

EFFORTS IN PROMOTING THE CULTURAL EVENT “PESTA DAMAS” IN KINABATANGAN, SABAH

ABSTRACT

This research focus on the efforts in promoting the cultural event *Pesta Damas* in Kinabatangan, Sabah. *Pesta Damas* was an annual event held and organize by Sabah Association of Bangsa Sungai (SABAS). An effort to promote this cultural event are needed to be done holistically. The association needed more involvement from the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The purpose of this study is to highlight the promotional effort that can be done to promote the cultural event and to analyze the important of the involvement from private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition, to suggest the strategic way to get a sponsor and promote from private and corporate organisations for this event. This study used methodological technique involving questionnaire survey and in-depth interview with informant from SABAS. The findings show that the promotional effort such as using different types of social media platform, promotion campaign, and broadcast media with the help of private sector and non-governmental organizations can promote this event widely. Overall, this research can help improve the promotional effort of the *Pesta Damas* in the future.

Keywords: *Efforts, Kinabatangan, Promotion, Cultural Event, Pesta Damas, Sabah*

INTRODUCTION

Pesta Damas is a cultural event that is organized and held by Sabah Association of Bangsa Sabah (SABAS). Damas means a traditional boat for the Sungai ethnic group which has become one of the main means of transportation for them to earn a living since generations. The main purposes of this events are to introduce Sungai's ethnic culture to the local community, especially to the young people from the ethnic group. *Pesta Damas* was first held in 2015 and then started to be an annual event. This event usually held on September in Sukau, Kinabatangan. There is a lot of events in *Pesta Damas* such as the main event the decorated boat competition, traditional costume, traditional dance, traditional music, exhibition of houses, clothes, and traditional handicrafts. *Pesta Damas* is a new and unique tourism product in Sabah. This event had help from governmental agencies such as MOTAC and Tourism Malaysia. Additionally, a cultural event is an event that not only preserve culture, but it also promotes the culture to the local and foreign tourists (Utusan Borneo, 2019).

Efforts to preserve the culture of the Sungai ethnic in the state of Sabah have been carried out by the Sabah Association of Bangsa Sungai (SABAS). Therefore, the involvement of various parties

is needed to promote this cultural festival. In addition, according to Muhamma (2019) states in a published article that efforts to promote culture-based products need to be done holistically with the cooperation of not only government departments and agencies. Efforts to preserve the culture of the Sungai people through the Pesta Damas not only require support in terms of promotion but also in terms of sponsorship. Moreover, according to Muhamma (2019) also mention that it is hoped that more private and corporate companies sponsor and promote more cultural programs. Therefore, *Pesta Damas* need support in sponsorship and promotion to rise the event in Kinabatangan, Sabah.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The initial goal of this study is to discover the potential promotional efforts that can be done by SABAS toward the cultural event '*Pesta Damas*' in Kinabatangan, Sabah. Next, is to analyze the importance of the corporate sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in promoting this event. Finally, this research is to recommend a strategy for obtaining sponsorship and promotion from private and corporate groups for '*Pesta Damas*'.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher will be using a literature review to gather all the information or data that are related to the topic. *Pesta Damas* is a Sabah Association of Bangsa Sabah (SABAS) annual event. Moreover, this event consists of traditional costumes & music competition (Jupin, Dolhan, Indang, & Abdullah, 2021). The "*Pesta Damas*" highlighted the expressions of local culture, especially orang sungai culture, with most of the activities having their origins in this custom. In addition, according to Kunjuraman, Hussin, & Che Aziz (2022) mention that *Pesta Damas* can be thought of as cultural aids for preserving cultural traditions, particularly for the orang Sungai tradition.

Cultural events such as *Pesta Damas* can have a significant influence on economic and cultural growth. Furthermore, Bob, Swart, Gounden, Gumede, and Nkambule (2019) demonstrate the effects of celebrations and events on neighbourhood economic growth and residents' quality of life. These are regarded as critical activities for identifying cultural traits and interests, as well as

acting as a marketing catalyst for locations. According to academic documentation on promoting an event by Muhamma (2019) discussed that cultural-based product promotion must be done holistically. These issues require the attention and cooperation of both the corporate sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This relevance to it is intended that more private and corporate organisations would finance and promote cultural programmes such as *Pesta Damas*. (Muhamma N, 2019).

