Assessing the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events: a supply-side perspective

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Declaration regarding independent work

I, Vanessa Govender (identity number 8404030039081, student number 12795828) hereby declare that this research submitted to North-West University, Potchefstroom for the MA Tourism study: ***Assessing the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events: a supply-side perspective***, is my own independent work; which is compliant with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other measures, pertinent policies, rules and procedures of North West University. This study has not been submitted before to any institution by any other person or myself in fulfilment of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

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Moreover, all observations and suggestions made during this study are those of the researcher and should not be regarded as those of CWT, NWU TREES, Prof Martinette Kruger or North-West University.

Personal journey and acknowledgements

I finalised my honours degree many moons ago. Thereafter I have been blessed abundantly with cherished travel opportunities worldwide and building up work experience in a wide variety of niche travel markets during the past 14 years. Being more right-brain oriented with an internal excitement for creativity, I always yearned to work in a tourism sector with a specific outlet for my copious creativity. That is how I found my happy place within the Tourism Meetings & Events (MICE) industry.

Working in the corporate world is rewarding, particularly in monetary terms. But I realised two years ago that the time has arrived for me to find a deeper purpose, to do more research and give back to this lovely industry; from an academic angle. That is how this brainchild was born; for me to further study corporate meetings and events was the natural choice as study topic.

While further researching this area, I found that little to no research has been done on a framework for effective event management in South Africa, stipulating guidelines and key success factors for event planning during the three main phases of pre-, during- and post-event. Not only does this study fill the gap in current research, it also holds the prospect of contributing to event planners practising the profession and guiding academic institutions in what to add and implement in theory studies of event management. This study also highlights common traits that successful event planners in their longstanding careers portray and what they have in common. This will assist recruitment companies and event-management industries with what to look out for while hiring potential successful event planners.

During my first year of writing my literature study (Chapter 2 and 3), I was dedicated to the purpose and infatuated with writing an outstanding literature study and delivering an insightful piece of work. It was difficult at times to juggle all my responsibilities and maintain a healthy work-home-study balance. When I look back at all the chapters, I'm in awe and can't believe I did all of this within such a short timeframe. Ultimately, enrolling for this Master's degree changed me and my perspective on life. This journey taught me that we can do so much more in our lives and there is so much of greatness in all of us.

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ABSTRACT

Assessing the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events: a supply-side perspective

The corporate events industry provides destinations with an opportunity to promote tourism by playing an important role in a destination's growth and marketing. Currently, corporate events, also referred to as MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions), are globally growing considerably and in South Africa – providing destinations with a sturdy income. However, being a lucrative business increases rivalry among rising corporate events companies, travel management companies, professional conference organisers and destination management companies. Event planners, therefore, need to be exceptional in their service offering. Though, managing corporate events is a multifaceted job, comprising the management of numerous key success factors (KSFs) to warrant successful corporate events. It is advisable for seasoned event planners to strategically manage corporate events, as it is a complex and intricate task. KSFs need to be applied purposefully during each phase of event management (pre-, during- and post-event) to ensure that the corporate event is planned and managed seamlessly, within the allocated budget and timeframe, while at the same time meeting the needs and expectations of the client. Consequently, the research purpose was to assess the KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events, from a supply-side perspective.

Four objectives were set and realised to reach the goal of the study. The first and second objectives were achieved through a comprehensive literature study (c.f. Chapter 2 & Chapter 3), with the first objective describing events and specifically, corporate events. The primary literature themes investigated to reach this objective were: the categories and classification of events; event planning; event history; event impacts; business tourism; corporate events; the structure of the meeting industry; and corporate events in Gauteng and South Africa. The second study objective assessed strategic event management and the KSFs thereof. Here various event-management aspects were analysed: the evolution and classification thereof; the different stages; advantages and disadvantages; previous research; an overview of the project- and strategic management; the profession and its educational necessities; the various role-players; pre-existing guidelines; as well as models and identified KSFs. The above refers to existing knowledge and event management in a broader context as little is known specifically regarding corporate events. The third and fourth objectives were achieved by means of an empirical study (c.f. Chapter 4), with the third objective identifying the following: the sample description of Gauteng's successful corporate event planners; the KSFs of strategic corporate event management; event planner occupational challenges and their reason for pursuing the

industry. The fourth objective was achieved by assessing corporate event management for destinations, with the study focussing on Gauteng and highlighting KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events and providing best-practices guidelines (c.f. Chapter 4 & Chapter 5).

The researcher pinpointed a combination of gaps in preceding research, which this study aimed to fulfil. An event planner's strategic management function has been neglected in event-management studies, with most studies focusing on a demand-side analysis. It is also evident from a detailed literature review and the empirical study that most event planners do not use prescribed strategies to manage corporate events. Moreover, limited research exists regarding corporate events. No prior studies have investigated in detail the personality attributes and personal experiences of corporate event planners. There is also no pre-existing measuring instrument for formulating a best-practices guideline for strategic corporate event management before this study developed one.

The research followed a qualitative approach, as the empirical study consisted thoroughly of semi-structured interviews in person, with senior corporate event coordinators in the Gauteng province. The supply-side (event planners) assessment provided important insights related to senior corporate event planners' specific knowledge and experiences. A total of 13 face-to-face recorded interviews were conducted across four weeks (between January and February 2020) and were analysed by employing Creswell's (2014:209-210) six qualitative data analysis and interpretation steps. Through the empirical study, four main categories with sub-categories and representative themes were identified. The categories included: event planning; strategic event management; KSFs of event management; and event management in Gauteng (to determine their knowledge on strategic corporate event management, to identify the significant KSFs).

Finally, during the conclusion of and recommendations drawn concerning this study (c.f. Chapter 5), readers are provided with three comprehensive guiding principles. The first (c.f. Figure 5.1) defines a successful event planner, referring to involved personal characteristics and corporate event planners' acquired skills. The second (c.f. Figure 5.2) clarifies the strategic best-practices guidelines for event planners to follow during the three phases of event management (pre-, during- and post-event). Touchpoints and strategic management tasks during all phases are stipulated, highlighting the main event planner roles and KSFs to take into consideration. The reader is also guided on how success can be measured throughout the best practice's guidelines. Lastly, according to a proposed SWOT analysis, a parameter of managing corporate event destinations - with Gauteng as the research destination (c.f. Figure 5.3) is presented. The detailed analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats focuses

on internal and external elements, whiles investigating positive and negative outcomes for a corporate event destination. This research adds value to the current literature on tourism, business tourism and event tourism in Gauteng, South Africa and globally. The dissertation further recognised shared key aspects of knowledgeable event planners, since the study results have proved to be helpful for talent acquisitions, Human Resource departments, and management of event companies to identify promising event planners for job placements. The research results also specified the importance of comprehensive emotion management; passion for the industry and tasks at hand, and the human element for successful event-management operations - previously no formal research existed to support the idea. Die findings from this research indicate how event management curriculums can be adapted to make it more practical and relevant for event planner learners. The findings also greatly contribute to the literature on corporate event management. Furthermore, practical guidelines are provided in the form of best practices that not only corporate event planners will find useful; they can be applied to any events company.

Keywords: MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions), corporate event management, strategic management, supply-side, event planner, key success factors (KSFs), best-practices guideline.

OPSOMMING

Assessering van die sleutel suksesfaktore vir die Strategiese Bestuur van Korporatiewe Gebeurtenisse: ’n Aanbodkant-Perspektief

Die korporatiewe gebeurtenisse-industrie bied bestemmings die geleentheid om kerntoerisme te bevorder deur ’n belangrike rol in die uitbreiding en bemarking van ’n bestemming te vervul. Tans brei korporatiewe gebeurtenisse, waarna ook verwys word as MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions), wêreldwyd uit – eweneens in Suid-Afrika – en voorsien aan bestemmings ’n vaste inkomste. Deur ’n winsgewende besigheid te bedryf verhoog egter wedywering onder opkomende korporatiewe gebeurtenis-maatskappye, professionele konferensie-organiseerders en bestemmingsbestuur-maatskappye. Gebeurtenis-beplanners moet dus uitnemend wees in hul diensverskaffing; om korporatiewe geleenthede te bestuur is ’n multifaset-taak; dit bestaan uit die bestuur van talle sleutel suksesfaktore (SSF’e) (KSFs in Engels), om suksesvolle korporatiewe geleenthede te verseker. Dit word gerade geag dat ervare gebeurtenisbeplanners korporatiewe gebeurtenisse strategies moet bestuur aangesien dit ’n komplekse en ingewikkelde taak is. Gevolglik moet die SSF’e doelgerig tydens elke fase van gebeurtenisbestuur (voor, tydens en na die gebeurtenis) toegepas word om te verseker dat die korporatiewe gebeurtenis foutloos beplan en bestuur word, binne die toegestane begroting en tydraamwerk, terwyl daar terselfdertyd aan die behoeftes en verw agtinge van die kliënt voldoen word. Gevolglik was die navorsingsdoel om die SSF’e te assesseer vir die strategiese bestuur van korporatiewe geleenthede, soos gesien vanuit ’n aanbodkant-perspektief.

Die navorser het die kombinasie van gapings in vorige navorsing aangestip wat hierdie huidige studie beoog het om te vul. Die strategiese bestuursfunksie van ‘n geleentheidsbeplanner is tot hede in geleentheidsbestuur-studies verwaarloos, met die oorgroote meerderheid studies wat op vraag-kant analises fokus. Dit het ook duidelik geblyk uit ‘n gedetailleerde literatuuroorsig en empiriese studie dat die meeste geleentheidsbeplanners nie voorgeskrewe strategieë vir die bestuur van korporatiewe geleenthede toepas nie. Hierbenewens is navorsing rakende korporatiewe geleenthede in Gauteng yl gesaai. Geen vorige studies het die persoonlikheidseienskappe en persoonlike ervaringe van korporatiewe geleentheidsbeplanners indringend ondersoek nie. Verder het daar ook geen meetinstrument vir die formulering van bestepraktyk-riglyne vir strategiese korporatiewe geleentheidsbestuur nog bestaan voordat hierdie huidige studie een ontwikkel het nie.

Om die doel van die studie te bereik is vier doelwitte gestel en bereik. Die eerste en tweede doelwit is bereik deur middel van ‘n omvattende literatuurstudie (vgl. Hoofstuk 2 & Hoofstuk 3),

deur die eerste doelwit wat geleenthede, en spesifiek korporatiewe geleenthede, na te vors. Die primêre literatuur-temas wat nagevors is met die oog daarop om hierdie doelwit te bereik was: die kategorisering en klassifisering van geleenthede; geleentheidsbeplanning; geleentheidsgeskiedenis; geleentheidsimpak; sake-toerisme; korporatiewe geleenthede; die strukture van die vergaderingsbedryf; en korporatiewe geleenthede in Gauteng en Suid-Afrika. Die tweede studie-doelwit het strategiese geleentheidsbestuur en die SSF'e daarvan bestudeer. Hier is verskeie geleentheidsbestuur-aspekte geanaliseer, naamlik stadia, voordele en nadele, vorige navorsing oor die onderwerp, 'n oorsig oor die projek- en strategiese bestuur; die beroep en die kwalifiseringsvereistes daarvoor, die onderskeie rolspelers, reedsbestaande riglyne, asook modelle en geïdentifiseerde SSF'e. Voorts is doelwitte drie en vier aan die hand van 'n empiriese studie bereik (vgl. Hoofstuk 4), met die derde doelwit wat die volgende geïdentifiseer het: die demografiese profiel van Gauteng se suksesvolle korporatiewe geleentheidsbeplanners; die SSF'e van strategiese korporatiewe geleentheidsbestuur; beroepsuitdagings vir geleentheidsbeplanners; en die beweegredes vir hul besluit om die beroep te beoefen. Die vierde doelwit is bereik deur korporatiewe geleentheidsbestuur per bestemming te assesseer, deurdat die studie op Gauteng gefokus het; verder ook deur SSF'e uit te lig vir die strategiese bestuur van korporatiewe geleenthede en bestepraktyk-riglyne te voorsien (vgl. Hoofstuk 4 & Hoofstuk 5).

Die navorsing het 'n kwalitatiewe benadering gevolg aangesien die empiriese studie bestaan het uit indringende semigestruktureerde van-aangesig-tot-aangesig onderhoude met senior korporatiewe geleentheid koördineerders in die Gauteng-provinsie. Die assessering van die aanbod-kant (geleentheidsbeplanners) het belangrike insigte opgelewer wat verband hou met senior korporatiewe geleentheidsbeplanners se spesifieke kennis en ervaringe. 'n Totaal van 13 van-aangesig-tot-aangesig onderhoude wat op band opgeneem is, is oor 'n tydperk van vier weke (tussen Januarie en Februarie 2020) gevoer en is geanaliseer deur gebruik te maak van Creswell (2014:209-210) se ses stappe vir kwalitatiewe data-analise en -interpretering. Deur middel van die empiriese studie is vier hoofkategorieë geïdentifiseer, gepaard met subkategorieë en verteenwoordigende temas. Die kategorieë het ingesluit: geleentheidsbeplanning; strategiese geleentheidsbestuur; SSFe van geleentheidsbestukur; en geleentheidsbestuur in Gauteng.

Ten slotte word lesers tydens die gevolgtrekking en aanbevelings (vgl. Hoofstuk 5) voorsien van: 'n rigtingaanduidende beginsel van wat 'n suksesvolle geleentheidsbeplanner definieer, deur te verwys na persoonlike eienskappe en vereiste vaardighede, strategiese bestepraktyke-riglyne vir geleentheidsbeplanners om tydens die drie fases van geleentheidsbeplanning te volg (voor, tydens en na die geleentheid); en 'n parameter van hoe om korporatiewe

geleentheidsbestemming ooreenkomstig ’n voorgestelde SWOT-analise te bestuur (met Gauteng as die navorsingsbestemming). Hierdie navorsing voeg waarde toe tot die bestaande toerisme-literatuur, saketoerisme en geleentheidstoerisme in Gauteng, Suid-Afrika, en ook wêreldwyd. Die studie het verder ook gedeelde sleutelaspekte van ingeligte geleentheidsbeplanners uitgelig, aangesien die studie resultate nuttig is vir talentwerwing, mensehulpbron-departemente, en die bestuur van geleentheidsmaatskappye om belowende geleentheidsbeplanners vir posplasings te identifiseer. Die navorsingsresultate het ook die belangrikheid van omvattende emosiebestuur gespesifiseer; asook passie vir die industrie en take op hande; en verder ook die menslike element van geslaagde geleentheidsbestuur-ondernemings – vroeër was daar geen formele navorsing om die idee te ondersteun nie. Die bevindinge van hierdie navorsing dui aan hoe geleentheidsbestuur-kurrikulums aangepas kan word om dit meer prakties en relevant vir geleentheidsbeplanning-leerders te maak. Die bevindinge dra ook grootliks by tot die literatuur wat handel oor korporatiewe geleentheidsbestuur. Voorts word praktiese riglyne voorsien in die vorm van beste praktyke wat nie slegs korporatiewe geleentheidsbeplanners nuttig sal vind nie; enige geleentheidsmaatskappy sal dit kan benut.

Sleutelterme: MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions), korporatiewe geleentheidsbestuur (corporate event management), strategiese bestuur (strategic management), aanbodkant (supply-side), gebeurtenis-beplanner (event planner), sleutel suksesfaktore (key success factors), bestepraktyk-riglyn (best-practices guideline).

Assessing the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events: a supply-side perspective

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... **V**

OPSOMMING ..... **VIII**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND METHOD OF RESEARCH **1**

1.1 INTRODUCTION **1**

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY **3**

1.2.1 The South African corporate events industry 3

1.2.2 Towards strategic event management 5

1.2.3 Challenges faced by event planners 7

1.2.4 Previous research on the management of events 8

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT **10**

1.4 GOAL OF STUDY **12**

1.4.1 Goal 12

1.4.2 Objectives 12

1.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH **13**

1.5.1 Literature study 13

1.5.2 Empirical survey 14

1.5.2.1 Method of collecting data 14

1.5.2.2 Sampling method and survey/ collation of data 14

1.5.2.3 Ethical considerations 15

1.5.2.4 Development of the interview guide 16

1.5.2.5 Data analysis 17

1.6 DEFINING THE KEY CONCEPTS 18

1.6.1 Event 18

1.6.2 Corporate event 18

1.6.3 MICE 18

1.6.4 Supply-side analysis 18

1.6.5 Key success factors (KSFs) 18

1.6.6 Strategic management 19

1.6.7 Best-practices guideline 19

1.6.8 Event management 19

1.6.9 Event planner 20

1.7 CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION 20

CHAPTER 2: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE OVERVIEW OF CORPORATE EVENTS 22

2.1 INTRODUCTION 22

2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF EVENTS 23

2.2.1 Classification of events 25

2.2.2 Classification of events according to size 27

2.2.3 Classification of events according to type 29

2.3 EVENT TOURISM 31

2.3.1 Benefits of hosting events 32

2.3.2 Economic impacts 33

2.3.3 Social and cultural impacts 35

2.3.4 Environmental impacts.....39

2.3.5 Tourism sustainability.....41

2.4 BUSINESS TOURISM 43

2.4.1 Classification of business tourism 44

2.4.2 Evolution of and background to business tourism.....45

2.4.3 Challenges of business tourism 51

2.4.4 Benefits of business tourism 53

2.4.4.1 Business tourism benefits for the organisation and attendees.....53

2.4.4.2 Business tourism benefits for the host community and destination 54

2.4.5 South African Business Tourism 56

2.4.6 Business tourism in Gauteng 61

2.5 CORPORATE EVENTS.....64

2.5.1 Classification and overview of corporate events 64

2.5.2 Structure of the meetings industry 66

2.5.2.1 Buyers.....66

2.5.2.2 Suppliers 67

2.5.3 Type of corporate events 69

2.5.3.1 Meetings.....70

2.5.3.2 Incentive travel 71

2.5.3.3 Conventions, congresses and conferences 72

2.5.3.4 Exhibitions.....73

2.5.3.5 Other 75

2.5.4 Opportunities and obstacles – corporate events in developing countries 75

2.5.4.1 Impact of corporate events on the economy/ Economic roles fulfilled by events.....79

2.5.4.2 The South African and Gauteng corporate events industry 82

2.5.4.3 Corporate event challenges and threats 86

2.5.4.4 Corporate event benefits and opportunities 90

2.6 PREVIOUS CORPORATE EVENTS RESEARCH 95

2.6.1 An overview of previous corporate events research in South Africa.....95

2.6.2 An overview of previous international corporate events research.....98

2.7 CONCLUSION 119

CHAPTER 3: A LITERATURE OVERVIEW OF THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS (KSFS) IN STRATEGIC EVENT MANAGEMENT 121

3.1 INTRODUCTION.....121

3.2 THE SPOTLIGHT ON EVENT MANAGEMENT 122

3.2.1 Definitions, classification and advantages of event management.....122

3.2.2 Background of event management 125

3.2.2.1 The link between project management on event management 125

3.2.2.2 A brief history of event management 127

3.2.3 Event management as a recognised professional field.....129

3.2.3.1 Event-management educational requirements 129

3.2.3.2 Career paths and opportunities in the event-management sector 136

3.2.3.3 Event-management's attempt as a recognised profession 141

3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP OF BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS AND EVENTS 142

3.3.1 The different event stakeholders 142

3.3.1.1 External stakeholders 143

3.3.1.2 Internal stakeholders 145

3.4 STAGES OF EVENT MANAGEMENT 149

3.4.1 Pre-event-management stage 150

3.4.2 Event implementation stage (during the event) 161

3.4.3 Post-event evaluation 163

3.5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE MANAGEMENT OF EVENTS IN SA 165

3.6 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT 168

3.6.1 Management methods/ approaches 168

3.6.2 Management functions in events management 169

3.6.3 Strategic management during event planning 172

3.7 EXISTING EVENT-MANAGEMENT MODELS AND GUIDELINES 174

3.7.1 Event-Management Process by Gers-Couto 175

3.7.2 Kestner's Event-Management Guide 178

3.7.3 Seven Stages of Strategic Planning by Mcgrath and Bates 180

3.7.4 Getz's model of event planning 181

3.7.5 Salem *et al.*'s Event-planning Model 181

3.7.6 Tum, Norton and Wright's Event Operations Management Model 183

3.7.7 The Event-Management Planning Process (Pondicherry University – MBA) ... 185

3.7.8 Strategic Management Process for MICE (Tassiopoulos) 186

3.7.9 Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) 187

3.7.10 A critical synthesis of event-management models and guidelines 191

3.8 KSFs IN EVENT MANAGEMENT/ BEST PRACTICES 194

3.8.1 Classification and definitions of KSFs in event management 194

3.8.2 Previous research on the KSFs identified for tourism operations in SA.....196

3.8.3 Benefits and disadvantages of KSFs in event management.....201

3.8.4 KSFs of corporate event management 203

3.9 CONCLUSION 207

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS 209

4.1 INTRODUCTION.....209

4.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH 209

4.2.1 Research design 210

4.2.2 Data collection and development of the interview guide 211

4.2.3 Ethical considerations 212

4.2.4 Data analysis.....213

4.3 RESULTS 215

4.3.1 Profile and background of participants.....216

4.3.2 Identified categories and themes 218

4.3.2.1 Category 1: Event Planning 220

4.3.2.2 Category 2: In-depth Strategic Event management 232

4.3.2.3 Category 3: KSFs in event management 251

4.3.2.4 Category 4: Corporate event management in Gauteng 266

4.4 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION 273

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 281

5.1 INTRODUCTION 281

5.2 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE LITERATURE REVIEWS 281

5.2.1 The first objective 282

5.2.2 The second objective 283

5.2.3 Conclusions regarding the empirical study results and recommendations 286

5.2.3.1 Defining a successful corporate event planner 287

5.2.3.2 KSF's and strategic corporate event management 289

5.2.3.3 Gauteng as a corporate event destination 295

5.3 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH 299

5.3.1 Conclusions regarding the methodology 299

5.3.2 Recommendations for future research 301

5.3.3 The researcher's understanding and observation 302

BIBLIOGRAPHY 304

ANNEXURES 345

ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW GUIDE 345

ANNEXURE B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE 350

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR STUDY 352

ANNEXURE D: LETTER FROM ACCREDITED TRANSCRIBER 353

ANNEXURE E: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR 354

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1: General problems events planners face **7**

Table 2-1: Different event sizes/ scopes **28**

Table 2-2: Cataloguing of planned events, based on their form **30**

Table 2-4: Percentage distribution of business tourists in SA from SADC Countries (2018) **59**

Table 2-5: Percentage distribution of business tourists in SA from foreign countries (2018) **60**

Table 2-6: Percentage distribution of business tourists in SA from other African countries (2018) **60**

Table 2-7: Summary of previous corporate events studies in SA **95**

Table 2-8: Summary of preceding international corporate events studies **102**

Table 3-2: Summary of previous research on the management of events in SA **165**

Table 3-3: Summary of event-management models and their processes **191**

Table 3-4: A compilation of definitions of KSFs **195**

Table 3-5: Summary of previous research on the KSFs identified for tourism operations in SA **196**

Table 4-1: Interviewed participants' demographic profile and event-planning background **217**

Table 4-2: Personality traits and skills of successful corporate event planners in Gauteng **238**

Table 4-3: The empirical study categories, sub-categories and themes **274**

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2-1: Event nomological structure **27**

Figure 2-3: Map of SA and the "big five" business tourism destinations **56**

Figure 2-4: Map of Gauteng, highlighting the economic core of South Africa **62**

Figure 2-5: The MICE industry **70**

Figure 2-6: SA's current market priorities and key industries around which to plan corporate events **77**

Figure 2-7: Key requirements for a developing MICE country **79**

Figure 2-8: A breakdown of international corporate event study topics, from the past decade **99**

Figure 3-1: The project management process and ten areas around it that project management draws on **126**

Figure 3-2: Preferred event-management educational requirements **130**

Figure 3-3: Event-management graduate attributes in the workplace **133**

Figure 3-4: External event stakeholders **143**

Figure 3-5: Internal event stakeholders **146**

Figure 3-6: The stages of event management, and essential action steps to follow **150**

Figure 3-7: The Harvard Model for HR management during event management **154**

Figure 3-9: The seven steps of perfect event budgeting **157**

Figure 4-1: Six steps in data analysis and interpretation **214**

Figure 4-2: Summary of the study categories and sub-categories **219**

Figure 4-3: The top six aspects for measuring the effectiveness of a corporate event **220**

Figure 4-4: The importance of understanding the target market's needs, behaviours and trends **222**

Figure 4-5: How event planners deal with changing market trends **224**

Figure 4-6: Challenges in the event-planner workplace.....**226**

Figure 4-7: Event-planning procedures.....**229**

Figure 4-8: Event planner roles and responsibilities pre-, during- and post-event.....**233**

Figure 4-9: Event planner requirements **237**

Figure 4-10: The five proposed stages of event management **242**

Figure 4-11: General KSFs during the multiple phases of event management **252**

Figure 4-12: KSFs pre-event.....**258**

Figure 4-13: KSFs during-event.....**261**

Figure 4-14: KSFs post-event.....**265**

Figure 4-15: Strategic management KSFs.....**266**

Figure 4-16: Corporate event management in Gauteng **267**

Figure 4-17: Identified socio-cultural impacts in Gauteng.....**270**

Figure 4-18: Environmental impacts of event management in Gauteng.....**271**

Figure 4-19: Economic impacts of event management in Gauteng.....**272**

Figure 5-1: Defining a successful event planner (skills & traits) **288**

Figure 5-2: KSF's and strategic best-practices guidelines for event planners, designed by the researcher……**291**

Figure 5-3: Managing corporate event destinations.....**295**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND METHOD OF RESEARCH

Multilevel multitasking multiplied multiple times is event management ~ Rehan Waris

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Events are an essential promoter of tourism and a key player in the marketing and development plan of destinations (Spencer & Bavuma, 2018:125). According to the Allied Market Research firm, the global corporate events industry is anticipated to reach $1,439.3-billion in 2025 (Nortje, 2020:internet). Events are also an international phenomenon, continually gaining a more significant standing as one of the most important parts of tourism and a devoted part of human society (Oklobdžija, 2015:83). Oklobdžija (2015:83) further pronounces how international tourist numbers are rising, and their expectations; events play a vital role in fulfilling these needs. The broader scope of events is extensive and spans from individual celebrations, community festivals, incentives, conferences, sports, and business meetings to exhibitions (Getz & Page, 2016a:1-7). Spencer and Bavuma (2018:125) claim that business events, event-tourism, special interest tourism (SIT), sport events and festivals comprise the categories of events of most interest for destinations.

