

## Antecedent of Event Management Intention Toward Sustainable Practices: A Theoretical Framework

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**Abstract:** The incidence of rising global temperature, extreme weather, depletion of finite resources, and other environmental impacts has shown as one of the most crucial issues to deal with. The situation to create low-carbon communities and sustainable systems through sustainable event management—that is, the switch from conventional event management concept to more environmentally friendly and socially responsible practices among the event company by engaging with various stakeholders. Recent studies suggested that evidence on sustainable intentions concerning events in Malaysia is still limited. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, environmental consciousness and economic benefit toward sustainable capabilities. This paper will contribute to future literature regarding understanding what drives the event management intention toward sustainability contributing to the existing green behavior and body of literature. It will increase stakeholder awareness and policymakers to be more innovative in reducing environmental impact. This paper is expected to better understand company behavior toward adopting ecologically ethical and socially accountable methods. More research needs to be done to validate and reinforce the proposed theoretical framework. Therefore, future research should concentrate on both qualitative and quantitative research designs by examining the relationship between the antecedents and intention. Ideally, insights from practitioners and academicians are highly encouraged in substantiating the proposed theoretical framework.

**Keywords:** *Event Management, Sustainability, Sustainable Capabilities Intention, Attitude, Environmental Consciousness.*

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### 1. Introduction and Background

The events sector has expanded rapidly in recent years, making a major contribution to both cultural and economic development. However, issues regarding sustainability have been raised by the event's environmental effects, such as waste production, carbon emissions, and resource depletion. A viable strategy to lessen these environmental effects and encourage ecologically friendly practices in the events sector is sustainable event management; sustainability capabilities pertain to the deliberate incorporation of environmentally and socially responsible methods across the whole process of organizing and carrying out an event. By acknowledging the effects that events can have on the environment, nearby communities, and general societal well-being, this strategy goes beyond typical event management. The goal is to organize events that accomplish their goals and make a positive impact on a sustainable and responsible future. Recent studies suggested that evidence of sustainable intentions about events in Malaysia is still limited (Mair, & Smith, 2021; Abdullah et al., 2023). Historically, previous studies predominantly focused on the advantages of sustainable events for society or organizations in terms of socioeconomic development (Chirieleison et al., 2020; Langarita & Cazcarro, 2022). They also aimed to understand the management and organization of these events (Martinho et al., 2018).

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a widely recognized psychological model. In the context of sustainable event management, TPB provides important insights into how both individuals and organizations approach and integrate sustainable practices into event planning and execution. Sustainable event management focuses on organizing and conducting events in a way that reduces negative environmental and social impacts while enhancing positive outcomes (Zamzuri et al., 2013). Notably, the sustainability impact of sustainable events on behavioral intentions has often been neglected (Tolkes & Butzmann, 2018). Even so, there is little awareness of event organizers' attitudes toward sustainable practices. Abdullah et al. (2023) indicate that attitudes can be changed depending on the situation and conditions. Thus, sustainable events can shape attitudes and promote sustainable behavior. Therefore, this study wants to report how the factors affect the behavior of event

sustainability in Malaysia as this has not been reported. To reduce environmental footprints and improve sustainability in event planning and execution, the objective of this study is to determine factors that influence the event practitioner's intention toward sustainable practices.

## 2. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

The research framework indicates that there were five independent variables: attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, environmental consciousness and economic benefit.

**Attitudes:** In psychological terms, attitude refers to a person's evaluation or feelings toward a particular object, person, group, event, or concept. Attitudes can be positive, negative, or neutral and play a significant role in shaping an individual's thoughts, choices, and actions (Ajzen, 2005). The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) posits that attitudes toward a behavior are crucial in influencing an individual's intention to perform that behavior (Tsen et al., 2006). A favorable attitude suggests that the person sees the behavior as beneficial, enjoyable, or desirable, increasing the likelihood of forming a positive intention. Event organizers' positive or negative evaluations of sustainable practices influence their behavioral intentions. A favorable attitude toward sustainable event management, considering its benefits for the environment, community, and long-term viability, increases the likelihood of individuals incorporating such practices into their events (Jones, 2017).

Sustainable event management improves event quality and manages environmental, social, and economic impacts while reducing resource consumption (Janjusevic & Mathur, 2021). Event organizers need to understand the attitudes of their target audience towards sustainable event management to effectively promote and implement sustainable practices. By addressing any negative perceptions or misconceptions through education and awareness campaigns, event organizers can encourage positive attitudes and behavior change among stakeholders. Attitudes are formed through various sources, including personal experiences, social influences, and cognitive processes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). Event organizers' attitudes toward sustainability practices may be influenced by their past experiences with implementing such initiatives. For example, if an event organizer has previously experienced success in reducing waste and carbon emissions at their events through sustainable practices, they are more likely to have a positive attitude toward sustainability and continue to implement these practices in the future.