Conforming to Kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat (2016), promotion is any action made to promote or increase the sale of a product. While Belch and Belch (2018) define promotion as the coordination of all seller-initiated efforts to establish channels of information and persuasion to sell goods and services or promote an idea. The company may inform its clientele about what it does and what it can provide through promotion. Furthermore, promotion types include advertising, social media outreach, special offers, branding, public relations, and exhibitions. As what told by Muhamma (2019) efforts to maintain the Sungai people's culture through the *Pesta Damas* require not just promotional but also financial assistance. As a result, *Pesta Damas* need sponsor and promotion to grow the event in Kinabatangan, Sabah.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for a study involves a mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods to obtain various data sources and information. A quantitative research method works with quantifying and analysing variables to get the results. It involves the analysis of numerical data using statistical tools to answer questions like who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how using the who, how much, what, where, and what data. (Apuke, 2017). The qualitative method involves in-depth interviews with a small group of respondents to obtain specific and authentic data related to the research issue. According to Hennik, Hutter, and Bailey (2020), qualitative research is a strategy that enables in-depth examination of people's experiences

using a particular set of research techniques, including in-depth interviews, observation, focus group discussions, content analysis, visual methods, biographies, and life histories

For quantitative method, the researcher used questionnaire survey to obtain data and information from respondent about the *Pesta Damas*. The question will be focusing on how well the promotional effort that had done by the SABAS to promote *Pesta Damas* to local people in Kinabatangan district. Next, the questionnaire survey will also contain question about to the importance of private sectors and non-governmental organizations (NGOS) involvement in promoting the *Pesta Damas* and suggest a strategic way to get sponsor and promote from them. the questionnaire survey was focus on the local people who have been to *Pesta Damas* in Kinabatangan, Sabah.

While for qualitative method, the researcher used purposive sampling and had conducted an in-depth interview session with two informants from SABAS promotion unit that is Mr. Haji Arbani bin Askal and Mr. Mahjur bin Salleh.

Then, for quantitative method the researcher will collect data and conduct a pilot test method and the researcher will analyze through IBM software Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27 to determine the formulated questions by the researcher. This will make it easier for researchers to conduct real field studies in the actual situation and time to come. The pilot test result will be measuring the as follows:

a > 0.9 – excellent

a > 0.8 – good

a > 0.7 – acceptable

a > 0.6 – questionable

a > 0.5 – poor

a > 0.4 – unacceptable

After the researcher did the analysis through the IBM Statistical Package for Social Science software (SPSS) version 27, the researcher has obtained the results for the pilot test is an average of 0.860 which is in the range of $a > 0.8$ – Good. With decision, the researcher can conduct a field study to obtain research findings as well as officially distribute questionnaires to respondents for answered.

Reliability statistics		
<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized item</i>	<i>N of items</i>
0.860	0.879	20

Table 1: Pilot test result

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The researcher will discuss the results from findings that have been analyzed clear and thorough on the study. To obtain the precise data sources for this research, the researcher has used two methods that is qualitative and quantitative methods.

A). Qualitative data analysis

Promotional effort that can be done to promote the cultural event “*Pesta Damas*” in Kinabatangan, Sabah.

Based on the in-depth interview with the informant the promotional effort that can be done promote the cultural event. It indicated that one of promotional effort that can be done is using a different type of promotion strategy. SABAS had used different types of promotional strategy such as advertising, promotion through social media, and using print media. It stated that it was effective in attracting the visitors not only on domestic level but also globally. Using different types of promotional strategy proven effective for them because not less than 20 thousand people came during the 3 days event. The visitor are foreign tourists from country like Europe, China, and Korea. They also state that they also going to have more cooperation with government agency, private sector, and NGO. It shows that government agency and private sector like Lembaga Kebudayaan Negeri Sabah, Lembaga Pelancongan Negeri Sabah, Jetama Sdn.Bhd, Astro Awani can help promote this event widely.