South African Tourism (SAT) markets South Africa both domestically and internationally as an ideal events destination. It is ensured that tourist services and amenities are of the highest standard, and the tourism sector's performance is continuously monitored (SA Gov, 2019:internet). The South Africa National Convention Bureau (SANCB, 2019:internet) specifies South Africa (SA) as Africa's most significant events destination, boasting with a diversity of venues and destinations that offer remarkable tourism experiences. SA previously hosted most of the major sporting world cup events, including soccer, cricket and rugby. Furthermore, included in SA's exceptional track record in hosting international events are COP17 ("Conference of the Parties" of the international treaty known as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), the 5th BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) Summit and the World Economic Forum (SANCB, 2019:internet). Moreover, the successful hosting of the International AIDS Conference (AIDS 2016) attracted approximately 18,000 delegates and 1,000 journalists, illustrating how SA currently competes internationally as an events host destination (Imrie, 2016:internet). Recent statistics from the South African Annual Report (2018:28) show an increase of approximately 3% in the number of meetings held worldwide. As per The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), the global

MICE industry recorded a total of 12,558 meetings held around the world in 2017 (SA Tourism Annual Report, 2018:28).

Business tourism is described as delivering services to delegates who attend meetings, congresses, corporate events, incentive travel, exhibitions and corporate hospitality (Spencer & Bavuma, 2018:127). MICE, often described as an “industry”, is the acronym for Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions/ Events (Getz, 2016:21; Brotherton & Wood, 2008:400). MICE is a category of tourism, with tours usually planned well in advance for groups and delegates brought together for a purpose (GL Events, 2018:internet). It represents a sector of tourism, which includes corporate events and activities alike (Lau, 2016:1). Many other terms are also used synonymously for corporate events, including the meetings segment, MCE (meetings, convention and exhibitions) and the convention or conference industry (Marais *et al*., 2017b:2). Spencer and Bavuma (2018:127) simplify MICE by describing it as off-site gatherings which bring people together to share information. This includes conferences, seminars, conventions, congresses, workshops and symposiums. Corporate events are also said to include annual general meetings, board meetings, exhibitions, incentive travel events, training courses, product launches, team-building events, technical and sales conferences (Tassiopoulos, 2001:10). Saayman and Slabbert (2002:90-91) highlight that corporate events may vary from one to the other, yet certain characteristics will always be required to organise and host these events.

The success of events is based on effective event management (Kim, 2017:internet). The purpose of event management is to manage event resources within a given activity, inside a specific timeframe, budget and performance requirements (Tassiopoulos, 2000:40). The event industry must continuously advance its event-management method to satisfy event visitors' needs (Manners *et al*., 2015a:3). Unfortunately, current research to a certain extend disregards event managers’ opinions. Therefore, research on the supply-side is vital, as it may vary from what the demand-side requires from events concerning memorable and satisfying visitor experiences. The supply-side analysis in events furthermore recognises the various motives for hosting events, the target market and the key management factors, referred to as Critical or Key Success Factors, that need to be accomplished when hosting successful events (Bosch, 2019:24).

This study seeks to make three practical contributions by 1) identifying the personal characteristics and corporate event planners’ acquired skills; 2) providing a formal guideline for corporate event management, i.e. a best-practices guideline for the strategic management of corporate events; and 3) parameters for managing corporate events in the Gauteng province is

presented. These outcomes are derived by assessing the supply-side, i.e. the event planner's perspective regarding the aspects or key success factors necessary to organising successful corporate events – which is the main goal of the study. The terms *event planner* and *event organiser* refer to the same job function and will interchangeably be used throughout the study. An event planner is well-defined as encompassing any profession wherein the foremost importance is the development, planning and execution of an event plan (Abson, 2017:404). Furthermore, event planners cooperate with event venues and organisations that produce events (Getz, 2016:24).

The research furthermore shows specific challenges in organising corporate events in Gauteng while highlighting event planners' tasks and pinpointing the Key Success Factors (KSFs) in managing corporate/ business events, referred to as key management aspects corporate-event planning. A combination of the factors mentioned above allows for an unpredictable but more tailored event-management approach. MICE is an essential component of South Africa's travel industry. For Gauteng and South Africa to reap the benefits of business tourism, the literature emphasises that quality management is of utmost importance. Identifying the KSFs from a supply-side can help event planners focus on the most critical aspects of strategic corporate event management (Burger & Saayman, 2009:15). The study forms part of a strategic management theoretical framework.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the research process followed for this study, by providing background to and context of the research and examining the problem statement; followed by the goals and objectives of the study, the research methodology thereof, the definitions of key concepts, and lastly the chapter classification.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The background provides a brief overview of the relevant literature. The following subsections include an overview of the current South African corporate-event industry, the classification of successful event management, strategic management of corporate events, challenges event planners face, key competencies of event planners and a summary of previous research on the management of events. The relevance of each section to reaching the goal of the study is also stipulated.

1.2.1 The South African corporate events industry

The African continent is perceived as an interesting destination and is appealing to establishments in Africa's growing middle class (Imrie, 2016:internet). Role-players view the

South African market as the first step to develop into the rest of Africa (Imrie, 2016:internet). Indicating the continent's prevalence as a MICE venue, around 123 African venues are listed in the 2015/2016 Business Events Africa Guidebook (Business Events Africa, 2020:internet). An analysis by category of events indicates that corporate events, mostly meetings and exhibitions, dominate the SA events market (Sport and Recreation South Africa, 2011:41). Marais (2016:25) concurs that corporate events contribute immensely to the SA economy and tourism industry. Corporate events are planned with a unified approach to develop and market a company or brand; this method attracts much attention and plays an integral role in attracting more visitors to SA (Spencer & Bavuma, 2018:125). The CEO of South African Tourism, Sisa Ntshona, said in an interview: “South African Tourism is pulling up our socks to make sure we get more market share from this space.” He also mentioned that the MICE sector generates over $800 million per annum (Granat, 2019:internet). Confirmed by the South African National Convention Bureau (SANCB), the corporate-events industry attracts on average one million delegates annually; indirectly and directly providing job opportunities for more than 250,000 individuals (Nortje, 2020:internet). Furthermore, MICE has become one of the most critical sectors for attracting foreign visitors and investment into the country, with 11.4% of foreign tourists coming to the country solely for corporate events (Imrie, 2016:internet).

Corporate-events statistics from 2017 show that it accommodates more than 1 million corporate event delegates annually - this in return creates an average of 250,000 jobs directly and indirectly. This calculates to an estimated annual total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of R115 billion to South Africa. This underwrites 9.4% of the country’s GDP (GL Events, 2018:internet). SA is graded 34th worldwide by ICCA regarding the number of meetings held, with 122 ICCA-registered international and regional meetings and conferences in 2017, which attracted 73,884 association specialists to SA. When factoring in corporate events not accredited by ICCA, the figure rises to 206 events hosted in SA during 2017, attracting 91,740 delegates. This surpassed the SANCB’s target of 145 annually. Therefore, South Africa is ranked in the world’s top 15 long-haul corporate-events destinations and number one in Africa (SA Tourism, 2018:28).

MICE is said to be the driving power behind the Gauteng tourism industry (Granat, 2019:internet). As the smallest province in South Africa, the most built-up and crowded with a population of 14,7 million, it is characterised by a multicultural mix of individuals (SA Gov, 2019:internet). This research aimed to develop a best-practice guideline based on the KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events. The study focusses on Gauteng province, as this is the province where the researcher resides and established a career in event management. The focus was to conduct research that will benefit event planners in Gauteng, as

no current research, to the researcher's knowledge, was available that focused explicitly on this province. However, the proposed guideline is developed to assist all corporate event planners.

1.2.2 Towards strategic event management

There are different criteria for the classification of events. Events are usually classified as either planned or unplanned; planned events focus on this study of event management and require set-up, management, executives and a timeframe (Oklobžija, 2015:86). As per Allen *et al.* (2005:160), the event-management process includes actions such as marketing, designing, costing and monitoring, risk management, logistics, production and assessment. There are three phases during the event management process: pre-event, during-event, and post-event planning (Matter, 2015a:8). By definition, event management is the concept, coordination, planning, budgeting and management of all the individuals, crews, logistics and structures that come together to create an event (Deakin, 2015:internet). Getz (2016:4) further defines event management as "an applied, professional field devoted to understanding and improving the management of planned events". Event management is an essential process; any event needs proper planning, as it is costly to stage an event, and one cannot allow mistakes (Saayman, 2001:125). Advantages of practising effective event management include: saving valuable time, avoiding hidden costs, ensuring a risk assessment strategy is in place, and less stress is experienced during the event-planning process (Deakin, 2015:internet).

This study is presented from a management discipline perspective; event management was primarily discussed, followed by strategic management. Strategic management is a top management function, also referred to as "management of the big picture" (Marais, 2016:35). Furthermore, strategic management comprises a large amount of planning (de Witt, 2004:11). The seven stages of strategic planning and management by Mcgrath and Bates (2017:156) provide a valuable overview of steps for event planners to produce comprehensive and well-thought-out events. This management theory creates a guideline for the strategic management of corporate events from a supply-side. The steps can be incorporated during the various event-management phases, as indicated below (Mcgrath & Bates, 2017:156):

Pre-event:

Step 1: Identify the reason for planning/ hosting the event.

Step 2: Set goals to plan and strategically manage a successful event.

Step 3: Break the goals down into measurable objectives to be monitored.

During-event:

Step 4: Identify and implement actions to achieve the proposed objectives.

Step 5: Formulate/ follow a step-by-step guide for individuals and teams to execute strategy.

Post-event:

Step 6: Set up a system to compare planned and actual performance.

Step 7: Reward successful strategic management of events.

Tassiopoulos (2000), cited by de Witt (2004:12), proposes a similar strategic management process that comprises the following aspects:

Pre-event

- Situation analysis (internal & external).
- Strategy formulation (vision/ mission & objectives).
- Monitor potential impacts (economic, socio-cultural, physical).

During-event

- Focus on aspects (Marketing, HR, operational management, financial management).
- Implement event strategy.

Post-event

- Evaluation and control of event.

These two strategic management concepts (Mcgrath & Bates, 2017; de Witt, 2004) combined with other established event-management models are showcased and deliberated in detail during Chapter 3's literature review discussion (c.f. 3.7). The event-management environment is one of the most exhilarating and fastest-growing sectors of the tourism and hospitality industry (Alexander, 2009). To develop a best-practices guideline for event planners to strategically manage successful corporate events, the researcher thought it well to administer an in-depth understanding of event management and strategic management (processes, functions, KSFs, and advantages thereof) within every phase of the event. This approach allowed the researcher to identify strategic event-management guidelines that can benefit event planners in the future. It was necessary within the study to take note of challenges faced by event planners, as this may influence the quality of effort towards a successful event (c.f. 2.5.3; 2.6.3.3; Figure 4.6).

1.2.3 Challenges faced by event planners

Getz (2016:24) stipulates how event planners work with events in a destination to help realise their tourism potential, including funding, advice and marketing. Event planners' tasks can be daunting and complicated; it requires a wealth of knowledge within the field, common sense and imagination (Manners *et al*., 2015a:2). Some endless circumstantial factors can hinder the performance or contribute to event planners' achievement (Damm, 2012:10). Table 1.1 refers to eight general challenges event planners face daily and the event phase in which the difficulties present itself.

Table 1-1: General problems events planners face

Identified problems/challenges	Author(s)	Pre-event	During-event	Post-event
1. Searching for unique venues to increase attendees' satisfaction.	Lee *et al*. (2015:164)	✓		
2. Data protection regulations hinder collecting personal data on attendees, speakers, sponsors etc.	Gines (2018:78)	✓		
3. Interacting with different stakeholders for every event, and each brings their individual views, considerations and requirements.	Damm (2012:19); Getz (2016:7)	✓	✓	✓
4. Lack of creativity and innovation to consistently create exceptional events.	Damm (2012:22); Silvers *et al.* (2006:192)	✓	✓	
5. Long and irregular working hours, better time management and more flexibility is a requirement.	Kokt and Strydom (2014); Marinakou (2019:512); Nelson (2004:46-50)	✓	✓	
6. It is identified as a job that does not pay exceptionally well; the event industry offers only reduced employee benefits.	Straus (2017); Damm (2012:12-13); Marinakou (2019:512); Nelson (2004:46-50)	✓	✓	
7. High-stress levels, event management, is listed as the fifth most stressful job in the world.	Strauss (2017:internet)	✓	✓	
8. Deadlines and targets are too specific and difficult to catch up on	Sabhaney (2019:internet)	✓	✓	✓
9. It is considered a high employee turnover industry, regularly losing talent that can contribute to its competitive advantage	Marinakou (2019:513)	✓	✓	

Source: Researcher's compilation based on the existing literature

As indicated in Table 1.1, most of the challenges are experienced by event planners throughout the pre-event and during-event-planning stages. The reason for researching common challenges through a literature study is to pinpoint challenges to further investigate in the

empirical study, to ultimately provide recommendations for future successful event-planner best practices (c.f. Figure 5.1 & Figure 5.2). As discussed below, KSFs within this niche market also influence corporate event management.

1.2.4 Previous research on the management of events

Zeng and Yang's (2011:232-239) research draws attention to the **industry perceptions of event management** abroad, which partially supported this research study. Previous studies related to the MICE industry mainly focused on **KSF** (see Manners, 2011; Kruger & Heath, 2012; Manners *et al.,* 2015a; Erasmus, 2012; Burger & Saayman, 2009; Marais, 2009; de Witt (2006), Kruger, 2006; Mccallagan, 2015; Lade & Jackson, 2004; Getz & Brown, 2006). However, only Kruger (2006), Mccallagan (2015) and Burger and Saayman's (2009) research focused on corporate events, as they researched the KSFs concerning managing conferences and the facilities thereof. Extensive former **event-management** studies were completed due to the need for a more specialised approach to the industry. For findings that were applied within this study, see Venske (2017); Barron and Leask (2012:473-488); Damm (2012); Silvers (2012); Allen *et al.* (2011); Silvers (2010b); Tassiopoulos (2010); Allen (2007); Goldblatt (2002); Saayman (2001); as well as Abbott and Abbott (2000:105-119). Studies focusing specifically on the **MICE industry** (see Granat, 2019; Spencer & Bavuma, 2018; Lau, 2016; Schlentrich, 2008) provided an in-depth understanding of corporate events. However, event practitioners in the past did not contribute enough to research papers, case studies and academic literature (Getz, 2007; Harris *et al*., 2000:24). "Almost two decades have passed since Getz (2000) labelled the events industry as an immature topic of academic research. Since then, the events industry has grown exponentially" (Leigh, 2019:5). Refer to Table 3.2 for a summary of previous research on the management of events in SA.

After a thorough exploration of current literature studies focusing on KSFs in a variety of South African tourism fields (see Getz, 1997; Saayman & Slabbert, 2002; van der Westhuizen, 2006; Cloete, 2003; Lade & Jackson, 2004; Swart, 2005; Getz & Brown, 2006; de Witt, 2006; Kruger, 2006; Hoeksema, 2008; Marais, 2009; Burger & Saayman, 2009; Marais & Saayman, 2010; Manners, 2011; Engelbrecht, 2011; Erasmus, 2012; Neethling, 2015; Marais *et al.*, 2017; Chingarande & Saayman, 2018), several acknowledged KSFs were recurrent throughout all the studies. Ismail (2014) is the only relevant international study found to focus solely on MICE KSFs. The researcher compiled the list below, indicating frequently identified KSFs from previous tourism studies that were used to further investigate during the literature review chapters and the empirical study – to establish a guideline for corporate best practices:

- General/ hospitality management;
- Operational aspects;
- Finance management;
- Marketing management;
- Risk management;
- Green management (Eco-friendly);
- Human Resources;
- Security & safety;
- Accessibility;
- Hygiene;
- Accommodation;
- Venue/ location;
- Facilities & services;
- Entertainment & activities;
- Catering;
- Quality;
- Post-event evaluation/ reporting; and
- Adequate planning/objectives.

Donald Getz is regarded as a prominent author in the field of events with more than ten publications [see Getz, 1991; Getz, 1997; Getz, 2007; Getz, 2008; Getz, 2010; Getz, 2012a; Getz, 2012b; Getz & Brown, 2006; Getz *et al.*, 2012; Getz & Page, 2016a; Getz & Page, 2016b], to list but a few. Most researchers have previously focused on defining event visitors' needs and not of the event planners (Manners *et al.,* 2015a:2). This study was conducted from a supply-side, specifically focusing on developing a proposed corporate event management guideline. Also, this research reviewed the challenges event planners experience during the event-management process. Previous research by Swart (2007:70-72) proposed a business tourism market framework, where the **distinction is made amid business tourism demand and business tourism supply**. Preceding **location challenges and impact studies on tourism** in South Africa include those of Nkosi (2010) and Boshoff and Marais (2013) in Gauteng. Nelson (2004:40-50) earlier conducted a **study of event planners**, examining various sociological theories and the reason for the career choice. Nelson's study was based on Australian event planners; this study included similar questions in the empirical study, examining event planners in Gauteng and South Africa's reason for choosing this profession and career path. Limited research has been done to recognise the needed skills, characteristics and education requirements of successful event planners (Bowdin *et al*., 2012). Previous research regarding **skills** challenges and education requirements within event management

include those by Venske (2017:42-43); Schwagerman (2016); Getz (2016:5); Bladen *et al*. (2012:2-27); Formandi and Raffai (2009:75-89) as well as Beaven and Wright (2006:17-24). Therefore, the challenge in South African higher education is to identify the required skills to operate corporate events successfully (Venske, 2017). Moreover, Alexander *et al.* (2012) investigated the organisational and individual characteristics influencing event planners' perceptions of information content and channel choice. The insightful cognitive approach of event planners is explained by Key's (2015:internet) research.

As per the above classification of the current research, a shortage of reports, articles and books was still found to exist within this field. Most of these existing studies presented international perspectives. Therefore, this study is distinct in its attempt to actively involve event planners in the Gauteng province to gain a supply-side perspective and propose a guideline of best practices for the strategic management of a corporate event to support corporate-event planners in South Africa.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The purpose of this study is to identify the KSFs from a supply-side and use this to propose a best-practices guideline for the successful strategic management of corporate events in Gauteng. This research is necessitated by the following gaps identified in current event-management literature as well as from a practical perspective:

- Regardless of prevalent literature maintaining that effective management development is essential for related industries such as tourism and hospitality, it has thus far been neglected in the event-management industry studies. Instead, the literature on events often focus exclusively on the practical aspects of the delivery of events in general. Most studies furthermore focus on demand-side analyses. This study argues that event planners' role is a key management function, as event planners are exclusively accountable for the delivery of strategically and financially significant corporate events (Abson, 2017:404).

- After the literature review that will follow and across a decade of practical experience within the event-management industry, the researcher found that event planners do not use set guidelines for the effective strategic management of corporate events in Gauteng. The study, therefore, attempted to propose an outline of strategic management for Gauteng event planners. It is observed that a framework system is a set of network elements and variation in key environmental aspects that affect the event

and the strategic management process thereof (Henry, 2003:10). The study thus also investigated challenges and factors that impact event planners in Gauteng, affecting their performance. This information is not only useful to corporate-event planners in this province but also those based in other South African provinces as well as in other developing countries.

- The problem statement here is to identify effective event planners. According to Abson (2017:404) event management is a field of industrial practice, which involves the supervision of several actions required to achieve event objectives. The term *event planner* is defined as encompassing any occupations wherein the focus is on developing, planning, and implementing an event plan (Abson, 2017:404-405). The study also identified key aspects that experienced and successful event planners have in common (c.f. Figure 5.1). The study maintains that it is vital to understand the human resource (HR) management functions of event planners and their strategic management practices. Research of this nature is imperative, as the outcome can also be used by operational managers and recruiting agencies during interviews to identify effective event planners in Gauteng and other provinces for job placements.

- Regrettably, limited research exists regarding corporate events in Gauteng, with available statistics only estimating attendance numbers, income generated and the overall contribution to South Africa's GDP (Granat, 2019:internet). Therefore, by undertaking this supply-side analysis, the researcher identified a comprehensive overview and detailed vision of event planners in Gauteng, while producing a guideline for best practices based on their shortcomings and potentially identifying KSFs for hosting strategic memorable corporate events. Furthermore, a supply-side analysis adds to the current literature on the events industry, as part of the creative tourism industries and its contribution to business tourism and event tourism.

