by the Public Works Department once they get the approval from the fire department which was tasked to carry out the inspection of all new

buildings. He gave an astonishing statement, revealing that one of the event venues owned by the government has never had the CF since it was built for the past 10 years or so.

“OK, I can tell you that **xxxx** [deleted for anonymity] don’t even have CF [meaning: Certificate of Fitness] from the ‘Bomba’ yet. So, actually ‘Bomba’ had come [for inspection] last June, so ‘Bomba’ was really not satisfied with the current system... [...] ... This has been ten years! So, they will come for re-inspection on this 29th, this coming 29th of October and they will refer back to the previous visit’s file. So, even among ourselves here we don’t really know how many fire extinguishers, how many CO2, where are their locations, how many Bomba’s emergency water pipes that we have within the area of **xxxx** [deleted for anonymity]? So, even all these things also they [the staff] do not know!”

Besides stated that a fire engine should be park inside an event side, Mykletun (2011) also suggested that officers from the fire brigade performed daily checks on measures to prevent fires and the preparedness for fire extinction. And from all the responses above we can say that the fire department had a major responsibility in the event management sector. They obviously constituted an important component in the planning and management of all types of events and across all venues, no matter whether it is indoor or outdoors.

6.2.3 The Medical Services

The findings of this study proposed that the medical services category was the next important function related to event management and planning. A significant number of respondents mentioned this theme but they have been using different kinds of terms to describe its importance. Among the terms that had been used to describe the medical services were ambulance, hospitals, medic, doctors, clinics and the first aid. Putting aside these differences of terms, all were actually referring to the emergency medical responses which had become another important element in the event management field of work (Allen et al., 2002; Fallon and

Sullivan, 2005; Silvers, 2008). The emergence of medical services had been elicited from the discussion regarding crowd safety which was undeniably the most important theme for this whole study. As event management itself involves the attendance of huge crowds, it is vital that the planners and venue providers, look after their safety and well-being throughout the events' duration. According to most participants, that was the main reason that the ambulance and medical team has been put on standby in most events that they organised.

“Anything can happen anywhere in the world. But of course we have ambulance standby but the ambulance also cannot reach us because of traffic jam....”

“At the same time we also have put the ambulance on standby case if some incidents happen such as injury and so on... that's why in various mega project events we had coverage of insurance, we had ambulances, we also had to have the public liability insurance and everything in case if anything happen we have the coverage.”

One respondent explicitly described good practice regarding medical emergency services by a famous convention centre which had been mentioned as the benchmark for risk and safety aspect for event venue operators in Malaysia (refer chapter four). Although they might not be obliged to do so, this venue provider had even provided a medical facility to be used by their clients exceeding the minimum requirement underlined by Mykletun (2011) on putting first aid group and a fully equipped ambulance placed at an event venue.

“But when we say traffic movement at the main centre, we also put in ambulance and also we put doctors on site. In big meetings we have to have doctors on site. But [in] KLCC (Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre), the doctors maybe no, but there will be what we call a nurse and doctor's medical room for emergency. The doctor's medical emergency room will have oxygen, you know... and these sort of things...[and etc.]”

But unfortunately, the study has also exposed some of the insufficient practices among event planners regarding to this medical services function. But a few of them still opted to

differentiate the medical treatment available to ordinary event attendees and the VIPs. The following informant expressed a view that the best medical services should be offered to distinguished guests while the second respondent had stated that the medical services would only be on standby if VIPs were among their invitees, raising a big question mark whether there will even be any medical treatment for the ordinary crowd then?

“.... It’s enough, it’s G to G [government to government]. OK, if you talk about health, somebody got fainted, the hospital (team) is there. The representatives of hospital... the representatives of the nearby hospital is there, the emergency ambulance is there. See? It’s all covered! [...] It’s still government, yeah! And in my event if there is a King and a Queen there, so the special team from the hospital is there for the King and the Queen.”

“Risk management for example... OK, let me give you an example, ‘Brand Entrepreneurs Conference’, where ‘His Royal Highness Raja Nazrin’ is the officiating party. And their part actually required us to have all the safety measures to be there, so ambulance and everything will be there. So, when it’s required we’ll do it.”

The final point discussed here is related to the common practice of several event managers in implementing medical aid and emergency services at an event venue. The first respondent here stressed on having fast response when faced with medical incidents. That was why he opted to identify the nearest clinic (or doctor) to the event venue and ensured that his staff were equipped with first-aid knowledge.

“Clinic, doctor which is the nearest, ambulance or hospital... [...] we actually will go for the nearest clinic, [because] the nearest clinic can be there fastest. [...] Although they are private [clinics], hmm... [...] ...because they [the private clinics] would be easier to come compared to the hospital.”

“We will have that, that is compulsory. When we organise [adventurous] events we will make it compulsory for our trainers and motivators to have experience on first-aid, and its [first-aid] equipments must be complete, [as] standby.”

The next respondent who dealt with aviation events established a command centre system when managing any aviation-type events. All the communication and instruction, including medical incident reporting, was done through the command centre, and the command centre then channelled the reports to relevant parties, such as for reported medical incidents that involved injuries, the command centre then channelled it to the medical team or ambulance services as described below.

“Well... as I said we have the command centre, on the site itself we have the ambulance and our medical personnel, right? So, this will be the front [response] that will attend to them, if there is serious we'll bring it to the hospitals”

And the final respondent who normally had a lot of security personnel when he organised large events such as big musical concerts adopted a different strategy. He used lots of security personnel and event staff to monitor and look after all the operational services including from the medical emergency aspect.

“Even on that site we already had a team, because we won't be needed all the security [personnel] to guard the fences or tickets, no! We have delegated their tasks, some will take care the ambulance, some will take care the fainted crowd, some will take care of the crowd, all angles we have delegated tasks, all angles we need to monitor.”

6.2.4 Other Emergency Services

Apart from all the three main emergency services of the police, the fire department and the medical services, there were also some other less significant themes related to events emergency services. Among the minor themes which emerged were the safety

committee, the search and rescue team (SAR), security company/consultant, and voluntary organisations such as the Red Crescent Society, ‘RELA’ corps (Volunteers of Malaysian people), ‘Regimen Askar Wataniah’ (Territorial Army Regiment) and JPA3 or JPAM (civil defence services agency).

Most of the event management literature identifies volunteering as a significant element in an event management field of study (Stone and Millan, 2012; Wakelin, 2013). Similarly, Malaysia also had various voluntary organisations and some of them were quite popular within the event management industry. Many event planners and venue managers used the services of volunteers from these organisations, although some of them did charge a small amount for services rendered. Among them was ‘RELA’ (Ikatan Relawan Rakyat Malaysia) which translates as Volunteers of Malaysian People which was a paramilitary civil volunteer corps formed by the Malaysian government (Wikipedia, 2012). In terms of an event management scenario, RELA had often been tasked with crowd control and crowd safety functions, as described by the following respondents.

“If we predicted that there will be a certain risk, we will stationed RELA actually to control the crowd, especially like the areas close to the electric cables that needs to be protected, it’s dangerous actually, anything can happen.”

“We will have the committee [on crowd control and crowd safety] that I’ve mentioned just now, comprises of us, from RELA, from the city council or that particular local council.”

As has been noted, ‘RELA’ (Volunteers of Malaysian People) and ‘Wataniah’ (Territorial Army Regiment) would often work together with the event management team or specifically with the safety committees whose main task was to protect and ensure the safety of crowds attending an event. Two informants from separate government departments endorsed the importance of such a role on the safety committee in the event management operations.

“I am myself a volunteer of ‘Wataniah’ [meaning: Territorial Army Regiment].... [...] Yes, he would liaise because he is the volunteer, so he would know what was the situation compared to the normal public who don’t know anything. So, he would have known better because he was also the host...and coincidentally he was also the agent of the safety committees...”

“If something happens, at times we have committees for emergency services and safety committees, we have already established committees for emergency services and safety. Safety [committees] involves in safeguarding the whole event area, traffic control and crowd control.”

Another voluntary organisation that was also pertinent to events management and has been mentioned by respondents was the Red Crescent Society whose job was to assist in providing first-aid treatment and other minor medical services for crowd attending events. But the second informant below stated that a search and rescue team was a mandatory requirement for event companies who organise aviation events due to the involvement of flying activities in such events.

“I would suggest adding more involvement from the Red Crescent Society, OK? And then, maybe put the ambulance on standby, it’s that simple actually....”

“.....and then of course the security, crowd control, and the incident or accident reports, right...and of course we have the search and rescue committee. So, these all have to be in place.”

The final emergent sub-theme for the emergency services aspect was the involvement of security companies or security consultants in providing support, particularly on the crowd control aspect. Abbott and Geddie (2001) acknowledged the importance of such security organisations to help the police in crowd management and crowd control. In Malaysia, large government events

would normally employ their own staffing or external consultants as security personnel to ensure the smooth operation of their events.

“Uncontrollable! Sometimes there would be conflicts among various authorities such as the Police, RELA and JPA3. That’s why we have to employ our own security personnel that we can easily instruct when the crowd behaviour seems uncontrollable, they would pull out those who caused trouble and bring them away from the scene...”

“We also have [security] consultant. So, basically we would appoint for [parties], first is ourselves, secondly is the [security] company that we appointed, third are the JPA3 or civil defence, and fourth is the Police. [...] Normally we would appoint security companies, and we would select ordinary bouncers [security guards]...”

A lot of sub-themes have emerged in relation to the emergency services category that involved various authorities namely the police, the fire department, medical services, security companies, safety committees and different voluntary organisations such as the Red Crescent Society, RELA, JPA3, etc. All of them were vital in providing various kinds of emergency services required in different events situations, and work together to make sure its smooth operation.

“Now this one is...but we got the help from all the authorities, the police, the ambulance, the rescue people squad, they are all there.

Hence, the findings of this study has been endorsed by Abbott and Geddie (2001) as well as Mykletun (2011) who both acknowledged the importance of the Police, the fire department, the health authorities and some other public services in providing support and emergency services in all events operations.

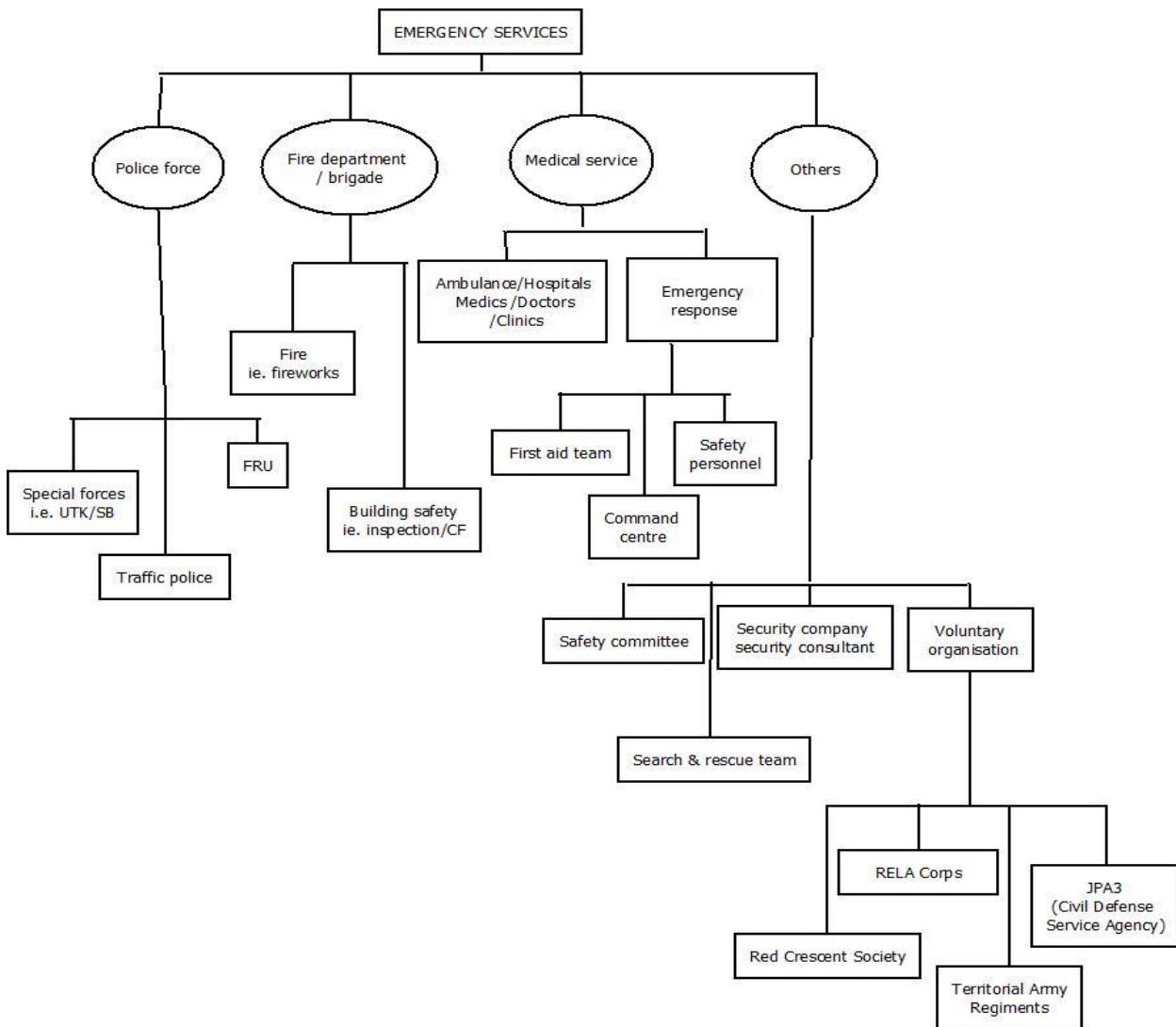


Figure 6.1: Thematic network of Emergency Services

6.3 Security risks and issues

Although this investigation mostly focused on the risks related to safety, it was vital to include security aspects as well because the concepts were interrelated and sometimes

overlapped with each other. According to Abbott and Geddie (2001, p.262), “security may represent an aspect of crowd control, especially as it pertains to emergency procedures, but it may also be effectively utilised as a part of a broader crowd management plan.” Hence, the part of a broader security angle has been elicited in this section. Even some respondents struggled to differentiate between safety and security when asked at the beginning of the interview sessions. Most issues relating to security concerns focused on crime and safety.

“I think on the event is OK actually, for instance like for the public we will put more focus on the security and safety aspects, that was all.”

“All been included, public liability insurance, security, ambulance, all I have included. This is how you... this is what event management all about! They consult the client, [because] client does not know, they consult the client.”

The security aspect identified was discussed from two perspectives: first, it related to crowd safety (including the organisers/planners and venue management) and secondly, security hazards pertaining to the event component such as its props, and equipment. Also included in this category was the security of personal effects belonging to the crowd and event/venue managers or their management team. Among the emergent sub-themes were issues such as crimes related to theft, terrorism and bombings, security management team, security of venue and some other security threats discussed at the end of this section.

The first security hazard that has been identified from this investigation was the global threat of terrorism and bombings. Since the tragedy of 9/11 in New York, terrorism and bombings have become the most critical issues in relation to safety and security all over the world particularly in the realm of tourism, which includes the event management industry (Arana and Leon, 2008). In recent years, mega-events had to increase safety and security budgets, as well as implement stringent anti-terrorism measures (George and Swart, 2012). But in this context, I found that most of the participants did not put a major concern on the threats related to

terrorism and bombings, maybe due to the fact that until now Malaysia had never been involved in such a disaster. Unlike some other neighboring countries such as Indonesia and Thailand which had suffered such catastrophes, Malaysia was fortunate to escape such calamities. The researcher assumed that this was maybe the reason for these security threats were only mentioned by three out of the total 33 participants. But the absence of terrorism incidents was not supposed to make event managers and venue operators eliminate such risk and regard this hazard as a forgone issue, as been portrayed by the following informant.

“Take for granted, partly because one thing maybe it is good in one sense because we are not behaving like the western people who are knee jerk, knee jerk meaning they over respond to the issues pertaining to terrorism.”

It was noted that the threats of terrorism and bombings were comparatively more evident in Western literatures (Kennedy et al., 2003; Oriol, 2004; Weinberg, et al., 2004; Taylor and Toohey, 2006; Arana and Leon, 2008), where it was regarded as a major risk issue particularly to the West as most of the terrorist attacks including failed or interrupted attempts happened there. However, that was not justification for the above respondent to feel so secure and belittle this type of risk, as well as undermined mass efforts taken to mitigate these threats.

The next respondent had a different opinion regarding this aspect. His view were based on his experience in relation to terrorism and bombing hazards, in which case he had suffered a fatal blow to one of his major events that happened post 9/11. He was supposed to have a big international event which turned out disastrously because of the ‘September 11th Attack’ in the United States.

“We did run a very large event called Le Man Race, that was 19...2003, but that was also September 11, that event... I mean, I have been running event from the 70’s, from tour events. That was a very big event but we didn’t buy insurance, now that one September 11 didn’t...was nothing to do in Malaysia but the drivers were all from America, the

organiser is American, so with September 11 we lost an event just overnight without Malaysia didn't have anything [to do with it]....”

According to this participant, the ‘9/11 incident’ has generally caused a major downturn in the tourism industry worldwide (including the event management sector) which lasted for couple of years before it started to recover. He stated that although the ‘September 11th’ tragedy was not supposed to affect Malaysia, he later learned a bitter experience having found that the impact was so severe for the tourism and event industry, even in the Malaysian context. His opinion was supported by Kennedy et al. (2003) and Oriol (2004) who both established that immediately after 9/11 safety and security-related processes in airports, embassies and public venues, such as event venues and sport stadia, were re-examined, and additional surveillance equipment and personnel were required. All these has inevitably affected the tourism and travel businesses including drop in the attendances at events all over the world. The situation faced by the above respondent was a hard evidence that event planners and venue managers in Malaysia should be putting efforts to avoid such threats domestically. Another informant supported the idea.

“That’s why I said it’s very subjective you cannot say as such that I have made [prepared] 100% perfect, risk management is not... [for example] like you have prepared everything smoothly, your concert going to be in two days time suddenly there is a bombing near to the event’s site, you have to cancel the concert!”

Findings of the study suggest that the perceived threat of terrorism had minimal impact on the event/venue managers in the Malaysian event management industry. Most respondents did not present notable safety fears concerning terrorism. It can be anticipated that their perceptions were based on the general feeling among Malaysians that Malaysia is a safe destination and provided safe event environments. Therefore, it was not surprising that these respondents were not constrained by perceptions of terror as they did not perceive this risk. However, Malaysian event organisers and venue operators must always ensure that appropriate

actions are taken to handle the risk of terrorism and must not in any way downgrade security measures to the extent that they are risking safety (Taylor and Toohey, 2006).