The important of private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involvement in promoting cultural event “*Pesta Damas*” in Kinabatangan, Sabah.

The involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in helping to promote *Pesta Damas* in Kinabatangan, Sabah. It states that with help of from these two parties it can encourage a lot of visitors to come into *Pesta Damas*. The involvement of private sector and NGOs provide media coverage to *Pesta Damas*. Private sector like KUPI-KUPI FM, Sandakan FM, and ERA FM doing coverage to help promote this event. The informants state that some of the private sector help the promotion by promoting it directly to the tourist such as putting poster and brochure in hotel around Sabah. This in fact, can help promote the event domestically and globally. Other than that, the informant states that they are hoping for more private sector and NGOs can involve and contribute to *Pesta Damas*. SABAS hoping that they can provide sponsorship and promotion for the *Pesta Damas*. As far as now, some private sector like Adabi Consumer Industries Sdn.Bhd had provide product sponsorship to attract visitor to join the cooking competition.

Strategic way to get a sponsor and promote from private and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for *Pesta Damas*

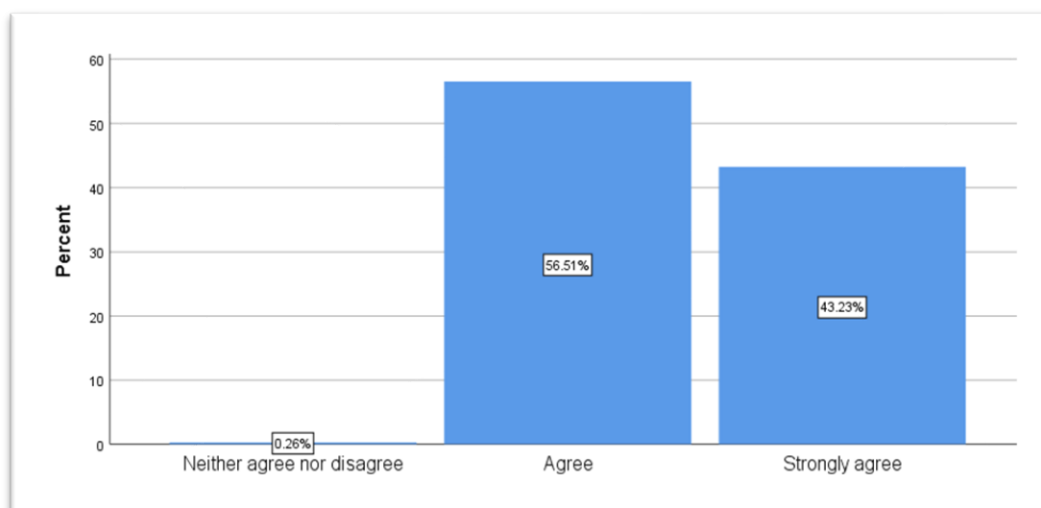
There are a few strategic ways SABAS carry out collaboration with private companies and NGOs. First, they will call on any private companies or NGOs that wish to participate in the *Pesta Damas* to participate in their meetings. Meanwhile, for the existing parties, SABAS will always be in touch with them to forge stronger cooperation. It stated that SABAS is in constant contact with them to exchange opinions and ideas to enliven the *Pesta Damas* in the future. With these strategic ways they can expand the network of contacts and to be better known throughout Sabah. This

strategic way has ensured the relationship between SABAS and the private companies and NGOs continues to this day. Lastly, the finding and results shows that SABAS will indeed provide space for the private companies and these NGOs to open booths or exhibitions to ensure our relationship continues to be strong.