To fill the gap in the current literature, this dissertation aimed to answer the following questions:

- What is the socio-demographic profile of event planners in Gauteng?
- How do event planners overcome general challenges and underdeveloped skills in the workplace?
- What are the KSFs for hosting corporate events in Gauteng, throughout every strategic management planning phase?
- What are the current successful strategic management procedures that event planners in Gauteng follow?
- Does the province of Gauteng pose specific challenges within the event industry?

This led to the principal research question: **Which KSFs from a supply perspective need to be considered for the strategic management of corporate events in Gauteng?**

1.4 GOAL OF STUDY

The study relied on the following goal and ensuing objectives:

1.4.1 Goal

To provide a guideline for planners in the strategic management of corporate events, by critically assessing the key success factors from a supply-side perspective.

1.4.2 Objectives

The achievement of the goal relied on the following objectives:

- **Objective 1**

  To evaluate events and specifically the MICE industry. Literature themes such as: classification and categories of events; the effective planning of events; the history of events; impacts of events; business tourism; corporate events; the structure of the meetings industry; corporate events in South Africa as well as Gauteng (development and challenges) were examined by means of a comprehensive literature analysis (c.f. Chapter 2).

- **Objective 2**

  To assess strategic event management and the KSFs thereof in a critical overview by means of a literature review. The detailed analysis comprised aspects such as the classification and evolution of corporate-events management; the different event-management stages; advantages and disadvantages of event management; previous research on the management of events in South Africa; an overview of strategic management; event management as a profession and the educational requirements thereof; corporate event-management role-players, a detailed overview of existing strategic event-management models and guidelines as well as the KSFs to be taken into consideration when drawing up guidelines for the strategic management of corporate events (c.f. Chapter 3).

- **Objective 3**

To identify the demographic profile of event planners in Gauteng, the KSFs in strategic corporate event management, challenges they experience in their professional occupation, challenges within the geographical location and the motives for building a career in corporate event management, by means of an empirical survey (c.f. Chapter 4).

- **Objective 4**

To conclude and make recommendations regarding an assessment of corporate event management in Gauteng from a supply perspective. This includes a proposed best-practices guideline and highlighting KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events in the Gauteng province (c.f. Chapter 4 & Chapter 5).

1.5 METHOD OF RESEARCH

The research study followed a qualitative approach by means of face-to-face planned interviews. The research method used is further discussed in the (i) literature review and (ii) empirical survey.

1.5.1 Literature study

The literature study (c.f. Chapter 2 & Chapter 3) was based on specific keywords i.e. *planned events, corporate events, MICE sector, event management, event planner, KSFs, strategic management* and *Gauteng*.

During the literature study, a proposed theoretical framework for strategic corporate event management (during all phases of the event) was investigated and the KSFs thereof. This was successfully and thoroughly accomplished by analysing books, theses, dissertations, journal articles, newspaper articles, and other tourism-related literature. Information searches were conducted mainly through the internet, library catalogues and indexes. Scientific databases such as North-West University's One Search database library, EBSCOhost, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar played a dynamic role in searching for the most current publications and data. Concluded through these sources, a comprehensive study was accomplished of the outline for the strategic management of corporate events in the Gauteng province and South Africa. Furthermore, the studies combined both primary and secondary sources, through a thorough literature study and empirical survey (facilitated through interviews).

1.5.2 Empirical survey

The researcher used a qualitative research method, as the method is crucial to researchers in the management discipline, to provide significant insight associated with individual experiences (Creswell, 2014). The following sub-sections provide a detailed background description of how the empirical surveys were steered.

1.5.2.1 Method of collecting data

The researcher decided on a **qualitative** research method. This style of collecting data does not bind the candidate to a structured questionnaire, but rather to an approach where diverse event planner opinions are recorded. The qualitative research method creates in-depth feedback and data, and it also helps to see how event planner (participants') opinions differ from existing literature. No previous research exists from an event planner's perspective, and the industry is dynamic and continually changing; therefore, a qualitative approach was the best option. Qualitative research was also the best approach for this study to save resources, finances, and time. The aim is ultimately for this qualitative research to assist in formulating a questionnaire for future event planner research.

The empirical survey data were collected through semi-structured planned **interviews**, performed face-to-face. First, a **tailored e-mail** extending a personal invitation to participants in the study were directed to potential contributors. The **cover letter** included a brief description of the study, an explanation of confidentiality, the proposed interview date and contact information (of the researcher and study promoter) for additional questions.

1.5.2.2 Sampling method and survey/ collation of data

Purposive sampling was done to select relevant event planners involved in the corporate event management industry. Purposive sampling refers to a non-probability sampling method, where samples of participants are purposefully selected due to their representativeness of or relation to an explicit phenomenon and can provide trustworthy research data on the said phenomenon (Bosch, 2019:19). After careful consideration and taking the time, funding and availability of the sampling frame into consideration (Silverman, 2006:109-152; Creswell, 2014:32-261), the researcher conducted **in-depth interviews**. As highlighted by Venske (2017:36), the values of qualitative research typically do not only lie in the number of participants, but rather in the knowledge shared by the study participants. The qualitative research process was well-thought-out to meet rigour and trustworthiness and copious and rich data. In deductive theory, the researcher started with 13 interviews, with the strategy of

conducting further interviews if the found interview data were insufficient. After 13 interviews, the point of data was saturation. The interviews in this study were valuable, as it captured and presented with poise and care for the participants. Moreover, **participants needed to be**:

- Located within the narrowly applied scope, which was confined to the geographical area of *Gauteng*;
- *Directly involved in the planning and strategic management of corporate events*. This included event planners employed in-house by prominent corporate event venues, Professional Congress Organisations (PCO) as well as Travel Management Companies (TMC); and
- Experienced, with a *minimum of 10 years' experience* in the niche industry of corporate event management.

The interviews were conducted within the first trimester of the second academic year (January to February 2020); during pre-scheduled one-on-one meetings with the interviewer at pre-arranged venues of the participants' choice. During the meetings/ interviews, with formal permission beforehand, the researcher took detailed **notes** and used a mobile audio set to **record** the interviews.

1.5.2.3 Ethical considerations

Research ethics exist to protect the well-being of research participants at all times and to apply moral standards in developing, conducting and writing research results (Bosch, 2019:20). The research proceeded ethically, with **ethical approval** obtained from the Ethics Committee of North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, NWU-01316-19-A4 (c.f. Annexure C). Furthermore, the study did not target any vulnerable groups. As the sampling population was sensibly selected, the intent was to minimise risk for participants during stages of data gathering and prevent ethical dilemmas. Participants were required to sign the proposed **consent** form (c.f. Annexure B) and an information sheet explaining the study's aim and objectives before the interviews commenced. The participants also did **not receive any incentive** for participation. The most important aspect concerning the subject was the **anonymity** throughout the study of those supplying the data; therefore, a simple **coding system** was devised (e.g. EP1 – Event Planner 1). The researcher took full responsibility for the collation of data due to the small sampling population. Interview participants were well-informed beforehand in advance and **allowed to end the interview** at any given time. Furthermore, the **data gathered through interviews are secured** on a personal password-protected computer with only the researcher having access to the data. All interview files will be destroyed within three years (in the year 2023).

1.5.2.4 Development of the interview guide

Since no standardised measuring instrument existed for conducting a supply-side-analysis with corporate event planners in Gauteng, a **new interview guide was developed** by the researcher (c.f. Annexure A). Firstly, the study was explained to the participants, clearing up the type of questions, and participants were advised that not all questions needed to be answered, but they were highly encouraged to try. **Semi-structured interviews** were conducted due to the flexibility, and it allows the researcher to add alternate questions within a pre-prepared framework. The questions were outlined to guide these semi-structured interviews around the study's main categories, sub-categories and themes (c.f. Table 4.3). **Interview questions** were based on the literature reviewed (c.f. Chapter 2 & Chapter 3), as well as the researcher's knowledge and experience in the corporate events industry. The interview guide was based on pre-developed **themes** that emerged from the literature discussion. This included the section of *strategic event management* and *KSFs* of event management (c.f. Annexure A – Section B: In-depth strategic event management); where the researcher investigated the actions, trials and responsibilities required throughout pre-, during- and post-event. Here, event planners' personality characteristics and educational requirements were also examined due to the gap identified in the current literature. The interview guide further focused on *Gauteng*, measuring KSFs for corporate events' strategic management (Annexure A - Section C: Corporate event management in Gauteng). A section in the interview guide was allocated to the participants' profile (c.f. Annexure A – Section A: Demographic profile) to identify the participants' event-management background and *demographic data*.

Section A: Demographic profile

The first subdivision purpose was to get to know the participants through various socio-demographic and socio-economic questions. Profiles such as age, gender, ethnicity, home language, relationship status, education level, career paths, income bracket, job experience and weekly hours spent working were established. This material was used wisely while analysing the survey results; enquiring the correct demographic questions led to discovering meaningful and actionable understandings of participants.

Section B: In-depth strategic event management

The guide aimed to lead each interview through the three phases (pre-, during- and post-event) of event management and the five identified stages of the event-management process indicated by Damm (2012:52): research, design, planning, coordination and evaluation. The intention was to let participants speak freely about the topic at hand. Furthermore, during Section B, detailed strategic event-management questions were posed to corporate event planners in order to identify:

- how they measure event success;
- target market requirements;
- ever-changing market trends;
- workplace challenges;
- obligatory event-management models/ frameworks;
- work procedures;
- roles and responsibilities;
- the anticipated stages of event management and factors to consider throughout; and
- KSFs during each stage of event management

Section C: Corporate event management in Gauteng

Section C of the interview guide explored corporate event management in Gauteng. Exposing provincial strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for event planners (c.f. Figure 5.3); to produce a proposed destination SWOT analysis, to be implemented by any corporate events destination. The detailed questions focused on provincial underdevelopment; travel restrictions; safety and security issues; average stay; socio-cultural impacts; environmental impacts; and economic impacts.

The final drafted interview guide was **pre-tested** by an event planner, similar to the rest of the sampling population; as this individual had more than ten years' experience as a corporate event planner and worked in Gauteng. During the test run, interview responses were monitored in detail, and the interviewer also kept a record of how the candidate interpreted the questions before further explanations followed. This exercise was essential to modify the proposed interview guide and formulate answers for each candidate's question. The interviewer took note of the time spent while interviewing to disregard a lengthy process during final sampling. The candidate's levels of attentiveness during the interview were also observed. The researcher further identified questions that could cause response delays, and it was rephrased, amended or disregarded before the final sampling took place.

1.5.2.5 Data analysis

Creswell's (2009:185) **six steps** to scientific qualitative data analysis were implemented: categorising and formulating data for investigation; reading through all the data; completing a detailed analysis during a coding procedure; using a coding process to generate and describe themes for analysis; describing how categories and themes are presented in a qualitative narrative; and interpreting the data to create meaning (c.f. Figure 4.1 - Six steps in data analysis and interpretation).

1.6 DEFINING THE KEY CONCEPTS

The following concepts are used throughout the dissertation and therefore require some clarification.

1.6.1 Event

A variety of events are presented for various motives and purposes. In every instance, there is an intention to create or at least shape the individual and create mutual experiences for the audience (Getz, 2012:30). Events are essential promoters for tourism and play an important role in promoting a destination (Getz, 2008:403).

1.6.2 Corporate event

A corporate event is an event scheduled unaccompanied or in conjunction with other events, which supports business objectives including management functions, corporate communications, training, marketing, incentives, employee relations and customer relations (Silvers, 2010a:internet). The focus of corporate events falls on capital gain (Getz, 2016:21).

1.6.3 MICE

The acronym *MICE* stands for Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions/ Events (GL events, 2018:internet). It is a collection of primarily corporate events (Getz, 2016:21). The multifaceted MICE industry comprises a selection of parties involved in the planning and executing events, such as planners, suppliers, participants, convention and visitor bureaus, meeting locations and accommodations (Brotherton & Wood, 2008:400).

1.6.4 Supply-side analysis

A supply-side analysis classifies the KSFs to be managed for hosting fruitful events (Bosch, 2019:24). A supply-side analysis in events identifies the various motives for hosting events and audiences targeted (Saayman, 2004:152-153). The supply-side for this study is a population of corporate event planners.

1.6.5 Key success factors (KSFs)

An aspect or factor that is key is highly significant and is of utmost importance (Manners, 2011:14). As per de Witt (2006:9), KSFs “are pre-requisites for the success of any

organisation". It does not only refer to corporate goals or objectives. However, it is an amalgamation of procedures and actions proposed to support accomplishing the desired results identified by an organisation (Brotherton & Shaw, 1996:114) – in this case, corporate event-management goals and objectives. Therefore KSFs are essential factors that most affect the capability of organisations to be successful in the marketplace. It includes corporate results that show the divide between revenue and cost, certain skills, resources, policies, competitive abilities and product features (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:8).

1.6.6 Strategic management

Strategic management warrants a better fit between an organisation and its changing environment (Marais, 2016:35). Strategic management's ultimate goal is to reach improved alignment of strategic priorities and corporate guidelines (Business Dictionary, 2019b:internet). Furthermore, the Business Dictionary (2019b:internet) defines strategic management as the methodical study of factors associated with the organisation itself (the internal setting) as well as customers and competitors (the external setting) to provide a foundation for sustaining the best management practices.

1.6.7 Best-practices guideline

Common variants for the phrase *best practices* are best outcomes; probably effective practices; better practice; good practices; promising practices; evidence-based practice; and science-based practice (Osburn *et al*., 2011:217). According to Farkas and Anthony (2006:87-88), best practices can be all-encompassing of value-based practices and evidence-based practices, while a guideline instructs individuals on how something should be done.

1.6.8 Event management

Planned events within tourism are purposely created to offer appeal and more worth to a destination (Bosch, 2019:23). It is a specialised field dedicated to understanding and improving planned events' management (Getz & Page, 2016:595). Tassiopoulos (2000:40) explains that event management's drive is to manage event resources on a given activity, within time, allocated cost and performance obligations. Event management consists of the following actions: planning, leading, marketing, designing, budgeting and controlling, risk management, logistics, staging and evaluating (Allen *et al.,* 2005:160).

1.6.9 Event planner

Event planners are individuals who plan and run events, involved in the planning, implementation, brand building, marketing and communication strategy of the events (Gulati, 2019:internet). Abson's (2017:403) research established six skills of successful event planners: appealing communication skills, strategic perceptions, critical analysis and judgement, resource management, emotional resilience and interpersonal compassion.

1.7 CHAPTER CLASSIFICATION

The study includes five chapters. Below is a brief overview of what the reader can expect from each of the chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction, the background to the problem, problem statement, goals and objectives and method of research

This chapter serves as an overview of the research study and provides a summary of the research problem and the steps to take to solve the problem. This chapter includes the introduction, background to the problem, problem statement, goal and objectives of the study, research methodology, and important definitions pertinent to the study.

Chapter 2: An in-depth study of corporate events and the MICE industry

This chapter is a theoretical study with a detailed overview and classification of all types of events. A thorough literature analysis of previous studies on business tourism, cataloguing of events, the MICE sector and corporate events in Gauteng follow.

Chapter 3: An analysis of the strategic management of corporate events

An intensive literature review of previous research is performed on strategic management, event management, and KSFs. Chapter three serves as a theoretical analysis of strategic event management (definitions, classifications, the evolution of the industry, advantages, career potential, guidelines and procedure models).

Chapter 4: Method of research, analysis and results

This chapter assessed corporate event planners in Gauteng from a supply-side. Here the researcher discussed the methodology followed in conducting the interviews with event planners. The results and data analysis of the study were also presented and explained in this mentioned chapter. The chapter aimed to identify shared KSFs of strategic event management, useful practices in event management, the demographic profile of event planners in Gauteng,

challenges they experience in their occupation and geographical location and the motives for building a career in corporate event management.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

This section served as the conclusion to the study. Conclusions were drawn from the literature analyses and the empirical results by which the best practices were identified of strategic management of corporate events in each event phase (pre-, during- and post-event) (c.f. Figure 5.2). The chapter also provides readers with proposed guidelines for defining a successful corporate event planner (c.f. Figure 5.1). The guidelines serve as recommendations from the study and help fill the gap in current supply-side research on strategic corporate event-management practices. Furthermore, the chapter contributed to the SWOT analysis of Gauteng and other destinations as a corporate events destination (c.f. Figure 5.3). Suggestions for further research followed suit.

CHAPTER 2: A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE OVERVIEW OF CORPORATE EVENTS

We design events to create opportunities that create interactions" ~ Anonymous

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Yeoman (2015), cited by Smith (2017:17) points out that "the growth of events has been significant over the last decade". The constant rapid growth makes it an impossible task to attempt measurement of the events industry size (Bowdin *et al.,* 2006:441), as several factors are fuelling the rapid growth of the events industry during the planning process (Erasmus, 2012:31-32; Goldblatt, 2000:3-4). These factors, amongst others, include the following:

- Technology is developing speedily, and people require more technologically advanced experiences. Events continue to be the most active resource of providing a high-touch experience to visitors.
- The consciousness of event management to focus on resources, satisfies and delivers objectives as an interconnected discipline.
- Government is informed of the profit that events have in store for them and is actively making use of the opportunity.
- Visitors have more disposable income available to spend on planned events.
- Amplified time pressure. Individuals are working harder and playing harder, with more regular holidays, as opposed to the annual three-week holidays in the past. Tourists are more time-poor and will make financial and time investments based on the need for convenience.
- Increased business cognisance of event-marketing influence.
- There is a higher demand for improved and larger events due to the growth of the economy; particularly in the leisure and recreation sector.
- Demographic changes. As the population ages, a need arises for more celebrations. For anniversaries, birthdays etc. planned events will take place to celebrate these milestones.

The examination of previous research is imperative in all theoretical study areas (Rogerson, 2018). To reach the present research goal, the literature in Chapter 2 is divided into five major areas pertaining to **events, events tourism, the impact of events, business tourism and**

corporate events. Events are the fastest growing and utmost challenging part of the tourism industry (Erasmus, 2012:14).

> "Although business travel represents a significant share of international travel and a critical economic anchor for both the transport and tourism industries, the sector is poorly understood and patchily researched. Moreover, existing scholarship on business travel and tourism is diverse and highly fragmented (Rogerson, 2019:45)."

Therefore, to provide a better understanding of business tourism and ultimately corporate events in SA and Gauteng, this study supplies a literature background as a foundation for the following chapters and presents an introduction to events, which have been defined. The type of events, as well as their scope, characteristics and benefits, are discussed briefly. This is followed by an investigation of event tourism's history and its pioneers to better understand the said industry's background. The various significant impacts of events and how to manage sustainable events are conferred. As part of the study, business tourism with its cataloguing, background, related challenges and benefits are summarised. The review investigates business tourism in SA and accentuates the province of Gauteng, which is the focus of this research. Other significant areas in the study include corporate events and business meetings. The benefits and challenges of hosting corporate events are also discussed, serving as a motivation for researching and identifying them in developing such as SA and the province of Gauteng.

Special note:
For this study, the term *special event* will be used to describe a planned or unusual occurrence outside of one's daily routine. To shorten the spelling and ease of reading, the word 'event' is used to refer to all special events, corporate events, general events, and meetings, interchangeably. Event planner refers to the event project manager, project leader, event coordinator and event meeting planners; therefore, anyone responsible for the proficient planning and management of an event. The terms "business", "corporation", "organisations" and "institution" have the same meaning and are also interchangeably used throughout.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF EVENTS

Events are instillers of principles, directive and structure, and they celebrate traditions and customs while bringing people together to foster better relations (Ong & Goh, 2018:968). The first event-related articles in tourism appeared in the 1970s, and almost five decades later, it is a very well-established theme within tourism (Getz & Page, 2016:601). Many parts of the events field have been studied, mostly from an event-management approach. Previous studies with an event tourism perspective concentrate mainly on event impacts or marketing (Getz, 2008:409).

Getz (2008) and Oklobdžija (2015:93) hold that event-related research is still inadequately developed. Most of the existing event-related literature focuses on the area of economic benefits, neglecting research with cultural, social and personal development results. Getz (2008) emphasises how future event tourism research should identify inputs such as event bidding costs; positive and negative impacts of events; event promotion and transformation processes; facility expansion; events as agents of change and what it takes to make events happen (referring to the goal of this study). Furthermore, Getz and Page (2016b:593) recommend that "within the context of tourism and the tourism system events comprise a key element in both the origin area (i.e. events are an important motivator of tourism) as well as within the destination area (i.e. events feature prominently in the development and marketing plans of most destinations)".

Events are closely related to facility management, business studies, tourism and hospitality, arts and sports administration as well as parks and recreation (Getz, 2000:11). It also fits in the grouping of the service economy and experiential industries (Pernecky, 2015:109). The reason being that events harvest experiences and supply to note how tourism is lately part of the 'experience economy'; consequently, the planning, production, marketing and assessment of the experience have become a significant part of the tourism product. Smith (2017:7) stresses how creating an experience is a key success factor (hereafter referred to as KSFs) of events. Events, therefore, make engagement possible. Gubb (2015:23) holds that an experience is multi-dimensional, as it is proximate to the client/ attendee while creating a tangible brand experience.

Furthermore, intimacy is created by proximity and tangibility; an emotive client response will be evoked by the total authentic experience (Gubb, 2015:23). Researchers were initially doubtful about whether tourism can be classified as an industry or not, and comparable arguments are elevated concerning events. Due to its remarkable economic impact, by generating both income and employment, events are now known as an industry and a sub-set of the tourism industry (Getz, 2000:15). It is an exceptional industry and immeasurably diverse compared to the manufacturing-, banking- or hospitality industry. Events from various categories are designed for several purposes, but the goal to shape the individual and produce shared experiences for the attendees is always priorities during events (Getz, 2012:30). A specialised events industry was created due to the vast extent of organised events globally, with the pre-requisite to doing so professionally (Pernecky, 2015:109). Events play a crucial part in human society; it entails personal and local events, traditional festivities, and religious and historical events (Erasmus, 2012:14). Events now have a prominent place in planning documents for most destinations and cities. Owning the capability to act as a need for varied corporations, clients and individual

entities is recognised as a vital instrument for both the local and international public (Pernecky, 2015:109-110).

Furthermore, according to both Manners (2014:24) and Saayman (2006:28), attendees have different needs encouraging them to travel to diverse destinations and partake in activities, such as visiting family and friends, sightseeing and de-stressing. Therefore, it is noteworthy to bear in mind that attendees require different things from basically similar offerings at events. To successfully deliver quality service in terms of the visitor experience, event planners need to fulfil the expectations in most of the areas and surpass it in the delivery process of a couple of areas (Moutinho, 2000:239). It is easier for event planners to satisfy visitor needs when the planners are informed about how visitors experience an event. The public's leisure time and unrestricted spending habits have increased radically in recent years, which commands entertainment, public events and other festivities (Bowdin *et al.,* 2006:3). Bowdin *et al*. (2006:3) further explain how the government promotes events due to the destination marketing benefits and positive economic growth opportunities it brings to different cities and towns. Thus, events are part of our modern life and connected to government approaches, commercial marketing, and tourism advancement (Erasmus, 2012:14). "Events become meaningful through the symbolism and affective outcomes associated with participation" (Ong & Goh, 2018:965). To understand the events industry and further research it in-depth, one needs to understand the definition of events and how it was created, as indicated in the next section.