Attitudes play a role in influencing individuals' intentions and behaviors toward sustainable event management. Individuals who perceive fewer barriers or challenges associated with sustainability initiatives may be more inclined to adopt them due to their favorable attitudes. Sustainable event practices show an organization's dedication to wider societal and environmental objectives, helping to create a stronger bond with participants. Nowadays, attendees who are driven by purpose frequently prefer to engage with events that align with their values (Ashwin, 2023). By cultivating positive attitudes through education, communication, and advocacy efforts, event organizers can foster a culture of sustainability within the events industry and contribute to a more environmentally friendly and socially responsible future. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**H1:** Attitude has a significant effect on influencing behavioral intention in sustainable event management.

**Subjective norm:** A critical concept in the theory of planned behavior, refers to the perceived social pressure or approval-disapproval from important others regarding a specific behavior. Research consistently shows that subjective norms play a significant role in influencing behavioral intention in sustainable event management (Song et al., 2012; Hübner & Kaiser, 2006; Han et al., 2018; Wan et al., 2018). For example, 43.4% of the variance in sustainable consumption behavior can be explained by environmental influences, education and information, and market conditions. (Figueroa-Garcia et al, 2018). In the context of sustainable event management, subjective norms encompass the perceived social pressure or approval from industry peers, stakeholders, and the broader community (Barbera & Ajzen, 2020). When significant others expect or support sustainable practices, it contributes to the formation of behavioral intentions and the development of sustainable event management capabilities.

Several studies have emphasized the significant influence of subjective norms on behavioral intention in various contexts. For instance, Song (2012) demonstrated the impact of subjective norms on environmentally

friendly perceptions at a festival. Hübner & Kaiser (2006) and Wan (2018) further supported this finding by examining the relationship between attitude-subjective norms conflicts and the use of urban green spaces, respectively. Research indicates that subjective norms positively impact behavioral intentions across various settings, including sustainable actions. For example, a study on construction companies revealed that perceived social pressure from stakeholders increased the likelihood of adopting green practices (Li et al., 2023). Likewise, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) framework has been used to explore how subjective norms affect individuals' intentions to participate in eco-friendly behaviors. This framework suggests that when individuals believe that significant others expect them to act sustainably, they are more inclined to do so (Wu & Chiang, 2023). These findings collectively suggest that subjective norms play a role in shaping behavioral intention, including in the context of sustainable event management. By understanding and addressing the subjective norms related to sustainable practices in event management, event professionals can develop more effective strategies to encourage sustainable behaviors among attendees, exhibitors, and other stakeholders. This can lead to positive outcomes, such as reduced environmental impact, enhanced brand reputation, and improved stakeholder engagement.

**H2:** Subjective Norms have a significant effect on influencing behavioral intention in sustainable event management.

**Perceived behavioral control (PBC):** A key concept in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which is a widely used model to predict and understand human behavior. Perceived behavioral control reflects the individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The theory suggests that a concrete intention to engage in a behavior is formed when an individual perceives a sufficient level of control over that behavior. The TPB emphasizes the role of perceived behavioral control, indicating that individuals are more likely to act on their intentions if they feel they have control over the behavior. Conversely, perceived controllability involves external factors like resources, opportunities, and potential barriers (Vamvaka et al., 2020).

Sustainable capability aligns with this concept, as it involves individuals' capacity to overcome barriers and implement sustainable practices effectively. The TPB's concept of perceived behavioral control is relevant in the execution phase of events. Event organizers need to feel they have control over the implementation of sustainable practices, such as choosing sustainable vendors, managing waste effectively, and minimizing the event's ecological footprint (Allen et al., 2022). When event organizers perceive that they have control over the implementation of sustainable practices, they are more likely to take action and make sustainable choices. This is because PBC affects an individual's motivation to engage in the behavior. When people believe that they can perform a behavior, they are more likely to put in the effort to do it.

Additionally, Jin et al. (2013) found that perceived constraints and perceived value, respectively, significantly influence behavioral intentions in event management. Jeong & Kim (2020) further supported this, showing that event quality, tourist satisfaction, and place attachment also play a role. Perceived control can change one's motivation to engage in decision-making processes, which could potentially influence behavioral intentions (Weissmann, 2020) in sustainable event management. These findings suggest that PBC is a complex concept that is important for event organizers to be aware of the factors that influence PBC and to develop strategies to increase their sense of control over the implementation of sustainable practices. By doing so, they can increase their likelihood of engaging in sustainable behaviors and reducing the environmental impact of their events.