B) Quantitative analysis

Using different types of promotional strategies such as using advertising, social media, and print media to promote the *Pesta Damas* in Kinabatangan, Sabah

Bar graph 1: Using different types of promotional strategies such as using advertising, social media, and print media to promote the *Pesta Damas* in Kinabatangan, Sabah



(Source: SPSS descriptive data, 2023)

		Using different types of promotional strategies such as using advertising, social media, and print media to promote the <i>Pesta Damas</i> in Kinabatangan, Sabah.			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	0	0	0
	Neither agree nor disagree	1	.3	.3	.3
	Agree	217	56.5	56.5	56.8
	Strongly agree	166	43.2	43.2	100.0
	Total	384	100.00	100.00	

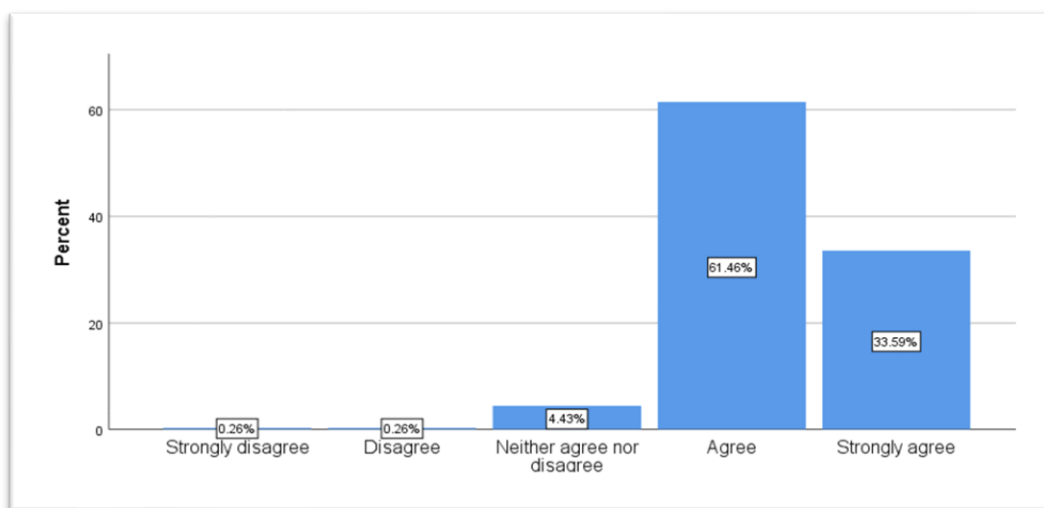
Table 2: Using different types of promotional strategies such as using advertising, social media, and print media to promote the *Pesta Damas* in Kinabatangan, Sabah.

Based on the table 2, it shows that the number of respondents who are “Agree” on using different types of promotional strategies such as using advertising, social media, and print media to promote the *Pesta Damas* in Kinabatangan, Sabah recorded the highest record by 56.5%. equal to 217 respondents. The second highest is “Strongly agree” that is 43% equal to 166 respondents. Next, “neither agree nor disagree” recorded 3% equal to only one respondent. Meanwhile, “disagree”, & “strongly disagree” got zero frequency.

Based on the finding and results, shows that most of the respondent choose “agreed” on this promotional effort that had been done to promote this event. Therefore, it indicated that most people think using a different type of strategy can promote the event more widely.

Provide financial sponsorship such as covering the cost of advertising and promoting the *Pesta Damas*.

Bar graph 2: Provide financial sponsorship such as covering the cost of advertising and promoting the *Pesta Damas*.



(Source: SPSS descriptive data, 2023)

		Provide financial sponsorship such as covering the cost of advertising and promoting the <i>Pesta Damas</i> .			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.3	.3	3
	Disagree	1	.3	.3	5
	Neither agree nor disagree	17	4.4	4.4	4.9
	Agree	236	33.6	33.6	66.4
	Strongly agree	129	61.5	61.5	100.0
	Total	384	100.00	100.00	