2.2.1 Classification of events

The word *event* is derived from the Latin term *eventus* to describe large exclusive happenings (Ismail, 2014:12). Damm (2012:6) points out that further study into the origin of the word eventus reveals that it resulted from the Latin expression *eventum*, which refers to an occurrence, issue or event. This again is obtained from the Latin word *evenure* (it turns out, it comes out, it happens) derived from the Latin word *venire*, which means to go for sale or to come (Damm, 2012:6). Consequently, earlier events were demarcated as something that is happening or as an occurrence (remarkable incident) at a given place and time, with a special set of circumstances (Getz, 2012:37). Robert Jani first revealed an English definition for events in 1955. Jani, cited by Damm (2012:7), said: "a special event is that which is different from a normal day of living". Unfortunately, no written sources have established a single generally accepted definition of events within the intervening period.

Events are either planned or unplanned. **Unplanned events** will not be considered for this research as it represents natural disasters, accidents and other comparable events (Oklobdžija,

2015:86). **Planned events** can be similar in form but will always stay tangible and diverse due to the multiplicity of event locations, attendees and different event programmes (Getz, 2007:18-19). Planned events are created for a purpose, it used to be mainly community and individual initiatives, but planned events recently developed into a dominion of entrepreneurs, specialists and professionals (Getz & Page, 2016b:594). Professionals use planned events to satisfy various entities' strategic goals (Getz, 2008:404), as the event program is well-publicised in advance and mostly pre-arranged in detail (Kruger & Saayman, 2015:15). All planned events have a special purpose with a limited duration (Getz, 2000:12) and specified timeline (Pernecky, 2015:120). Each one is exclusive in its amalgamation of cultural significance, economic worth, professionalism, management, scheduling, venues and participants (Getz, 2000:12). Planned events are also referred to as projects (Pernecky, 2015:120). Events are always planned with a specific drive, be it private or public, for a profit or charity or festive purposes (Silvers, 2004:internet). Private events such as holidays, anniversaries and birthdays are an integral part of our daily lives (Getz, 2000:12). On the other hand, public events outline culture and help generate a sense of community (Getz, 2000:12). More often, events play the role of "image-makers" for destinations and communities to attract more residents, investors and tourists/ attendees (Getz, 2000:15) to a specific location and simultaneously cultivate the economy of the local community (Erasmus, 2012:14).

Planned events are further divided into ordinary and special events. **Ordinary events** occur annually, and event attendees or host communities are familiar with these events (Bosch, 2018:119), such as the annual school athletics race. Because event planners annually plan ordinary events, they learn from previous years' events, and the planning process becomes easier. **Special events**, on the other hand, are planned events with a fixed duration; it can be occasionally recurrent or a once-off event (Ismail, 2014:16) which is very appealing to locals and tourists, as it provides social, leisure and cultural experiences that stand out from the daily routine and are infrequently available (Erasmus, 2012:34; Saayman, 2001a:116). Event classifications differ for the event attendee and the event planner. For the event planner an event is an organised activity for a particular group (Collins Dictionary, 2019:internet), "an experience carefully crafted to deliver an impact on the person of attendance" (Gers-Couto, 2013:11) as well as an occasion, taking place externally from ordinary activities of the sponsoring organising body (Getz,1997:11). On the other hand, event attendees join events to expand their daily recreational activities, in search of leisure activities out of the norm (Erasmus, 2012:14). To the event attendee, an event is a prospect of relaxation, a cultural or communal experience, beyond everyday experiences (Gers-Couto, 2013:11; Getz, 1997:11) and "a unique moment in time celebrated with ceremony and ritual to satisfy specific needs" (Goldblatt, 1997:2). Saayman (2001a:115) agrees that attendees are motivated to partake in special

events for different reasons. While some want to share in the experience, others need to belong to or be educated by the event.

Special events can further be categorised as **non-profit and profitable events**. According to Oklobdžija (2015:89) most events are hosted with the economic aim to be profitable and with the social goal to execute various programmes (i.e. cultural, sport, corporate, artistic, scientific, and political). Non-profit events can be charitable events, collecting funds for a good cause, and another form of non-profit events are mainly intended to boost the external image of attendees, event planners or businesses (Oklobdžija, 2015:89). Lastly, Oklobdžija (2015:89) explains how events can be classified in accordance with the level at which it is attached to a destination. Some events always occur in different communities (mostly requires a competitive bid to host, i.e. Rugby World Cup), others are continuously hosted at the same place/ community (i.e. Cape Town International Jazz Festival) and lastly those events that take place concurrently in numerous communities. As indicated in Figure 2.1, the nomological structure of planned events by Jago and Shaw (1998:24) shows how events involve *ordinary events*, carried out in an unplanned manner or *special events* that are planned.

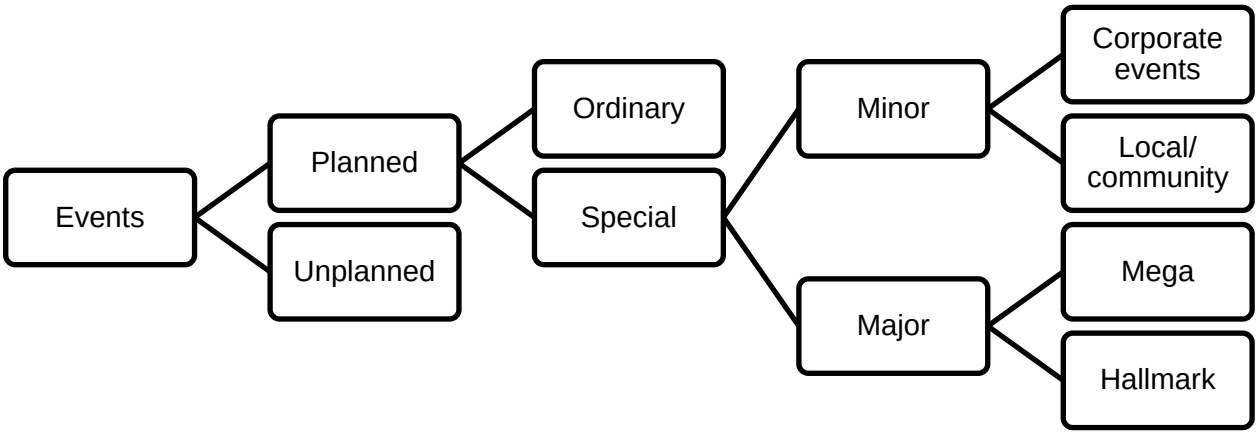

Figure 2-1: Event nomological structure
Source: Adapted from Jago and Shaw (1998:21-23) as well as Tassiopoulos (2010:11-15)

2.2.2 Classification of events according to size

Occurring in a broad mixture of scopes, with varied impacts (Kirby *et al.,* 2018:918), events are presented in numerous sizes and cover a wide range of activities (Akram, 2017:5). Special events are further divided into **minor special events** and **major special events** (Tassiopoulos, 2010:11). In addition to this, major special events are further separated into **mega-events** and **hallmark events** (Tassiopoulos, 2010:10). Lately, the special event field is problematic to define due to the large variety of events. However, reference is still made to the four most

notable sizes of events as major events, hallmark events, mega-events and minor events (Ismail, 2014:17). For this study, **corporate events** are also indicated in the events' nomological structure (Figure 2.1). The existing literature further categorises events in different ways according to the size and type, including the form and content of events. These groupings converse in the next section.

Events are either national or international and can be further categorised based on the event size, occasions and others (Jago & Shaw, 1998). Table 2.1 below summarises the different **special event scopes**, unfolding the event classification and providing examples of these events. Recognising these events' characteristics helps event planners comprehend how to distinguish them from one another and understand their different event functions.

Table 2-1: Different event sizes/ scopes

Type	Feature	Examples
Minor events	Most events fall within this category Small, annual events The profile is local, regional and international	Community celebrations, awards, historical events, sporting finals and social events.
Corporate/ MICE Events	The theme is characterised by its trade and business focus Tourism level is significant Economic impact – high foreign exchange revenue Frequency depends on the event	Corporate meetings, incentive trips, conferences, seminars, exhibitions etc.
Local or community events	Smaller in size and scale With community objectives Limited duration Hosted more frequently than hallmark or mega-events Celebrates facets of a community's way of life Supported by non-government organisations (NGOs) and local government agencies Mostly family-fun events organised by the community Use voluntary host community services and public venues	Kersiefees in Ficksburg Kirkwood Wildsfees Klerksdorp Air Show Woodstock SA Fashion Week South African Music Awards Oppikoppi Music Festival
Major events	Attract large audiences Possible tradition or legacies Profile is international Expensive to stage High prestige/ status Great media coverage Integrating additional events Big economic benefits for the area Limited duration	Comrades Marathon Cape Town International Jazz Festival Mr Price Pro Surfing Competition Cape Argus Pick n Pay Cycle Tour
Hallmark events	Refers to events that have become identical with an exact location Profile is international Gain extensive acknowledgement and responsiveness Large in scale and size Once-off or recurring	Carnival in Rio de Janeiro ABSA Klein Karoo National Arts Festival Aardklop National Arts festival Grahamstown Arts Festival Cannes Film Festival Tomato Festival in Spain

	Limited duration Improve consciousness and profitability of a destination over a brief period Seen as an image-building exercise	Festival of the Dead
Mega-events	Have global appeal Associated with large-scale social, economic and environmental impacts The event destination changes Vast monetary and human resources required Targeted by the international market and influence entire communities, countries and continents Limited duration Require enormous resources Offer the prospect focussing renewed efforts on human resource growth and service delivery Potential of changing stakeholder relationships within a city Defined as mega due to the size of their guests, level of government participation, target market, financial advance, the building of facilities and host communities' impact	FIFA World Cup Cricket World Cup Rugby World Cup Olympic Games Winter Olympics Formula One Grand Prix MotoGP Commonwealth Games

Source: Taken from Bosch (2018:119-123); Chamberlain (2019:1166-1167); Damm (2012:8); Dimmock and Tiyce (2001:357); Getz (2005:18); Ismail (2014:15-17); Jago and Shaw (1998); Kruger and Heath (2012:5-12); Leigh (2019:7); Maennig (2017:1-7); Manners (2014:28-30); Wang and Jin (2019:109-110); Westerbeek *et al*. (2002:303-304)

Wang and Jin (2019:111) explain that an event should be considered a mega, major or hallmark event owing to its ability to encourage substantial tourism development. However, the current dissertation on events is primarily based on event size and scale. Categorising events, according to type adds to another consistent method of ordering events, as indicated below.

2.2.3 Classification of events according to type

In summary from the event classification literature compiled thus far, an event can be an independent activity such as a tradeshow, concert, festival, roadshow, gala dinner or sporting event. These events can be clustered in a combination of ways depending on the arrangement, scope and event content (Allen *et al.,* 2008:13). The latter can be divided into community/ local events, major/ hallmark events and Mega-events (Allen *et al*., 2008:12). Bowdin *et al*. (2006:15) further explain how events are mainly clustered into different groups, rendering their content/ form and size and it comprises various subdivisions (Goldblatt, 2000:3). However, there is little agreement on how to group events, as various researchers and authors differ in their recommendations as to which event types should be clustered together. Matthews (2008:6) identified three event category groups, namely:

- meetings and conferences;
- tradeshows and expositions; and

- celebrations, spectacles and ceremonies.

These three categories can also be divided into public (i.e. festivals, concerts, sporting events, carnivals) and private events (i.e. fundraisers, corporate functions, ceremonies). Arcodia and Baker (2003) and Damm (2012:8) also mainly categorised planned events into three groups, namely:

- cultural events (i.e. festivals, exhibitions);
- corporate events (i.e. trade fairs, conferences); and
- sporting events (i.e. rugby world cup, Olympic Games).

Furthermore, Getz (2007) recommends that:

- personal events are categorised as a stand-alone category;
- political events, cultural festivities, arts and entertainment form one category;
- education, corporate and scientific events into another category; and
- recreation, as well as sports events, are grouped.

Shone and Parry (2004), cited by Marais (2014:31), on the other hand, suggest that: cultural events (art, heritage, ceremonial, sacred, traditional); personal events (centenaries, weddings, birthdays); leisure events (recreation, sport) and organisational events (commercial, political, charitable) be clustered together. Table 2.2 below provides the most common cataloguing of planned events based on their form (apparent differences in event programme purpose). Planned events can be subdivided and grouped as follows:

Table 2-2: Cataloguing of planned events, based on their form

	Categories of a planned event	Example of planned event category
1	Political and state events	Political events, summits, royal ceremonies
	Cultural celebrations	Festivals, carnivals, parades, religious events
	Arts and Entertainment	Concerts, shows, award ceremonies
2	Educational and scientific events	Workshops, conferences, seminars
	Business and trade events	Meetings, conventions, tradeshows, consumer tradeshows, exhibitions
3	Recreational planned events	Planned leisure and recreation programmes, social sport games
	Sport competitions	Tournaments, on local/regional/national/international level, professional/amateur

4	Private events	Weddings, parties, celebrations, socials

Source: Adapted from Bosch (2018:116-117), Getz (2008:404) and Oklobdzija (2015:88)

Mostly, the events sector consists of leisure events and corporate events, which include: meetings, incentives, networking, conferences and exhibitions (Abson, 2017:404). For this study, only corporate events will be further defined and discussed later in the Chapter now that a better understanding of event types, sizes and classifications has been established.

2.3 EVENT TOURISM

The term *event(s) tourism* was not formerly used before 1987 when The New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department described event tourism as a speedily growing and significant international tourism sector (Getz & Page, 2016b:597). The organised planning, improvement and marketing of special events as tourism attractions are termed *event tourism* (Getz, 2007:405; Saayman, 2001a:112). Event tourism is a sub-field of both tourism and event studies (Getz & Page, 2016b:595). Events can significantly influence destination development as imperative motivators of tourism. With the focus on event tourism, events increase tourist receipts and provide opportunities for encouraging tourism, destination branding, and business leverage (Wang & Jin, 2019:110). Event tourism only recently became an independent discipline in the research community and tourism industry, because of growing interest due to a significant number of papers, books, conferences and journals, covering events. Getz and Page (2016b:595) outline event tourism as a set of interrelations between event management and tourism management; event tourism is in the middle of the two sectors. While event management attempts to comprehend the event experiences and deals with the proposal, management, and promotion of events, tourism management studies relate to tourists' drive and behaviour based on tourism development. Event tourism aims for events to be greatly successful in increasing the positive impact an event may have on a destination, to increase tourism development of host communities and make the area more appealing to tourists (Oklobdžija, 2015:92-93). As described by Oklobdžija (2015:92-93): on the supply side, events tourism is conceptualised to:

- assist with urban renewal purposes of a destination;
- increase tourist capacity and infrastructure of the destination;
- attract more tourists, especially during shoulder- and off-peak seasons;
- animate destination attractions;
- create a positive destination image; and
- contribute to the promotion and marketing of the destination.

On the other hand, event tourism from a demand-side, involves determining the impact of events in endorsing a constructive destination image, potential co-branding with destinations and the position of event marketing in destination marketing (Oklobdžija, 2015:92-93). *Meeting industry* and *event tourism* are new terms from the 21st century (Davidson & Cope, 2003:70).

Event tourism can be beneficial and are affected by many destination factors (Marinakou, 2019:511). Various researchers in the past studied the different impacts of events, such as social (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008; Small, 2007; Wallstam *et al.,* 2018), environmental (Tyler Miller, 2002), economic (Maennig, 2017) as well as political, and cultural impacts (Allen *et al.,* 2008; Bowdin *et al.,* 2011). Hussain *et al*. (2017:504) hold that economic, social and physical impacts are caused by tourism and corporate events. From the following discussions, both negative and positive impacts of business tourism emerge, knowing the impacts and consequences should prescribe to event planner actions and strategies (de Witt, 2006:21). Event planners must take both the host community and event attendees' contentment into consideration while reducing possible negative economic, environmental and social impacts. Having said this, the economic impact has developed into one of the most cited and used arguments in events-bidding usage (Maennig, 2017:1).

2.3.1 Benefits of hosting events

According to Wang and Jin (2019:109), events boost cultural exchange, endorse the preservation of host community/ local culture, contribute extensively to the host destination's economy, and increase its consciousness. Events are also popular global tools used by cities to expand destination branding due to the vast benefits (Gubb, 2015:25). Planned events have been employed as tools for communication and become mediators of social change (Ong & Goh, 2018:965-966). Due to host communities realising the benefits of hosting events, competition among communities also increased (Buning & Gibson, 2016:175-176). Effectively planned events provide an array of tangible and intangible benefits, which entail (see Gert-Courto, 2013:11-12; Getz & Page, 2016b:593; Gubb, 2015:25-26; Manners, 2011:2; Ong & Goh, 2018:966-976; Saayman, 2001a:84,197; Venske, 2018:81):

- providing a unique visitor and social experience;
- events can be drivers of change in public opinion;
- it is only valid for a limited duration;
- encourage time-honoured traditions
- determining the boundaries of inclusion
- strengthening of community pride

- social amalgamation
- cumulative tourist visits to the destination;
- generating business and investment opportunities;
- contributing to a positive economic impact;
- job creation;
- providing sponsorship opportunities;
- attracting positive media attention;
- promoting the destination and region in a positive light and raising the image of a location;
- expanding the tourist season; and
- supporting key event role-players.

Classifying the benefits and spotting some problems that may occur during the event planning makes it possible to compile specifications to ensure a successful event. The proposed checklist includes the following event-planner tasks (Holley, 2001:6-30; Palo, 2016:15-22; Saayman, 2001a:111):

- permit adequate time for event planning;
- promote the event effectively;
- theme the event appropriately;
- establish strong objectives;
- finalise funding timely in the planning process;
- recruit well-trained staff;
- hire adequate food and beverages service providers;
- introduce a publicity plan;
- plan attendee transport and accessibility meticulously;
- communicate appropriately with stakeholders;
- apply risk management and launch a contingency plan;
- create a security, health and safety plan;
- follow the initial event plan; and
- provide a post-event report for future use.

2.3.2 Economic impacts

The event industry is a key economic supplier to a destination's income and employment; it is ever-evolving while inducing the tourism industry (Felsenstein & Fleisscher, 2003:385; Lei & Loi, 2016:53; Tichaawa, 2017:182; Saayman, 2001a:91). Regularly economic impacts are part of

public relations, attempting to influence pertinent stakeholders and mass media that the planned event is advantageous for the economy (local/ regional/ national) (Maennig, 2017:1). “During the last decades, there has been increased interest in analysing the economic impact of events” (Colombo, 2016:501). Sweeney and Goldblatt (2016:41) point out that historically planned events research conducted, mainly focused exclusively on economic impacts. The economic impact of MICE events is beneficial and brings great joy and gratification to local economies, destinations, and individual wealth (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:499). MICE tourism can have substantial economic benefits; it is the most economically beneficial form of tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:75). Hence more regions and countries have been bidding and attempting to attract business tourism. The number of visitors, duration of their stay, total expenditure and multiplier effect (how many times money spent by a tourist circulates through a destination’s economy) are the four significant aspects for determining the economic impact of events (Saayman, 2000:114). It is important to note that event economic impacts consist of both indirect and direct effects. *Direct effects* are event-attendee spending, and indirect effects refer to the host community's impact benefiting from visitor expenditure (van der Wagen, 2005:340).

Kruger (2006:47), Reynolds, 2007:9; Saayman (2000:129), Swarbrooke and Horner (2001:76) as well as Wang and Jin (2019:109) all indicate that the positive economic impacts of events include the following:

- income opportunities for host community enterprises and the destination;
- job creation;
- tax revenue generation (central and local government);
- conceivable encouragement for investment in the region/ destination; and
- foreign currency injection from tourists.

Weed (2009), cited by Wang and Jin (2019:111), claims that economic impact analysis findings should not always be accepted as it appears, since different study results are not similar due to two explanations: deliberate obstruction because of political pressure, as well as procedural incompetence. Getz and Page (2016b:616) agree, by explaining how various scholars have highlighted the lack of reliability used in event impact studies, referring to literature studies by Dwyer, Forsyth and Spurr (2005); Sherwood (2007) as well as Uysal and Gitelson (1994). However, many excellent guidelines and literature are available for assisting future researchers in avoiding the pitfalls during economic impact studies of planned events, referring to outstanding literature commentary and methodology for steering economic impact assessments by Dwyer *et al.* (2000) (Getz & Page, 2016b:616).

The negative economic impacts of events include (Kruger, 2006:47-48; Reynolds, 2007:9; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:76; Westcott, 2015a:internet):

- an influx of business tourists may cause additional expenses due to congestion;
- price hikes and retailers stocking more expensive items to supply goods for wealthy travellers all contribute to needless inflation;
- facility (i.e. exhibition centre or convention centre) development may require public funding;
- host communities prioritising budgets for the development of business facilities and services rather than promoting education and health; and
- changes in tourism demand can be detrimental for areas that are too dependent on tourism.

In summary, events' revenue is the most beneficial economic impact (de Witt, 2006:22; Reynolds, 2007:8). Event attendees spend money on various services in the host destination, including transport, accommodation and other retail services. Consequently, all the event attendees' spending has an enormous positive impact as it circulates through the local community (Allen *et al*., 2002:39). Event planners need to consider economic impacts on the host community during the event-planning process; they may consult economic studies for research information (de Witt, 2006:22). Also, with the anticipation of positive economic benefits from events, stakeholders overlook negative impacts, i.e. inflated prices during events (de Witt, 2006:22). According to Hanharan and Maguire (2016:129), Colombo (2016:500), as well as Wang and Jin (2019:111) the socio-cultural impact of events receives minimal academic attention, as cultural and social consequences of tourism and events are frequently overlooked in favour of the economic advantages. Kruger and Heath (2012:4-6) disagree with this statement, in their argument that events hold plausible benefits and drawbacks for a destination and that both economic and social impacts are the most protruding and extensively researched impacts of events.

2.3.3 Social and cultural impacts

The fluctuations (positive or negative) in host communities' principles, value systems, ethics, norms, conduct, and the quality of life, due to events, refer to the socio-cultural impacts of (event) tourism. Sweeney and Goldblatt (2016:42) describe that a reasonable amount of existing literature focuses on the social impacts of tourism, mostly through the sustainable tourism research studies, but too few studies concentrate on the social impacts of events. Researchers have also already tried to evaluate events' cultural impacts successfully, but none of the studies offers a strong theory of knowledge definition or methodological approach

(Colombo, 2016:501). Therefore, Colombo (2016) proposed a theoretical and methodological model for measuring and analysing the cultural effects of events. It has also been suggested by Berridge (2007) that events have an impact on society's culture, jointly on a micro and macro level. As explained by Saayman (2000:138), event attendees and host communities have different perceptions. The host is present in their usual home and life, while visitors are enjoying events in an unusual place and time. Different cultures habituate these worlds. Due to the contrasting values and cultures, social conflict may occur depending on their flexibility and adjustment to tolerate one another. The less the hosting of an event is forced onto a community, the higher their tolerance to host it. Therefore, it is important for event planners first to study the host community's attitudes and perceptions before event planning commence, and investment is made in resources (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004:513). The Doxey's index of irritation can be used to show the relation between host community's altering attitudes as the number of event attendees or tourists increases (de Witt, 2006:24-25; Saayman, 2000:144):

1. During the development stage of little planning or control mechanism of event planning, the first phase is euphoria when host communities welcome investors and tourists.
2. This is followed by apathy when event marketing occurs, and formal contracts between residents and visitors are sealed.
3. Annoyance follows as a clear saturation point approaches. During this level of irritation, the host community has reservations about the event/ tourism industry. Instead of limiting growth, policymakers instead wrongly focus here on infrastructure development.
4. The final irritation level is antagonism when visitors/ attendees are the cause of all problems, and frustrations are openly expressed. Promoting increases to off-set the fading destination reputation, but unfortunately, only remedial planning takes place.