The next sub-theme in relation to security related hazards were the incidents of thefts and crime or also known as crime-risk that were often occurred within the vicinity of events and/or venue facilities. According to George and Swart (2012), this kind of crime-risk perception referred to crime-safety issues that could affect the respondents' perceptions and potentially their future decisions in managing risk. Theft incidents such as snatch thefts and pickpocketing have been identified as part of the security incidents that were frequently raised. During the data collection process in 2011, snatch thefts cases were a major issue highlighted almost every day in the country's mainstream media. According to SAR framework by Kasperson et al. (1988), media is an important filtering agent to either attenuate or amplify information in shaping the public risk perception. One participant took the opportunity to highlight this issue when reporting about several snatch theft cases that happened within the event management domain. He even expressed his concerns that this particular crime-risk would jeopardise the reputation of the country in the tourism and travel business sector (*ibid*, 2012).

“You talk about health and safety there’s something we don’t want to over exaggerating, Malaysia at the moment I mean... [...] ...we have a lot of snatch thieves especially created some accidents. How do you tell the customer that KL [Kuala Lumpur] got issues in certain area that snatch theft [incidents] is taking place? You heard of it, you read about it in the newspaper isn’t it? People snatching the bag and handbag of ladies! [How] to tell the customers on this [incident] to prevent it? When we talk of.... health and safety, nothing to do with us but happening outside an event site, outside the hotel they go around shopping that can happen. So, when we tell customer on this is a little bit difficult you know... How Malaysia is not a safe place? It’s difficult isn’t it? This is part of risk assessment safety issue.”

One would argue that snatch theft incidents might not have a direct impact on the security planning of an event, as most cases usually happen outside an event venue. However, a responsible event/venue manager would have applied certain measures to minimise the risk by at least warning the crowd so as to avoid them falling victim to such incidents. This respondent's concern was supported by George and Swart (2012) who argued that the negative image formed through the lack of safety and security may harm the tourism industry due to negative word-of-mouth communication, apart from the media who plays a significant role in accordance to risk perception theories (Slovic, 1987; Kasperton et al., 1988; Renn et al., 1992).

The study also found that pickpocketing incidents were the most common cases within the event management scenario. As an event is a means of gathering people in a certain venue at a specific time, huge crowd attendances inside the same facility triggered the opportunity to commit pickpocketing. Events such as mega sporting events which attracted large audiences provide an increased opportunity for criminal activity at the event site (Barker et al., 2003). Jarrel and Howsen (1990) who investigated this aspect concluded several factors for the increase of crime in a crowded area. Firstly was that it can be expected that as the number of unidentified people increases in an area criminals are less likely to be easily identified, and secondly, the large number of strangers provides a large pool of potential victims and thirdly, these unidentified people are attractive targets as they may carry money or other valuable assets (*ibid*, 1990). Most respondents recognised that the risk of thefts and pickpocketing was common especially in events that have large crowd attendances such as concerts, festivals, fairs, exhibitions and carnivals. These concerns were supported by Mykletun (2011, p.342) who highlighted that festivals and events often "attract high numbers of visitors in limited areas and involve material goods and properties of considerable value, and they may also be arranged in vulnerable environments." After all, the crimes of pickpocketing were not just happening within the events' vicinity but also in all other crowded areas in other locations and with other circumstances.

“Let say other than that there were some cases like pickpockets, can it be included as well? [...] Yes, that is one of the factors. [...] we have lots of experiences on outdoor events as well as in confined areas. When [we talk about] the risk of what to say... this pickpockets, they’re just the same whether in open spaces [outdoor] or indoors. What’s important for them is that they got the opportunities, when there are opportunities so it becomes easy for them [to commit the pickpocket crime]. [...] They just don’t care!”

“.....because often... for instance, there was at times the audiences came at once and it was very crowded. So, when lots of crowd the risk of...pickpockets [incidents] definitely will be high.”

Thefts involving the loss of items belonging to event organisations has been identified as another emergent sub-theme resulted from a lack of security control before, during and after an event being held. These were normally assets used to stage an event, items such as event props, and support equipment. According to Wood (2009), these organisational assets which support the event business objectives always required protection. He argued that the call of security management procedures was important in the aspect of risk and business continuity of an organisation, and this includes the event management organisations. It was true that a crowded event area would result in more vulnerable targets and more motivated offenders, however there should also be more capable guardians provided by the event planners and venue managers (Andresen and Tong, 2012). Evidence can be found in which the respondents reported various items being stolen due to a lack of security control within the event/venue management team. The items stolen range from electrical cables and other equipment belonging to event organisations to personal effects of the event attendees such as motorbikes, handbags and laptops. The following two excerpts were instances when the event organisers/planners had some of their equipment lost or stolen right before “d-day” (the event day).

“In terms of our things [event props and equipment], one of the major risk actually when the shipments arrives we will put everything in the storage. When it was like two or three

days after when we are going to use it suddenly the things has gone, they've lost! Or in other case when we targeted [a specific time] but the shipment did not arrive, whereas it was very nearly to the event day... [...] ... loss of things and equipment were quite top actually, especially the cables people like to steal cables, I just don't know why..."

"Safety incidents such as like, when we erected the equipment. When we erect the equipment maybe there was an accident, and then some items are lost. When the items lost and at that time there were items that we didn't insured. Insurance at that time was... [...] ... [on the] equipment, equipment. At that time Malaysia doesn't have insurance for all these equipment, just not yet, not yet at that time... after a year or two then only have [the insurance]...."

Still on the similar topic but from a different dimension, several respondents acknowledged that audiences and crowd also sometimes become the victims of theft when they attended events, such as the loss of their personal belongings. Although these respondents does not want to be held liable, it can be argued that as an event organiser or venue provider it was their responsibility to provide a safe environment for all event attendees (Eisenhauer, 2005), and that includes undertaking certain security procedures to ensure the safety not just to the crowd wellbeing but also ensuring the security of the crowd's belongings as well (Wood, 2009). It was highly likely that personal theft or knowing someone that has been the victim of theft while attending events will somehow have an impact on the likelihood of the person attending an event.

"OK, on another risk that I can perceive is like let say we have a big event in xxxx [deleted for anonymity], sometimes the outsiders can take opportunities. [...] what I meant was like... we had some of these cases previously. For example like when it was during the event, when the event is running suddenly we got like thefts incidents, the cases of loss motorbikes... [...] because all people focused there [at the event], for example during convocation fiesta when we had convocation expo, the security will not

stop the crowd because that event we open it to the public. So, people will come and enter the facility, so sometimes the outsiders can take the opportunities at that particular times [to commit crimes and thefts].”

“Safety incident domestic is actually like we had incidents of thefts only, that’s was it. [...] We had such a case in Sandakan [meaning: name of a city] when we organised an event there, our delegation has been the victim [of thefts]. So, when we had booths for the audiences... [...] ... They took the handbag... handbag and laptop.”

“Crimes can also occur, although now we don’t have such to a big extent like.... But having said that, we can’t say it was smaller [crime] incidents either as we did have [the case of] motorbikes been stolen. We had some cases of stolen motorbikes but not too high [frequent] actually.”

Mykletun (2011) acknowledged that the number of crowd and open access often make it unlikely that individual security checks may be undertaken. So, thefts has not been exclusive to respondents from the event venue category either. Two venue managers from two different event facilities admitted that they had experienced similar incidents in which some items belong to the facilities have been stolen by irresponsible crowds.

“.... We would never know on the safety aspect we had lots of different kinds of people attending an event, right? Whether the person really wanted to attend the expo or not... Like one of the case in last year... we had a case when a crowd came into this facility and took a certain advantage. [...] Yes, he went into the office and steals lots of our items, because we cannot determine [each crowd’s intention of] why they came to the facility actually. Because convention centres like us were always open to the public, so we would not know which kind of person they are, right?”

“Maybe... I am not sure, not really like into this... last time like into just to security everything happen to be like there was something... quite expensive items stolen, broken,

sometimes we've been... sometimes the lost was not our fault but at the end [because it was] our event so we have to be responsible.”

Due to a number of reported cases involving thefts and stolen items, the researcher then tried to dig deeper and explore this matter further by asking questions related to the enforcement of security procedures undertaken by these event practitioners. Due to the fact that planned events would always have the potential to have a significant impact on crime (Andresen and Tong, 2012), several respondents claimed that they had taken the necessary measures in relation to security, such as by deploying specific personnel to safeguard the items and enforcing certain strategies, such as implementing access control system to minimise such crime.

“Normally we would ask the workers to remain on the place to safeguard the item, that's the normal practice. Because at that particular times there were lots of opportunists [thieves]....”

“Temporary passes for them to enter to do work. When there is an event the security will monitor, so we will know every time belongs to the... [...] Control, because we were afraid that there might be outsiders coming in, those who are not supposed to.... So, when something came and they didn't understand the whole operation, that was how we control actually.”

There was an interesting responses given by a participant who was involved in organising sporting events for children. He revealed something which was far more serious compared to all of the above cases. It was about the loss of child within an event facility, maybe due to the fact that his events would often involve many under aged children, some even participated in the events without being accompanied by their parents. But he was fortunate that none of the reported missing children involved fatalities as all of them had been found safe and sound within the event premises. Although there is still limited data on the standard of care

provided for children at mass gatherings and special events (McQueen, 2010), this exploratory study has given us another important element within the risk and safety aspect. Children tend to be vulnerable, and as such, special precautions need to be undertaken by event/venue managers so that the cases of missing children can be handled in a quick and efficient way to avoid any fatalities or undue distress from this unwanted incident. Both McQueen (2010) and Mykletun (2011) supported this view by stating that those involved in event planning should include measures to ensure that appropriately trained personnel and equipped medical teams were used at festivals to safeguard the welfare of children who may attend.

“OK, sometimes when we organise, let say a carnival, soccer carnival. Sometimes children went missing, kids went missing...so these kinds of, wallets missing... I still remembered... [...] ... those incidents actually because sometimes the children was not aware, and they tend to walk away...and the parents also was not aware because they was too focused on the big brother [other child] who was playing football at the field so these things happen. But luckily we found them, because the venue and facility that we organise the event also played an important part. A good example is like this sporting complex of xxxx [deleted due to maintain anonymity], children would not [be able] gone far to the roadside.”

According to Kim et al. (2006), the perceptions of high crime rates and incidents of crime especially involving foreign tourists, were likely to tarnish the image of the event host destination as well as the organiser themselves. According to George and Swart (2012) risk is itself a multidimensional measure, hence, health issues and crime threats such as theft and muggings are considered major risk dimensions within the emerging markets of events and festivals management. Event attendees, including the tourists, may develop a negative image if they feel that their personal safety will be at risk attending such events (Botterill and Jones, 2010; George and Swart, 2012). Although most of crime-risk issues discussed above were understandably remote, it is imperative for Malaysia’s event/venue managers to at least ensure that these crime incidents would not escalate further.

On the other hand, there were some respondents who mentioned about sabotage as one the emergent themes related to the security threats. Some of them cited potential sabotage by political opposition supporters or locals who protested at the staging of certain events at their place. The event planners/managers were advised to at least be aware of this issue even though there were never any reported cases that this kind of threat would affect the safety and security of event stakeholders, but one can never be sure that it will not be possible to happen though.

“But then again on technical part maybe once in a while, maybe happened once in every four or five events. Maybe happen because we did the cabling to set power supply and everything, even sabotage also had happened in which some people [the locals] switched off our gen-set used to supply the electric, these were people who was protesting against us organising.... even had some of them even tear down our tents...”

“It will be very easy if there are people wanted to sabotage because the generator and everything were at the back. [...] If we look into that risk we would often put out RELA [national voluntary services], because lots of electrical cables also need to be controlled because it were dangerous actually, anything can happen...”

From the aspect of security management and personnel, most of the participants from both categories of event planners and venue operators agreed that security was needed in order to minimise or mitigate risk and safety issues. According to Connell (2009), security has a greater role in liaising with event patrons with regards to the crowd’s wellbeing. Thus, the security responsibility for an event organising team as well as event venue management was mostly dependent on the individuals and personnel appointed to handle such matters. In terms of security control, Ammon and Fried (1998) also suggest that the event/venue managers employ searchers at the gate and doors to prevent prohibited items such as bottles and cans from entering the event facility. But the findings of this research proposed several common practices in terms of handling security aspects in relation to the event management context in Malaysia. Some of the event organisations tended to leave security aspect to local authorities such as the Police, City

Councils and FRU (Federal Reserve Unit), whereas some preferred to handle this matter within their own management team. There were also those who favoured contracting out this aspect by employing external security consultants/companies. Connell (2009) claimed that it had become a norm that additional resources such as an increase in security personnel for policing and other security measures is needed for most event/venue managers nowadays. Such evidence can be found within the following statements, with the first two quotations claiming that they handled matters regarding security internally within their own organisation.

“Ok, if we can relate... relate with the authorities, safety can be divided into two, one is the safety aspect of the staffs and the other is the safety aspect of the event itself and so on, right? So, if related to the staffs the risk that we need to calculate is the security of the staff which like an example when we install [event preparation] at night we would prepare somebody as security or we make sure that our crew is someone who is what to say... experience in this aspect [security] actually...”

“Lots of workers, and that not yet even the case of a concert. For concerts, I had an experience of handling all crews involved from security, ticketing, aaaa....floor crew, production crew, all totalling about 850 individuals, all I handled. [...] I handled them all [...] I did a Hindi concert, bring down 14 Hindi artists, the biggest concert with the most crowd attendance. I got only on security [personnel] 200 persons.”

But the third respondent here opted to leave security related matters in the hands of the authorities.

“It is very important, of course, very important for in organising and planning for the event. But as since you touch on the risk assessment just now, or the event safety risk assessment, since we are in the government so all our event we involved the security like the Police to come in....”

However, most of the event planners would let the security risk to be handled by the venue managers and its facility. Their argument was that most of the time they were paying the rental for that venue/arena/hall and the fees charged were inclusive of certain services that were needed to be provided by the venue facility. Thus, the security services were among the area that would come under the responsibility of the venue operators, some planners even claiming that it was clearly stipulated in the contractual agreement between the event manager/planner and the venue host.

“Ok, for example like in the **xxxx** [extracted due to anonymity issue]... because normally when we rented a venue it will be included with the.... their security officers as well. So, their security officers would be responsible to monitor all aspects throughout the whole program right from the start until its end. [...] Yes, they will involve... so they will get involve, because it is the normal practice when we rented a venue we will include, because we paid for the [security] services. [...] We even had that in the contract between us and the venue provider.”

“Erm...OK, most of the places in Malaysia... No, no, no, no.... Most of the places in Malaysia, OK...they will provide security. [...] (But) Their own security will just be stationed at the front like a guard, just like that.... This is being a Malaysian that we always look, just stationed [rigidly] at the front of the entrance and exit doors...”

The importance of event venue facility in terms of security management was enhanced further by another two informants representing both categories of event planners and venue operators. However, the following respondent suggested a good practice by having security personnel from both the planners' team as well as the venue management.

“.... OK, in terms of security, in terms of the security how to say.... venue, venue. Venue is actually the most important [in terms of security] because of what, because we need to know doors, all [entrance and exit] doors we must have our own people and the

venue's staff as well. It is because some venues in Malaysia like the stadiums, they have their own security personnel. It was because they must have their people controlling the entrance and exit gates. So, we have to collaborate with them, the venue staff. So, the venue staff would be in our team and we will give them briefing as well.”

“Yes, he is actually the most important person. So, at the event we must have like a floor manager, he must make sure everything is in order. Then so, because... for every... when already known how many people then he will prepare the passes, temporary security passes for all the contractors... “

The negligence of not having a safety officer post in most government agencies has been discussed in chapter four. An event venue provider (government owned) was facing the same problem of the non-existence of a safety officer in his organisation but insisted that they did have an established position with regards to the security aspect, and assumed that the same person would handle both matters regarding safety and security. But at the same time, he also mentioned that most of the liabilities with regards to risk and safety will be under the appointed maintenance contractors. Hence, the situation in Malaysia regarding this aspect was very different compared to some of the developed countries, particularly the United Kingdom, which have the post of ‘Event Safety Officer’ described by White (2009) whose job is to handle risk and safety aspects of any events.

“For the event [safety] aspect is none, but we do have a security officer but he is more towards the security of the building...”

“..... [risk and safety is] to be inside the contractor maintenance company here. On our side we only have a security officer, but security means security per say, security of the building not of the events. But again as I said [to] Mr Masrur that when we are talking about the safety of the building indirectly it means safety of the events also actually, indirectly. But probably we are not thinking specifically directly towards safety of the

events but in terms of making sure that safety of the building is well maintained so that the event is [safe], we [should] have the permanent post, so the event is well taken care. [...] No, safety officer no! Security officer, yes!"

There are some other issues in relation to the security risk emerging from the data but these risks considered to be less significant as they had been mentioned by maybe one or two research participants only. These safety risk factors also were considered rare since very little literature has mentioned any of them either. The first was regarding the permits and licenses application, while the second was related to the blind spots locations which was identified by one of the venue managers who participated in the study.

"So, after been for more than two years there, and xxxx [name of company deleted for anonymity] starts to grow and starts getting events from xxxx [deleted], and they start having issues with securities [meaning: the government authorities], they started having issues with permits and all these things that how it all started actually... [...] ...OK, because the risk for events that we are organising now can be too many. First is the risk against the authority, that is a risk as well."

White (2009) stressed the importance for the event organisers and local authorities to have a good relationship. But on the other hand, this respondent was actually complaining about the application permits processes that could escalate into a security risk if not properly managed. The findings of this study are supported by White (2009) who agreed with this views that local authorities' lack of a standardised approach could cause practical problems and was indeed becoming a concern for both local authorities and event organisers.

"I guess the only thing that we would do or we have to maintain is the property itself. There are few blind spots in the hotel that we really have to look into it [for security purposes], and of course it's the responsible of the hotel to make sure all our equipment, our areas are well maintained."

All the above discussions described that security is an important aspect in relation to risk and safety. The findings of this study correlates with Connell's (2009) view that it can never be a doubt that security should have a greater role in liaising with event patrons especially the event attendees and crowd with regards to their wellbeing in attending any kind of events, festivals, concerts, conventions, and any other events.

