

Environmental Awareness through Garden Festival in Malaysia: A Public Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Tourism Malaysia has well established with important roles in Malaysia. Resent actions by Malaysia government to expend the economic by promoting tourist destination. In recent years, the rapid growth of event festival it become a new products. By doing this, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board (Tourism Malaysia) under the Ministry of Tourism & Culture, start focuses on promoting the country at all level. The campaign in 2015 Malaysia started continues with the 'Malaysia Year of Festivals' (MyFEST) with the theme 'Endless Celebration' emphasising the various festivals the campaign towards achieving the country's target of 36 million tourist arrivals outline from Tourism NKEA (National Key Economic Area). Every state in Malaysia have different type and content of festival activities, and at the same time they set up own brand festival. The need of planning creative festival, can meet better demand of tourism consumer and improve the visibility of the city and drive the regional economy. It will promote the healthy development of festival tourism.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction of Festival:

This decade has shown an increasing demands of professional development in festival organisation. Evaluation is becoming valuable management tool in demonstrating success and achievement of objectives. However, to date, there is limited research focus on the evaluation of the garden festival, with the limited research or published evaluation practice by viewing current literature and presenting the findings of an exploratory study into the approach taken for evaluation of the garden festival in Malaysia.

This paper discusses one of the important Malaysia annual garden festival namely 'Floria Putrajaya Flower and Garden Festival' located at Putrajaya city. This festival is created as a platform to educate public awareness and at the same time the exhibit provide education, inspiration and enjoyment. This study will provide a detail analysis of the Garden Festival in Malaysia and explain on how garden festival plays important role in educating public awareness. Firstly, this paper discusses on the development of the Garden Festival throughout the history and the evolution of Malaysia International Landscape and Garden Festival, the first garden festival in Malaysia and followed literature review on the concept and characteristics of the Garden festival. The discussion involves an evaluation of the public perception of the Garden Festival and how this showcase and give impact to public awareness. Additionally, challenges to organizer to make Malaysia society environmental awareness through the Garden Festival.

2.0 History of Garden Festival:

The origin of the garden tourism found in the Europe. The first garden festival began in Germany in 1945. The area was a war-devastated land and they started with design competition in a form of master plan and took up to ten years to form and establish urban parkland and become a permanent asset for community. Germans concentrated on Bundesgartenschau (Federal Garden Shows) every two years and every ten years there is an International Gartenbau Ausstellung (I.G.A) which is international exhibition recognized by Bureau

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International des Exposition. The idea has been adopted in Europe, the Dutch hold their Floriaden in every ten years and this similar to garden festival in Switzerland, Austria and France, and one in Canada, Montreal in 1980 and also being planned for Osaka, Japan in 1990 and for Columbus, Ohio in 1992. The Bundesgartenschauen or BUGA Park began as a local garden show in Dresden and become international shows, and continues through the twentieth century. In 1980 the joint Council for landscape industries, consisting of representative of landscape architects, landscape contractors and the plant nursery trade, central government started introduce German-style Gartenschauen to Britain. The British Department of the Environment start opened Garden Festival in May 1984 known as Liverpool International Garden Festival (IGF). The third garden festival Glasgow opened in 1988 has been well organized and successful.

Both garden festivals have their own concepts, English have a garden tours and substantial part of English tourism industry, whereas Germans with Bundesgartenschau (Federal Garden Shows) and providing the cities as a major tourist attraction.



Fig. 1.0: Britzer garden

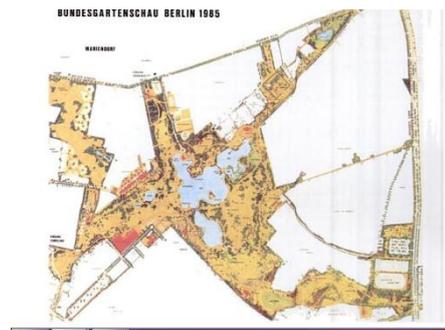


Fig. 1.1: Masterplan of the 1985 Berlin Garden Show

3.0 International Garden Festival:

There are local garden festivals, Regional Garden Festivals, National Garden Festivals and International Garden Festivals. The qualify as a International expositions, a show must be recognized by the International Association of Horticultural procedures (AIPH) and Bureau of International Exhibition and held in Liverpool, England, which was established by a diplomatic International Convention. Now it's become a model for several others country. Inspired from the history of garden festival many country in the world started to organized the Garden Festival, such as Floriade- Netherland, Chelsea Flower Show- United Kingdom, Keukenhoff- Netherland, Melbourne International Flower And Garden Show- Australia, Garden Tech Singapore, Thai landscape and Garden Show, Singapore Bloom, Ellerslie Flower Show-New Zealand, Floriade Canberra-Australia, Hong Kong Flower Show, China International Landscape and Garden Show Shenzhen – China, World Horticulture Expo, Kuming- China.

The development of garden festival during history until present prevails not much difference. During history, the used of festival ground from the war-devastated land and started with design competition in a form of master plan. After ten years the place become urban park as permanent community park. Most of the festival ground from a new urban park or being upgraded from the existing park. According, to Wolfgang Miller Garden Show have always take place on the same site. As to date, most of the garden festival was held in the park as existing environment. It was simply that the infrastructure was already present.

4.0 Progression of Malaysia Garden Festival:

Malaysia Government, under National Landscape Department and the Ministry of Housing & Local Government of Malaysia committed to organize a Garden Festival, and for the first time in 2004, Malaysia started The International Landscape and Garden Festival. This Festival hosted by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) at the Perdana Lake Gardens and has been endorsed by the International Federation of Parks & Recreation Administration (IFPRA). The goal of this garden festival was in line with the Malaysia government objectives to be Garden City by 2020. By organizing LAMAN, government is hoping for all levels of society to realise that garden living as a cultural and can muck and groove of society. Organizing the festival can create awareness, interest and educate society in landscape and forward realizing government intention to be cultural life in our society.