Local communities are often so 'taken' by the excitement of hosting events and the prospect of better image and facilities, that they tolerate momentary annoyance and commotion created by events (Allen *et al*., 2002:33). Colombo (2016:508-509), Lill (2015:39-43), Sweeney and Goldblatt (2016:42) as well as Wang and Jin (2019:109) stipulate how positive social and cultural impacts of events offer the following:

- experiences of enjoyment, empathy and personal fulfilment;
- improvement of local pride by celebrating national holidays and other community events;
- strengthening traditions by preserving folklore and history;
- attendees and hosts learn more about one another, promoting cultural vistas and mutual understanding;
- opportunity for artistic appreciation, learning and discovery of local traditions and culture;
- refining social ties and reducing international mistrust;
- development of cultural consciousness and appreciation;

- event tourism provides the opportunity of moderately well-paid jobs for some individuals;
- the local business community are exposed to new ideas;
- it can act as a motivator for many employees/ business travellers;
- bringing improved leadership;
- improved local accountability;
- better public-private cooperation;
- promotes international peace, as individuals from different cultures understand each other better; and
- event tourism endorses country pride.

According to the literature by the following researchers listed (Westcott, 2015a:internet; Colombo, 2016:508-509; Getz, 1997:46; Lill, 2015:39-47; Small, 2007:52) the negative social impacts of tourism events are as follows:

- attendees could be involved in unlawful activities, i.e. smuggling;
- moral issues are elevated, and bad crowd behaviour follows, including substance abuse and prostitution;
- the spread of sexually transmitted diseases by corporate travellers;
- attendees may offend locals by being ignorant;
- locals may be exposed to imported goods and luxuries unavailable in their own country;
- wealthy tourists may leave less fortunate locals with resentment or a feeling of inferiority;
- the reduction of the authenticity of experiences, due to the adaption of ancient customs and dances, to accommodate tourists' preferences;
- due to congestion, locals and tourists may compete to make use of local services;
- the start-up of successful business tourism development may change a destination's social patterns of political power and leadership;
- often local employees are in low-paid positions, while outsiders are paid more and attain higher positions as employed skilled workers from outside the local community;
- a surge in crime as criminals could be drawn to the event location by wealthy business travellers;
- regular business travellers suffer stress from apprehensions over lost luggage, flight delays, missed connections etc.;
- ill-managed events where noise pollution takes place; and
- annoyance due to the unbalanced distribution of profits and expenses among event stakeholders.

Negative social impacts of business tourism may be the source of grave community harm. Event planners can reduce the negative social impacts by following the six guidelines listed below proposed by Kruger (2006:49-50):

1. The host community must be made aware of the socio-economic consequence of the meeting industry through publicity;
2. The host community needs to authorise the upgrade of local attractions;
3. The combination of private and public efforts needs to uphold the quality and honour of host communities for recreational purposes;
4. Broad-based host community involvement in business tourism activities and events needs to take preference;
5. The host community themselves should identify and implement priorities and goals for business tourism development; and
6. Resident labour and capital should be used toward local tourism development.

After reviewing the social and cultural impacts, it is evident that the growth of the event industry may be attributed to the requirement for social interaction among communities, as humans are social beings who enjoy consuming good food and drink and partaking in exciting activities, appreciating a laidback milieu (Shone & Parry, 2004:50-51). Communities are collaborative and will always celebrate something together. Getz (1997:46) stresses how one needs to bear in mind that events' cultural and social contributions impact event attendees and the host community alike. The intricate relationship between host communities and events, therefore is substantial. By maintaining community values, improving the local community image, and acting as a medium of refining social relationships, events can play a constructive role in communities' lives (Hanharan & Maguire, 2016:130). Resulting from these positive attributes, communities comprehend the benefits derived from hosting events. As shown in Sweeney and Goldblatt's (2016:43) study (an exploration of mixed research methods in planned event studies) planned events improve the social capital within communities.

Furthermore, with supposed benefits on the horizon, host communities are more likely to support the hosting of events and other tourism activities. Though, when there is a negative relationship with the forecasted cost of hosting events, communities cannot give their support and formal permission. To manage the process and facilitate socio-cultural sustainability during event planning, implementation of local authority policies and guidelines at all levels are essential (Hanharan & Maguire, 2016:142). With these social and cultural impacts in mind, researchers (Kristen *et al.,* 2015; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:77) also pronounce how community awareness has grown immensely, grasping the negative impacts corporate tourists, the MICE industry and businesses may have on the natural environment.

2.3.4 Environmental impacts

Within academic research, the environmental impacts of planned events and tourism have remained a largely neglected study area, as only two published papers thus far by May (1995) and Harris and Huyskens (2002) have dealt exclusively with the environmental impacts of events (Getz & Page, 2016b:618). However, prior research has been conducted on environmental impacts of conferences by Lee *et al.* (2013) and Whitfield *et al*. (2014a). Gracan (2010), cited by Promlung (2018:10-13), demonstrates in an appalling example how 8,500 business tourists attending a five-day conference can consume 88,461 kWh of electricity, use 210,800 plastic plates, 306,000 water bottles, 255,000 plastic cups, 297,500 paper napkins and produce 24 tons of waste. Corporate events cause large consumption of products during events and are the most significant contributors to the waste stream in tourism hospitality (Promlung, 2018:10-13). Furthermore, according to Goldblatt (2012), events have direct and indirect impacts on an environment. The direct influence immediately impacts the environment, such as littering. While indirect influences impact the environment negatively later, for instance, lost vegetation and open space.

Hanharan and Maguire (2016:142) further maintain that it will be beneficial to put event-planning guidelines in place to manage environmentally safer and responsible events. However, local authorities do not consider the endorsement of such policies and a formal guideline as significant, due to the increase of legislature and *red tape* during event planning. Herein referring to legislation surrounding the event industry such as licensing, fire safety, health and safety, insurances, waste management, environmental health and traffic management. De Witt (2006:27-28) explains that the environmental impacts of both the built and natural environment need to be studied beforehand, and event planners must recommend how to manage the impacts during the event. Physical impacts of the natural environment to consider are the impact of the event on the vegetation, soil, water, fauna, natural aesthetics and open spaces. Impacts on the built environment refer to waste disposal, established aesthetics, utilities, roads, transportation systems, the flow and noise at built environments during events (de Witt, 2006:28).

Well-planned events, paying attention to detail in the supply of services and goods such as access to water, security, waste management and technology for adequate event-staging can benefit a destination (de Witt, 2006:25). Many positive impacts are also identified, as formerly run-down buildings may be reconstructed into convention centres and hotels (Kruger, 2006:50). The environmental benefits of planned events include enhanced environmental awareness, reinforced focus on lessening carbon footprint, and the desire for the conservation of natural resources (Wang & Jin, 2019:110). Furthermore, the hygiene and environmental quality of a

destination can be enhanced by local authorities, with the desire to attract affluent event attendees (Kruger, 2006:50). Events occasionally lead to the enhancement of the ecological eminence, as an upgrade of environmental aesthetics before events taking place, through landscaping programmes. This guarantees better maintenance and suitable building design. Well-designed tourist facilities will boost the image of a destination/ location. Recurrent infrastructure such as airports, water and sewage systems, roads and telecommunication systems upgraded for the sake of events, tourism and events consequently act as a catalyst for infrastructure development (de Witt, 2006:26-27). Donaldson (2013:26) accentuates "the flow or movement of business tourists is mostly within manmade environments (urban space, airports, hotels etc.) and thus does not disturb pristine or fragile environments".

Event planners and managers need to anticipate the impact of events on the environment sensibly; it, therefore, is advisable to conduct an environmental impact assessment before hosting major events (Allen *et al*., 2002:35). It has been demonstrated in the past that physical damage to the environment was caused by the lack of preparation and research, as opposed to attention to the event itself (de Witt, 2006:27). The negative environmental impacts of events are elucidated as follows (Donaldson, 2013:26; Promlung, 2018:10-13):

- The expansion of tourism infrastructure unfortunately also brings on negative impacts as the landscape changes, ecological disturbance takes place, and pollution is evident;
- The events industry contributes to environmental contamination by means of littering, gas emission, waste, air pollution, noise contamination and water effluence;
- Natural habitat is destroyed by business travellers' demand for infrastructure, such as roads and airports, which creates pollution and uses valuable resources;
- Ecologically unfriendly transport systems are favoured by business tourists, i.e. aircraft and private cars;
- Business travellers' trips are mostly sponsored, they are therefore wasteful with food and paper;
- Local building styles are ignored as new business tourism infrastructure (such as convention centres and hotels) in the form of standard architectural models emerges, which does not fit in with local building scales and styles;
- Incentive travel programmes could damage the delicate environment; and
- Congestion and overcrowding during events are other negative impacts.

In summary, corporate travellers like to feel that they contribute to saving the earth and therefore prefer eco-friendly hotels. On the other hand, Hotels need to sustain itself by attracting market forces and being "pro-green". For future development, event planners and organisations need to become more devoted to the sustainability of the environment (Ridhima, 2018:1-9) to

avoid losing business and reducing wastage (Promlung, 2018:10-13). Practising environmental sustainability lessens total cost in the long run (for business) and benefits the natural environment, as the natural environment needs to be well-preserved for the next generation.

2.3.5 Tourism sustainability

The impacts of planned events have been recognised and are imperative for destination attractiveness (Getz, 2008:403). Emerging sustainable development in *green* events is a system of approaching event management from a holistic approach, profiting communities and event stakeholders. Event-planning should preferably be sustainable towards the economic, social and physical environment, as previous literature deliberations indicate that events as a part of business tourism have several significant negative impacts. It is crucial for event planners to enthusiastically maintain a balance between conservation of the environment, optimum tourism satisfaction, and host community approval. Furthermore, sustainable events need to implement business strategies to nourish, protect and further improve natural and human resources while simultaneously satisfying stakeholder needs to reduce the negative environmental impact regarding pollution and resource exhaustion (Promlung, 2018:10-13). Tourists have high *green* expectations and are more environmentally sensitive, and by promoting it, businesses are becoming more sensitive (Nuray *et al.,* 2016). Venues practising sustainable event management will also reap the benefits, including added revenue, savings and extra business (pro-green businesses) generated (Promlung, 2018:10-13). Today event planners with a more sustainable approach ask questions such as (ICCA, 2018:internet):

- Why is this event planned?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- How will it benefit the stakeholders?
- Who else might it impact and how?
- How are negative impacts reduced?
- How can the benefits for all stakeholders be increased?

Anticipating these questions is one of the first steps one can take towards sustainable events. Host communities, policymakers, external funding agencies, educational establishments, and MICE entrepreneurs need to stand together and contribute to the sustainable management of events (ICCA, 2018:internet).

For sustainable business tourism planning, Kruger (2006:510) recommends that the carrying capacity be calculated, as tourism flow should not be allowed to increase. A threshold should be calculated for the following, and benefits ought to exceed the cost:

- physical carry capacity of a building with people;

- growing costs of high numbers which may overshadow the commercial profits;
- degrading of the tourism experience as numbers increase;
- corroding result of large numbers on the built-up and natural location; and
- degrading of the residents' experience of their locality as tourist numbers increase.

An event on its own holds the likelihood of having a substantial effect on event host communities. By presenting a positive image of a destination, events contribute to sustainable development and create improved host-guest relations (Manners *et al.,* 2015b:61). It is generally difficult for individual businesses to calculate the worth of events because events are unique, and many of their benefits are intangible, whereas economists' events have monetary value (Getz, 2000:18). By paying attention to all stakeholders, events hold the potential of generating and revealing sustainable management standards. This warrants the high probability of a positive impact on the environment and participants. Therefore the *event* is more appropriately understood as an *opportunity for many* (Pernecky, 2015:120). The outdated method of applying minimal resources and only employing temporary staff as a *quick fix* was unsuccessful in the past. Even if event planners are wary of the impacts, it is still impossible to eliminate negative impacts. The aim, however, is for better management.

Event planners need to follow a sustainability guideline, i.e., by encouraging corporate travellers to buy goods from local enterprises; to instead make use of public transport; cultivating business tourists to welcome local cultural variances and about social complications caused at destinations. Events endorsed as *green* or *eco* events follow a strong environmental program – it is also understood as intentional agents promoting sustainable event practices. Other events have a broader macro perspective, focusing on events at large. The latter gained international momentum by practising the need to manage possible negative event impacts (Pernecky, 2015:110). An example is the Organization for Standardization that developed a new ISO standard 20121:2012 to boost sustainable event management (ISO, 2019:internet). The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) also set a great global example by launching the MICE Master Plan 2017-2021 (TCEB, 2017:internet) for event planners to plan sustainable MICE events. The TCEB president Mr Chiruit Isarangkun Na Ayuthaya points out that nowadays host communities worldwide pay great attention to sustainable development; local participation and environment play a significant role in inducing decision making by MICE tourists for corporate events in Thailand. The main TCEB goal is to connect MICE event planners with host communities to practise sustainable MICE model development for host communities to benefit and MICE organisations to return optimum profits (TCEB, 2017:internet). In recent years sustainable tourism development has gained global acknowledgement. A new customary of universal goals and indicators referred to as the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs) was created by the United Nations (UN) (2017:internet). UN member states are anticipated to follow the 17 SDGs while establishing their tourism planning, political guidelines and agendas for the next 15 years. The SDGs cover economic and social growth problems, poverty, starvation, health, education, gender equality, water sanitation, energy, employment, industrialisation, destination inequality, urbanisation, environment, climate change, ocean sustainability, and preserving ecosystems, social justice and global partnerships.

In summary, event stakeholders are recently more aware of their waste management disasters, energy crisis, carbon footprint, global fluctuations in client desires, global climate change, fierce competition among opponents and eco-friendly criteria (Ridhima, 2018:1-9). The government and other funding corporations obligate event planners to produce more comprehensive outcomes locality. Consequently, sustainability nowadays is a part of the bid process for several significant local and regional events. Currently, sustainable MICE events are the standard and no longer only a trend; meeting planners need to be well informed concerning the impacts and manage it accordingly. Sustainable meetings lead to various resources to meet preserving resources, including water, accommodation, waste, food and beverage, travel and transport, energy, hosts and local community contribution (Promlung, 2018:10-13). However, this study focuses on corporate events, which is part of the business tourism industry, further defined in the following section.

2.4 BUSINESS TOURISM

The tourism industry is divided into leisure tourism and business tourism (Hussain *et al*., 2017:499). The latter is documented as a high-return section of the overall tourism industry with a pleasing economic impact on destinations, local economies, businesses and human capital (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:497; Marques & Santos, 2016:1). Within this study, business tourism refers to the *formal sector* business tourist / corporate attendee involved in travelling for business purposes generally on an international basis and as a domestic business traveller (Rogerson, 2018:384). Tichaawa (2017:181), Thomas (2012:59) and Javan (2018:internet) agree that business tourism forms an integral part of the international tourism economy. Moreover, in the tourism industry, business tourism is seen as an area with limitless potential for further development (Marques & Santos, 2016:1; Skinner, 2017:820). Corporate events (an integral part of business tourism) are globally observed as an important business; therefore, business tourism grew extremely important for many countries' economies (Manners, 2016:19). Around 14% of all international travel is by business tourists (Skinner, 2017:819). Certain countries rely heavily on business tourism as a revenue avenue, for example, Singapore, with 40% of its tourism revenue derived from business tourism (Skinner, 2017:819). The tourism

sector in most African countries does not yet perform to its full potential; therefore, business tourism's importance cannot be overstressed (Tichaawa, 2017:183). However, within Africa, the building of a chain of superior international hotels, conference facilities and convention centres represents the formal business tourism sector catering for business tourism travellers (Tichaawa, 2017:182). “Business tourism and its elements (meeting, conference, and convention centres) need to be managed effectively to provide a destination with a competitive edge.” (Tifflin & Balkaran, 2014:432.) Business travel is also a significant development area for present-day sub-Saharan Africa (Rogerson, 2015b:46). Within the next section business tourism is demarcated in detail, from both a demand and supply perspective.

2.4.1 Classification of business tourism

No generally accepted or frequently used definition is available to outline *business tourism* (ICCA, 2019a:internet). Over the years, various researchers and authors have explored tourism definitions and how to place business tourism in context. However, in 1942, Krapf and Hunziker were some of the first authors to refer to and define business tourism (Marques & Santos, 2016:4). Formerly the *business* category in tourism was established to categorise tourism trips according to travel purpose, without being compensated while travelling (Marques & Santos, 2016:4). Manners (2016:19) contends that business travel transpires when an individual attend another office for less than 30 days. The UNTWO (1991) cited by Marques and Santos (2016:4), on the other hand, acknowledged business tourism by defining tourism as visitor established activities found by tourists during their journeys to destinations outside of the norm for a successive time not exceeding a year, for business, leisure and other reasons not correlated to partaking in an activity paid in the visited destination. Therefore, business tourists are determined to travel to attend events that are closely related to their business interests (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:499). “Business tourism is described by researchers as a cross-section of industries and businesses and an interaction between stakeholders to meet the needs and everyday requirements of business travellers” (Marais, 2017b:2).

Business tourism from a **demand-side** is defined as disbursements paid by or on behalf of a business traveller towards a visit to a location that meets the measures to be well-defined as a business tourism trip (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:499; McNicoll, 2004:03). McNicoll (2004:04) further outlines business tourism from a **supply perspective** as “the range and volume of activities and commodities produced and supplied specifically for business tourism purposes”. Skinner (2017:819), Hussain *et al.* (2017:499) and Yusoff *et al.* (2015:1318) also describe business tourism from a supply viewpoint as the provision of services and facilities to multitudes of corporate event attendees who frequently travel to attend MICE tourism events (i.e. corporate

hospitality, meetings, incentive travel, conferences and exhibitions). Tichaawa (2017:181) agrees with this definition and adds that business travel can also comprise independent business trips over and above MICE tourism. Therefore, business tourism includes any business that knowingly depends on tourists, including indirect and direct utilisation of the corporate product or service (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:499). Corporate travellers may also partake in pre- or post-leisure activities within the MICE destination city, around in the province or country; business tourists can also be leisure tourists (Millán *et al.,* 2016; Reynolds, 2006:7). Khan (2015:229) approves of this with his statement: "MICE tourism is a perfect way of combining business with pleasure". In summary, Rogerson (2015b:45) explains how business tourism is most commonly defined as uniting independent corporate trips on the one hand and travelling for purposes of MICE on the other hand. Now that the term *business tourism* is better understood, the next stride is to understand how business travel developed throughout the ages.

2.4.2 Evolution of and background to business tourism

As businesses develop international influences and expand its international operational scale, intercontinental boundaries are thawing, and opportunities are growing, the need to travel increases international business opportunities and business tourism advances (Manners, 2016:19). In history, business tourism can be traced back to the Persian, Greek and great Roman empires (Reynolds, 2007:7). Back then, artists and traders travelled thousands of miles for business travel purposes to sell their products (Cosmin & Ioan, 2012:432). The main motives for business travel in the early history include priests undertaking journeys to different temples, trade industry dealers travelling to deal goods in distant places and soldiers being repositioned to different battle zones (Kruger, 2006:17). Therefore, corporate travellers have been travelling for business reasons for centuries, as business tourism was initiated with the trade of agricultural products in Africa, Europe and Asia thousands of years **Before Christ** (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:3). The establishment of realms in Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome further promoted business tourism trade industry growth (Saayman, 2000:53). In the earliest time travellers toured on foot for journeys (i.e. hunting, pilgrimages, exploring) motivated by the need for trading opportunities, safety, food and water. Major inventions of the sail, the wheel, better roads and railway networks provided new exciting modes of transportation for tourism and business tourism to be underway (Ugurlu, 2010:internet).

Egyptians, who initially travelled to launch communication between the central government and its territories, are the forerunners in history to develop accommodation for business travel purposes (Kruger, 2006:18). Cristea (2012:178) agrees that the ancient Egyptians' travel period

is undeniably known to be a period of increase in the number of business travellers (traders) due to the formation of special shelters designed to accommodate travellers in the inner cities and alongside the roads. ***Assyria*** was the section positioned in the ancient Near East, which under the Neo-Assyrian Empire stretched from Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) through Asia Minor (modern Turkey) and down through Egypt (Mark, 2018:internet). The Assyrian empire contributed significantly to the development of transport systems for business tourism by improving roads for heavy loads; erecting watering points; establishing guard posts; building stone bridges over rivers; paving roads; introducing horses as a mode of transport; designing more modern wagons; and placing road signs (Kruger, 2016:18).

Swarbrooke and Horner (2001:15) mention that the ***Greeks*** are acknowledged as the most influential traders of their time, making use of water as their primary mode of transport. It is also important to highlight that the Olympic Games originated during this period, which is known as the first major sport meeting in history (Cristea, 2012:179; de Klerk, 2013:24; Walton, 2005:82). By developing infrastructure and the concept of tour guides, the Greeks contributed largely to business tourism development (Saayman, 2000:53). Cristea (2012:178-179) further explains:

> Greek civilisation deeply marked travellers and travel history; from this moment, the first notes began to be recorded on the various tourism activities. Thus, in ancient Greece, people in their desire to travel safely conclude "contracts for friendly visits." These contracts tied those who sign them and oblige them to offer reciprocal accommodation, including housing and meals. We may believe that the sumbilon was equivalent to the reservation contract or voucher documents introduced a few centuries later in modern tourism.

Ancient Rome was a key breakthrough for the development of tourism, as the ***Romans*** were the first to design and build a vast-scale intelligible network of roads linking all distant points of the empire with the capital, initially developed for military purposes and used for trade and tourism thereafter (Walton, 2005:85) – a network of roads which is at present still the basis of the European System of transport and urbanism (Cristea, 2012:179). Furthermore, during the Roman era, Greek and Latin's official business tourism languages were introduced, and the Roman currency was the only financial unit that business travellers required (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:15). In ancient Roman times, due to the official language, Pausanias was able to write a travel guide in 170 BC titled "A guide to Greece", consisting of ten volumes, addressed to all passengers, particularly the Romans who needed to visit Greece (Cristea, 2012:178; Walton, 2005:82).

Within the years **100 AD** (Anno Domini, the year of our lord) to **500 AD** ancient travellers voyaged to distant locations via waterways to conduct business, through a network of relatives and acquaintances, which proved to be timeous, unsafe and an expensive exercise (Kruger, 2006:17). Also, from 300 AD, the Mayans established business routes for trading purposes, in parts of Central and North America (Jarus, 2017:internet). Gradually cities grew globally, as well as its need for commercial and political interaction with other developing cities (Saayman, 2000:44). During this period trading took place in temples and taverns while public halls and market spaces were used as meeting places (Kruger, 2006:17). From **500 AD to 1000 AD** agricultural trading was predominant and more formal marketplaces were established, leading to further urban settlements. Traders and artists produced local products such as arts, clothes and tools in exchange for food (Kruger, 2006:17).