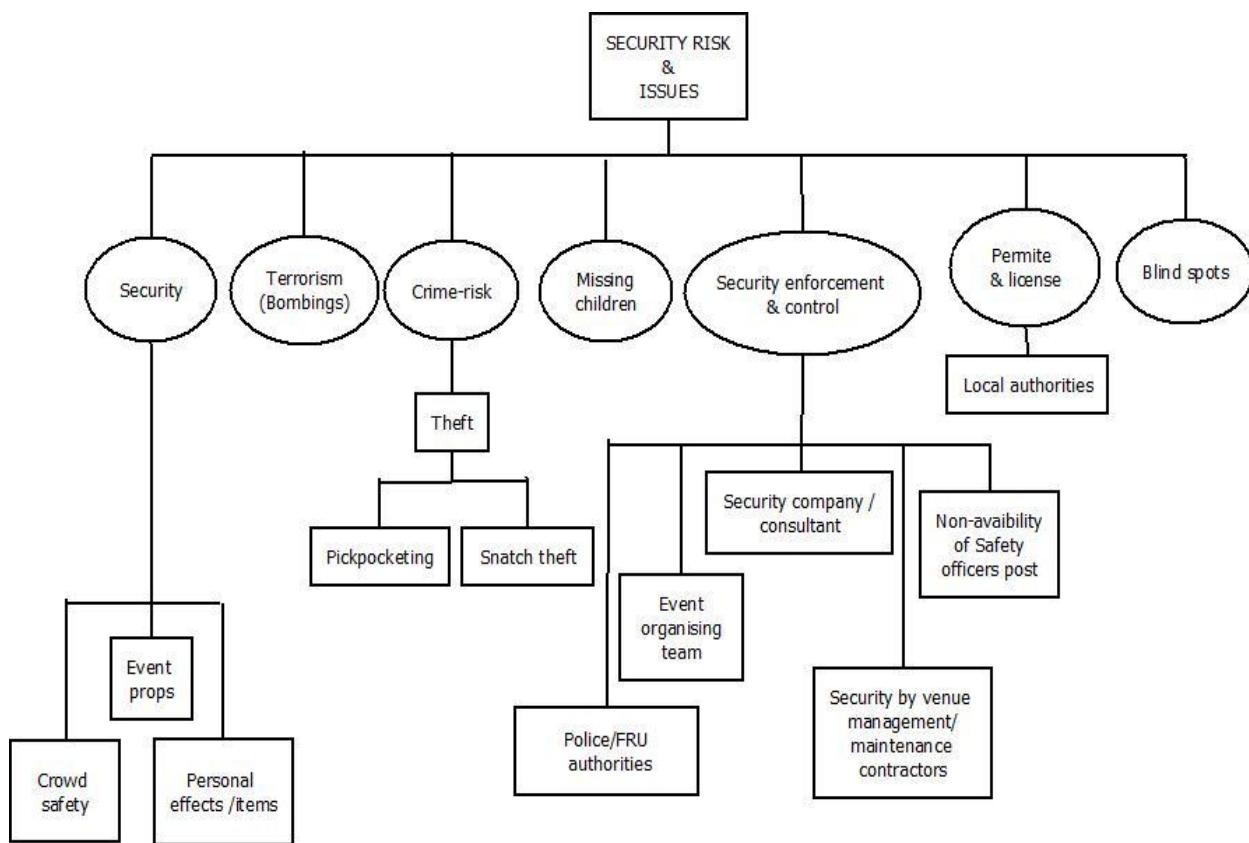


Figure 6.2: Thematic network for Security risks/issues

6.4 Environmental Risk and Hazards (Environmental Health and Safety)

Acts of nature and risks pertaining to the environment have been stipulated as another important emergent theme from this study. This next major theme is environmental risk and hazards or also known as environmental health and safety (EHS) as suggested by Cummings et al. (2013). The environmental risk factors here encompassed several other sub-themes mostly related to the natural disasters or weather conditions as well as certain outbreaks previously faced by the country. Most of the themes (and sub-themes) that emerging here were actually based on the participants' previous experience that were relevant to the context. Several literature mentioned the impact of environmental risk and hazards which comprises natural disasters as well as global health threats towards the travel and tourism industry, which includes the discipline of event planning and management (Keith, 2001; Faulkner and Vikulov, 2001; Lepp and Gibson, 2003; Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009).

6.4.1 Weather Hazards and Natural Disaster

The first risk that belongs to this category referred to the natural disasters and severe weather conditions which according to the respondents were mostly related to heavy downfalls, storms, typhoons, floods and tsunami. These kinds of risk are very difficult to avoid as they resulted from an 'acts of God'. However, Funk (2012) argued that the knowledge of the risks of severe weather would assist practitioners in making plans to deal with the risks. But it is worth noting that all sub-themes mentioned in this category were based on a Malaysian perspective as its findings were specifically related to weather conditions that is only common in this country. Those threats have previously happened and potentially will happen again in the future.

"...and...the natural kind of thing, if we involved in 'Four Wheel Drive Challenge' for example, it's a natural... [...] Natural disaster or natural whatever we called it, [such as] suddenly there was raining... [...] Haa...weather, this kind of thing..."

Before we proceed, it is imperative to describe the weather climate for the country under investigation. Malaysia is geographically located near the equator, so the climate for the country is categorised as equatorial, being hot and wet, with high humidity all year through. The condition of high temperatures and rains, with occasionally heavy downfalls occur throughout the year, with the average rainfall of 250 cm. annually (Saw, 2007). This heavy rainfall was brought by a Northeast Monsoon between November to March, which has a significant effect that increased the sea levels and rainfall, as well as increasing flooding risks in certain areas of the peninsular (Cavendish, 2008). Due to this fact, most respondents insisted that heavy rainfall and flooding was potentially the highest probability with regard to environmental risks and hazards. Due to the climate change, the risk pertaining to flooding has become a more common problem in Malaysian cities, including the capital city of Kuala Lumpur.

“The most common incident that we cannot avoid is the thing [risk] that is beyond our control such as suddenly there was a heavy rainfall, that is totally out of our control when for instance we were setting up the marquee tent and then it suddenly rains, then all works need to be stopped. Whether we like it or not we have to wait [the rain stops] because the steel will get wet and slippery, so we cannot even climb the thrust...”

According to Mair (2011, p.245), the travel and tourism industry including the event management sector was “particularly vulnerable to changes in climate and impacts such as increased global temperatures, sea-level rise and increasingly intense and frequent storm events.” Thus, heavy rainfall can lead to the risk of flooding that can become a disaster to run an event. This type of environmental hazards was crucial as some of the incidents could lead to disaster when practitioners were forced to take drastic actions involving cancellation of events due to its impact. The sudden nature of some natural disasters such as flooding was often very difficult to handle because of its unpredictable nature and/or short warning (Andresen and Tong, 2012).

“So when we have to have you know, when you do events you need to have the facilities. Sometimes when calamities would happens, because one of the event I had recently at

Labis [meaning: name of a town] where [it's famous as] flooding area. [...] Yeah, so that's where it's very risky. Sometimes the event would be cancelled straightaway because of the flood and we could be stuck there....”

“For example as I said when it's flooding, we are the one actually organising the things suddenly we [were] stuck at the venue [and] we can't go anywhere. So, those are the things [that] the organiser would be the first one that will be going into these kinds of problems.”

All responses given above were from the event planners/organisers category, maybe due to the fact that all event venue managers interviewed in this study were from the indoor venue type so they might not face such a big risk regarding weather conditions. Nevertheless, this type of risk can effect the risk and safety situations for both the event organisers as well as the venue providers as when the calamities strike, the event attendees and public would not be able to reach the event's site.

“Calamity, such as flooding and everything like that could be one thing. [...] Yeah, it could apply to both, the participants can't come either, it could danger them and definitely for the event itself actually, it's the question of whether to cancel or not cancel it [the event].”

The heavy rainfall sometimes can turn dangerous with thunderstorms that could bring strong winds and minor typhoons. This kind of situations can badly affects events that were been staged in an open-air site (outdoor events) such as carnivals, festivals, parades, fairs, exhibitions and fiesta. The frequency and intensity of storms and storm surges is a serious issue that required significant planning and risk management (Mair, 2011). A few respondents had experience of handling events in such stormy situations that had resulted in safety incidents involving minor injuries.

“The problem was on that particular time the ground support has been put on hold to a tree, the storm on that event day has caused the tree to fell off. So, [at that moment] this spectator was facing the screen so he didn’t notice the fallen tree [that held the ground support] and resulted in the screen fell upon him. Luckily that the screen that fell onto him was [made of] the canvas [LCD screen] and not the pure glass screen, but he was unfortunate to be hit a bit by the pole [meaning: the pole that holds the LCD screen]...”

“....When you are outdoor, in Malaysia we have rainforest kind of weather, so near to the ‘Garisan Khatulistiwa’ line [meaning: the equator]. So, we have the most of the rainforest weather, and at times our winds are very strong. Brother, do you know that a canopy with a strong winds work like a kite, it flies up! I have seen some events... not done by me, whereby the event organiser didn’t specify on safety and put the canopy on car parks, that in car park A in ‘Bukit Jalil’ stadium... Car park A, confirm [it was] car park A because the damage car is my car. The canopy actually flew over 40 feet....”

The above view agreed by Mair (2011) based on the reason that outdoor events were particularly vulnerable to the effects of severe weather events such as storms and cyclones. Mykletun (2011) also acknowledged the danger posed by strong winds that could blow parts of tents, equipment, furniture and some material damaged. There was an incident involving a cyclone (a mini typhoon) revealed by an informant. This can be regarded as the biggest weather related incident identified by the study because it resulted in the cancellation of a big concert. Although he has suffered a substantial amount of loss due to the cancellation, this respondent admitted that he was very lucky as there were no fatalities or injuries when the calamity struck before the event started, meaning that no crowd had arrived at that point of time.

“At about 7 o’clock [pm] a fine and clear sky suddenly turned dark. [...] It was not raining, but suddenly we could see from the open field area that there was such like a dark thing coming towards us very fast... [...] ...in Alor Setar [name of a city], near the stadium... it came in black color! Oh, it was like...what was that thing... and it came

“Vrooommm!!!” our big speaker becoming like this.... Vrooommm!!! It swings... so, the reason that thing [the speaker] been torn out, because the speaker swinging badly... When the speaker swings it was torn into half, haaa...it torn out “Brapp!!”

Another informant gave a different dimension to the safety risk brought about by the wind. Instead of facing the strong wind threats, this specific informant highlighted on the dangerous situation caused by a sudden change in wind direction. He stressed that wind direction was crucial in any business involving fireworks and pyrotechnics. Hence, the pyrotechnicians and special effects team must always be extra careful as a sudden change in the wind direction as it can harm the crowd.

“....Yes, even after you know there’s a lot uncircumstances like beyond our control, [such as] the wind direction, but at least we eliminate the minimum risks that involved... The problem is public is the one who will get excited, is it? And it always natural, they always want to go near. And I would suggest any fireworks that you see, you have to see 250 metres away, so that the debris doesn’t drop and hurt your eyes...”

“....And for fireworks we experienced sometimes the debris drops, the ‘lalang’ [meaning: a kind of weed plant] burns, you know the surrounding and all that, you know... And sometimes the debris drops on people but no catastrophes, nothing, nothing! I mean... they just complained and all that, that’s all actually, nothing!”

A few respondents involved in the aviation events agreed that the general weather condition were very important when dealing with any flying activities. They go on and shared similar perceptions on the importance of wind direction in managing such kind of events, such as air carnivals and a hot air balloon fiesta.

“The risks, OK.... Mainly the risk is flying, flying a hot balloon, because when you do an event, international event especially in Malaysia, and we have sponsors. The sponsors no matter what even though the weather condition is not that good they want to fly the

balloon, they want to have all these mileage. [...] Yes, [I agreed they have paid] but we would not subdue to these things, because I said the first [priority] is not money but first thing is safety. If the weather is not good we would decide whether we will fly or will not fly, right? [...] ... because... nobody, nobody can deal with the weather. [...] If... you can't fight against God, to say you won't [have] these matter and so on..."

"We have to have a plan, such as the hot air balloon also depends on the wind. So, the exact instance was like when we do it in... in the... Putrajaya [meaning: name of a city] here, KLIA [meaning: Kuala Lumpur International Airport] at the south, so let say when they [hot air balloon] departed the wind direction was to the south it will go to the KLIA direction! [Potentially to cause an air collision or accident with other commercial planes]"

The study disclosed that it was not only the wind direction that was becoming a major concern for informants involved in aviation events. All five of the interviewed participants in this category stressed the importance of general weather conditions in their routine job. They insisted on having safety briefing sessions at least twice a day throughout the duration of these events. One briefing session was carried out daily in the morning before the start of any activities while another de-briefing session was held at the end of the day. The major points of information and discussions in those sessions were matters regarding to the updated weather condition that was vital for any flying activities.

"Location, we brief on the... we do the briefing we always brief them about the no flying zone, restricted area, and during the morning we always do have updated weather conditions, weather forecasts, because this is aviation. [...] That [the briefing] is from the 'Air Boss'. The 'Air Boss' has to contact the control tower for the latest update for weather forecast, because normally the control will have all the weather forecasts."

“In each time, every day in the morning and evening before we started the activities ‘Air Boss’ will give the briefing on weather forecast, about the...”

The ‘Air Boss’ described above was referred to the person in charge who had been appointed to control the flying activities in any aviation events. The Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) which is the regulatory body for aviation activities in the country insisted that such kind of events must have an ‘Air Boss’. Thus, organiser was required to appoint an ‘Air Boss’ before his aviation event can be approved by the DCA. ‘Air Boss’ was actually someone with a vast experience in aviation-related matters as he would have full jurisdiction on all flying activities in such events. The ‘Air Boss’ would be the first to blame for any safety incidents, especially involving crashes, hence the authority of this individual was far greater than the event manager himself.

“Yes, ‘Air Boss’ is answerable to anything, that’s why it’s not easy actually, it’s not simply you can be the ‘Air Boss’, no, no...”

This important individual known as ‘Air Boss’ who has been appointed and given full authority regarding the risk and safety aspect in aviation events needed a further explanation and clarification. So, I have decided to pursue this matter further, resulting in a moment when I had a very interesting conversation regarding the roles and responsibilities of an ‘Air Boss’ with an experienced practitioner. He claimed that although this specific individual had been appointed by the event host/organiser, it was the ‘Air Boss’ who had absolute authority over all issues related to risk and safety in an aviation event.

“It has been required by the DCA. So, it means that in terms of the event operation, I can say that the safety aspect is our priority. Even one of the conditions for the event to be approved was that there has to be an ‘Air Boss.’ This ‘Air Boss’ is actually like a commander of a ship. Even if I owned the event [or as event organiser] I cannot be the ‘Air Boss’. ‘Air Boss’ has to be someone who has vast experience in aviation, and he

will look at the three aspects of safety. Firstly in terms of flying called air space. Secondly is the parking area called as ground space, or air sight, it's on the ground but been known as air sight actually. And the third one is the exhibition area.”

“.... So, ‘Air Boss’ has the authority to stop people from flying or to stop people from doing anything at the air sight. So, he has the ‘veto’ power. Even like for example, myself as the event manager smoking in that area... and that was my event what? But if I’m smoking then the ‘Air Boss’ has the right to chase me out. So, that’s the power of ‘Air Boss’!”

But this informant later concluded that it was imperative to strike a balance between the role of ‘Air Boss’ and an event manager/planner. It was crucial for both of them to have a good understanding from the initial phase of the event planning.

“Yes. So, this is the important on check and balance. OK, that was during the event meaning that during the event this ‘Air Boss’.... that’s why before the event, ‘Air Boss’ with event manager we have to get a strong understanding between us.”

The concept of an ‘Air Boss’ managing the risk and safety aspects in aviation events can be regarded as a good practice that can be implemented into the general event management domain. But some changes maybe needed to be made such as the term ‘Air Boss’ to change into ‘Event Safety Officer’ as described by White (2009).

The next environmental risk emerging from this study was related to the ecology and geographical location of the country. Unlike two of her neighboring countries in the South East Asian region which are Indonesia and the Philippines, Malaysia was fortunate not to be geographically situated within the ‘Pacific Ring of Fire’. The ‘Ring of Fire’ is an area where a large number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur in the basin of the Pacific Ocean, and it is associated with a series of oceanic trenches, volcanic belts and the earth’s plate movements, such as caused the Tsunami disaster (Rosenberg, 2013).

“On 26th December 2004, an earthquake and tsunami disaster killed over 250,000 people and destroyed hundreds of thousands of buildings around the Indian Ocean” (Kennedy et al., 2008, p.24), including in Malaysia. But prior to that date, the Malaysian public was actually unaware of a tsunami threat as the country had never experienced any such natural disasters. But the great tsunami disaster on 26th December 2004 had affected the country’s northwestern part in which both Langkawi and Penang islands as well as the coastal plains of Perlis, Kedah and part of Perak were hit by the disaster resulted in the total loss of 68 lives (Liong, n.d.). The Malaysian Meteorological Department has since developed early warning systems and efforts have been taken to closely monitor all earthquake and earth plate movement within the region in order to avoid the effects of future tsunami. The tsunami disaster has therefore become a significant environmental risk for Malaysia, hence, it was not a coincidence that some talked about its threats.

“...When we have the OSH [Occupational Safety and Health] then only people started thinking about Tsunami, and thinking to gather all these [safety related] things, let's have this OSH!”

“Let say one day in order for you to be my panel hotel I want you to do that. If Tsunami strikes what is your emergency safety plan, how you are going to escape? They will follow you for example let say from the upper floor you run into the staircase and exit at this site, even they will follow you [for the inspection], to that detail!”

One of the informants stated that it has now become a norm for the management of high profile hotels to implement a comprehensive safety plan that includes evacuation in the event of a tsunami. It is assumed that the event venue operators could also do the same and implement such measures for the safety of the crowd from this great calamity, a view confirmed by Kennedy et al. (2008) who stressed that the tsunami disaster recovery plan should focus on the safety, security and livelihoods of the affected victims no matter where it strikes.

“.... Even now for you to have a panel hotel or whatever, one of the company such as Shell they will send their employees who were in charge of the OSH (Occupational Safety and Health) to check how the hotel management would handle the situation of a Tsunami disaster. Let say your hotel is at the coastal site very near to the sea, if Tsunami happen which access points that we are going to bring the guests on, must have complete guidelines, we don't even think to that extent, right? But now few companies has made it compulsory, meaning if they fail, let say the hotel fails in terms of the Tsunami evacuation plan, you cannot be their panel, to that extend!”

However, tsunami was not the only natural disaster mentioned by the participants. There were also other global epidemic threats that have halted the growth of tourism and event industry in Malaysia.

6.4.2 Epidemic/Pandemic and Outbreaks

According to Maclaurin and Maclaurin (2001, p.6), “health concerns associated with international and domestic tourism are beginning to attract more attention in the tourism industry.” Our focus now shifts to global epidemic and/or pandemic disasters that have affected the tourism industry globally, including Malaysia. Richter (2003) argued that there was a unique and growing public health crisis associated with global tourism which includes the event management sector all over the world. The author stressed that there were many diseases and dozens of illnesses which highlighted the unanticipated perils of this huge industry, making headlines all over the world since 1999 until approximately late 2010 when the World Health Organisation (WHO) officially declared the end of H1N1 pandemic (WHO, 2010). A good example was a paper by Evans (2009) focused on disaster preparedness for an avian influenza pandemic. But the environmental health and safety (EHS) mentioned by Cummings et al. (2013) only focused on two major outbreaks that have been experienced by the country over the last few years. Within the last ten years, Malaysia has suffered from SARS and H1N1 diseases which indirectly affected the event management industry through the larger domain of the tourism

sector. The first outbreak was in 2003 of SARS or ‘Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome’ which was a viral respiratory disease of zoonotic origin caused by the SARS coronavirus (Thiel, 2007), and the second was the ‘pandemic H1N1/09 virus’ or ‘swine flu virus’ in 2009, also known as influenza pandemic (Gibbs, 2009). Both of these pandemics have escalated to be serious global threats. It was no surprise that a significant number of the informants mentioned SARS and H1N1 as important environmental health and safety issues within this context.