LAMAN showcases every aspect of the Malaysian and International landscape and horticulture industry; from commercial agricultural products to garden exhibitions and landscape products. Exhibitors from Malaysia and foreign countries create exceptional displays and presentations in a park-setting environment. LAMAN also act as a meeting point for local and international industry players for the development of new businesses. This festival is organized in order to provide a platform to exhibit and discuss a new technology in landscape and

garden development, besides exchanging information on landscape industry and horticulture industry; from commercial agricultural products to garden exhibitions and landscape products.

5.0 Research Issues:

Vukonic and Cavlek (2001) stated that there are eight main types of events: cultural, political, economic, entertainment, scientific and educational, sports competitions, recreational and private. Cultural events include festivals, carnivals, commemorations and religious events. Political events are heads of state summits, royal ceremonies, political meetings and visits of important persons. Grzinic & Vojnovic, (2014) believe that not all cultural events have the same potential and valorisation. But the most significant among them are festivals which can be defined as public, theme-designed celebrations, held in time-limited periods and which celebrate valuable aspects of the way of living of the community and can be educational for all those participating.

This paper focusses on garden festival as public events and educational development. Discussion in paper intends to elaborate on the issues related to visitor point of views towards environmental awareness at Garden Festival.

Garden Festival a Platform to Educate Public Awareness:

As mention earlier, the purpose of Garden Festival is to create environmental awareness, and to educate public especially young generation in appreciating their living environment. Garden festivals also contributed to a better social life; they create atmosphere for people to come together and celebrate, thus improving the quality of life.

The most popular element in garden festival is a garden showcase presented with various design themes and concept. The garden represents the transformation of site according with distinguish aesthetic values. Display elements in garden festival not only displaying domestic garden culture, but also rare opportunities to advance new thinking in garden design and counter traditionalist thinking. The approaches to the character of festival grounds have emerged: the festival as a display of floriculture and related environmental concerns. Therefore the display of the environmental garden and using recycle material in festival ground as one of the idea to educate public awareness Elements of small-scale garden culture are a prevalent design motif at all garden festivals and are the most consistently identifiable festival concept. People attending the festival show are able to learn new idea, enjoy variety of garden design display and at the same time they enjoy attractive garden concept elaborated with intricate planting composition using variety of plant materials. More importantly, garden designers always remember to display the name of the plant species (local and scientific name), in order to educate public about planting material in a very responsive way of learning.

Garden Festival as a Fun Learning Place:

There are numbers of activities and programs provided by the people who participated in garden festival organization. Besides variety of attractive garden displays, this festival ground can also be as a place for DIY garden. Thus, this garden show will not only presenting the end products but also teach public on the process of garden making. Normally, exhibitors will have a close session before the event started. This is during the preparation and construction of the garden show. Close preparation is required due to safety, cleanest, and time constrain. Therefore, there is a need for the exhibitors to think of alternative in providing fun learning ways of gardening activities during the show.

Every festival and special event have a difference objective, the organisers are strongly responsible in achieving the goal and objectives of the garden festival. For instance, the organizers have to ensure public receives variety of ways elevating environmental awareness during Garden Festival. These programs created throughout the event open-up fun and attractive learning time and enjoying themselves with numbers of gardening, design, arts and crafts opportunities while attending to the show. A limited timeframe seems to be one of the limitations for the showcasing of garden festival. Garden festival therefore, seems to be quite difficult for public to attend especially for those who are staying outside the country. There is a need for researcher to think and discuss on the best possible way to solve the timeframe issues and accessibilities to the organized garden flower show.

"Many Festival have limited timeframe (National Task Force on Tourism Data (Canada)., *stated "A celebration or display of some theme to which the public is invited for a limited time only, annually or less frequently"*.

Garden Festival as a Trend Setter:

The Garden Festival has become an annual festival for most of the countries in the world. Each years, the organiser will invited professional landscape practise from government department, private sector, university and school children to participate in a garden show. They have to conceive and built installation in a garden base on the theme in a size of approximately 10m x 10m and 5m x 5m space given.

Garden showcase become a main feature in the garden festival. This garden showcase do not only displaying a modern and new trend of garden design but also this icon of the international garden. The garden showcase is a place of displaying of type of garden in the world. Every Garden in the world have the icon and identity of their garden such as Chelsea Flower Show with English cottage garden, become popular during the 20th century in France and northern Europe. Keukenhoff- Netherland with tulip, Melbourne Flower Show with contemporary garden, Japanese garden, Chinese Garden. Displaying this garden give knowledge to visitor to learn more other country concept garden. In Malaysia however, icon and identity for the local garden festival is still at the moment; can be considered as uncertain.

Conclusion:

Much of the appeal of garden festival is that they are never the same, and you have to 'be there' to enjoy the unique experience fully; if you miss it, it's a lost of opportunity. The displaying a garden with a variety of ideas and concepts only can been seen once a year with limited of duration some people will come and repeat visitation.

Visitor attractions and events also differ in some key success and effectiveness management factors, including funder, community, and educational objectives; and levels of local community involvement and participation. Application of the structural model indicates that garden festival provide a showcase which then contributes to public awareness and education. These finding contribute to the understanding how garden festival is a platform for educate public awareness and a place of education contribution to the public. Therefore, In addition, 'virtual events', communicated through various media, also offer something of interest and value to consumers and the tourism industry.

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