During the **Middle Ages of 1000 AD to 1500 AD,** the Roman Empire came to an end, and so did business tourism, as people returned to rural areas (Saayman, 2000:55). Marco Polo's exhibitions throughout the Far East heightened interest in travel and trade between 1275 AD and 1295 AD (Brown, 2015:internet). The manufacturing industry gradually brought on trade and further business tourism opportunities as slavery was eliminated (Saayman, 2000:56). The Renaissance period followed suit, where trade fairs became a prevalent event for business travellers, who also made use of local entertainment facilities, accommodation and restaurants (Saayman, 2000:56). According to Gale (2013:internet): "…merchants, missionaries, soldiers, students and pilgrims were the most likely to use sea travel during the Renaissance. As trade and exploration increased during the Renaissance, overseas travel became more popular". However, business trips once again began to decline due to the rise of Protestantism (CNN, 2017:internet; Saayman, 2000:56). Investopedia (2019:internet) and Kruger (2006:20) stipulate how the best business travel route, named the Silk Route, was due to the hefty silk trading that took place during that period, was established during this time promoting business trips between Asia and Europe. This route was especially important for business tourism as it permitted transportation of goods and brought scientific inventions such as astronomy knowledge; gunpowder; original religions; and medicine developments (Reynolds, 2007:7). Once again, further transport, accommodation and restaurant services developed (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:15).

Kruger (2006:21) explains how, during the years **1500 through to 1700 AD,** inns were significant business meeting sites. Also, later in the mid-1650s trade and information exchange took place at newly developed coffee houses. A great example of this is the Lloyds Coffee House, where London's prominent business professionals such as bankers, marine insurers and lawyers gathered for business meetings (Suter, 2005:107-110). The 1650s also mark the

period during which public coach/ carriage services were put into place, communal carriages were first presented to let for hire in France by Nicholas Sauvage (Brewster, 1830:548), running between main cities, as well as strategic inns placed alongside these routes. Farmers saw the potential of housing business travellers and made use of the opportunity by converting their farmhouses into inns (Kruger, 2006:21).

Cox and Kings Ltd., founded in 1758, is the first known business travel agency which developed as Richard Cox became the primary authorised travel coordinator of the British Royal Armed Forces (Cox & Kings, 2019:internet). South African History Online (2015:internet) clarifies that from **1700 AD to 1900 AD** the Industrial Revolution followed, growing business tourism incredibly all through 1750 to 1900, which commenced in the United Kingdom and soon spread to other European countries, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. This period allowed industrial dealers to buy and sell goods in a broader spectrum actively. There was a dire need for more raw materials, as production levels increased; this was coupled with advanced rail and road infrastructure, ultimately growing the business tourism sector further (Reynolds, 2007:7).

> Travel by water is as old as civilisation itself. However, as we know it, the industry began when Thomas Newcomen invented the steam engine in 1712. The first crossing of the Atlantic by steam engine took place in 1819 aboard the SS Savannah, landing in Liverpool, England, after 29 days at sea. Forty years later, White Star Lines began building ocean liners including the Olympic-class ships (the Olympic, Britannic, and Titanic), expanding on previously utilitarian models by adding luxurious amenities (Westcott, 2015b:internet).

Thereafter, mapping was developed from the 1820s by the East India Company (for India's great surveys). More technically innovative great trigonometrical surveys began in the 19th century, as a vital part of exposing and embracing the globe, which allowed for more calculated travel between countries by using maps (Walton, 2005:20). Noteworthy business tourism transport breakthroughs developed during this period, also known as the “mobility era” (Sezgin & Yolal, 2012:74). Highlighting 1822, when Robert Smart of Bristol in England was proclaimed the first steamship agent booking various business travellers on steamers to Dublin and numerous other Bristol Channel ports (Ugurlu, 2010:internet). Two decades later, on the 5th of July in 1841, Thomas Cook launched a 12-mile special excursion train (the first publicly advertised excursion train) in England, from Leicester to Loughborough, transporting 570 travellers round trip for 1 shilling per passenger. Cook was the first rail excursion agent globally and therefore a true pioneer for business tourism development (Ugurlu, 2010:internet; Walton, 2005:26). Another forerunner in business tourism was the Englishman Thomas Bennett, who in 1850 set up business as a *trip organiser* (similar to what we know as a travel agent today), also

providing business travellers with itineraries, supplies and travel kits (Ugurlu, 2010:internet). Conferencing became exceptionally popular during the 19th century as universities gradually provided information-exchange services, and the conference industry underwent many changes (Rogers, 2003:3). The first convention bureau was formed in 1896 (Rogers, 2003:3).

From the year **1900 until 2000 AD** conference tourism increased due to the growth in the following demand-related factors (Rogerson, 2015b:47; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:18): economies; language skills; new industries; free trade associations; industry globalisation; professional associations; world peace; global populations; hobbies; and professions. Furthermore, various supply-related factors assisted with the increase of conference tourism during this era, including (Rogerson, 2015b:47; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:19): faster and larger aircrafts (1960s); the development of high speed trains (1980s); health advances in many destinations; increased ownership of private cars (mobility growth); specialist business tourism facilities development; and the evolution of specialist suppliers within the industry. During 1903 the Wright brothers launched an era of flight with the first successful aircraft flight (Slusser, 2011). A decade later, in 1913, Hendry Ford began the Ford automobile model T (Manning, 2019:55), which brought individual freedom to travel for business purposes. Shortly after that, the first commercial passenger flight took off on New Year's Day 1914 in Florida, transporting one passenger across Tampa Bay (IATA 2014:internet). In 1917, KLM (Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij or Royal Dutch Airlines) was the first airline operating commercial flights, making it the oldest airline still in operation (Westcott, 2015b:internet). Herewith tourism via air transportation was born. Unfortunately, during the 1930s through to the beginning of the 1950s business tourism activities declined due to the Great Depression, as financial institutions took safety measures to overcome the crisis (Westcott, 2015a:internet; Sezgin & Yolal, 2012:80). IATA, the international body responsible for regulating 94% of worldwide air traffic, was founded in 1919; regulating security, safety, finance, and air travel (Razack, 2017:16).

Nonetheless, in 1945 World War Two (WWII) ended and ushered in a new era of opulence, providing large numbers of business travellers with a greater sense of democracy, further education, wealth, time and business interest to travel (Westcott, 2015a:internet; Sezgin & Yolal, 2012:75; Walton, 2005:4). During this period, the most notable impact of technology is associated with the Computer Reservation Systems (CRSs), implemented from the early 1950s, with airlines, hotels and tour operators as suppliers, and communication commenced via various network consortia (Sezgin & Yolal, 2012:77). Moreover, in 1958 American Express announced its first credit card, making business trips safer, defying money losses and robbery (Sezgin & Yolal, 2012:76). Soon after that, in the late 1960s, the jumbo jets (Boeing 747, DC 10) were developed, transporting more passengers and travelling at a faster speed (Sezgin &

Yolal, 2012:76). Additional travellers were presented with the opportunity to travel for business and leisure at a discounted rate as Southwest Airlines became the first low-cost carrier reforming the travel industry in 1971 (Westcott, 2015b:internet). Swarbrooke and Horner (2001:17) explain how the term convention or conference advanced in America during the 20th century. They further clarify how meetings were held by political parties, trade and scientific associations at the end of the 19th century, as events gained further motion in the 20th century (due to economic rewards), convention bureaus were established to market destinations as convention destinations.

Business tourism growth has been interrupted at numerous key points in history, including WWI; the Great Depression; WWII; 9/11 ("September 11, 2001, 19 militants associated with the Islamic extremist group al-Qaida hijacked four airplanes and carried out suicide attacks against targets in the United States" [History, 2019:internet]); the war in Iraq; the 2008/2009 global financial crisis; other alleged threats of terrorist attacks and various health scares (i.e. SARS outbreak of 2003) (Tsui *et al*., 2018:390; Westcott, 2015a:internet). Also, **currently,** business tourism demand patterns are drastically fluctuating worldwide (Skinner, 2017:819). However, business tourism experienced substantial development in recent years due to expanding international relationships and trade; it is a very profitable tourism sector and is supported by globalisation (Tichaawa, 2017:181).

Allen (2007:5-6) describes how business functions (lately known as business tourism) was formerly used to primarily communicate internal corporate developments (i.e. company's forecasts, procedures and policies), these events were basic and typically dealt with in-house at the office or a local venue. In the past businesses used corporate events to raise morale; foster goodwill among management and employees; encourage company loyalty; show customer and employee gratitude; validate leadership, and offer internal training. However, as technology progressed corporate events developed a more sophisticated elegance, event planners started to host corporate events further away from the office at exciting venues and in new destinations, which made events logistically more complicated. Nowadays, businesses strive to be leaders in the market share, stand out from their competition, and entice top performers. Simultaneously, with these changes, business tourism budgets also increased.

Presently, developing technology plays a significant role in business tourism, as a major technological shift took place as amplified internet-use revolutionised business travel services (Westcott, 2015a:internet). An example hereof is the sharing economy, a relatively new economic model in tourism, coordinated via the internet, where business and leisure travellers rent cars, beds, and boats directly. Airbnb, which originated in 2008, is the most prominent example of this model (Wilson-Mah, 2015:internet). More business travellers are also making

use of Online Travel Agents (OTAs). According to TravelClick (2014), cited by Wilson-Mah (2015:internet), 13.2% of all hotel bookings for business travellers within the first quarter of 2014 were made through OTAs (i.e. Kayak.com, Expedia, Hotels.com etc.). Furthermore, ridesharing apps, such as Uber, which allows business travellers to find a ride with their mobile phones, arose to influence car travel in main destinations (Westcott, 2015b:internet). Technology also holds benefits for the consumer, Tsui *et al.* (2018:390) suggests one of the most significant motives for the reductions in business travel is video-conferencing, initially implemented as a safer (due to terror threats), less time-consuming (no travel time allocated) and more cost-effective conferencing method (only requires internet streaming). As business tourism evolved throughout the ages, it grew into a dynamic industry, but significant challenges are visible within the commerce.

2.4.3 Challenges of business tourism

Tichaawa's (2017) study focuses on business tourism in Africa and the neglected issues around business tourism, which contributed immensely to the current literature around business tourism challenges in the African continent. Furthermore, Skinner's (2017) recent research also adds value to this subject, although it emphases business tourists, rather than meeting planners', perceptions of business tourism. A variety of forces are highlighted by Getz (2000:12-16) that influence business tourism in general and may pose challenges during overall business tourism planning, namely demographics, economic factors, technology and cultural values. Due to the challenges posed, these forces need to be managed sensibly as explicated below (Getz, 2000:12-16):

- Demographics – here one needs to look at the age of the population, identify the dominant segment and apply a marketing mix that speaks to the majority or a combination (i.e. senior citizens, baby boomers, foreigners etc.);
- Economics – a calculated decision needs to occur, estimating what consumers are willing to pay towards business tourism. Sponsors (corporate and government subsidy) can be approached to make business tourism more affordable for the masses, feasibly more business tourism events at a lower cost per event may be a solution. One also needs to focus on the competitiveness of destinations that affects the economic force of business tourism;
- Technology – the internet plays an important role, creating global coverage for business tourism. The successful use of technology will lure technologically sophisticated consumers to business tourism events. Planners need to identify what technology consumers expect and prefer to use in business tourism (i.e. online ticketing, online booking, information searching etc.); and

- Values and culture – business tourism need to cater to a multicultural society and pay attention to flourishing special interest groups. Ideally, stakeholders need to identify how business tourism events can amalgamate societies.

Marques and Santos (2016:11-12), Reynolds (2007:16) as well as Swarbrooke and Horner (2001:223), cited by Marias (2016:27-28), listed significant challenges in corporate travel and business tourism from both a supply and demand perspective. The challenges include:

- Deficiency of satisfactory facilities and infrastructure;
- Corporate travel and business tourism lack an advanced education and training system, which is the main reason for the sector not being recognised professionally;
- The corporate travel industry and its trade associations are disintegrating, and it is a disjointed sector of late with no single body representing the entire corporate travel sector;
- Insufficient promotion of destinations as a business tourism destination;
- Shortage of skilled human resources, especially due to unsatisfactory technical expertise;
- A lack of quality data on corporate travel and business tourism. In order to be more successful, the changing market trends need to be more closely monitored;
- With the rising of more innovative technology, the demand for corporate event planning and business tourism may diminish;
- Female corporate travellers' needs are often neglected, as corporate travel promotion is more directed at male travellers, typically assuming corporate travellers are more likely to be men. Event planners need to find a middle ground to make both male and female attendees feel worthy and welcome;
- Not enough consideration is provided to disabled corporate travellers, and more attention should be paid to wheelchair accessibility, induction loop systems and braille communication;
- Event planners fail to please the buyers/ consumers and client equally. The organisations paying for business travel is the client who is satisfied with the lowest prices. While consumers instead prioritise quality above cost. Event planners need to consider both aspects and find an acceptable middle-ground;
- Corporate travellers travel for business purposes, which can be demanding. A balance should be upheld, and the travellers offered with opportunities to relieve stress, pursue leisure time and connect with friends and family;
- A more sustainable method, reducing negative environmental impacts, should be followed during corporate travel and business tourism operations;

- Industry performance needs to be evaluated more accurately by organisations in the business tourism sector, to encourage future achievements;
- More resources and partnerships are required to market corporate travel and business tourism;
- Accessibility difficulties (i.e. national highways, railways);
- Managing the multi-cultured nature of corporate travel, additional consideration should be lent to the specific product and suitable complementary marketing plan; and
- Competitiveness from other regions.

The positive effects need to offset the negative consequences, for business tourism to be considered a success in the short- and long-term (Reynolds, 2007:16). If not pre-empted and managed accordingly, the challenges mentioned above may have an undesirable impact on business travel progress and unpleasantly affect all stakeholders involved. There are, however, numerous benefits associated with this industry that potentially profit the organisation, attendees and destination (Marais, 2016:25-26).

2.4.4 Benefits of business tourism

Business tourism is a significant share of Africa's tourism activity; thus significant. Lau (2016:11) believes many cities would like to develop business tourism due to the benefits it brings to a city. Business tourism has extensive commercial impacts on local, regional and national economies (Getz & Page, 2016). It is, therefore known as one of the most lucrative and fastest evolving tourism segments (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:497). Business tourism also brings about the interchange of (Spencer & Bavuma, 2018:127): data; contacts; knowledge; technology; corporate trips; congresses; exhibitions; and affiliated tourism events – making it one of the most successful scopes in the current world economy. It is a unique feature of Africa that the quantity of business tourists continually surpasses leisure tourists (Rogerson, 2015b:49). This industry directly benefits business event attendees and the organisations that host the events.

2.4.4.1 Business tourism benefits for the organisation and attendees

Business tourism benefits for the organisation and attendees include (Haven-Tang *et al*., 2007:109-110; Hussain *et al.,* 2017:504; Marais, 2016:26; Tichaawa, 2017:183; Skinner, 2017:820):

- Face-to-face networking opportunities made possible for attendees;
- Attendees can share ideas and valuable industry-related information;
- Opportunity to create new professional contacts;

- Attendees can share technological expertise;
- Educational benefits, as the corporate event could further educate attendees;
- Training prospect for attendees;
- Return on investment for the organisation, as event generates added incoming business;
- Personal growth opportunities for attendees;
- Positive behaviour-change prospects for attendees;
- Attendees gain more social benefits, as they experience different cities, countries and cultures during business trips;
- Psychological benefits, the opportunity for satisfying experiences;
- The opportunity to create awareness of a destination's culture and natural resources;
- The prior arrangement; business tourism events are always planned far in advance; and
- Standardised services, all attendees at the same corporate event will have very similar requirements as to service standards while similar business tourism events would typically have comparable programmes; therefore, standardised services are mandatory.

Furthermore, business tourism is essential for the travel industry as it attracts high value and high-quality tourists to a destination (Jurakanit, 2018:30; Skinner, 2017:819-820). Therefore, the host community and destination draw several definite benefits from business tourism (Reynolds, 2007:8).

2.4.4.2 Business tourism benefits for the host community and destination

The MICE industry worldwide profits host communities and destinations with economic, cultural and social benefits (Jurakanit, 2018:17). Marais' (2016:25-26) research approves of this statement, affirming how corporate events and association business tourism contribute significantly to the economy and tourism offering of a destination. Moreover, the host community and destination benefit from business tourism in the following ways (taken from Haven-Tang *et al*., 2007:109-110; Lau, 2016:11-12; Marais *et al.,* 2017b:2-3; Marques and Santos, 2016:7; Reynolds, 2007:16; Rogerson, 2015b:48; Sirivaneepagorn, 2018:100; Skinner, 2017:320; Tichaawa, 2017:182-183; UN, 2017:internet):

- Business tourism extends tourism activity during the year and directly decreases seasonality, assuring higher hotel occupancy rates. Venues and facilities (i.e. accommodation, entertainment activities, congress centres, catering etc.) are solely dependent on business tourism as they are utilised throughout the year for business tourism purposes. Business tourism destinations offering more diverse services also lead to an extended tourist season;

- Often MICE events extend the length of stay by business tourists to a destination. MICE events attended by business tourists encourage positive impacts by building friendships and business contacts as well as cultural exchange;
- By creating employment opportunities for locals in hotels, restaurants and other business tourism venues;
- The development of business tourism facilities and services attract further investment opportunities to a destination and create jobs due to the expansion;
- No fixed destination: several business tourism events are not fixed on a host city or country, if a city has satisfactory MICE facilities and venues, the city can be selected to host the event;
- Business travellers spend more than twice (monetary value) as much as leisure travellers per day, even though business travellers stay for shorter periods, which is an important income generator for local service providers. Business tourism increases revenue to a destination due to the higher business traveller spending average. Business travellers are more willing to freely spend towards services and activities related to leisure tourism because their business travel expenses are mostly covered in full by their companies, organisations or other entity sponsors;
- Enhance secondary businesses, as business tourism supports a broader spectrum of services than does leisure travel, i.e. florists, audio-visual companies and teambuilding agencies;
- Destination profitability can be amplified;
- Well-balanced circulation of profits;
- In the case of business travellers opting to make use of public transportation the benefit is lower environmental impact;
- Through indirect impacts of production and distribution chains which include craft, food and sex workers;
- Attendee spending is advantageous to the destination;
- Foreign currency influx to the destination;
- Through powerful effects in terms of externalities;
- Can catalyse short-break leisure tourism;
- Host community pride intensifies;
- Destination image is boosted during successful business tourism practices; and
- Encouragement of local host community may lead to further curiosity into international tendencies.

From investigating business tourism benefits, it is apparent that this is equally advantageous for the attendees, organisations and host communities/ destinations (Marais, 2016:26-27). For this study, further insight into SA's business tourism and the statistics thereof is required.

2.4.5 South African Business Tourism

Figure 2.3 illustrates a map of SA for the reader to form a visual perspective of the destination during the onset of the discussion of SA's business tourism. The map also highlights the "big five" business tourism destinations within the country, discussed in further detail throughout the literature discussion.

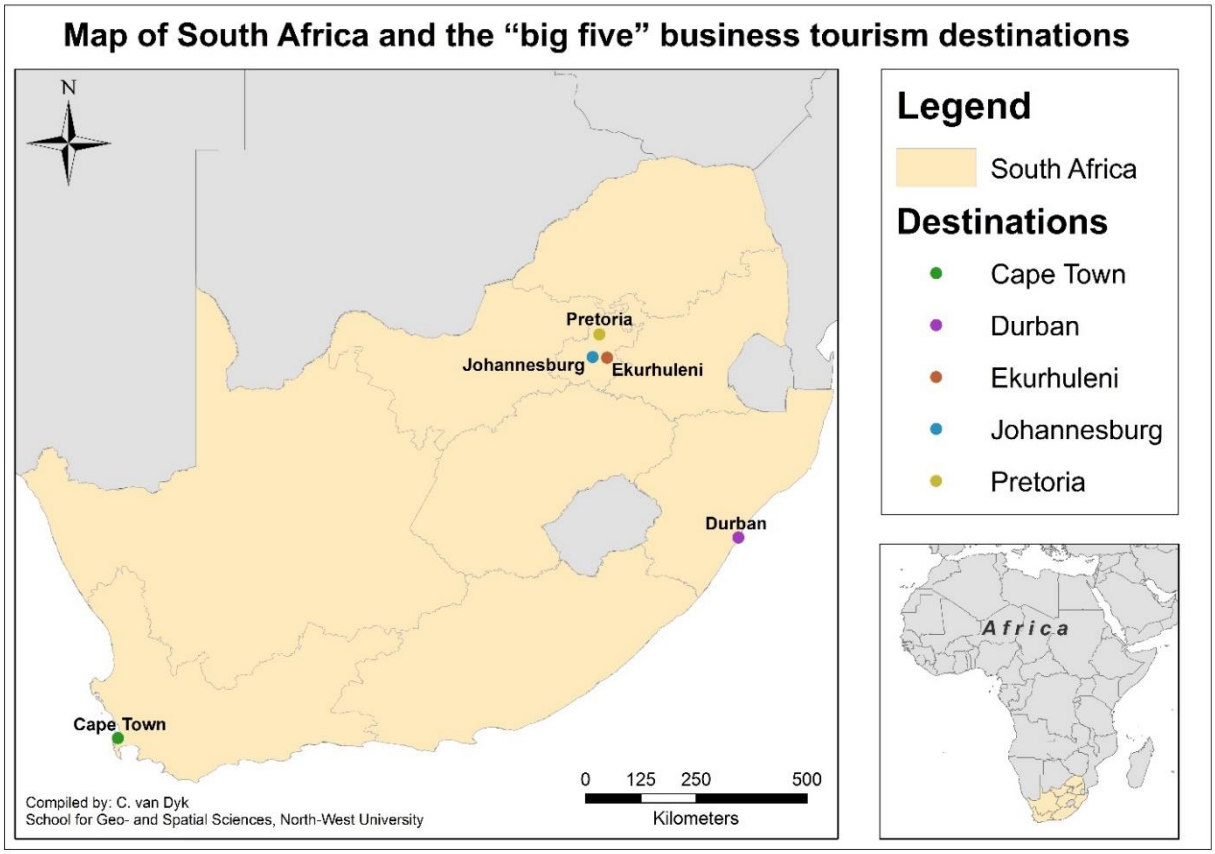

Figure 2-2: Map of SA and the "big five" business tourism destinations
Source: Van Dyk (2019b)

Domestic business tourism impact and motions are under-researched, as the bulk of current business tourism literature that relates to SA only comprises the following studies: Donaldson (2013); Fenich *et al*. (2012); Marais *et al*. (2017); Reynolds (2007); Rogerson (2005; 2015a; 2019); Swart (2007); Swart (2013); Thomas (2012); as well as Tiflin and Balkaran (2014). "Among the most well-developed research issues are the growth of new accommodation

services for business travellers in terms of networks of business hotels and of the contribution of business tourists to total commercial bed nights…and serviced apartments" (Rogerson, 2019:84). Furthermore, despite business tourism representing one of the oldest forms of tourism in academic discourse, it is overshadowed by leisure tourism research (Skinner, 2017:817), especially in tourism scholarship about sub-Saharan Africa (Tichaawa, 2017:182). Also, most of the existing business tourism studies focus on the formal sector of corporate travel internationally in developed countries such as Australasia, Europe, North America and East Asia, with little consideration of domestic business tourism in Africa (Tichaawa, 2017:182). Rogerson (2015a), a prominent researcher in this field, stresses the need for much more business tourism studies, as in Africa, leisure tourism is more widely researched than business tourism. Recently the most protruding contributions around business tourism in SA have been consultancy and policy documents that were produced to support national government initiatives aiming to expand the formal sector of business tourism and enhance SA's role as an international destination for MICE tourism (Rogerson, 2015a:188). The following paragraph highlights the history of SA's business tourism journey.