“Safety aspect, it was similar to when we had... OK, not the bombings, we talking about disease H1N1 right, so the Health Minister warned us to avoid public gatherings and so on but you still have to organise it. Let say during that session occur such outbreak, outbreak cases I mean, we as the project holder is answerable actually. That’s why now my immediate preventive was like we have to hold certain events such as station visits, we held the visits for the last three months already as our preventive measures on H1N1. At the same time at the security booth we have a tent to check visitors entering our premise, before you enter we have to check your body temperature, health screening...”

“The big risk, of course is.... I mean, you know, you’ve got H1N1, you’ve got SARS cos [because] it’s happened before. That means people affected by air or by touching. Currently a lot of people saying that we shouldn’t be shaking hands, cos [because] of the issue, and this one actually created a drop in business arrival in Malaysia. I mean those are things that you cannot help to prevent.”

With reference to the final respondent’s statement, it was true that we cannot do too much to prevent such kind of EHS risk that will normally lead to the cancellation of events for safety reasons. According to Richter (2003), this unprecedented risk of infectious diseases and other health related crises were globalisation’s greatest challenge as most public health bodies from the local office to the international World Health Organisation (WHO) are way behind the curve. It was generally accepted that such a pandemic would slow down the tourism and event industry, hence, the only way to avoid such risks was by not organising any events during the infected

period. But due to economic pressures, an informant revealed a surprising case of an event in Malaysia which had been preceded during an outbreak, where the organising team had taken drastic measures to scan and quarantine certain quarters that had been affected by the virus.

“....we can also did like one of the concerts during the outbreak of that virus, during the H1N1 pandemic there was a concert and they had to proceed with the event. OK, because they cannot cancel the artists, venue also cannot be cancelled, even the money also has been spent so much, and the sponsor didn’t want to pull back, so they have to take off that concert.”

Despite a plethora of new and deadly diseases, governments all over the world, especially in developing countries such as Malaysia, always found it difficult to mobilise the public and private sector against its threats (Richter, 2003). The increasing threat from infectious diseases over recent years has enhanced the effort to convince event/venue managers in the country to at least taken note of caution about the health consequences brought about by more crowding and the urbanised nature of leisure and events (*ibid*, 2003).

6.4.3 Other Environmental Hazards

The final sub-theme emerging from this category was not very relevant in terms of risk and safety for the generic risk typology for Malaysian event management industry. However, as a professional, it was my duty to report whatever themes emerged from this study. The final sub-theme was related to the threats of venomous creatures or poisonous animals, which been mentioned by two respondents that coincidentally from the event venue category.

“....but maybe in terms of the venue, the surrounding for example we are in an open area like this, so we are surrounded by greens, we are surrounded by tropical, by nature, all right. [...] And there are possibilities of all these in the creatures like snakes and so forth, that loitering around this area because we are surrounded by a golf course. So, these are the things that we have some issues, no doubt we managed to overcome it, we do not

have that much of problem but if it happens it will be a bit difficult because this is something that we cannot control. No doubt we control by putting in sulphur and so forth, but then again you know, if the snakes...if this kind of thing want to happen it happens. So, I don't see if this happens, I'm not sure whether the current hospitals are equipped with such a services which they have a venomous kind of thing to be given to the patient you know. This is something that for us as a hotelier which have a surrounding area like this is a bit of worried for us whether our nearby hospitals does have the facilities.”

“We have here in this facility the National Poison Centre, for instance we have poisonous creatures such as snakes and so on, so how about the risk? Do they pay much attention in managing the risks involves? On my site maybe I am not aware of their effort but anything happen the safety must be the utmost concern....”

Although it may be seen as less important, this final sub-theme may be useful for some event planners especially those involved in organising motivational camps and teambuilding exercises held in rural areas. These types of event would have some adventurous activities such as jungle trekking, mountain climbing, kayaking and so on which would indirectly make them vulnerable to this type of hazards.

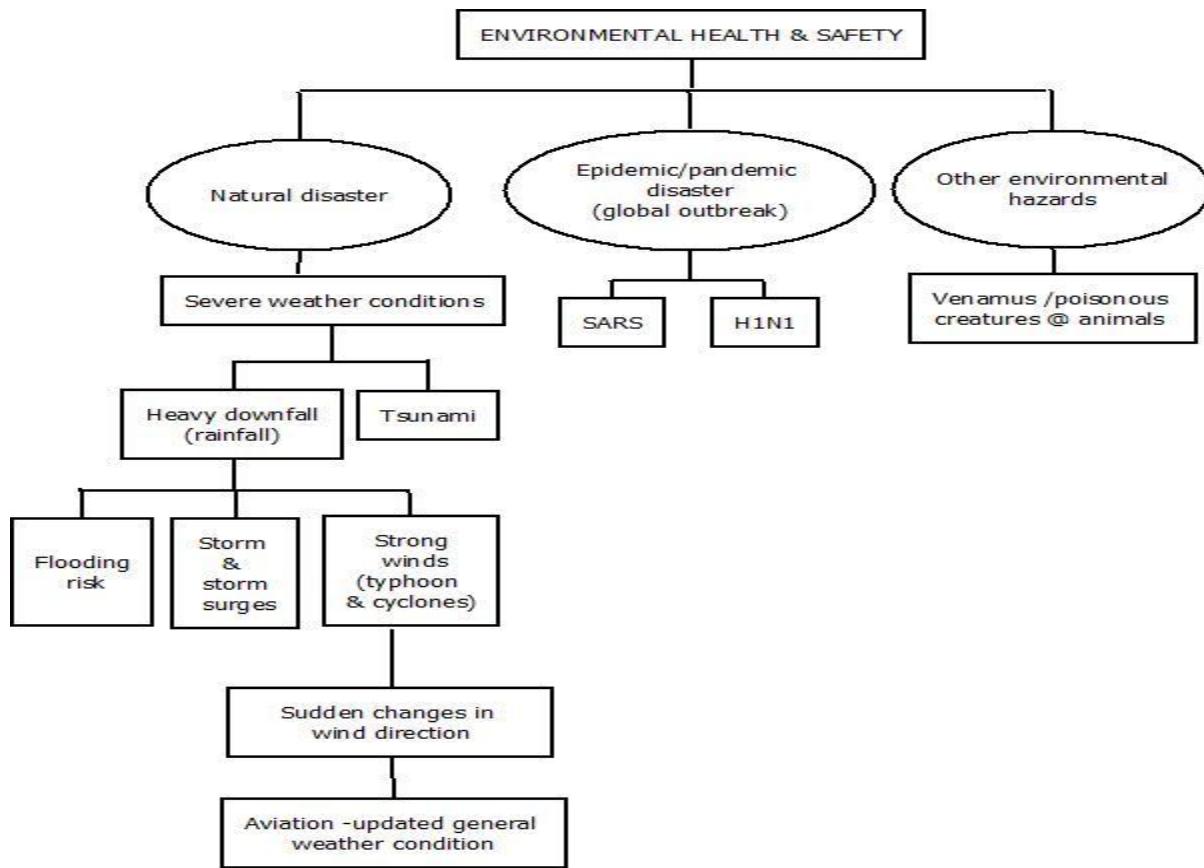


Figure 6.3: Network typology of Environmental Health and Safety

6.5 Financial Risks and Insurances

Some might argue that the next emergent risk was maybe not related to the safety risk focused in this investigation. However, it is worth to note that a large part of this study derived from the data emerged from all the 33 sample participants engaged right from the beginning of preliminary phase, hence, the role played by the researcher was relatively minimal – at least in intention. There were a significant number of participants who argued that financial risk or business risk was also part of the discussion relating to risk and safety aspect. Wood

(2009) argued that although financial loss was not a direct loss but it could be regarded as a consequential loss. It has been decided that this category of risk might not have a direct impact on this research area of inquiry but it does have a significant indirect effect. According to Evans (2009, p.59), governments generally have the responsibility of preparing for and managing risk and disaster consequences, however, he argued that “organisations and enterprises also need to consider undertaking preparedness planning for the purpose of maintaining business continuity”. Hence, the findings of this study attempted to challenge Wood’s (2009) view that normally after a certain safety disaster such as a fire incidents, little thought was given to the organisation’s ability to continue doing business i.e. business continuity.

A large part of this emergent theme was discussed from the angle of a Malaysian perspective in chapter four (refer to chapter four – 4.3.6: tension between cost of risk and profitability). However, the discussion in this chapter was rather different as it tried to link the relevance between the financial or business risk to the risk and safety aspect.

“.... Of course [the] cancellation of the main event because of issues is a major risk, because I’ve lost millions on cancellation, that to me is major! It may not have bodily harm of anybody but because of SARS or earthquake or a tsunami, we had the whole thing cancelled. That to me is also a big risk. Is the risk of the company closing up! So, when you do risk assessment I’m not sure whether you consider that as a risk. To me that is a very risky as an entrepreneur, as a businessman, how do you prevent that risk? Company close shop, I have 200 staffs, 200 families depending on the livelihood. So, it has the risk, a major risk! You build up over 30 years you can lose it like that if you don’t get the proper insurance.”

“[The aspect of risk and safety] It is essentially important to safeguard the interest of the company actually. What I mean is like this, let say some safety incidents happen when we organised the event and we suddenly faced with lots of claims from the event participants and the crowd for instance. So, I think that can make this company goes

bankrupt! Let say 10 thousand people claims, we are definitely going to die [meaning: bankrupt] if we are not covered by the insurance and whatever.”

“... Probably be my only concern of risk which is taken from another angle is the business risk, that’s all. We were very much concern about the numbers and the target that we were wanting to achieve....”

It was not a coincident that all the above respondents were event entrepreneurs whereby each of them owned various event businesses. As mentioned, they were individuals who take some sort of financial risk in the hope of profit and revenue generation. Although in terms of business they were risk takers, the responses given above explicitly elicited that they wanted to avoid or minimise the loss from potential safety risk incidents because the potential loss to those threats could be incalculable (Wood, 2009). Hence, the discussion here would lead towards the emergence of insurance as another important theme mentioned by subjects in this study.

But before we proceed to discuss insurance, it was important to know how the financial risk has indirectly become a major theme. There were two important aspects involved. Firstly was the indirect effect described by the first respondent above which refers to event cancellation that could hamper the livelihood of all parties involved, especially the event companies and its employees including the contractors and suppliers. This was the biggest threat that any event entrepreneur would want to avoid. On the other hand, the second participant explained the direct consequences that the risk and safety that could bring about by any incidents and accidents related to the safety. He was speaking about the importance of insurance in relation to protecting businesses. The risk was mostly related to claims and legal actions that could be brought by the crowd and/or other event participants who had been affected by those incidents. The next respondent clarified this matter further.

“OK, safety to me is a business. [...] To me safety is a business. Because if you fail on your safety precautions and everything, so you will lost your business. People will talk about it, “Oh, you don’t engage with xxxx [deleted], safety is [priority] number twelve to him.” So, you’ll effect your audience, you will effect your stage performance, you will effect with everything! So, you will conclude with your early stage proposal [in] the planning that you have for 100% perfect, [but] it can be 10% only... because of safety concerns. To me, safety is business, is part of business, right?”

This informant stressed that safety concerns would be a major aspect that will affect the reputation of an event company. The nature of event management, which is categorised under the service industry, makes it more important for event managers to protect and uphold their reputations. Any safety incidents or accidents would definitely jeopardise their image and would subsequently harm their businesses as well. This view was enhanced by an informant from the aviation industry who has stated that aviation itself was a risk and safety business, confirming its significance within aviation and air-related events.

“OK, when we talked about safety is just like what I said just now. The aviation field itself is the risk and safety business, right! So, anything... any activities, any movements involving aircrafts whether fixed wings or rotor [propeller wings] or para-motor and so on....”

Wood (2009) stated that among the consequential loss from risk and safety incidents that event planners/managers could suffer ranged from the loss of business, investigation costs, salaries for staff who cannot work, loss of customers and customer confidence, increase in insurance premiums, cost of replacement equipment, loss of reputation and loss of market share.

The next two informants gave differing perspectives on the relationship between financial and revenue generation with the risk and safety aspect. According to one of them, an event manager who had a limited budget would possibly neglect risk and safety concerns. Event

planners and venue managers who faced budget constraint would also not be able to implement safety measures to its full potential. Thus, this was another effect brought about by the financial aspects. He gave an interesting comment when suggesting that the revenue and safety were like a chain reaction which were connected to each other.

“Budget constraint, and some more it is not in our culture that we enjoy to go to the concerts. [...] So, what is the relevance? When it is not in our culture that people like to watch concerts so how we are going to sell the tickets? So, our purchasing power is low and it will affect the revenue. Our revenue will be effected unless if we can get the sponsor to come in, to bear half of the cost, at least half! Without sponsor the event cannot take off, if they want to take off they.... [...] ... Our revenue is low so we are going to have safety problem, it’ll effect! It’s like a chain, it will be like a chain... because when we are not able to sell tickets our revenue will be low and we cannot hire more people especially to handle the safety. We have limited... limited source. All these were related actually. That’s why when you see at certain.... Certain concerts or certain events, the security [personnel] was not there at the front, wasn’t even at the site or wherever....”

The insurance perspective begins even at the pilot stage when the data collection first started back in 2009. Allen et al. (2002) underlined insurance as an important aspect for the risk and safety management at events and this has later been empirically supported by Fallon and Sullivan (2005). Although some part of the questions developed in the interview guide was influenced by the literature, it was interesting to know that the theme of insurance had emerged from the data itself. Even the first respondent for this research talked about the ‘Contractors All Risks Insurance’ (CAR) in my first interviewing session then.

“xxxx [deleted for anonymity] we already have our insurance known as ‘Contractors All Risks’, CAR. [...] This insurance [coverage] involves deaths, involves equipments, deaths, or anything happen, accident.”

According to Dunning (2008), ‘contractor all risks insurance’ covers two aspects: cover for the damage to property and cover liability for third party claims for injury and death or damage to third party property. This informant was an employee of the main contractor who did the maintenance for a building owned by a government agency. Since he was based at the building, the contractors’ all risks insurance was taken by both his employer (the maintenance contractor) as well as the building’s venue management. The use of this type of insurance was crucial in managing construction risks (Odeyinka, 2000) and it was usually taken out in the joint names of the contractor and the employer (Dunning, 2008).

According to Arcodia and McKinnon (2005), there were generally some problems currently besetting the liability insurance for planned events such as increasing claims, declining industry profitability and poor risk management practices. The insurance has emerged as an important theme since a lot of participants concerned about it right from the preliminary until the completion of the data collection phase. But the most important type of insurance that was mentioned was ‘public liability insurance’(or ‘third party public liability insurance’), which refers to the insurance which covers injury or death to anyone on or around your property – in this case the event’s venue/site. Arcodia and McKinnon (2005) went further to state that there were two types of claims in public liability insurance which were property damage and bodily injury. Petrolia et al. (2013) added another type of insurance which is the ‘flood insurance’ that could also be taken by the event planners and venue managers in Malaysia. Thus, these informants’ views were supported by Wojcik (2003) and Mykletun (2011) who both agreed that public liability insurance was significant to the festivals and event management industry. There was evidence of several good practices among the participants from the Malaysian event management industry regarding taking out public liability insurance as precautions against unwanted risk and safety incidents and/or accidents.

“It’s compulsory for us to take public liability insurance. We covered all aspects from the distinguished guests to the entire crowd who attended that event. Let say there was a tourist among the event attendees and suddenly there was something happen to the tourist then the

insurance will cover his medical cost and so on. But then, we have some limitations, [such as] the victim cannot sue the government whatsoever, it's written in the term and clauses, we cover mostly on the medication.”

“The ones that I myself organised ‘Alhamdulillah’ [meaning: thank God], those the things that I always...of course in terms of the events such as mass events that we organised the first thing that we stressed on was the public safety, OK. That’s why in the organising itself the first [priority] is on insurance, public liability insurance. [...] Yes, it must be in our... in our what to say... in all events that I organise it must be [have] public liability insurance, [coverage] right from contractors starting work until the bump out stage.”

Both participants here were all civil servants who were involved in planning and organising various types of government events. The government has implemented a standard guideline regarding the requirement of insurance for government owned events which were normally comprised of large scale events. But the procedure of obtaining insurance had not yet become a common practice among the event management companies in the private sectors, albeit for some respondents below who insisted that they would have between one to three million (Malaysian) dollars insurance coverage for every event they undertook.

“..... Sometimes they don’t stress on that but I always, which event that I’m gonna organise I always apply for public liability insurance. Just in case for anything happen we will do the coverage for... [...]Yes, it’s not come for free, the premium is certain amount of money but the coverage we will take not less than one million actually.”

“Yeah, yeah... we’ll brief them, we will tell them. We have to take care our own precaution, you know...haa, you see... So, on top of that we make sure that we also have public liability insurance. We are covered for three million dollars public liability for every events. [...] Every event! Don’t care, because we take a flat open.”

This respondent further claimed that the insurance coverage was taken because it was compulsory according to the requirement of the law. But this special law requirement was not enforced right across the event management industry in the country. It was only made exclusively to a certain type of event, such as fireworks and pyrotechnics events.

“Yes, public liability insurance, this is the precaution. [...] Yes, compulsory! It’s also the requirement of the law, but it is all depends on individual company what they can afford to buy actually. But for us, as ~~xxxx~~ [deleted for anonymity] we have a three million dollars public liability [insurance]. It’s required by the police.... by the police and the Home Ministry.”

But the study found that the payment for insurance premium generally was still not been accepted as a common practice among the event management companies in Malaysia. This was supported by Arcodia and McKinnon (2005) who addressed that the increase in the insurance premium has led to a number of events and festivals operating without insurance. But another standpoint was given by an event planner who agreed with Wood (2009) that the insurance coverage was crucial for the sustainability of their business. Although they would sometimes have to pay a high premium in the long run it would significantly reduce the financial risk that they would have to bear for any risk and safety failures.

“Because to me, when we apply the public liability insurance actually we protect ourselves, right? To me it’s compulsory, we protect ourselves. I mean, if you lose something, if for instance you don’t even think about risks anyway at the end of the day it falls back to you if anything happen. I mean, you have to alert yourselves indeed.”

Besides the property damage, third party public liability insurance usually covered any deaths or injuries amongst everyone who attended the events, including the event employees and event volunteers (Arcodia and McKinnon, 2005). But some of the respondents asserted that they would often provide extra cover in the form of personal life insurance coverage

for key individuals, such as the artists, musicians and other performers. There were others who claimed that events' suppliers and contractors needed to have different insurance coverage for their own workers as the public liability insurance taken would not have covered them.

"Yes, because safety is... not only that, because this is a backup thing anything happen to the audience or whatsoever we have the public liability will covered to this. Let say ten people injured because of this... maybe it was our negligence or whatsoever, we do know right.... so we will cover their medical treatment and everything. [...] We would also take insurance to the artist, insurance to the workers, insurance to the artists... [...] ... For our artists we would have taken life insurance actually. But workers... each contractors have to what to say.... submit the insurance for their own workers."

"As the organiser yes, its part of the responsibility of the... It's included, both have been included. The one that we will cover is public liability but the contractors that participated in the job should have shown in their tender document the insurance coverage for their workers. This is part of the insurance, before we produce the....what we said... before we make the contractual agreement."