Meeprom (2020) found that perceived special event quality directly influenced social, economic, and emotional value, which in turn affected behavioral intentions. Similarly, Hashemi et al. (2020) identified a positive association between perceived conference quality and behavioral intentions, with accessibility and self-congruity playing a significant role. By understanding the factors that influence PBC, event organizers can develop more effective strategies to increase their sense of control over the implementation of sustainable practices. This can lead to increased adoption of sustainable practices in the event industry and a reduction in the environmental impact of events. Therefore, it can be inferred that:

**H3:** Perceived Behavioural Control has a significant effect on influencing behavioral intention in sustainable event management.

**Environmental Consciousness:** Environmental consciousness is likely to have a direct impact on forming

strong behavioral intentions (Wiek et al., 2011; Liu, Teng, & Han, 2020). The level of understanding individuals possess regarding the environmental implications of their actions significantly influences their commitment to engaging in environmentally responsible behaviors. Environmental consciousness is a key factor in translating intentions into actual behavior. Boo & Park (2013), Fang et al. (2018) and Lin & Niu (2018) highlight the importance of environmental knowledge and educational experiences in driving the intention to implement green practices. Informed individuals are more likely to follow through on their intentions by incorporating sustainable practices into their daily lives. These individuals recognize the personal responsibility they hold in protecting and preserving natural resources.

Event organizers who possess a greater understanding of environmental issues are more likely to embrace and act upon the principles of environmental responsibility, as outlined by the TPB. Consequently, this knowledge empowers organizers to exercise greater control over their behavior, making them more likely to engage in sustainable practices and contribute to the collective effort to protect the environment. Environmental consciousness acts as a powerful catalyst in fostering strong behavioral intentions and translating them into concrete actions (Tandukar & Yadav, 2020). Song et al. (2012) extend this to the festival context, demonstrating that environmentally friendly perceptions positively influence behavioral intention. Organizers who are well-informed about environmental issues are better equipped to make informed decisions, embrace sustainable practices, and actively contribute to the creation of a more sustainable and responsible society.

**H4:** Environmental Consciousness has a significant effect on influencing the behavioral intention in sustainable event management.

**Economic Benefit:** The economic benefit of sustainable event management is a complex and multifaceted issue. Numerous studies have explored the relationship between economic factors and sustainable event practices, providing insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by event managers. Reddy et al. (2023) highlight the role of macro and micro environmental factors in determining the demand and competitive advantage in the event management industry. This suggests that economic considerations, such as market trends and financial incentives, play a significant role in shaping the adoption of sustainable practices by event managers and organizers.

Janjusevic & Mathur (2021) emphasizes the growing importance of sustainability in event planning, with a focus on the environmental, social, and economic impacts of events. During periods of economic growth, businesses and consumers may have more disposable income to spend on events, leading to increased demand for event management services. Conversely, during economic downturns, demand for events may decline as businesses and consumers cut back on discretionary spending. One key issue is the tension between the need for economic viability and the desire to reduce environmental and social impacts. Event managers are often faced with the challenge of balancing the financial sustainability of their events with the need to minimize negative externalities. This can be a difficult task, as the cost of sustainable practices can be higher than conventional practices.

Economic incentives, such as cost savings, support for the local economy, sponsorship opportunities, and enhanced brand value, reinforce the link between intentions—shaped by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)—and the actual adoption of sustainable practices in event planning. The long-term economic advantages, such as an improved brand reputation that leads to increased attendance and greater brand loyalty, can further bolster the intention to pursue sustainable practices (Barozzi, 2023). When organizers recognize that sustainability boosts brand value, they are more inclined to plan and commit to sustainable events. Many event managers may not be aware of the long-term cost savings and reputational benefits that can result from adopting sustainable practices. Understanding that sustainable practices not only lessen environmental impact but also promote local economic development can make organizers more inclined to adopt these practices (Ashwin, 2023).

Additionally, there may be a lack of knowledge about how to implement sustainable practices effectively. To effectively address the economic and environmental challenges of sustainable event management, a broader understanding of sustainability is needed. This includes understanding the economic, environmental, and social impacts of events, as well as the role of stakeholders in promoting sustainability. Despite these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the importance of sustainable event management not only as a



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