Tourism as an economic system was recognised in SA even before WWII began (Visser, 2016:3). Visser (2016:3) explains that SA remained a popular destination, even post-war until a saturation point was reached in the late 1960s. Due to SA's political instability, referring to international sanctions and apartheid from the 1970s until the late 1980s, the country was rejected as a business tourism destination. The history of South Africa's business tourism sector indicates that the preliminary industry restrictions were politically related, nonetheless after SA's new democracy and recuperation into the global economy, tourist arrivals (principally for business purposes) amplified (Marais *et al*., 2017b:2). Burger and Saayman (2009), cited by Marais *et al.* (2017b:2) maintains that an added restriction for SA business tourism was the deficiency of satisfactory facilities and resources. However, post-apartheid SA's hotel economy was updated, resulting in the development and arrival of a wide variety of diverse business accommodation arrangements, reinforcing the country's competitiveness as a business destination (Rogerson, 2015b:47). One of the most noteworthy post-apartheid changes was that of tourist mobilities, as a great diversity and volume of regional travellers, was crossing the South African borders after 1994. The abandonment of international sanctions post-apartheid also caused substantial tourism flows from Europe and North America into SA (Rogerson, 2018:385).

Nowadays, business travel signifies the main drive behind growing regional tourism motions within sub-Saharan Africa over the last 15 years. As per Rogerson (2015b:49) "the scale of domestic business tourism in sub-Saharan Africa is very significant in terms of total expenditure,

and more so in terms of pro-poor impact, compared to international business tourism". It is documented that business tourism is the most important tourism section in most African countries, outside the handful of conventional leisure destinations (i.e. SA, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Kenya and Botswana) (Rogerson, 2015b:47). It is also the leading element of West and Central Africa (Rogerson, 2015b:47). Thapa (2019:30) agrees that SA lately is undoubtedly a dominant tourism destination in the African continent. An influx of direct foreign investment transpired in sub-Saharan Africa, due to corporate travellers' market during the past couple of years. One also notices how SA-based hotel groups are capitalising in a series of African nations (i.e. Southern Sun, City Lodge, Protea Hotel). In 2013, 23 international hotel establishments already operated in Africa (i.e. Hilton, Accor, Intercontinental and Starwood) (Christie *et al.,* 2013:46). Moreover, intercontinental hotel corporations (i.e. Rezidor, Hilton, Kempinski) all launched hotels in sub-Saharan Africa (Rogerson, 2015b:47). These corporate hotels generate an extensive system of benefits for the destination. The growth of Africa's business tourism is a compound for new investment in the middle- and high-level accommodation. Athwart the land SA caters to varieties of niche tourism, including business tourism; sport tourism; cultural tourism; paleo-tourism; eco-tourism; and adventure tourism.

Furthermore, SA developed into a highly popular leisure and business travel destination due to its picturesque attractiveness, brilliant outdoors, sunny weather, cultural multiplicity and for delivering value-for-money tourism experiences (Spencer & Bavuma 2018:128). SA business tourism developed as a direct spin-off leisure tourism (Reynolds, 2007:27). Today, SA is Africa's most important international and domestic business tourism destination (Tichaawa, 2017:183). "South African Tourism focus specifically on bringing business people to SA through business events" (Thomas, 2012:61). Tichaawa (2017:382) describes how the World Bank highlights the importance of business tourism for African economies, as it enhances the livelihood of African residents, is revolutionary, and constantly drives economic development. Nearly two decades ago already, business travel was one of the most important parts of travel in Africa and still is. Unfortunately, business travel has not been researched as much as other tourism sectors, and to take advantage of business tourism growth in SA, more research needs to be focused in this direction (Marais *et al.,* 2017b:2). This study aims to contribute to filling the current research gap.

According to Thapa (2019:30), the most recent UNTWO (2016) statistics show how SA ranked first within the African continents, as the top earner of international tourism receipts, grossing 8.23 billion US Dollars (which accounted for 24.9% of the total market share) – gratitude to 8.9 million international arrivals, which is equivalent to 16.7% of the African arrivals market share. SA's domestic tourism spent increased by 3,4% in the past decade (WTTC,

2019:internet) and currently, business tourism is still active in SA. Business travellers are inclined to spend more than leisure travellers; therefore SA must aim to attract more business travellers in order to boost the local economy (Marias *et al.,* 2017b:1). The estimated SA population presently stands at 58,78 million (Statistics SA, 2019b:internet). The World Bank (2011), cited by Rogerson (2015b:47), approves business tourism as a significant growth area for present-day sub-Saharan Africa. According to 2015 tourism statistics from Statistics SA (2015), cited by Marais *et al.* (2017b:1), 15,051,826 overseas travellers visited SA, 4.8% were business travellers, and 93.8% travelled for leisure purposes. The business travel numbers regrettably declined, as the most recent statistics (Statistics SA, 2018:17) show in 2018, that 96.9% of South African tourists were leisure travellers (10 149 339) and only 2.3% (242 417) travelled for business. The 2018 business travellers can be further subdivided as follows: 80,718 travelled from overseas, 13,126 from other African countries and the majority (147,603) were from the SADC (Southern African Development Community). The SADC is a regional organisation comprising 14 Member countries including SA; Angola; Botswana; Congo (DRC); Lesotho; Malawi; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Seychelles; Swaziland; Tanzania; Zambia; and Zimbabwe (SADC, 2015:internet). SA developed into an important business travel destination, particularly for regional business travellers (Marais *et al.,* 2017b:2). The most recent percentage distribution of tourists from SADC countries on business in 2018 is specified as indicated in Table 2.4 below, with Zimbabwean and Mozambiquean business tourists in the lead.

Table 2-3: Percentage distribution of business tourists in SA from SADC Countries (2018)

SADC Country	Percentage distribution
Zimbabwe	27.5%
Mozambique	21.7%
Namibia	16.0%
Zambia	12.3%
Lesotho	9.4%
Botswana	5.4%
Malawi	3.0%
Swaziland	1.8%
The Democratic Republic of the Congo	0.8%
Tanzania	0.8%
Other SADC countries	1.3%

Source: Data in the table compiled based on and adapted from Statistics SA (2018:19)

As shown in Table 2.5, the overseas business travellers travelled from various countries into SA in 2018, with most business travellers originating from the United Kingdom, United States of America and India.

Table 2-4: Percentage distribution of business tourists in SA from foreign countries (2018)

Foreign Country	Percentage distribution
United Kingdom	17.6%
United States of America	10.4%
India	9.4%
Germany	8.7%
China	6.3%
France	5.7%
Netherlands	3.9%
Italy	3.1%
Australia	2.6%
Canada	2.1%
Other foreign countries	30.2%

Source: Information in the table compiled based on and adapted from Statistics SA (2018:19)

Table 2.6 provides an outline of tourists' percentage distribution from “other” African countries on business in 2018 visiting SA, excluding the previously mentioned SADC countries, with Kenyan and Nigerian business tourists being in the majority.

Table 2-5: Percentage distribution of business tourists in SA from other African countries (2018)

Foreign Country	Percentage distribution
Kenya	26.7%
Nigeria	16.2%
Uganda	9.7%
Ghana	9.4%
Egypt	7.9%
Ethiopia	5.2%
Cameroon	3.0%
Cote dÍvoire	2.3%
Morocco	2.1%
Sudan	1.8%
Other African countries (excluding SADC)	15.6%

Source: Statistics in the table compiled based on and adapted from Statistics SA (2018:20)

According to the latest SA tourism statistics, tourism contributed to 10.4% of the total gross domestic product (GDP) contribution globally (WTTC, 2018:internet), whereas business tourism contributed to approximately 9.5% of the country’s GDP (Naicker, 2018:internet; Venske, 2018:81). GDP can be explained as follows (Statistics SA, 2007:internet): *The sum of the gross values added at basic prices of all producers, classified and compiled by industry = taxes on products - subsidies on products = GDP at market prices.* While the global economy grew by 3.2%, travel and tourism grew significantly more at 3.9%, directly creating one in five jobs over

the past five years (WTTC, 2018:internet). “Presently, the tourism industry is creating opportunities for many South Africans and this includes prospective occupations in the event management sector” (Venske, 2018:81). Travel and tourism are further listed as the fourth-highest impact sector, contributing to the global GDP, after mining, agriculture and the automotive industry (WTTC, 2018:internet). Within SA, Travel and Tourism contributed to 8.6% of the total economy. This shows a decrease of -1.9% (WTTC, 2018:internet). Furthermore, 9.2% of SA’s total employment (1,499.7 jobs) is directly linked to travel and tourism. In 2018, international visitors spent R128.3 billion in SA, and 36% of the spent was towards business-spending and the rest to leisure-spending (WTTC, 2018:internet).

SA’s currently prosperous business tourism industry is ascribed to many essential aspects, together with the following (Rogerson, 2015a:188):

- the availability of foreign exchange of other countries;
- Johannesburg (as an international linking city) holding a collection of headquarter hubs for operating businesses throughout Africa;
- first-rate infrastructure, including infrastructure to host corporate events;
- upgraded business tourism accommodation;
- improved internet connectivity and telecommunication linkages;
- enhanced land and air connectivity between SA and other key destinations;
- the supporting of national government enterprises through strategic policy documents; and conversion of numerous SA companies into multi-national enterprises, operating in manifold African countries.

The following section provides further insight into successful business tourism operation within the province of Gauteng, in SA.

2.4.6 Business tourism in Gauteng

The Gauteng City-Region Observatory (2018b:internet) and Statistics SA (2019a:internet) combined offer a valuable summary of the province, as explained in this paragraph. Gauteng City-Region (hereafter referred to as only Gauteng) is the smallest province in SA, but most densely populated. Spanning over an area of 18,182 square kilometre (1.4% of national land cover in SA) and housing approximately 15,176,116 people, which is a fifth of SA’s population (according to Statistics SA's July 2019 mid-year population evaluation). Referring to Figure 2.4 below (the map of Gauteng), the province is a cohesive grouping of urban nodes, towns and cities, that form the economic core of SA. Gauteng includes the cities of Johannesburg (SA’s financial capital and a formerly important centre of gold production), Pretoria (SA’s

administrative capital) as well as commercial, industrial and mining centres (i.e. Springs, Germiston, Boksburg, Benoni, Alberton, Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Randfontein, Krugersdorp and Westonaria).

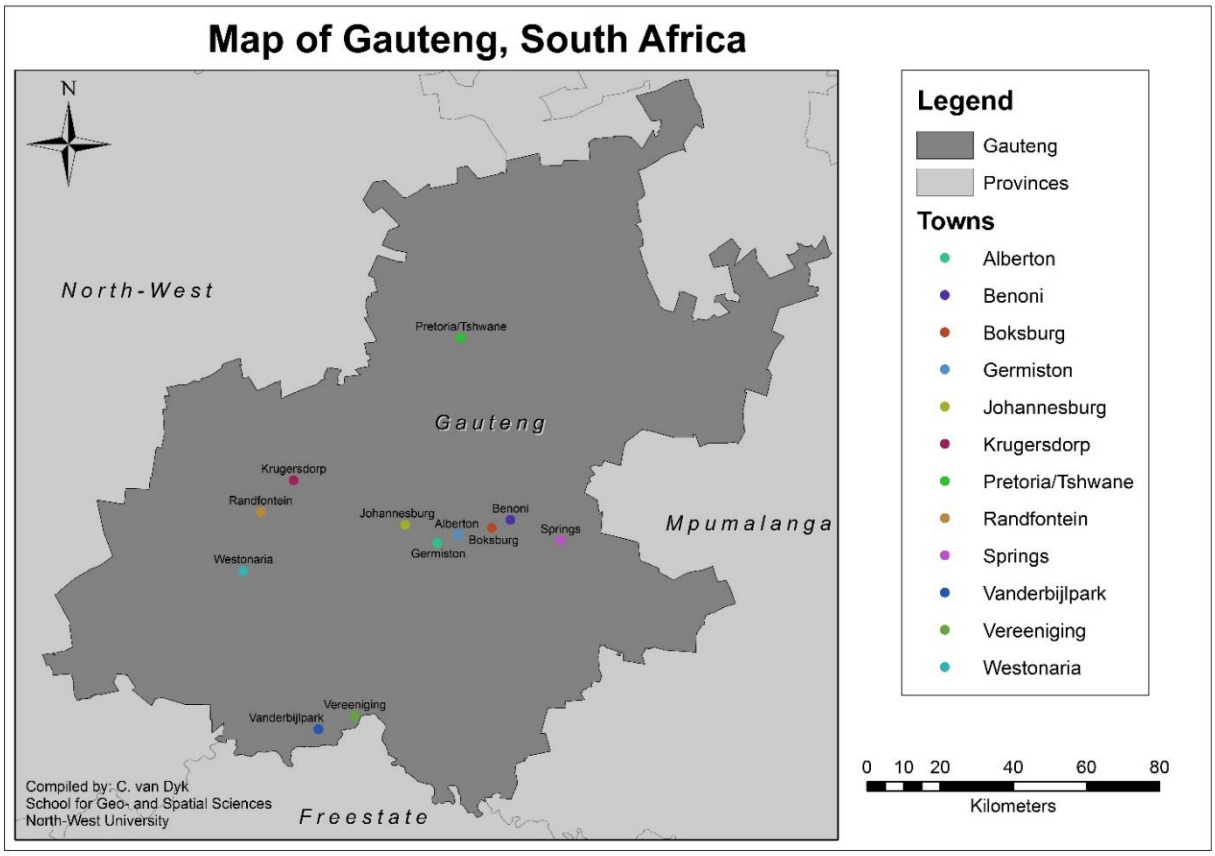

Figure 2-3: Map of Gauteng, highlighting the economic core of South Africa
Source: Van Dyk (2019a)

Furthermore, Gauteng underwrites a substantial percentage of SA's economic productivity, focusing on manufacturing, innovation/ trade, mining, financial/ business services, and tourism. Gauteng generated more than a third of SA's GDP in 2017 and contributed to approximately 45% of SA's total economic output. Thus, it is the top-ranking province in terms of GDP per capita (a measure of standard of living), contributing R1,59 trillion to SA's R4,65 trillion GDP. Due to its economic strength, perception prevails that better living standards, education and work opportunities are available in Gauteng. Due to the mentioned success, the business tourism sector received much attention from the public and private sector during the last twenty years (Yusoff *et al.,* 2015:1317). Reynold's (2007:33) research stipulates the following aspects which attract international business tourism spend to SA, which is prevalent in Gauteng, i.e., accessibility; an assortment of pre- and post-tours; value for money; African energy; and

curiosity about SA's past. In Africa, geographically business tourism is strappingly linked to built-up tourism destinations, within SA business tourism focus on the key cities (Rogerson, 2015b:47).

Rogerson (2015a:192) lists the top South African destinations for business travel (also known as the "big five" destinations) as being: Ekhurleni (a metropolitan municipality that forms the local government of the East Rand region of Gauteng); Johannesburg; Tshwane (referring to Pretoria and surroundings); Cape Town; and Ethekwini (Durban metropolitan) – refer to Figure 2.4. One can derive from this statement that metropolitan cities are dominant in the business tourism industry and Gauteng as a province, as three of the "big five" business tourism destinations in SA are situated in Gauteng. Gauteng's cosmopolitan city of Johannesburg is SA's second most important destination for tourism spend, with Cape Town as number one (Rogerson, 2018:382). Rogerson (2015a:192) further explains that the reason for these cities' dominance is that they provide the nation's best corporate hotels, corporate service initiatives, biggest exhibition and convention centres and other MICE facilities.

The reason why Gauteng's Johannesburg, Ekhurhuleni and Tshwane are so dominant is their appeal to formal corporate travellers in terms of the location, SA's major national airport, the centre of government and main embassies as well as their roles as commercial capital. According to Statistics SA (2018:15), 3,088,524 tourists flew into SA during 2018, and the majority (70,2%) used O.R. Tambo International Airport, which is Gauteng's largest commercial airport. Crucial other tourism cities such as Cape Town and King Shaka international airports were used by 27,8% and 1,6% tourists respectively. Also, Gauteng visitors are typically higher spenders (Manners *et al.,* 2015b:66; Saayman & Saayman, 2008). The Gauteng City-Region Observatory (hereafter referred to as GCRO) is a partnership between the Gauteng Provincial Government; the University of the Witwatersrand; the University of Johannesburg; and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). The GCRO assists in obtaining data that organisations, the government, civil society and host communities/ residents require to make Gauteng socially comprehensive, spatially cohesive, competitive, and environmentally sustainable (GCRO, 2018a:10). It will be beneficial for future business tourism researchers, business tourism planners etc., to use current GCRO data in their studies and events.

When looking at statistics, it is important to note that – apart from formal business tourism – a great deal of business tourism in Gauteng can be classified as informal business tourism, due to widespread migrant entrepreneurs selling goods informally in Gauteng (Peberdy, 2007; Peberdy, 2016). Rogerson (2018:385) emphasises how informal business tourism is a widespread phenomenon between SA and other countries in Southern Africa (i.e. Lesotho,

Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi). Gauteng (referring to the cities of Johannesburg, Tshwane and Ekurhuleni) have been an earlier place for regional African Corporate travellers to partake in cross-border shopping/ trading (Peberdy, 2016). The development of a low-income economy of informal business tourism is a frequently overlooked facet of business travel in Africa. The largest section is represented by local and cross-border trader and shopper activities (Tichaawa, 2017:182). This study will however, not elaborate further on informal business tourism in Gauteng and SA. The business tourist market and corporate events industry are closely related (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:500). Within the following section, corporate events will be explicated.

2.5 CORPORATE EVENTS

Corporate events enable individuals to communicate, connect, collaborate and learn. Marais (2016:19-20) explains how corporate events are a significant and very competitive section of the events sector – attendees join these events as part of their corporate interests or responsibilities, education opportunities, network, leadership development, or career pathing purposes. Corporate events are hosted at exhibition centres, convention centres or other smaller venues (i.e. hotels, restaurants, resorts) for networking purposes, to promote the organisation's brands/products (Bosch, 2018:118) and to deal with current trends and problems (Fenich, 2012:6). Different type of corporate events within the business tourism sector includes: corporate meetings; congresses; conferences; conventions; meetings; exhibitions; trade fairs; workshops, symposia; seminars and incentive travel (Bowdin *et al*., 2011:24; Getz, 2007:38-40; Hussain *et al*., 2017:499; Khan, 2015:299; Pernecky, 2015:110). Herewith follows a more detailed overview of corporate events.

2.5.1 Classification and overview of corporate events

Corporate events form part of tourism industry activities (Thomas, 2012:2) and ultimately bring together corporate organisations members (Getz, 2007:38). It is also perceived as a niche group within tourism (Khan, 2015:299). Corporate events have a specific time and duration, it is professionally organised events with many aspects/ features, and the planning stage typically starts well in advance (Khan, 2015:299). Corporate events can be defined as all off-site assemblies that bring business-people together for a common purpose of sharing information (Allen *et al*., 2005:15). It can be planned alone or in conjunction with other events. It is further identified as an event that makes provision for business objectives; corporate communications; marketing; incentives; customer relations; employee relations; management functions; or training sessions (Silvers, 2010a:internet). While the primary focus of corporate events is

business and trade, it may also include non-business-related activities (Bosch, 2018:118). Khan (2015:300) maintains that a corporate event usually includes a detailed agenda with an explicit theme/ topic (i.e. education topic, professional trade organisation or special interest group). In this study, the terms *MICE* and *Meetings industry* are used interchangeably. With the lack of standardised terminology for business tourism, various acronyms are categorised to define events-related business tourism. Marques and Santos (2016:2-5) advise how one may also refer to the following:

- CEMI (Conventions, Exhibitions, Meetings, Incentives);
- MC & IT (Meetings, Conventions & Incentive Travel);
- MCE (Meetings, Conventions, Exhibitions);
- MECE (Meetings, Events, Conventions, Exhibitions);
- MI (Meetings Industry); or
- MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions)

Khan (2015:299) explains that within the acronym MICE the “E” occasionally refers to either events or exhibitions and the “C” can refer to conventions or the term conference industry. In 2006 to standardise and generate a stronger tourism sector image, an executive decision was made by the MPI (Meeting Professionals International), UNWTO, ICCA and the Reeds Travel Exhibition to form and announce the term MI (Hussain *et al*., 2017:499; Marques & Santos, 2016:5). Furthermore, meetings industry educationalists are endorsing the use of "events industry" as an umbrella term to describe the broad-spectrum meeting and events sector (Khan, 2015:299). Therefore, the term MICE is perceived as part of the broader events industry (Bowdin *et al.,* 2006:441; Saayman & Slabbert, 2002:15). MICE events enable individuals to communicate, connect, collaborate and learn (Pernecky, 2015:110). This industry is growing and maturing faster and therefore seen as a significant sector within the worldwide tourism industry (Saayman & Saayman, 2012). Because of their high spending potential, the attendees at MICE events are referred to as “quality” attendees (Erasmus, 2011:62). There are a variety of stakeholders involved in planning and hosting corporate events, i.e. meeting planners; trade organisations; logistic companies; tourism boards; incentive houses; travel selling professionals; venues; caterers; tour operators; facility managers etc. (Khan, 2015:299), which are discussed in further detail later in the study.

In summary, according to Thomas (2012:2), corporate events add value as it directly affects the performance of the tourism industry (employment opportunities and financial flows). Furthermore, businesses that partake in business tourism activities gain new knowledge to enable them to accomplish more. The meetings industry structure can be complicated, and the next section aims to provide the reader with a better understanding of this intricate industry.

2.5.2 Structure of the meetings industry

The meeting industry is a multifaceted structure (Davidson & Cope, 2003: Rogers, 2003; Swarbrooke & Horne, 2001), with a combination of buyers and suppliers. Event suppliers and buyers play a significant role in brainstorming and producing events (Bosch, 2018:102).

2.5.2.1 Buyers

The term *buyers* also refer to consumers, customers or clients in the meetings industry. The meeting industry is segmented in corporate, association, government and entrepreneurial buyers, differentiated as follows:

- **Corporate buyers**

The term *corporate* refers to buyers employed by corporate businesses, found in various industries such as telecommunication; pharmaceuticals; production; financial services; IT; oil and gas; engineering; automotive industry etc. (Milic, 2012:internet). These businesses can be service or industrial companies, mainly established to profit (Bosch, 2018:102). Within some of the corporate businesses, no dedicated in-house event management departments exist; therefore, the onus lies with sales, marketing, administration, or human resources. A streamlined and easy decision-making process is in play. Authorisation can come from the event authorisers, line managers, the managing director or by a group of consulting individuals (Rogers, 2003:29-30).