The discussion on insurance was not popular among the respondents in the event venue category, apart from the following hotelier. This was maybe due to the fact that all these venues were insured under a fire and building insurance made compulsory for the operation of any public and commercial properties especially those with mass gatherings.

"Well, insurance is basically if they say, for example certain things happen to the hotel which to negligence of the hotel itself, then of course we would compensate to it. That is why I guess our insurance also comes in. So they will claim from the insurance for our insurance to actually compensate to whoever who actually faced with the... [...] The staffs safety of course, staffs safety we provide facilities for them we do have... It does covers but not to say 100%, for example the company does certain level of percentage

covers which of course I don't really... I can't recall how many percentage, but we have a cover. Let say if you admitted to the hospital the company will pay, then whatever the difference then the staff will pay.”

I would like to conclude this section with some valuable information regarding the practice of insurance among those involved with the aviation events. According to them, the aviation related events were strictly regulated by the DCA (Department of Civil Aviation) and closely monitored by the MSAF (Malaysian Sports Aviation Federation) especially on matters pertaining to risk and safety. Any proposal to stage any kind of aviation events needed to be submitted to the DCA for approval, and thus, the department made it mandatory for the proposed event to have the coverage of relevant insurance. This has been enhanced by Flouris et al. (2009) who stated that since post 9/11, the aviation insurance market has undergone considerable changes and has been adjusted to be reasonably ready for any catastrophes. The following excerpts entail the common practice for aviation and air related events. It was assumed that such practices could be incorporated into becoming best practice in the event management industry.

“Well, basically in Malaysia the event itself, in event... aviation events, it has been regularised by the Department of Civil Aviation. So, these are the things that you have to take heed to what are the requirements, the requirements of the....well, it will regulates, it will cover almost all aspects of the event itself. So, we have to pay insurances, the licences, permits... compulsory for the insurance covers all the pilots and all the crew, even the spectators. [...] Yes, for the event insurance that is for the spectators. Any injury to the spectators they are insured. [...] Every balloon [hot air balloons] that comes they come together with the insurance, anywhere in the world, for pilot, and passengers and crew. But as an event organiser, you have to take insurance for the spectators as well.”

“Yes, DCA (Department of Civil Aviation and MAB (Malaysian Airports Berhad). Furthermore, we also have insurance and whatsoever, so any glitch, anything happen then

we can claim all insurance, so we have to follow all the rules and regulations. [...] Event, the event management have to pay the insurance... third party liability. [...] It's inclusive, as long that means like this, when you talk about third party is not the government bodies and is not the pilot itself. Because government have their insurance and the pilots have theirs too. [...] Usually the minimum requirement is at least 1 million. Third party, includes third party... So that is why we talk about third party liability that we have taken the insurance for the event.”

Last but not least, besides all discussions in relation to the role of insurance in mitigating the risk and safety factors, we should be aware that in any case, the insurance companies would only agree to cover safety incidents and accidents if the event planners and venue managers had taken due diligence in providing all safety measures and risk management plan (Gollier, 2003), including the local government who was expected to take due diligence when planning for the safety of the public (Gaynor, 2009). An informant reminded me that all safety measures needed to be undertaken, including compliance with certain procedures before any claims could be put forward to the insurance providers.

“.... For example is like in the stage construction, when they have completed the stage it must be certified by the licensed engineers that the stage is safe to be used... So, if we comply with these kinds of things... then only the insurance will cover. If we have the insurance but our facilities has not been endorsed, then it will not.”

Based on all the above financial consequences, the findings of this study supported the argument that the risk management plan was essential for the event organisation's survival and continuing operation, hence, allows those organisations to be as well prepared as possible for a risk event to occur (Wood, 2009). The financial impact of a disastrous event would exceed the sum of the individual loss and leading in some cases to bankruptcy (Rodica and Petronella, 2013). Thus, it can be concluded that the risk management function was at the core of an event company's

survivability and therefore, “underpin the company’s ability to conduct its business and to provide a physically secure environment for its staff” (Wood, 2009, p.84).

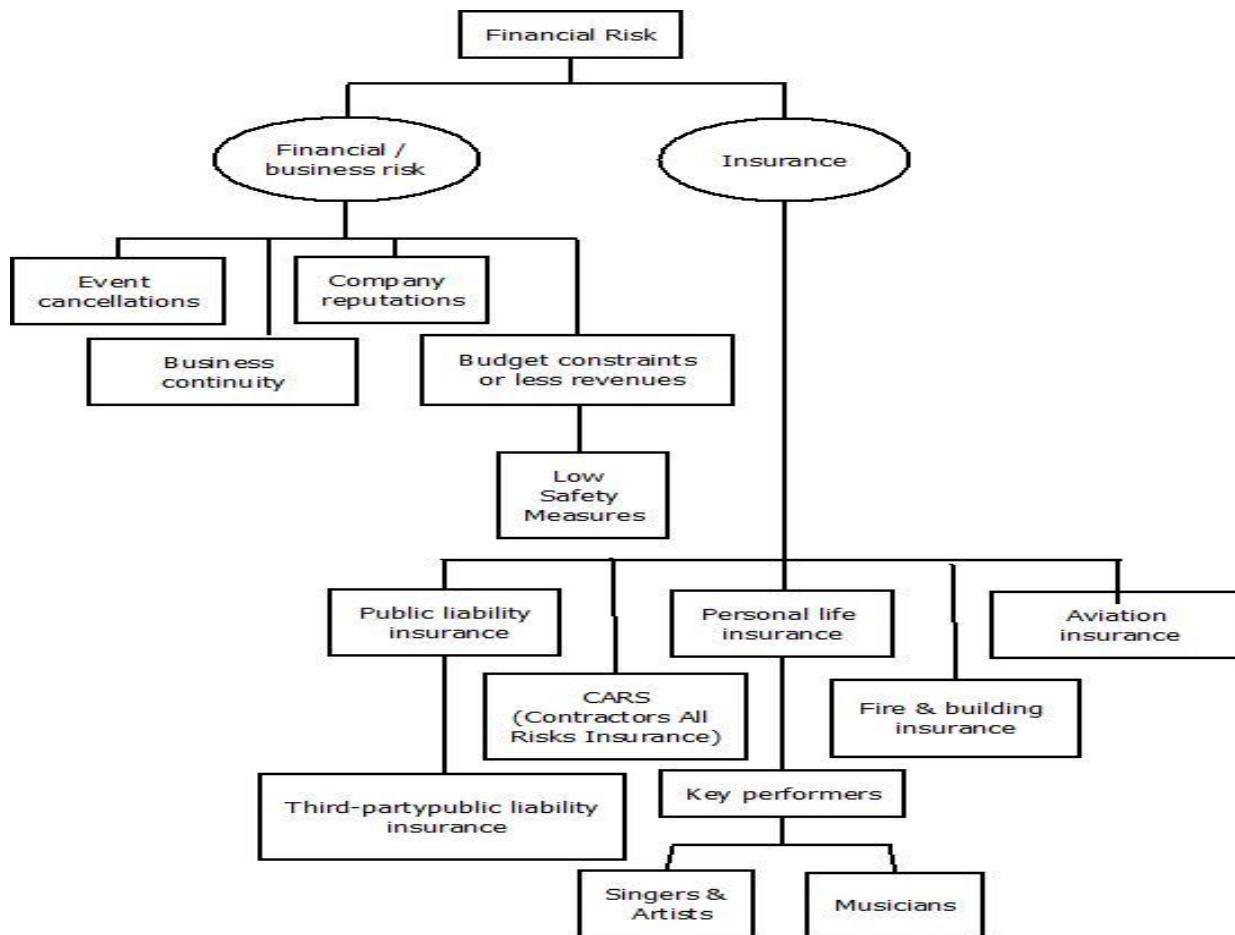


Figure 6.4: Thematic network of Financial Risk

6.6 Other Safety Risks

6.6.1 Food Safety

Food and beverages, sometimes known as catering management, was pivotal for most events such as convention and conferences, meetings, weddings, festivals and so on. This

is an important function especially in the cultural context of Malaysian society, even to the extent that some would rate the event highly if it had a good F & B (food and beverages) services and vice-versa. However, this was not the focus of this study. The study attempted to investigate another aspect brought about by the food and catering management in terms of its safety. Event planners and venue managers always need to be prepared for the unexpected to occur during events. According to Maclaurin and Maclaurin (2001), a food-borne illness outbreak is in the same category as fire, a severe storm, or other similar unwanted event. The first emergent theme was related to food poisoning expressed below.

“.... Next, is the aspect of their food and drinks as such... there were concern that they might have food poisoning and so on. These were all the risks that we have to mitigate in order to ensure the safety of the participants and their welfare as well.”

This study found a few hazards in accordance to Yeung and Morris (2001, p.172) who advised that “the analysis of risk relating to food safety can begin with the identification of food hazards.” There are various reasons for food poisoning such as the food not being properly cooked, contamination, and also due to hygiene factors (Mykletun, 2011). According to Maclaurin and Maclaurin (2001), food safety is an important element of a professional meeting and event planner’s overall risk management strategy. An outbreak of food-borne illness during an event could have a negative effect on an event planner’s and/or event venue’s reputation and can lead to litigation (*ibid*, 2001). The next two respondents described the importance of food safety when handling events.

“For instance, safety in the construction industry or safety in other things, food safety or risks in other areas are something that is new. When I mean new probably in the last five to ten years. [...] I’ll make sure that I check the food first, food...so what I am trying to say is that I think this issues [safety issues] are big issues.”

“And then there is a person that goes to the kitchen and check the food, that is also a safety issue. But that one came under agenda of food you see.”

To add to that, two event managers shared their previous experience related to food safety. It was interesting to find out that these informants used to organise motivational camps and team building sessions that required participants to be in a rural area away from a proper event facility. It had been anticipated that this environment was the reason for vulnerability in terms of food preparation and management as the victims might suffered from diseases caused by contaminated food and water (Maclaurin and Maclaurin, 2001).

“And then the food as well, we are very concern, because in my experience in eighteen years there was two times during a program that my participants actually had a serious food poisoning. Two times! [...] You know what they eat? They eat some kind of seafood. So, we got to bring in, I got to bring in... they came the next day they vomited a lot. So, I got to bring in my friend which is a doctor, he left his clinic because I got to save the program. So, he treated everybody and provided medicines on the spot. The medicines was not difficult, its name is ‘Lumotell’ even been sell at Boots.”

The second informant stated the common problem of diarrhoea and allergy that has often haunted such kinds of event activities. His view has been supported by Maclaurin and Maclaurin (2001) who stated that diarrhoea and vomiting caused by contaminated food would not just affected the event planners or venue providers but also could possibly damage the reputation of a country as a tourist destination.

“Diarrhea is common but it’s not because of [our] food... [...] Aaaa.... It’s not because of the food actually, because it was the normal food. Sometimes it was like... before he came he has already make something else, we do not know what he has eaten. Because if it was diarrhea all [participants] would be affected, but this happen to only one or two of them. So, before they come they must have eaten something. So far ‘Alhamdulillah’

[meaning: Thank God], our food has never caused diarrhea, so what they have eaten before the event were the caused for one or two of them suffered from diarrhea. [...] OK, this is important! First, we have to have a fresh chicken because diarrhea often would be caused by old chicken that had been kept too long. Secondly the cause [of diarrhea] were either chilies' paste or coconut milk. [...] we never appointed external caterers, we use our own cook.”

The remaining discussion on food safety focused on the management of food and its preparation among event venue operators. Both informants from this category mentioned about the practice of leaving food preparation for events organised at their venue to the appointed caterers. This practice was believed to enhance the credibility of their organisation, as most of the caterers were those who had vast experience and were already familiar with the requirement expected by the venue management.

“So far we don’t have any, because from my experience for those events organised here at the xxxx [deleted for anonymity], all of them were familiar with the situations whether indoor or outdoor they already knew. For example is like the caterer, they already know that in xxxx [deleted] when we have official events they cannot use mineral water bottles, they already know how is the management of food, cannot use plastic plates, all of them already know, they have been here for quite long already...”

“Looking towards xxxx [deleted for anonymity] itself... Because you mentioned about food, risk about food is one of the issue actually. Because we don’t have any in-house food and beverages provider. [...] We only have panels also.”

The responses above confirmed the assumption by Maclaurin and Maclaurin (2001) of a certain degree of complacency among meeting planning professionals concerning food safety issues. This has led me to probe further in order to establish whether these informants had faced any food safety incidents from this normal practice of appointing panel of caterers for food

preparation and management at their venues. This resulted in a lengthy conversation with one venue manager who later explained how the management of food has been conducted at their venue, admitted that they do have a concern regarding this matter.

“Yes, one of the panel will be coming over, but it is compulsory for them to cook here, because we have three kitchens here. [...] Yes, compulsory to cook here, but yet again... [...] Issue of the freshness of the food, food are still fresh been eaten.”

“I think, that’s why I’m saying that there is nothing specific about safety and risk management but what we are doing is something to do with the safety and risk management. Because when we’re asking them to cook here we are not thinking about risk management or safety issues but we are thinking more about the food are fresh been served to the guests, but it indirectly means that the food are safe to be eaten. Probably nothing to do, nothing specific with, you know... without we ever realised it has something to do with safety as you can see. So, that’s why we ask people, contractor panels of caterers to cook here.”

This informant had initially expressed his satisfaction that the practice of food management indirectly contributed to the proper handling of food in terms of risk and safety. However, when I probed further, he later admitted that there were still lots of weaknesses in terms of current practice. Maclaurin and Maclaurin (2001) insisted that people in the serving line in the hotel including the event venue need to know that food safety and the safety of the guests (as well as themselves) were important issues, and proper handling and hygiene procedures must be followed. The following excerpt describes in detail how the practice cannot yet be regarded as best practice for the event management industry in Malaysia.

“.... Coming back to the questions, since we do not have in-house caterer, because we have around six, seven, ten caterers, each events have their own caterers, the issue of contamination of food, it happens! Because each caterers have their own kitchen,

leftovers during say this event finish, event A finish with caterer B. So, event one starts with another caterer, so they need to use the same kitchen. So, in terms of what we call here.... handing over, yes handing over between caterer A and caterer B. So, caterer A needs to give the kitchen to caterer B in a clean condition. So, if it's in such a short time, because the dinner finish at night and tomorrow's event starts in the morning, so in such a short space of time the caterer don't have the time to clean thoroughly the kitchen. So, probably one of the loopholes is there actually. So, what we can do to minimise is just to make sure that these kinds of continuous events will be given to the same caterer. But again, other issues will come over, about the integrity you know... about caterers not been satisfied [because] not been given events, so but there is other issues here. But in terms of safety and risks, that is one of the loopholes about... But, luckily we had never experience big issues of food contamination or food poisoning...”

6.6.2 Human Factor (risk related to human error)

The discussion in this section starts by an assumption that humans are fallible and errors are to be expected, even in the best organisations (Reason, 2000). This study is now going to reveal another aspect of risk and safety that mostly relates to the individuals involved in managing and organising events. Compared to other risks that have been discussed throughout this chapter this particular risk refers to the nature of individuals tasked with the job, thus, focusing on the risks related to the human factor that can become dangerous in certain circumstances. This emergent risk category of human error has also been cited by Mykletun (2011) as one of the important risks that can cause risk and safety issues in festivals management. The event management field involves a number of different disciplines that were put together for the sole purpose of the successful organisation of various kinds of events. Event management was unique in the sense that it was never a routine job because there will never be a two identical events. Event practitioners often work in very stressful conditions, sometimes in tense environments especially towards the final phase nearing to the execution of a particular event. All these conditions can lead to the act of negligence in handling tasks assigned in

planning and managing an event operation. According to Reason (2000), the unsafe acts such as errors and procedural violations by event/venue managers might be arising primarily from aberrant mental processes such as forgetfulness, inattention, poor motivation, carelessness, recklessness and negligence.

“.... So, firstly is the negligent at workplace, [including] negligent in handling the event’s tools and equipment, negligence! And then we have to also look into the vandalism by the public. There are certain times when you have completed everything nicely and suddenly there was several boys came and destroyed the thing. We don’t actually mind the broken things but sometimes it caused injury, that’s what happened in the past...”

“We sometimes cannot smell the danger. Number one, every event organiser has to have public liability insurance, OK? You may take everything, every aspect into considerations but sometimes it’s either mother nature, human error, or.... Mother Nature and human error that’s it, one of the main two causes for mishaps.”

The next safety risk regarding human error was related to fatigue and tiredness of the individual members in the organising team. It was normal that some event staff even do not have enough sleep or rest during their work. Some might have to work round-the-clock and give more than one hundred percent concentration at certain stages of their work. The fatigue and tiredness can make them vulnerable towards safety/risk issues, as described by the informant below.

“Staffs, they are tired [so they] are exposed to such risks. So, you cannot push the staffs so hard also, the staffs work hard during the event. So, you have to give them proper accommodation, proper food nearby, so they are not... you know... When they are tired accident can happen, and they got to have [proper] training. So, they have to be trained or accident can happen if we are not prepared.”

This particular informant stressed that fatigue and tiredness was such an important risk factor to look out for because it might expose the event personnel to other potential dangers that were harmful to them and those working and/or being around them. An event staff who was in such conditions could also potentially expose the crowd to unnecessary dangers. The following informant also talked about tiredness as the cause for risk and safety incidents but he highlighted a different dimension by citing external problems such as family issues as the cause of the fatigue.

“..... So, how do you check if she is tired, is she not enough sleep, or is she having some family squabbles at home? Things like that can take place. So, the family issue is important then they are more alert.”

The literature explained how the event management field was similar to a project which has a starting and an ending point (O’Toole and Mikolaitis, 2002), hence, timing was crucial in the work of planning and managing an event project. The stress level and pressure would often emerge especially towards the final phase when so much work still needed to be completed until the very last moment before the event commenced. This would normally result in staff members working in a very tense situation. It was highly possible that working in such condition might lead them towards unwanted incidents and/or accidents. Several respondents talked about the danger of hassle before the event (bump-in) as well as rushing in to do the clearance after the event finished (bump-out).

“..... In Malaysia we had an incident where the spotlight fell off, that happened because they wanted to complete the job quickly. [...] No, fortunately didn’t hurt anyone. When the preparation is not well prepared, such as you hurriedly wanted to do the event... [...] Rush, when it is rush... [at the] stage is going to have lots of hazardous things, dangerous to the artists, dangerous to the band, dangerous to the engineers. So, these are things that can occur. So, we have to look into the safety such as maybe there was nails, even all people wears the shoes. When we do things hurriedly everything seems OK. But after

that [the completion] the stage was not even on its level, when the artist perform she fell down.... That what happened to Jack [meaning: Jacqueline Victor, a popular singer in Malaysia].”

“They were rushing, they rushed at that time the contractor wanted to assemble the thing and at the same time the client was already there, they were... anchoring the booth. Usually these things need to be separated, for example when you going to hang the hall banners there shouldn’t be any construction actually. But then, all these things... all at the same time and right when we were going to hang the thing... [...] that’s why I mentioned by that time rushing time or whatever so the thing been neglected, because we have datelines and everything, right. I am not blaming anyone because... it’s understandable because of the event if I was the project manager I would also asked them to be quick and to do it fast to complete it....”