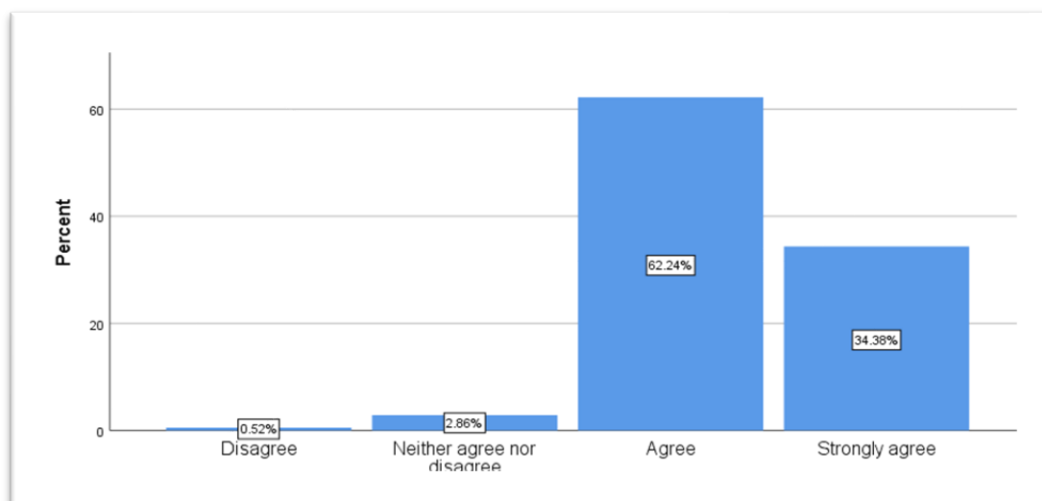
Table 3: Provide financial sponsorship such as covering the cost of advertising and promoting the *Pesta Damas*.

Based on the table 3, it shows that the one of the reason the important of private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involvement in promoting cultural event “*Pesta Damas*” in Kinabatangan, Sabah is to provide financial sponsorship such as covering the cost of advertising and promoting the *Pesta Damas*. The number of respondents who choose “Agree” recorded the highest record by 33.6%. equal to 236 respondents. The second highest is “Strongly agree” that is 61.5% equal to 129 respondents. Next, “neither agree nor disagree” recorded 4.4% equal to 17 respondents. Meanwhile, “disagree”, & “strongly disagree” got same frequency that is 3% equal to only one respondent.

Based on the finding and results, it shows that most of the respondent think that the involvement of the private sector and the NGO is important to give *Pesta Damas* financial sponsorship such as covering the cost of advertising and promoting the *Pesta Damas*.

Offering returns to private and corporate parties such as trade fairs or free stalls in *Pesta Damas*

Bar graph 3: Offering returns to private and corporate parties such as trade fairs or free stalls in *Pesta Damas*.



		Offering returns to private and corporate parties such as trade fairs or free stalls in <i>Pesta Damas</i>			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0
	Disagree	11	5	5	5
	Neither agree nor disagree	2	2.9	2.9	3.4
	Agree	239	62.2	62.2	65.6
	Strongly agree	132	34.4	34.4	100.0
	Total	384	100.00	100.00	

Table 4: Offering returns to private and corporate parties such as trade fairs or free stalls in *Pesta Damas*.

Based on the table 4, it shows that the most respondent choose “Agree” that is by 62.2%. equal to 239 respondents. The second highest is “Strongly agree” at is 34.4% equal to 132 respondents. Next, “neither agree nor disagree” is at 2.9% equal to 2 respondents. Meanwhile, “disagree” got 5 % equal to 11 respondents. Lastly “strongly disagree” got no frequency.

Based on the finding and results, it indicated that most of the respondent assume that it is a strategic way to get a sponsor and promote from private and corporate organisations for *Pesta Damas*. By offering them something both parties will be willing to make cooperation for the *Pesta Damas*.

CONCLUSION

The promotional efforts undertaken by SABAS to date have had a positive impact. However, deeper attention needs to be made to ensure that this promotion effort can be done continuously and further developed to a high level. The findings of this study are expected to provide a clear picture of the promotional efforts that have been carried out not only by SABAS but with the assistance of government agencies, the private sector, and NGOs. The findings of this study show the importance of engagement as well as the assistance provided by the private sector and NGOs. The researchers hope that this study will provide exposure to the parties involved such as the private sector and NGOs to always be involved in helping to promote cultural products to a higher level.

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