“Sometimes let say if the event finishes at 10 pm, then the next one let say few days after but they need to start constructing everything the next day. So we have to rush for the overnight clear.... overnight for the clearance [bump-out]... [...] everything needs to be clear overnight. That’s what I’ve seen some safety issues. Because people are tired like whatever... the night after the event [day], and then you rushed for the clearance. But for me, I am not which side but I understand cause we have to go against the time.... But these things you can’t... but you got no choice.”

Another respondent stressed that it was not easy to maintain concentration when working in such an environment because when tired, we tend to make mistakes that can sometimes lead to injuries and fatalities. The majority views has been supported by Reason (2000) who referred all these conditions as latent conditions – a condition that can translate into error provoking conditions within the workplace resulted among all from time pressure, understaffing, inadequate equipment, fatigue, and inexperience.

“This kind of job... this work in terms of sickness to the workers also can be a reason because sometimes we were rushing to.... [it affect] our fitness and our stamina also, not sleeping for three nights because of doing work, right... [it will effect] our concentration of focus also sometimes [tend to make] errors, mistakes.”

Another risk that has emerged from this study was also related to negligence but this one actually refers more to the unprofessional attitudes of some event practitioners, such as leniency in giving event contracts to personal contacts as well as giving and receiving some sorts of bribery that could hamper the efficiency of risk and safety management. It was true that the risk related to human error was comparatively difficult to handle. Hence, event planners and venue managers need to prepare barriers and safeguards against all these hazardous risks based on the assumption that we cannot change the human condition but we can change the conditions under which humans work (Reason, 2000).

“....Now I want to resign and establish my own event management company. You are my good friend, so you must help in giving me some of the [event] projects for me to handle. But because of friend sake you forget about safety aspects. These kind of things actually... though involving friends, we have to be professional.”

“Let say I am the manager, I will make sure that this thing maybe you as the third party you are going to say... how come this manager is so fussy, so I will meet other manager, or I will meet the staff and tackle him on this aspect and not let the manager knows, can you do this, this, and this for me... don't tell the boss I will give you some money, bribery, corruption kind of things, right? This things wil be like I said... so if we are too stricts you know Malaysian, they are very creative, they go to the back door, if can't enter through the back door they will find another door, understand?”

It is hoped that the identification and proper management of all risk factors discussed in this chapter as well as the previous chapter five would raise the technical and procedural quality for

the event management sector (Mykletun, 2011). The next process was to put together all these themes and sub-themes which have been elicited from the data into a comprehensive thematic network that illustrated the generic event safety risk typology based on a Malaysian perspective (refer Appendix XII).

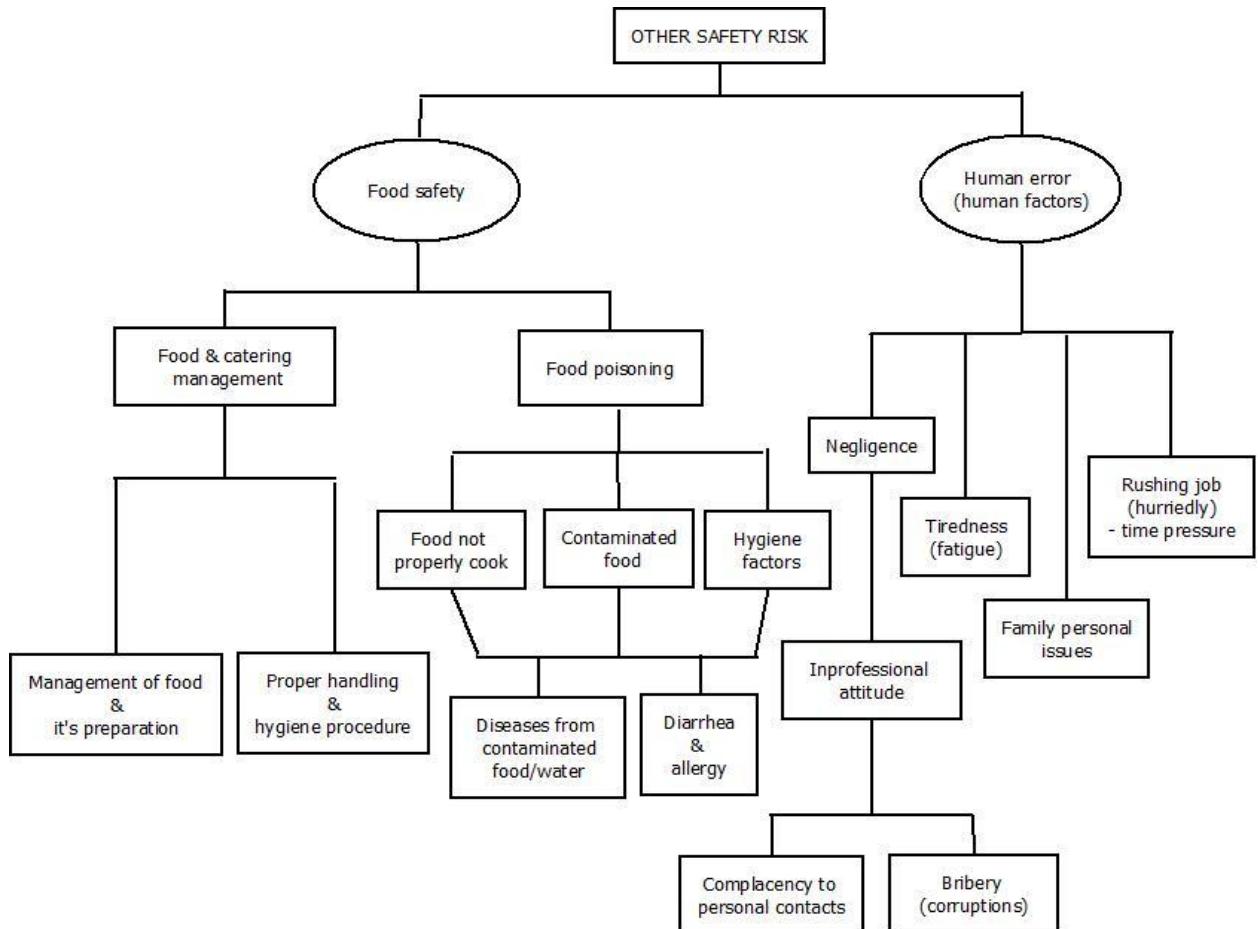


Figure 6.5: Network typology for other safety risks

6.7 Legal Issues on Risk and Safety for Malaysian Event Management Industry

It would be incomplete for any topic related to risk and/or safety without discussion related to the legislation and litigation aspects. According to MacLaurin and MacLaurin (2001), failure to mitigate risk can expose event planners and venue managers to undesirable legal and negligence liabilities. Therefore, this part will briefly discuss the existing legislation situation for the event management industry in Malaysia – adding up to the legislation aspect discussed in chapter two. It will start by describing the roles of several governmental safety and health organisations that are responsible for the issues of risk and safety in Malaysia. The differences between the roles that these organisations play were also highlighted. After that the study will look into some of the Malaysian legal acts that seemed to be relevant to the event industry and have been mentioned by the participants.

6.7.1 Malaysian Health and Safety Organisations

In general, there are three different organisations that are responsible for the risk, safety and health issues within Malaysia across all sectors and industries including the tourism and event management arena. These organisations were fully owned by the government of Malaysia and been administered by the Ministry of Human Resources. But they each have different objectives and different roles to play in terms of safety and health purposes. This section will therefore explain the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Occupational Safety and Health, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, and the Social Security Organisation.

The first is the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) which is responsible for ensuring the safety, health and the welfare of people at work as well as protecting other people from the safety and health hazards arising from the activities of all different sectors in Malaysia. These sectors ranged from manufacturing and construction to the services industry such as the tourism and event management area (DOSH, 2010) In other words, the

establishment of DOSH has the mission to ensure that all private and public companies provide a safe and healthy work environment for all their employees and also to protect other who may be affected by their activities (Johnny, 2013). As a government agency, the department is responsible for the administration and enforcement of legislation related to the occupational safety and health of the country. This department actually had the mission to become an organisation that can lead the nation in creating a safe and healthy work culture that contributes towards enhancing the quality of working life (DOSH, 2013). Among the most important objectives by DOSH for the event management industry was pertaining to their role of ensuring that all event management organisations comply with all requirements of legislation related to safety and health as stated in the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 (Act 514), as well as regulation and codes of practice which have been approved within the industry. Unfortunately, it was the enforcement role of this agency that has been questioned by quite a significant number of respondents in the chapter four – lack of government initiatives, priorities and enforcement.

On the other hand, the National Institute of Safety and Health (NIOSH) which was part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was put under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health and Human Services, and had a slightly different role with regards to the safety and health practice in the country (NIOSH, 2013a). This federal agency is responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related injury across all sectors and industries, including event management. The main purpose of this institute is to generate new knowledge in the field of occupational safety and health, and later transfer that knowledge into practice for the betterment of workers within all industries in Malaysia. During the 6th Conference of Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) on 14-15 July 2003, the Human Resources Minister who officiated at the conference has stated that NIOSH has performed its role in full commitment and dedicated for the past 10 years in the area of developing the field of occupational safety and health in the country (NIOSH, 2013b)

The final agency involved in managing issues related to the risk, safety and health in Malaysia is the Social Security Organisation (SOCSO) which was formed in 1971 under the

Ministry of Human Resources. SOCSO, or also commonly known as ‘Perkeso’ or ‘Pertubuhan Keselamatan Sosial’ in Malay terms, was originally established to provide social security protections to all employees/workers in Malaysia (NBC, 2013). This organisation has been set up by the government to administer, enforce and implement the ‘Employees’ Social Security Act 1969’ and the ‘Employees Social Security (General) Regulation 1971.’ These acts acted like a general insurance cover since it stated that employers with a monthly income of MYR 3000 (Malaysian Ringgit/Dollar) or below, along with their employees were required to make contributions. Any event/venue managers and employees who are registered under the SOCSO will be provided with social security protection by social insurance which includes medical, cash benefits, provision of artificial aids and rehabilitation to employees to reduce the sufferings. We have seen in previous discussions that the event management industry was clearly exposed to numerous types of risk and safety hazards, therefore, the contribution to this agency would help to minimise the impact that may be suffered by those involved in safety incidents and/or accidents.

Although all of these agencies’ existence was for the common purpose of the betterment of risk, safety and health practice in the country there were explicit differences in the roles played between them. DOSH main task was to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all employees and to protect others who may be affected by its activities. NIOSH on the other hand was responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related injury and illness, whereas SOCSO was in charge of providing social security protection through the social insurance for all employees in the country including those from the event management industry.

6.7.2 Legislation and the Event Industry

Event planners and venue managers are ultimately held responsible for improper standards of control in any events that they are responsible with. According to Abbott and Geddie (2001), the assumption of risk doctrine will not always preclude the defendant from

liability. In other words, the event/venue managers should always ensure that they have carried out the due diligence in implementing all risk and safety requirements in the planning and management process of an event project.

In their research, Abbott and Geddie (2001) highlighted some legal case analyses for event managers and planners to obtain a valuable understanding of the necessity for crowd control and the preventive measures they can utilise in preparing for an event. Although these cases were specifically for crowd safety and focused on US law and court cases, it is nonetheless the case that event/venue managers could gain meaningful insights regarding what action or inaction is considered reasonable with respect to crowd control and management. Taking inspiration from their work, I would also like to highlight certain legislation that seemed to be important for the Malaysian event management industry. Although there is still no standard procedure in this area, some respondents did mention certain facets of the Law of Malaysia (Malaysian Act) that were relevant to the event management domain, and some had already implemented it in their event operation (such as the KLCC benchmarking discussed in chapter four). For example, there were a few participants who mentioned the relevance of occupational safety and health law that was related to the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 (Act 514).

However, the discussion of legislation would not be explored in detail as this was not the focus of the study. This study also would not be able to provide any legal cases in a Malaysian scenario as it has not explored any such cases, unlike what have been done by Abbott and Geddie (2001). Thus, the purpose of this section was only to create awareness of some Malaysian acts that were important for this industry based on the participants' perceptions. This was based on the notion that an effective planning system for safety and health requires an organisation to establish and to operate a safety and health management system which controls risk (HSE, 2003). It is believed that this chapter has briefly illustrate certain legislations that were pertinent to the event management industry perceived by participants in this investigation – refer 5.3.3 below. But another thorough investigation is needed on the practicality and whether such legislation could be implemented in the event management industry in Malaysia.

6.7.3 Malaysian Legal Acts for the event management industry

<p>Law of Malaysia (Malaysian Act) and the description of the law</p> <p>[source: Law of Malaysia]</p>	<p>Event safety risk area</p>	<p>Excerpts from participants</p>
<p>Occupational Safety & Health Act 1994 Act 514)</p> <p><i>'An Act to make further provisions for securing the safety, health and welfare of persons at work, for protecting others against risks to safety or health in connection with the activities of persons at work, to establish the National Council for Occupational Safety and Health, and for matters connected therewith.'</i></p>	<p>Crowd Safety and crowd control</p>	<p><i>"First of all I would have to refer to the act. My act is I am registered with the DOSH, 514 year 1994. The act has been gazetted at the parliament for some reasons. First, to make sure of the safety and health for all workers. Secondly to protect all workers in that working place. Thirdly to encourage the safe environment for all employees. And then to implement ways or procedures according to the law. These were all its purposes, I would have to follow this."</i></p> <p><i>"Occupational safety and health, yeah... [...] This is where we comes in as provider which we have to more or less go according to their requirements, which OSHA would normally come inspect the property for about twice in a year. They come and inspect in terms of</i></p>

		<p><i>our safetyness, how often do we practice our safety committee meetings, how often do we practice our safety drill, how often we servicing our smoke detectors, how often do we service our alarm systems, so these are been done accordingly twice a year. So, we more or less we obliged to their requirements and we go according to the required.”</i></p>
Factories and Machinery Act 1967 (Act 139) <i>‘An Act to provide for the control of factories with respect to matters relating to the safety, health and welfare of person therein, the registration and inspection of machinery and for matters connected therewith.’</i>	Technical and logistics hazards	<p><i>“We comply almost all whatever requirement to us. For example, how do you say... I give you an example for scaffolding... Oh! FMA, another one is FMA. Factory and machinery act. [...] Basically for example are, in FMA they also mention about scaffolding, and in OSHA also they also mention about scaffolding. So, whatever scaffolding is been erected in the centre whatsoever, we would try to comply with whatever the legal requirement. For example, scaffolding erected more than 2 metres we would require a P endorsement, and then the erector must be a competent person. So those are the requirement that we comply.”</i></p> <p><i>“Yes, we have act 5... the factories and machinery act 1967, that one involved machinery in which we have at the back there sky jet upright and also overhead crane, that involves the PMA, permit mesin angkat. So, that one has to be renewed annually and required DOSH to come and do the inspection.”</i></p>

<p>Environmental Quality Act 1974 (Act 127)</p> <p><i>'An Act relating to the prevention, abatement, control of pollution and enhancement of the environment, and for purposes connected therewith.'</i></p>	<p>Environmental safety and health hazards</p>	<p><i>"Yes, we do! In fact we have the list, we have the legal register. In our management system we have the legal register which we identify all the legal requirement that we have to comply in Malaysia. For example, OSA, OSHA, then we have to comply with BB, building by law, and then Bomba act, EQA environment quality act, there is a few I can't really remember all..."</i></p>
<p>Explosives Act 1957 (Act 207)</p> <p><i>'An Act relating to the manufacture, use, sale, storage, transport, import and export of explosives.'</i></p>	<p>Technical and logistics hazards (risk of fire)</p>	<p><i>"Yes, the district police, they have their own protocol. Any application you apply to district police, district police will send to the arms and explosives department to look into what you are going to fire and all that, you have a supporting letter, and then they send to the Police headquarters, because only the State Chief of Police is authorised, he is the licensing officer. [...] He is the licensing officer, that comes under the Explosive Act 1957 if I'm not mistaken. I think Explosive Act 1957, if I'm not..."</i></p> <p><i>".....pyrotechnics is like a special requirement. Do you know that pyrotechnics require licence? So, most of the event organisers they are not aware of all these, so we are here to advise them...[...] But we have to ensure that they comply, whatever legal requirement, regulations that is applicable to events, we have to ensure that these organisers, or event organisers or contractors comply with it."</i></p>

<p>Peaceful Assembly Act 2012 (Act 736)</p> <p><i>'An Act relating to the right to assemble peaceably and without arms, and to provide restrictions deemed necessary of expedient relating to such right in the interest of the security of the Federation or any part thereof or public order, including the protection of the rights and freedom of other persons, and to provide for related matters.'</i></p>	<p>Crowd safety and crowd control</p>	<p>"Number two is on the ground is the same as any events, we have to have the permits from the police because you are gathering more than twenty people, you have to get a permit from the police. And of course permission from the local government like council, we have to inform them. Normally we get them involved in our committee."</p>
<p>Fire Services Act 1988 (Act 341)</p> <p><i>'An Act to make necessary provision for the effective and efficient functioning of the Fire Services Department, for the protection of persons and property from fire risks and for purposes connected therewith.'</i></p>	<p>Technical and logistics hazards (fire and electrical hazards)</p>	<p>"We have Bomba act that involves fire but that one also been put under [the jurisdiction of] act 514 also."</p>

<p>Employees' Social Security Act 1969 (Act 4)</p> <p>'An Act to provide social security in certain contingencies and to make provision for certain other matters in relation to it.'</p>	<p>Crowd safety and crowd control</p>	<p>"All our employees have SOCSO, all have it. [...] SOCSO is compulsory for the management, right? ... as somebody who is sensitive to the workers I will be responsible for those who is under me..."</p>
<p>Civil Aviation Act 1969 (Act 3)</p> <p>'An Act to make better provision in the law relating to Civil Aviation and for matters connected therewith and ancillary to it.'</p>	<p>Technical hazards (Aviation events and fireworks)</p>	<p>"Well, basically in Malaysia the event itself, in event, aviation events, it has been regularised by the Department of Civil Aviation. So, these are the things that you have to take heed to what are the requirements, the requirements of the....well, it will regulates, it will cover almost all aspects of the event itself. So, we have to pay insurances, the licences, permits. Of course number one is if you don't have permission from DCA you cannot do it, it's against the law. [...] DCA, for the air you have to abide their law, that is number one."</p> <p>"Wait, wait... Simultaneously when you apply you also have to apply for DCA, that is for fireworks, Department of Aviation. Anything above 500 feet you must get DCA approval, and you also have to apply for 'Bomba'. [...] 50 metres or 500 feet I forgot, and you have to also have the 'Bomba'. 'Bomba' you need to have for fireworks, for pyro-technics..."</p>

6.8 Conclusion of findings: Safety risk typology for Malaysian event industry

As has been mentioned, this chapter is actually the continuation from the previous chapter which focused on important emergent themes and sub-themes related to this study. Thus, the aspect of emergency services for event planning and management were elicited as another important theme with regards to event risk and safety. Respondents discussed several external organisations that were crucial in terms of emergency management such as the police force, the fire department, medical services and some other related organisations. The police force, which includes the traffic police and the federal reserve unit (FRU), was mainly responsible for the crowd management and crowd control aspect whereas the fire brigade (or also known as Bomba in this study context) was tasked with handling fire and ensuring the safety of the building where the event been staged through the endorsement of the CF (certificate of fitness) and several machinery inspections. The medical services meanwhile were mentioned as hospitals, ambulances, doctors, medics and clinics, in which the participants also addressed the importance of having a first aid team and security personnel to handle emergency matters being coordinated by a command centre. The other vital components in this category comprise the sub-themes such as a safety committee, a search and rescue team, security companies or security consultants as well as other voluntary organisations often deployed in events vicinity, such as the Red Crescent Society, RELA corps, Territorial Army Regiment and the civil defence services agency (JPA3 or JPAM).

The threats related to various security risks and issues also contributed to the safety and wellbeing of the crowd. The security aspect initially focused on the security of personal belongings of a crowd attending events and other assets or effects belonging to event organisations, including the event venue facility. The biggest security threat was related to terrorism and bombing, although some participants argued that this threat was not particularly relevant to Malaysia based on its clean record related to such incidents. Most of them mentioned crime-risk with theft as the most commonly featured cases in the forms of pickpocketing and snatch theft incidents. The incident of

missing children was also quite common especially in crowded areas of events which warranted certain action to be taken before this matter escalated into a more serious problem. Participants in this study have some differing arguments relating to the extent of involvement but most agreed that security aspects would have been handled by the following parties: the police and local authorities; security companies or appointed security consultants; the maintenance contractors (for event venues); and/or the event organising team themselves. There were a considerable number of respondents who claimed that security was the responsibility of event venue management, based on the notion that the event would be held at their place. The issue of security personnel being tasked with safety matters because of the non-availability of safety officer post has been highlighted as a major weakness in the practice of safety within the local event industry. Finally, there were also some security issues on the blind spots for an event venue and also issues related to the application process of permits and licensing requirements by the local authorities.

Environmental health and safety or also occasionally known as environmental risk and hazards was divided into two major facets indicated as natural disasters and global outbreaks or pandemic disasters. The first category here refers to the severe weather conditions that have affected some events in Malaysia such as heavy rainfall which normally is accompanied by strong winds, cyclones, mini typhoons, storms and storm surges that sometimes resulted in the risk of flooding. There were also respondents who identified the risk of sudden changes in the wind direction and the importance of regularly updating the general weather conditions particularly from those in the fireworks and aviation events category. On the other hand, the global pandemic disaster was related to two deadly epidemic health outbreaks that have infected the country within the last decade which were the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the H1N1 virus, or popularly known as the swine influenza pandemic. The final risk mentioned in this environmental risk hazards was the threat of venomous creatures and/or poisonous animals which might harm participants in certain event locations.

The next major theme emerging from this study was an indirect effect which was regarded as a consequential loss that could affect the risk and safety of an event being organised. The financial or business risk from event cancellation would definitely affect an event organisation's reputation as well as their business continuity which could hamper the livelihood of all stakeholders involved. There were also several opinions confirming the relationship between financial risk and safety aspects in which a situation of budget constraint or less revenue would result in low safety measures undertaken. The other important emergent theme in this section was the importance of insurance coverage to minimise the risk from safety incidents and accidents. Among the common insurance coverage taken by the event/venue managers were the third party public liability insurance, contractors all risk insurance (CARS), fire and building insurance for the event venue, as well as personal life insurance coverage for certain key individuals, such as the artists and musicians. On another note, the aviation insurance was regarded as a benchmark in the promotion, implementation and enforcement of this good practice within the event management industry in Malaysia.

The final risk categories identified by this study were related to food safety hazards and risks caused by human factors. The food safety aspect was regarded as one of the most important risk management criteria which was related to food and catering management which involves the management of food and its preparation as well as the proper handling and the hygiene procedures. This process was crucial to avoid the risk of food poisoning which is caused by food not being properly cook, diseases from contaminated food or water and hygienic factors which normally resulted in diarrhoea and some allergy reactions to the victims. Besides that, the fallible nature of human beings led to errors such as the acts of negligence, doing things hurriedly, fatigue and tiredness or certain personal/family issues that could influence the risk and safety features. To these acts of negligence we can add unprofessional conduct, such as accepting bribes for personal gain or being too complacent especially towards personal contacts on matters related to risk and safety.

All these efforts on hazard identification can be summarised or simply described as the process to find, list and characterise hazards. But it is worth noting that there were various differing responses that have led to the emergent themes and sub-themes. The researcher has made considerable efforts to identify and analyse those important themes (including some that were meant but not explicitly spoken) based on the consistency in participants' statements. This difference in responses was maybe based on the fact that risk and safety has been regarded as a sensitive or somewhat controversial aspect to be discussed openly because it could somehow effect the organisations' reputation and image. However, what was consistent in the responses was the importance of conducting risk assessments to evaluate the level of risk associated with each functions of event operation. It is assumed that by exploring the significance of all hazards and risks involved, event planners and venue managers will be able to obtain a valuable understanding of the necessity of managing risk and safety preventive measures in preparing for an event. After identifying the possible adverse events (risks/threats), and evaluating their likelihood of occurrence and their expected consequences, a summary of thematic network diagram of event safety risk typology based on a Malaysian perspective is presented in Appendix XII.

This chapter later expands on some brief discussions in terms of the legislative aspects, focusing particularly on the current state of the implementation and enforcements of Malaysian acts within the event management industry particularly from risk and safety perspectives. There are three government related agencies responsible for the implementation, management and enforcement of health and safety across all sectors namely the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), National Institute of Safety and Health (NIOSH) and Social Security Organisation (SOCSO), the latter specifically tasked with compensation and insurance matters resulting from work-related injuries. There were also discussions on the country's legal acts (Law of Malaysia) relevant to the event management industry as perceived by the participants of this study, such as: Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 (Act 514); Factories and Machinery Act 1967 (Act 139); Environmental Quality Act 1974 (Act 127); Explosives Act 1957 (Act 207); Peaceful Assembly Act 2012 (Act 736); Fire Services Act 1988

(Act 341); Civil Aviation Act 1969 (Act 3); and Employees' Social Security Act 1969 (Act 4). The implementation and enforcement of these acts within the event management sector might enhance the risk and safety best practices. It is also expected that by exploring the significance of all hazards and risks involved event managers will be able to obtain a valuable understanding of the necessity for the management of risk and safety preventive measures they can utilise in preparing for an event.

7 CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to provide insight on how key event stakeholders such as event planners and venue managers perceive risk and safety aspects in the event management industry in Malaysia. The subject of risk and safety is much more of a personal or subjective judgment than a finite measure and therefore, does not lend itself to being reliably measured (Rose, 2006). That was the first reason that triggered this study to adopt an approach based on the perspectives of the participants involved. Perception differs between each individual, so it was natural that some informants reported more than others and portrayed different attitudes to the matters related to this area of investigation. Risk perceptions vary, reflecting of course biases based on differing exposure to information as well as other experiences and sensitivities (Cummings et al., 2013), such as the participants' experiences, background, exposure and their micro-cultural contexts. Thus, it was common that some subjects under study gave rich and nuanced data whilst others may have preferred to 'play safe'. But no matter what, the data driven operation of this qualitative inquiry has produced a sufficiently robust conclusion that there was generally a strong desire to measure and track risk and safety in the investigated domain (Rose, 2006). The ever-increasing drive for smooth event operation must be shown by Malaysian event stakeholders to uplift this industry to a higher standard both nationally and internationally. As a result, this study has offered the first empirical evidence of risk and safety hazards relating to the Malaysian event management field in the form of an event safety risk typology which highlights major themes such as crowd safety, technical and logistics, alcohol, environmental hazards, security and financial risks as well as the aspects of emergency services.

7.2 Conclusions and Recommendations

The main purpose of the study was to obtain descriptive and explanatory accounts (Miles and Huberman, 1994) of risk and safety management practices. Thus, the intent of this study was to collect specific data that would identify current industry practices in the area of event safety risk. Understanding these practices allowed event planners and venue managers as well as other event practitioners to establish benchmarks pertaining to risk and safety aspects, and later on to determine appropriate risk assessment and risk management strategies in order to reduce the hazards/threats posed by event management organisations in Malaysia.

I will start the discussion on this section by critically reviewing the strategy undertaken by this study. Over the past four years, empirical data was extensively gathered from event planners/managers as well as event venue operators involved in the Malaysian event management industry. The data collection process involved two distinct stages: initial/preliminary data collection in 2009 and a larger data collection for the main phase in 2011. This data provided a comprehensive basis for interpretation, and formed the basis of the study. Qualitative research was recognised as more suitable in seeking the in-depth perspectives of key event management stakeholders in the industry (Creswell, 2007). The literature confirmed that there was insufficient research on the topic undertaken by this study (Allen, et al., 2002; Silvers, 2005; Fallon and Sullivan, 2005; Silvers, 2008; Robson, 2009). Furthermore, there was also insufficient empirically published data on the effectiveness of various strategies within the event industry on risk and safety matters, and insufficient published data on the perceptions of risk and safety within the event management context (Robson, 2009). Due to the lack of empirical studies in this area a ‘grounded’ approach has been largely undertaken but also in some little part deductively supported/inspired by previous studies of Allen et al. (2002) and Fallon and Sullivan (2005). Hence, the literature review chapter was not a priori requirement but merely been used as preliminary reading and as a guidance for part of data gathering processes. It was the emergent themes from the data that suggested what and which literature would be sought or

deployed. However, it is worth mentioning that this iterative process critically affected the outcomes of this study. It may appear that there was over-reliance on certain literature discussed in chapters four and five, but these happened in response of the strong drives from those emergent themes. It was the data which suggested the relevance of those literatures. In other words it was the emergent themes which suggested what literatures apply. I believed that this is a suitable exploratory strategy to investigate this matter of risk and safety from a Malaysian perspective. Having said that, it was important to note that the empirical outcome of this research in the form of an event safety risk typology was suggested by the data rather than absolutely confirmed. Hence, this exploratory research enabled the researcher to collect data in a systematic way and focus on the direction rather than the destination.

The study also examined the impact of inadequate risk and safety planning and identified event managers', planners' and event venue operators' liability risks pertaining to safety. A few respondents testified about the need for 'industry standards' with no proof that the industry actually followed the claimed standard that may not actually exist. Most participants in the study expressed concerns related to inadequate practice among Malaysian event professionals and expressed their regret at the lack of commitment and enforcement regarding this matter. But on the other hand, the study found a more sufficient implementation of risk and safety aspects within the special category of aviation and air related event planners. For instance, the 'Air Boss' concept could be implemented into the general event management practice, provided that the events' host as well as the event planners and venue managers are willing to reduce their authority and endorse full autonomy for this specific individual in charge of the risk and safety. However, more in-depth study was needed in order to examine whether this idea can be put into practice in the Malaysian event management industry.

This study provides a cautionary tale that we should look to the types of risks being investigated as the perceptions of these risks differ tremendously both as a function of the characteristics of the risk itself and the personal characteristics that distinguish between individuals making risk judgments (Cummings et al., 2013). In

other words, each risk has been investigated according to each individual participants' judgment based on their personal characteristics (such as their personal and professional background, experiences, exposure to risks, organisational stance, etc.) Although it focuses on individuals, the key findings from the current study may help other event planners and venue managers to view categories of risks that display similar risk perception markers among more homogenous subsets of individuals (Cummings et al., 2013). For instance, the participants involved in the aviation events sector gave more or less similar opinions regarding the importance and the practice of risk and safety within their field. Hence, the addition of studying specified risks in concert with similar risks, may yield greater gains in understanding individual and group perception (Cummings et al., 2013), such as when studying specifically the risk of fire or other electrically related technical hazards. And to be able to divide up the risk by area requires each safety risk to be appropriately classified for cause and other factors. The specified risk identified between similar risk categories has been summed up by the event safety risk typology in the previous chapter. But this classification can be further extended by studying each individual type of event on the notion that different types of events would carry different types of risk. Hence, the classification of risks requires the selection of the types of events from a set of classifiers or descriptors that can possibly be referred to as major risk categories recommended by this study - that might explain what the risk was and what its likely cause was. An event may involve several causes and areas of operation so each "event may have may have several different risks classifications – each owning area of the event operation so that the total risk can be divided between them" (Rose, 2006, p.28).

This study explored the significance of risk and safety and the need for proper operating procedures in identifying the risk assessment plan for the event management industry in Malaysia. However, it was not the intention of the research to provide prescriptions for the data analysis and findings, hence, most of them were quite descriptive in nature. The prescription is supposed to come at a later stage of the process which will involve the risk evaluation and/or risk rankings probably done in the risk assessment and the subsequent risk management stages. However, there were

certain occurrences in which the researcher has expressed prescriptive explanations such as when discussing the cost concerns among the event entrepreneurs in efforts towards the management of safety risks involved in their events (refer chapter 4: tension between cost of risk and profitability).

This study would recommend the development of a theory (or maybe merely a framework) for risk and hazard identification. It has been concluded that there were three continua of risk that were found by this research, each of which were categorised under three different dimensions in terms of probability, severity and financial aspect. Such risk continua would help in the process of evaluating the identified risk later on. The first risk continuum would evaluate the severity brought about by each risk in terms of its security and danger, while the second continuum would predict the probability of the risk from its likelihood to happen. The third risk continuum would weigh the risk from a monetary/financial point of view, ranging between revenue generating and financial loss. The three continua would later develop an orthogonal pattern of risk perception as described in figure 7.1 below. But this model would probably need further investigation maybe in the risk assessment phase later on. Nevertheless, based on its exploratory nature, this study can be seen as one of theory generation rather than theory verification. In short, the result of this study may be used as a benchmark to identify important safety risks and also to mitigate devastating financial losses and to protect event/venue managers from liability and safety disasters, as well as a marker for further research on risk evaluation, assessment and management later on.

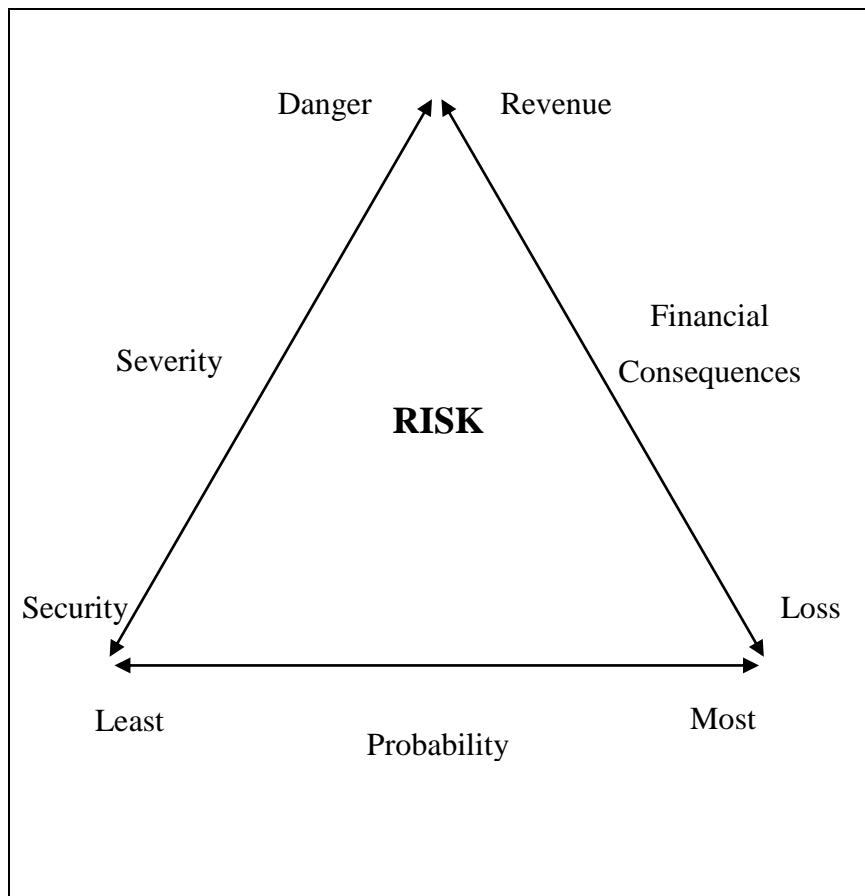


Figure 7.1: Proposed risk and hazard identification triangle (framework)

7.3 The Author: Reflexivity in Writing My Research

This research endeavour has taken me towards issues of reflexivity and representation in my field of inquiry. When I started writing my research proposal and writing up and discussing the findings of my pilot study I, like many other qualitative researchers, chose to write in a distanced, third-person voice. However, according to Gilgun (2005) this approach gives insufficient attention to the voices of both informants and the researchers, as if neither they nor their informants (especially their informants!) were part of the research. This was not a surprising starting-point as since I had just ‘switched camps’ from a quantitative to a qualitative approach, and regarded myself as a novice in this whole new world of qualitative investigations. The need for an in-depth

analysis brought me towards a different approach to a qualitative method where the empirical details are prominent and valued more than any drive towards generalisation in the quantitative style. Hence, apart from the nature of the problem, being reflexive about one's positivism was necessary because it reflected my background, and suggested a way to slowly and systematically adapt myself to this new venture into qualitative research.

Thus I had been inclined towards qualitative researchers who write in a distanced, third-person voice and who gave short shrift to informants' 'voice' because we believed that this kind of impersonal writing was more 'scientific' whereas first-person writing was not. In reporting my pilot study I used the quotation type called 'embedded quote', briefly quoting phrases within the analyst's narrative as proposed by Creswell (2007) and Richardson (1990), because they consume little space and provide specific concrete evidence in the informants' words to support the identified theme. I also tried to distance myself from the interviewer-interviewee relationship by not acknowledging the personal politics involved. I was of the opinion that my research would be more scientific by omitting myself as it would avoid my personal bias, prejudice and so on (although later on I found out that this possibility was rejected by most qualitative researchers). I did not realise at first that by omitting the voices of myself as author and my informants' constitutes a form of silencing. But I was not too concerned, based on Gilgun's (2005) view that most qualitative researchers recognise multiple perspectives, and so consider the idea that definitions of science are essentially pluralistic and that dominant understandings are subject to revision.

After attending and participating in some sessions on reflexivity organised by fellow researchers at my faculty I was in quite a dilemma about my stance in this qualitative undertaking. I tried to be more reflexive about myself and my area of inquiry and as a result, began facing myself with numerous questions such as: how am I going to include myself in the research project? What sort of engagement do I expect from this study? Am I somehow related to the topic of the study? Will I be able or not to self-disclose myself in analysing the data? How far would I distance myself from the

study by being ‘objective’ and how deeply am I going to include myself and my interpretation in writing up the thesis? I also came across some qualitative literature among others by Creswell (2007) who acknowledged that qualitative researchers today are much more self-disclosing about their qualitative writing and conclude that it is no longer acceptable to pose as the omniscient, distanced qualitative writer. On a related note, Haraway (1988) warned researchers not to pull ‘the God trick’ by speaking in anonymous third-person voices, instead urging them to make their presence explicit in their writings. Gilgun (2005) likewise concluded that by using a third-person voice, the author silenced himself along with the informants. Denzin (1989) and Richardson and St. Pierre (2005) also critique the positivist approach in search of objectivity and as a result the qualitative researcher today is more likely to acknowledge the impact of qualitative writing on the researcher, participants and the reader as well (Creswell, 2007). All these experiences (engaging myself in reflexivity discussions and qualitative readings) encouraged me to take a second look at my study and give deeper thought to my qualitative writing style.

I started thinking and reflecting how much I had included myself in this research journey right from the beginning when I made the decision on the topic itself. As this is a qualitative study, it is central to narrate where I was from, what made me decide to undertake this journey, where am I now and where am I heading. This implicitly includes the importance of an ontological and epistemological stance that I have taken in this long journey. The choice of topic for my research project was actually based on my experience as an academic in an event management undergraduate program at a local university in Malaysia. So, the focus of this study has been based upon my professional experience. Of course there is no absolute best practice for managing risks at events (Fallon and Sullivan, 2005), however, I still hope that my novel approach will at least have significant implications for the event management industry in Malaysia. Hence, without any particular concern about an overtly reflexive approach, I had actually been reflexive concerning my own experience as well as my perceptions towards risk and safety issues in the Malaysian event management industry.

According to Creswell (2007), how we write is already a reflection of our own interpretation based on the cultural, social, gender, class, and personal politics that we bring to our research. All researchers, as persons as well as professionals shape the writing that emerges. In my case it was obviously based on my cultural background as a middle class Asian male postgraduate student living in the West (UK). Such a background influences the way I perceive things. On a larger scale, I have to admit that the way I interpreted my study (and other things) was still largely influenced by my cultural background and past experiences, although I have tried my best to be as open and objective as possible.

Qualitative reporting is always a matter of co-constructions, representations of interactive processes between researchers and the researched (Gilgun, 2005). During the early phase, I was not fully engaged with this context of interviewer-interviewee relationship as I was not directly involved in the industry, and (had I not been the researcher) would not fit into the informants' sample myself. But contrary to my initial thinking, Gilgun (2005) suggested that the use of the first person and of direct quotes is a way of acknowledging that the voices of researchers and those whom we research are not the same, yet are interconnected. For example, I began to realise that this study actually has an important cultural context (and maybe political as well), with me living more than four years in the UK (see seat belt story on risks below – this story was not in any way related to the Seat Belts story in Adams (1995, p.113). But the truth was that there was actually an aspect of me that is quite relevant to my area of study. The following is a story, perhaps an allegory, on how I perceive risk and safety issues particularly in relation to my driving style back in my home country in Malaysia, and how I suddenly emerged as a completely different person/driver in the UK. Such a story is a good metaphor for me in my reflexive journey towards researching risk and safety for event management industry in Malaysia.

7.3.1 The ‘Seat Belts’ Story

For more than a decade since I obtained my driving licence back in 1991, safety and risks has never come into my consideration whenever and wherever I am

behind the steering wheel. This kind of rough attitude maybe based on me getting a driving licence at a very young age and also based on the conditions of road safety in Malaysia which was among the countries that have highest road accidents cases. So, in a way it becomes quite a norm for Malaysian drivers (including me) to pay little attention and not be too cautious with our driving style. Motorists and drivers were largely not risk-adverse at all, where road accidents and fatal incidents on the road have been regarded as common news for centuries. Traffic laws and road safety regulations become less of a concern as the enforcement and implementation was so weak and poor, thanks to a corrupt system and their law enforcers.

As for me, even during the last ten years I have been summoned, fined and even involved in a few accidents (no fatalities) but still all those cases never changed my driving attitudes and perceptions towards this subject matter. For example, I never put on a seatbelt whenever I drive or as passenger in a car unless I am about to be stopped by the police, in such circumstances I was forced to wear the seatbelts to avoid a hefty fine by the authorities. To be frank, I have been fined more than three times by the traffic police for not wearing my seatbelt for which I reluctantly agreed to pay the fine – the final one about a week before I left to the UK. It was not too extreme to say that there was only financial concern (to avoid me paying hefty traffic fines) if I happened to put those seatbelts on during those years in Malaysia.

After living for more than three years in the west (UK specifically), I was quite surprised that my view and/or attitude on road safety and risks have been totally changed. I had never imagined that I would be able to change the bad attitude concerning my driving behaviour but the impossible does happen. In fact, here in the UK I had never been involved in any accidents and was also never been fined for any traffic offences, mainly for the reason that I never committed one! I have to admit that during my first year I am too cautious whenever I took to the road here in the UK, which was actually a new experience altogether for me living in another country. It was maybe based on my own assumption that I am a foreigner in this country so will try to avoid any unnecessary problems. Another reason was maybe because of the law

enforcement and implementation itself, in this case referring to the traffic regulations. There were comparatively lots of traffic cameras and police patrol cars everywhere, a scene that seems so unfamiliar in Malaysia based on the low ratio of police officers compared to the United Kingdom.

Moreover, my perceptions and attitudes have been enhanced indirectly by numerous TV programs regarding law enforcement units, something that can be regarded as taboo in my home country. Slowly and steadily I had come to a conclusion that law enforcement here in the UK aims to educate people whereas in Malaysia laws normally were been used as tools of punishment. A very good example is traffic speed cameras; here in the UK we can see those cameras from a distance so we will avoid speeding unlike in Malaysia where the police will try their best to keep it hidden from the motorists mainly for the purpose of getting as much tickets/fines possible for their collections. In short, living three years in the UK has successfully transformed me into being a good driver with lots of safety and risk concerns, something that I had never achieved as a motorists in Malaysia for nearly two decades. As we put it to the end, now I would automatically put on the seatbelts even for just reversing my car in our own driveway!"

7.3.2 How does this story connected to this research?

The ‘seatbelt’ story narrated above actually gave a very good example of how I interpreted the findings and wrote the discussions based on an interviewer-interviewee relationship between me as the researcher and the interviewees as my informants. I have in a way perceived the event risks and safety issues differently from my informants, who are all Malaysian based. I have somehow been in a position where I could recognise their views by being a Malaysian myself but also be able to further extend my understanding by being in a country that is comparatively more developed with regards to risk and safety aspects (plus living in a more risk-averse society of 21st Century Britain (Cornish, 2010). In terms of reflexivity, this personal story of my experience of the traffic safety culture between the two countries shows how my initial cultural orientation changed once I shifted cultures. This complex experience has given

me some sort of personal advantage in doing my data analysis. I was able to jump in and out of my informants' shoes, 'zooming' in and out from time to time in order to access deeper and alternative meanings and have in-depth and comparative understanding on the topic discussed. I was also enabled to address not just the informants' standpoint but also my own standpoint as the researcher, although in most cases I tried to minimise the personal political aspect based on my ontological stance. The 'rhetorical' structure (overall and embedded) based on Creswell (2007) was used throughout writing up the findings and discussions for the entire thesis.

To be honest, I was undecided whether to fully acknowledge my involvement in this investigation or to distance myself from it by keeping the third voice as I did in writing up the preliminary phase. Hence, according to Richardson (1994) the best writing acknowledges its own 'undecidability', so maybe I could take a rather positive stance on my state of being (my dilemma) at the time. Of course in a qualitative study there is no single way of absolutely deciding which approach is the best due to its subjective nature, but the choice made by the researcher must reflect or be in accord with the ontological and epistemological stance chosen. In my case, although I am doing a qualitative inquiry, I have adopted a post-positivist ontology that seems quite appropriate to the voice that I had chosen in my preliminary stages in accordance with Gilgun (2005) and Creswell (2007) who both agreed that if the chosen philosophy of science is relatively positivistic, then the third voice chosen might have been appropriate. Thus, I have chosen to take both measures by using both the first and third language throughout the writing up process for this thesis.

Although qualitative writing has been shaped by a call for researchers to be self-disclosing about their role in the writing and also how information conveyed is read by the audience (Creswell, 2007), it is up to us as social scientists who have the task of figuring out how to represent ourselves and other human beings in the most full and accurate way possible (Gilgun, 2005). Qualitative researchers still have choices in how to present and represent what they come up with, so researchers can include themselves and their informants in their writing to varying degrees, but the presentation

must be consistent with the philosophy of science on which the research is based (*ibid*). For this research, I decided to focus on the objectification of the voices of informants in the hope that I can give readers a direct grasp of the respondents' voice rather than my own.

7.4 Research Contributions

7.4.1 Originality: A Novel approach

"Original means not derived, copied, imitated or translated from anything else; novel; creative; independent in invention" (Chambers English Dictionary, 1990 cited by Silverman, 2010, p.69). Both the literature search and the preliminary investigation undertaken at the beginning of this research revealed that there was a lack of research in this area of inquiry, especially in the Malaysian context. In fact, this exploratory study was the first (research) empirical attempt to address this gap in this particular domain.

Being an academic involved in the establishment of the first event management undergraduate program by a public university in Malaysia triggered my motivation to investigate the area of risk and safety in event planning and management as this specific area of inquiry is actually among the five most important knowledge domains necessary for the management of an event (Silvers et al., 2006). The novel approach of introducing a risk typology based on the risk and safety aspects may be not only exclusive for the event management industry in Malaysia but also an attempt at sharing best practice among academic communities and event practitioners worldwide. It is expected that the proposed event safety risk typology will be the first of its kind in Malaysia and may set a benchmark not only for event management organisations but also have implications for event management education programs in the country as risk management for events is actually recognised as a core competency and responsibility in most event management certification program and curricula (Silvers, 2005).

There are 15 different definitions of originality agreed by Phillips and Pugh (2005) for a PhD research project. Hence, the originality and novelty of this study were synthesized from the concept of originality proposed by the authors and described in the following table:

No	The Concept of Originality (Phillips and Pugh, 2005)	This Research Project
1	Setting down a major piece of new information in writing for the first time.	The literature search and pilot study confirmed that there has never been any written form of standard or best practice in relation to the subject area of this research in Malaysia.
2	Continuing a previously original piece of work.	N/A
3	Carrying out original work designed by the supervisor.	N/A
4	Providing a single original technique, observation or result in an otherwise unoriginal but competent piece of research.	N/A
5	Having many original ideas, methods and interpretations all performed by others under the direction of the postgraduate.	N/A
6	Showing originality in testing somebody else's idea.	N/A
7	Carrying out empirical work that hasn't been done before.	The qualitative inquiry for the topic has been done by Fallon and Sullivan (2005) but for a smaller number of samples and only referring to two community sponsored events in Sydney and New South Wales. Robson (2009) did an investigation on risk perception in Canada using a quantitative approach but focusing only on meeting planners.

8	Making a synthesis that hasn't been made before.	This study tries to synthesise different areas of event management, risk perception, management and assessment, and intertwined event management with some part of project management.
9	Using already known material but with a new interpretation.	This research partly adopts a topology on risk categories originally introduced by Allen et al. (2002) that has never been interpreted from the Malaysian perspective.
10	Trying out something in Britain that has previously only been done abroad	This study of event safety risk was the first of its kind in the Malaysian domain.
11	Taking a particular technique and apply it in a new area.	The study attempts to apply the risk perception theory in other fields for the use in the new field of event planning and management.
12	Bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue.	N/A
13	Being cross-disciplinary and using different methodologies.	This study involves the interdisciplinary nature of risk perception, assessment and management, project management and event management.
14	Looking at areas that people in the discipline haven't looked at before.	Very few have looked into the matter but there has never been a large scale comprehensive study focusing on this topic.
15	Adding to knowledge in a way that hasn't been done before.	This study fills the gap in its specific area of inquiry and provides a milestone for further research in this area.

7.4.2 Contribution to the Body of Knowledge

The research will hopefully contribute to the body of knowledge in the rapidly growing but emerging area of event management studies. It has supplied explicit evidence that despite numerous events organised by various organisations in Malaysia, there was no standard procedure for identifying the risks associated with organising and managing events. This research was therefore important in helping event planners and venue managers form a better understanding of the importance of

risk and safety in managing event projects as they need to familiarise themselves with the concepts of risk assessment and risk management (Fallon and Sullivan, 2005). This was because once the threat was defined and hazards identified, an assessment must be made of the event or activity against that threat (Rose, 2006).

As the researcher, I personally wish that the findings of this research will be used as a basis for the identification of risk factors related to the risk and safety aspects for event planners and venue managers in Malaysia. There was an optimistic anticipation from the informants interviewed in the study that the proposed ‘Event Safety Risk Typology’ will act as a minimum standard or set of requirements towards the important need of implementing safety and risk management measures when organising and managing events in the country. To sum up, the anticipated/expected research contributions were outlined as:

- i. The empirical findings on: (i) the extent of event risk and safety practices among events’ planners and venue managers; (ii) event practitioners’(event planners and venue managers) perceptions towards the importance of risk and safety activities; (iii) regulations and legal requirements pertaining to the risk and safety aspect in Malaysia.
- ii. A generic typology for event safety risk focusing on important risk factors for event management industry in Malaysia.
- iii. An avenue for further research in the new emerging field of event management and/or risk perception.

It was anticipated that this generic typology will fill the gap to serve as a source of reference particularly for Malaysian event practitioners which includes event planners and venue operators in this emerging industry. This is a suitable exploratory aid to help event planners and venue managers in Malaysia in the identification of safety risks pertaining to their event management operation. This study has established a learning process where experiences of participants have been accumulated and contributed to increase safety awareness and safety performance levels in the future. Thus, the risk

typology produced can also provide a basis for theoretical and research underpinning for the wide ranging scale of Malaysian event management education and professional training programs. Finally, this study also contributes to the literature on risk and risk perception, safety management as well as event management field of study, and has particular relevance to other developing countries especially within the region on the management of risk and safety.

7.5 Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study was that the selection of participants derived from convenience or purposive sampling before being expanded by snowballing techniques. Thus, reliability and representation concerns can be raised here but it is important to note that that was not the focus of this study. This was a study based on perceptions, so what I am doing here is presenting the perceptions and not any objective reality. That was the reason for using the ‘iceberg model’ explained in chapter five, but again there were limitations as some of the risks might be hidden. According to Rose (2006), there were two potential ways to overcome these limitations; first by using more reliable data and second, by trying to verify the data to determine how much of the iceberg you can actually see. Hence, another in-depth study with a larger sample equipped with alternative methods might be worth taking in order to further explore this issue.

There were many other dimensions pertaining to the risk and safety aspect that were not investigated or addressed by the study. For example, one item that has not been discussed in this research pertained to the type of training used to enforce crowd management and crowd control aspects in event management and planning. Last but not least, this study has been taken only on a limited Malaysian context which means that the data collection was limited to the Klang Valley area which comprises the capital city of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

7.6 Future research

Insight gained from this study may provide event planners and venue managers with relevant information when designing and implementing benchmarks for the event management industry in Malaysia. However, further studies of risk factors specifying specific event venues such as sports facility and specific events, such as music concerts should be conducted. Perhaps this study has provided additional areas for event and venue managers to investigate later (Fried, 2009). It also offers potential areas for future research, which may result in greater understanding of risk and safety aspects and assist in reducing it.

The study found that risk measurement and safety practices in the aviation and air-related events were comparatively more efficient than the general event management industry. Hence, in the near future, I am planning to publish an article on implementing/improvising the concept of aviation safety in the event management field. The existing data from the six participants from the aviation industry can be further investigated and become part of my empirical data in examining whether this concept is workable or not. The working title for this article would be ‘From aviation to event management: applying concepts of aviation safety to risk management in the event industry.’

This study focused on the perceptions of event planners and venue managers regarding risk and safety, and the risk such as human error was viewed from the event practitioner’s perspective, meaning that questions were asking about the negligence and ignorance from the planners’ and organisers’ point of view and not from the audience’s perspectives. But “those who attend events perceive them to be in safe environments, and those working in the event environment continually strive to improve and develop strategies to ensure a safe environment is maintained for all” (Connell, 2009, p.27). Based on this view, it was expected that other future studies on the same focus can be taken but this time from the audience perspective. This study confirmed

Mykletun's (2011) views that it was hard to provide an empirical real-life test to the effect of this risk prevention and safety management techniques. Hence, it might be possible to use other data collection methods or different methodological approaches to address this issue in the future, including participant observation (Mackellar, 2013). Such methods may help to gather more valid data about actual safety, as it could come from real-time monitoring of the operation to detect incidents and events as they occur (Rose, 2006).

Maybe another study could be undertaken in the future, starting by revisiting those informants who have previous experiences dealing with alcohol intoxicated crowds and researching current practice on how they have handled those alcohol related issues'. Once these alcohol management practices are identified, industry benchmarks can be created and implemented by concerned event planners and venue managers, as benchmarks are necessary to determine appropriate industry practices (Fried, 2009). The findings from this future study might result in new policies on strategies and/or new techniques being developed that will impact alcohol and crowd management practices for years to come. Enforcing these policies will help to promote crowd safety, increase revenue generation for the planners/venues and assist in limiting potential litigation (Fried, 2009). Other than the alcohol risk, maybe more studies focusing on all major emergent themes could also be undertaken in the future.

Future researchers could also replicate this study at other domains, or a larger geographical population than the Klang Valley which only involves two capital cities which were Kuala Lumpur and Shah Alam. In future studies, gathering data in all of the Malaysian cities including East Malaysia would provide a larger, more varied sample that could enhance the findings of the study. Similarly, a comparative study between these capital cities could identify city-specific factors that influence visitors' perceptions. It could also be valuable to conduct a before and after study, whereby respondents are questioned using entry and exit surveys (George and Swart, 2012). On a larger perspective, maybe an additional research study could also disaggregate different countries into regional geographical regions and nationalities to gain more

insight, in an attempt to achieve more targeted sample strategies. There is an optimistic feeling that this ‘event safety risk typology’ may be transferred across contexts, but the problem is a shared understanding and loyalty may be the decisive matters (Mykletun, 2013) because in most cases, nationality also appears to explain differences in perceptions of risk (Barker et al., 2003). Moreover, the aim to identify categories of risks may be developed in subsequent studies to improve future risk perception investigation. But most importantly, as the study of risk identification has been concluded, the next step now will be to embark on another research to develop a complex risk assessment and risk management plan for event management industry in Malaysia.

7.7 Final remarks

For most, the road to success is long, sometimes confusing, laden with obstacles and a never-ending stream of competing priorities (Gaynor, 2009). I, like some other unfortunate (qualitative) researchers have been engaged in this iterative and never-ending journey that has taken most of my time (and my other resources) for more than the past four years. Being a novice researcher in a qualitative arena has not helped at all, but looking optimistically on another aspect has given me enormous new experience and has built confidence for my future academic endeavours as a qualitative investigator. As a final remark, I would really hope that at some point in the near future, this in-depth understanding will make certain event/venue managers apply greater due diligence when addressing risk and safety aspects especially in the event management industry in Malaysia.

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