- **Association buyers**

Association buyers contribute to political or charitable events (Bosch, 2018:102). These conferences require longer lead-time for planning and receive plenty of professional media exposure. The aim is not to make an extensive profit as only enough turnover is needed to cover expenses and possible future conference launches (Bosch, 2018:102; Rogers, 2003:33). Association delegates choose to attend events rather than being asked to do so by their company; these events also have a higher participation rate than corporate events (Rogers, 2003:34). Davidson and Rogers (2006:6-7) refer to *SMERF* groups, representing organisations operating in the social, military, educational, religious or fraternal area. Globally association events are recognised as the largest and lengthiest hosted conferences, with trade or professional associations as buyers; this refers to individuals sharing mutual professions, ideas and goals (Milic, 2012:internet). Voluntary associations are also categorised under this grouping, which consists of members with similar hobbies or interests. Additionally, religious establishments, political parties and charity associations are also listed as association buyers (Tassiopoulos, 2010:72). Benefits from joining an association as a buyer include the following

(Milic, 2012:internet): it amplifies the status and credibility of the buyers who become its members; access to an established database is approved; educating buyers and other parties indirectly affecting or affected by the association; to be presented with networking opportunities with interest or target groups; keeping up to date and encouraging trends, i.e. market research and projections of several issues relevant to a specific area; associations organise casual meetings and entertainment for its members; their inspiration influences the improvement and formation of an industry, profession or idea dependent on the determination of founding the association; and at the association buyers have the prospect of getting to know one another better and connecting is possible, creating a platform to cooperate and deliberate issues regarding their interests or occupation.

- **Government buyers**

Government buyers are measured as non-profit buyers, accountable for promoting social and economic benefits through events while laying out public funding (Bosch, 2018:102). It comprises organisations at all levels from international scale through public sector bodies to local municipalities. High profile media attention is in place at an international level during events such as the European Union's intergovernmental conferences (Davidson & Rogers, 2006:6-7). The governmental sector and association sector are alike; the latter can differentiate between International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and International Governmental Organisations (IGOs) (ICCA, 2019c:internet).

- **Entrepreneurial buyers**

Entrepreneurial buyers identify trending topics in the academic or business world and produce conferences to present and debate these topics, inviting high-profile speakers and specialists in the field to do so (Rogers, 2003:43).

2.5.2.2 Suppliers

Event suppliers make the external hire of professional services, event destinations and venues possible (Tassiopoulos, 2010:74). There is an array of establishments supplying the meeting industry with services and facilities, and the event suppliers are distinguished as follows:

- **Venues**

It is significant to select a unique venue, combined with a professionally produced corporate event, to leave attendees' lasting impression. The venue also influences the number of attendees, as participation increases when an event is hosted nearby (Palo, 2016:11).

Dimanche and Andrades (2015), cited by Bosch (2018:103), explicate how venues are the most visible MICE supply-side. MICE is a group of corporate events at a variety of facilities, larger MICE events hosted at convention and exhibition centres, whereas smaller events are held at meeting venues such as hotels or resorts (Getz & Page, 2016b:21). The venue choice is often conceded due to business needs, rather than appealing to the event attendee (Manners *et al.,* 2015b:62). The importance of venues is a central trend in the events industry; lately, any building can be used as a MICE venue – new venues and the updating of older venues are continuously created.

Hotels are the key suppliers of MICE events and the main beneficiaries thereof (Lau, 2016:17). Rogers (2008:56) views hotels as important venues in the corporate market sector because more than half of MICE events are hosted at hotels in city centres, adjacent to airports, near major motorways and in country-sides. Certain hotels will also benefit as accommodation providers due to its proximity to popular event venues (Tassiopoulos, 2010:70). **Purpose-built complexes** that are specially built for the meeting industry are venues typically intended for events with large numbers of attendees, such as convention centres (SA Conference Venues, 2019:internet). Event planners also make use of venues/ facilities at academic institutions. Furthermore, **civic meeting venues** include committee rooms, town halls and council chambers, to name but a few. The last type of venue is an unusual or unique venue, including a comprehensive assortment of venues. Event planners, clients and attendees are drawn to **unusual venues**, as it generally adds further appeal to the event, i.e. authentic event dining adventures in private rooms, retail experiences at Nike stores for personalised fittings, movie theatres for private screenings etc. (Stoltenberg, 2019:internet). There is an extraordinary increase of extreme unusual event venues, as events are often taking place in vacant subways, ruin taverns, barns, cathedrals, old vaults, abandoned dynasties and other types of rooms beneath street level. These venues bring the added thrill of excitement to an event (Jansson & Lagerkvist, 2009). As indicated in this discussion, it is apparent that the event venue is a KSF to the overall success or failure of an event.

Event planners are recommended to evaluate the proposed venue and pose the following questions during venue selection (Palo, 2016:12,17):

- Does the venue fit in with the organisation's theme and image?
- Are ample parking and public transportation options available?
- Is the venue large enough to accommodate the proposed number of attendees?
- Does the venue provide a sound system?
- Is there adequate lighting in and around the venue?
- What technology does the venue offer?

- Is catering included onsite, or should it be outsourced?
- Is there the likelihood of outside noise at the venue that may disturb the event?
- Does the venue offer toilet facilities and enough thereof?

- **Destination**

Business tourism destination image studies tend to be from the event planner's perspective predominantly – the individuals who choose the event destination (Oppermann, 1996). Events take place in different locations and destinations. Manners *et al*. (2015b:64) stress the definite difference between a location and a destination. **Location** is the specific site/ public setting where an event takes place. In contrast, the **destination** endorsed by a tourism organisation is different tourism components joint in a physical setting, i.e., accommodation; infrastructure; attraction; transportation; attractions; and resources. Organisational and management aspects regarding the event venue or location are regulated by event management. The location and destination where the event takes place to impact the visitor's behaviour and profile (Manners *et al.,* 2015b:65). It is vital within the meeting industry for event planners to select an appropriate site to host a proposed event. Location plays an essential role in the event-staging decision-making process. The destination can refer to a city, town, province or country. Geographic areas are characterised by the diverse climates, religious associations, customs, government policies and economies that propose diverse regimes, beliefs and values (Manners *et al.,* 2015b:62). Each destination provides a variety of facilities, venues, services, attractions and infrastructure to host events. The responsibility lies with Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVBs) and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) to promote destinations for events (Rogers, 2008:59).

- **Other suppliers**

Countless suppliers are involved in the meeting industry (Rogers, 2008). Lau (2016:11) agrees that numerous suppliers are required to host a successful MICE event. The main suppliers are known to be: transportation operatives; caterers; speakers; translators; audio-visual companies; entertainers; corporate events companies; floral contractors; and exhibition contractors (Buathong & Lai, 2017:3; Rogers, 2008:60).

2.5.3 Type of corporate events

Corporate events are presented in diverse sizes and types, with a typical short leading-time to be finalised within several weeks or a few months. The business is responsible for paying for delegate attendance, and the event budget always reflects cost per attendee (Rogers, 2003:31). The following are examples of the most well-known corporate events (Bosch, 2018:102):

meetings (i.e. board meetings, shareholder meetings, annual general meetings); incentive travel events; conferences and seminars; exhibitions; training courses; product launches; tradeshows; roadshows; appreciation events; and team-buildings. Marais (2016:1) sees corporate travel as part of the business tourism industry concerning events and travel opportunities directly related to a traveller's business interests or employment, i.e. corporate meetings, incentive travel, exhibitions, or conferences. As indicated in Figure 2.5, the MICE industry consists primarily of meetings, incentive travel, conventions/ conferences and exhibitions/ events (ICCA, 2019b:internet; Marques & Santos, 2016:441; Yusoff *et al.,* 2015:1318), described in further detail within the content of the following subheadings.

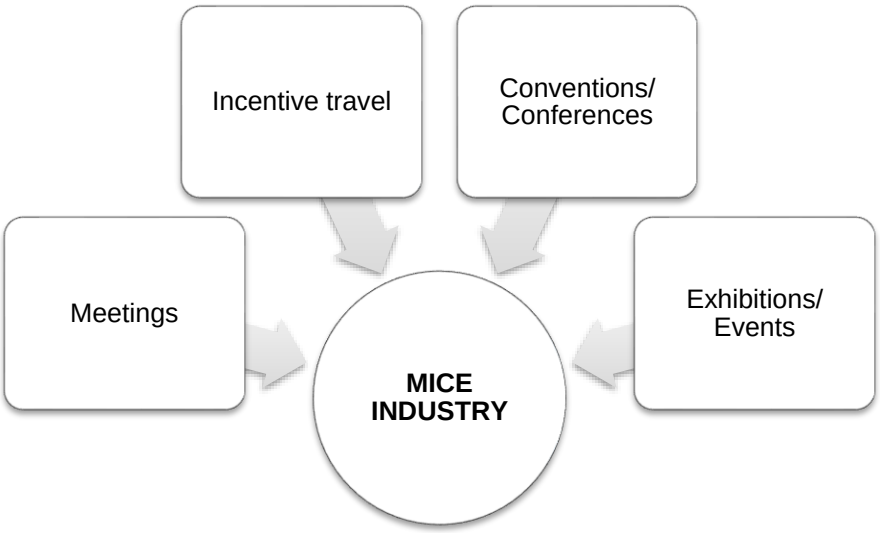

Figure 2-4: The MICE industry

Source: Adapted from Sirivaneepagorn (2018:100), Bosch (2018:129), ICCA (2019b:internet), Khan (2015:302) as well as Marques and Santos (2016:441)

2.5.3.1 Meetings

A meeting is recognised as an assembly of attendees and can be scheduled unaccompanied or in conjunction with other events. Meeting attendees have the drive to make decisions, to be educated, build relationships, debate or exchange information (Silvers, 2010a:internet). The general term *meeting* represents the assembly of several attendees in one place to carry out a specific activity. It can occur on an ad hoc basis or according to a set pattern (ICCA, 2019b:internet; Rogers, 2003:18). Promlung (2018:10), on the other hand, defines a meeting as a gathering of ten or more attendees, in one place for a minimum of four hours to share ideas, for learning objectives, to encourage attendees or to conduct business. Lau (2016:3-4) explains that meetings mostly refer to corporate meetings, i.e., board meetings; training seminars;

management meetings; product launches; shareholder meetings; strategic planning; retreats; and client-meetings. Moreover, meetings can also comprise staff; board, sales; state; intercontinental, incentive, and local meetings (Marais, 2016:20-21; Saayman & Slabbert, 2002:3). Lau (2016:3) stresses that meetings can range from ten to thousands of attendees. It is an activity where refreshments and food are usually served, an opportunity to bring attendees together in one place to solve problems and share information, with meeting times depending on the meeting type, while Swarbrooke and Horner (2001) pronounce that meeting attendees are anything from six attendees to more. Rogers (2003:30) clarifies the difference between external and internal corporate meetings; external attendees are the clients/ customers, while internal event attendees are business employees. The business aim of external events is to use the event as a tool to improve long-term relationships with important clients. Clients then become part of a business' developing process by attending educational meetings and product launches. Moreover, the "I" in MICE refers to incentive travel.

2.5.3.2 Incentive travel

"Incentive travel is a management tool for rewarding and motivating sales representatives, dealers, distributors, production workers, support staff, and in some cases, customers" (Lau, 2016:5). According to Thomas (2012:xxx) incentives "refer to programmes that high achievers attended to recognise and further motivate participants for their performance within the organisation…used to introduce new products and services to key players". Incentive travel, therefore, occurs when a tour is organised as a reward for star employees for targets met or exceeded (ICCA, 2019b:internet; Saayman & Slabbert, 2002:3; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:6). It is part of corporate events and considered a special event (Promlung, 2018:10). Within incentive travel, smaller events occur, such as gala dinners, games, parties, seminars etc. (Getz & Page, 2016:21). It differs from other MICE tourism categories, as incentive travel does not focus on educational or professional services, but purely on entertainment purposes (Khan, 2015:300; Lau, 2016:5; Promlung, 2018,10). Incentive travel is a very profitable and important part of the MICE sector. Also, incentive travellers are seemingly high spenders who are not limited to the major city hubs (Reynolds, 2007:37). The organisation supporting incentive tourism is called a Destination Management Company (DMC); their core responsibility is to arrange travelling programs based on customers' needs. There are various factors behind the incentive travel decision-making process, which include (Lau, 2016:5):

- security and safety, of the area where the incentive travel programme will take place;
- value, identifying how this incentive destination's services and facilities compare with others;

- incentive budget economy, referring to the economic strength of the country where the sponsoring group is headquartered;
- the political climate, travel-alert needs to be in place for destinations within political turmoil; and
- unique experiences, by establishing whether the attendees had experienced this type of incentive trip before.

The "C" in MICE events represents the conference, a convention or congress, explained in further detail below.

2.5.3.3 Conventions, congresses and conferences

Promlung (2018:10) explains how different explanations of these three terms have distorted their definitions throughout the years. *Conference* may be a favoured term in a specific destination such as SA, while other destinations prefer to use *congress* or *convention*. Congress is a word mostly used by the Americans while referring to American parliamentary meetings (not used for general corporate meetings), while in other countries a congress refers to a large meeting. The terms *conventions* and *conferences* are often used interchangeably in the business tourism literature (Marais, 2016:21). However, notable differences occur between the two event categories. *Conferencing* is a high-yield area of the business tourism industry in SA as it generates a better employment generation, foreign exchange and tourism expenditure (Rogerson, 2019:82). On the other hand, *conventions* refer to a large gathering of attendees (frequently several thousand), with many global attendees, and some form of exhibition attached to most conventions (Thomas, 2012:xxx). Conventions are mostly planned annually, with a specific theme in mind (Lau, 2016:6). Also, Rogers (2003:17) describes conventions as a wide-ranging formal meeting of an economic group, jurisdictive body or social group.

The drive for these meetings is to offer information on a specific situation, discuss it in detail, and find an agreement on strategies and future procedures among the attendees. Conventions comprise a variety of corporate events, including (Lau, 2016:6): conferences (small meetings aimed at information sharing; congresses (large-scale trade assemblies); confexes (conference with a small exhibition included); and one-to-one corporate events (premium networking events). Conventions can be planned on a local, regional or global level (Lau, 2016:6). Conventions and conferences refer to events held away from the attendees' standard workspace and consist of networking prospects, educational programming and an exhibition (Marais, 2016:21). Conventions gather attendees with common purposes, and it is planned to share ideas, information and opinions among attendees (Lau, 2016:6). These corporate events

are premeditated to bring together attendees with a shared discipline in a networking environment to: gather information; relay messages; discuss opportunities; solve problems; exchange views; share understandings; open debate; and for learning to take place (Saayman & Slabbert, 2002:6). Due to the high-return nature and high quality of corporate travellers, tourism marketing organisations are very willing to entice conference and convention attendees (Locke, 2012). There are a few distinct differences between meetings and conventions, in that conventions are (Lau, 2016:6):

- planned by associations (i.e. professional and trade associations, voluntary associations, charities, political parties);
- generating income for the association;
- long-lasting for several days;
- larger events;
- inclusive of a social programme;
- typically conducted annually; and
- require a substantial amount of time spent on-site/ venue selection.

A conference is primarily a meeting planned for fact-finding, debate, consultation and problem-solving (ICCA, 2019b:internet). A conference usually is smaller in scale than a congress and more select in attractiveness, with a specific objective and limited time duration (ICCA, 2019b:internet). Certain elements, i.e. transport, accommodation, attractions, restaurants and supportive infrastructure, should be available for a destination to host conferences (Kruger, 2006:27-28). The following type of corporate event explained is an exhibition, which communicates services and products to attendees and consumers, displayed on a show floor (ICCA, 2019b:internet; Marais, 2016:21).

2.5.3.4 Exhibitions

Exhibitions are classified as a form of business tourism meetings and one of the four key components of the business tourism sector (Reynolds, 2007:23). It refers to corporate events, which also include sales, public relations and marketing (Fenich, 2012:6). Exhibitions have a twofold purpose in business tourism, as it is a supplier of business tourism and in a way, promotes the entire industry (Reynolds, 2007:25). The purpose of an exhibition is to compile the latest information on competitors, introduce new products, obtain sales leads, build a network of influential contacts, and shape its image (Lau, 2016:8). The organisation showcasing its products are called the exhibitor. Exhibitors usually rent an area from the exhibition planners and set up an exhibition booth to meet with latent buyers. The buyers require a ticket or invitation to be allowed admission to the exhibition (Lau, 2016:8). Exhibition events cater to

invited audiences, as it is an opportunity to demonstrate services or products with the persistence of sharing information and generating sales (Bosch, 2018:129; Promlung, 2018:10). Exhibitions are mainly seen as a specialised form of marketing for exhibitors (Reynolds, 2007:54); it offers three-dimensional product advertising (can be touched, seen and assessed) (Promlung, 2018:10). These organised corporate events may be commercial or non-commercial, lasting for a few hours to a week, with few to thousands of attendees (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2001:5). Depending on the type, scope and size of an exhibition, it could be categorised into (Lau, 2016:8):

- only open to business buyers, namely business-to-business (i.e. tradeshow, trade exposition, trade fair);
- for the public, also known as a business-to-consumer (i.e. show, fair, exposition); or
- a mixed/ combined show, combining both public and trade.

Exhibitions are commonly divided into consumer shows and tradeshows. The latter is targeted at specific occupations or trades. The public might have access to tradeshows, but it typically caters only for sales and exhibitors, which is dissimilar to consumer shows, customarily held for the general public (Getz, 1997:9; Saayman & Slabbert, 2002:4). Herewith important current key players in exhibitions – with more than 35 years' experience in managing globally renowned travel exhibitions with a cumulative portfolio exceeding 20 international travel and tourism trade events in Europe, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Reed Travel Exhibitions is the world's leading travel and tourism events planner (Reed Travel Exhibitions, 2019:internet). Moreover, founded in 1980, is EXSA (Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa) a non-profit organisation with the principal strategy to develop SA's events and exhibition industry dynamically. It is a zealous and dedicated platform that supports members of the industry to participate, connect, learn and grow. EXSA promotes the unique marketing benefits offered by exhibitions and events and concurrently aims to raise EXSA members' profile (i.e. venues, event planners, event suppliers etc.) (EXSA, 2019:internet). EXSA (cited by Reynolds [2007:52]) explains the advantages of exhibitions over other marketing mediums and how exhibitions are powerful tools for:

- communicating a message by means of all senses;
- meeting face-to-face with the target market;
- experiencing the marketplace (i.e. buyers, suppliers, consultants, media and purchase influencers) simultaneously in one place;
- demonstration platforms to reply to queries, overcome objections and reveal products;
- meeting prospective customers; and
- bringing customers to the exhibition.

Jurakanit (2018:17) sees another great benefit of the exhibition industry as its assistance to improve the eminence of services and hospitality. Also, in the surrounding area, it inspires investment to further develop-associated services and facilities.

Within the past era, exhibitions transformed from large fairs (i.e. entertainment and agricultural) with a mass audience into expert exhibitions from the trade and consumers (Reynolds, 2007:23). Europe hosts the largest number of exhibitions annually, and most are leading international trading events. Reynolds (2007:23) further explains how the iconic Eiffel Tower in Paris was initially built explicitly to mark an exhibition's opening (International Exhibition of Paris of 1889). History also shows how Germany reconstructed their post-war (WWII) economy through the medium of exhibitions. Therefore, exhibitions had always played an important role in developing destinations and are an important factor in the marketing mix (Calof, 2005:57). Other corporate events can also be sub-categorised under the already-mentioned corporate events or hosted in combination with larger corporate events.

2.5.3.5 Other

Certain corporate events are intended solely for a specific organisation or planned for an explicit purpose, i.e. teambuilding events or internal meetings. For these types of events, only the organisation's employees join the event (Thomas, 2012:3). Training courses are another form of corporate event, primarily hosted to offer training for those involved (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:199). Corporate events also include product launches, award ceremonies and various hospitality events – mostly organised to entertain corporate clients (Marais, 2016:22). By making use of internet-supported software for corporate meetings, event expenditure can be minimised. This refers to online corporate events, i.e. virtual meetings, webinars or online training, enabled by interactive meetings software (Thomas, 2012:4). These meetings are also useful to implement when employees/ clients are often working geographically remote and need to attend a meeting readily. Within the (business) tourism industry, corporate events are found in an area with limitless potential for further development (Skinner, 2017:820). The next section provides an overview of corporate events in developing countries, such as SA, highlighting opportunities and obstacles.

2.5.4 Opportunities and obstacles – corporate events in developing countries

More than a decade ago, Reynolds (2007:17) highlighted opportunities and challenges for the corporate events industry in developing countries, which still are relevant today. It encompasses **strategic marketing planning**, **evaluation and selling strategies**, and **critical trends** for

consideration in the business tourism sector (i.e. corporate social responsibility; on-going unpredictability; new destinations; transport and return on investment [ROI]). According to Kotze-Nhlapo (2019:internet) major obstacles for business tourism growth in developing countries and especially within Africa are water supply, air access, traveller perception, safety and security. Grant Thornton is one of the world's leading organisations of independent assurance, tax and advisory. In their deliberations on business travel within a consumer-led economy, Grant Thornton (2016:internet) identifies five major global industry trends, which also apply to event planners to abide by in order to stay relevant in the fast-pace MICE environment:

- **Go green** – event companies that are committed to sustainable practices can build brands with strong appeal for increasingly ethically and environmentally conscious attendees/ consumers;
- Supply **end-to-end product offering** – for event planners to make themselves indispensable in the MICE marketplace, it is advisable to offer consumers a seamless and complete experience from the beginning to the end of their MICE event. This is possible by partnering with restaurants, venues, airlines, hotels etc. in order to "sell" attendees an end-to-end product offering (one-stop-shop for MICE);
- Incorporate **new technology** – including new digital solutions (i.e. automatic verification of business travel documentation, booking and checking-in via mobile) transforms the industry and makes business travel easier. By embracing new technology, event planners can boost customer loyalty, build new business, adapt outdated business models and ultimately personalise the attendees' event experience;
- Adapt to **changing demand patterns** – high-value consumers from large developing countries and the Generation Z ("…composed of those born between 1995 and 2010, which means that the oldest are about 22 and are just entering the workforce" [Patel, 2019:internet]) worldwide are driving product strategies, global portfolios and considerations. To appeal to these groups, business travel companies must take note of customers' penchants, language and expectations regarding service, technology and personalised experiences;

  Face the sharing economy – nowadays, business tourists choose local hosts (i.e. Airbnb) and car-sharing (i.e. Uber). Business tourism service providers need to join in, link up with locals (to create authentic experiences), and tailor their business models by making guest experiences more personal and presenting flexible accommodation.

Donaldson's (2013:34) study around corporate events in SA also confirms factors that influence event attendance and attendee satisfaction, namely: the corporate event program; networking opportunities; the cost associated to the corporate event; external activities and the event location. By following these guidelines, developing countries such as SA can reach higher attendee satisfaction and push up attendance ratings. Globally the demand patterns for

corporate events are constantly changing. Also, the size of corporate events is decreasing annually, even though there is, on average, a 10% growth in the number of corporate events held (Marques & Santos, 2016:2). Moreover, the ICCA recorded between 2008 and 2012 that the greater number of corporate events (79.8%) hosted fewer than 500 attendees per event (Marques & Santos, 2016:2). In the slide, Figure 2.6, by Kotze-Nhlapo (the Chief Convention Bureau Officer of South African National Conventions Bureau (SANCB) [2019:internet]) for the keynote presentation at the 2019 Africa's Travel Indaba – KSF to take MICE Tourism in Africa from great to good, she showcased SA's current market priorities and key industries. It will be beneficial for SA to focus on these key industries and plan more corporate events around it to up SA's MICE events statistics and success rate. The industries include mining and metal; life sciences; manufacturing; creative industries; information and communication technology; and business process outsourcing.

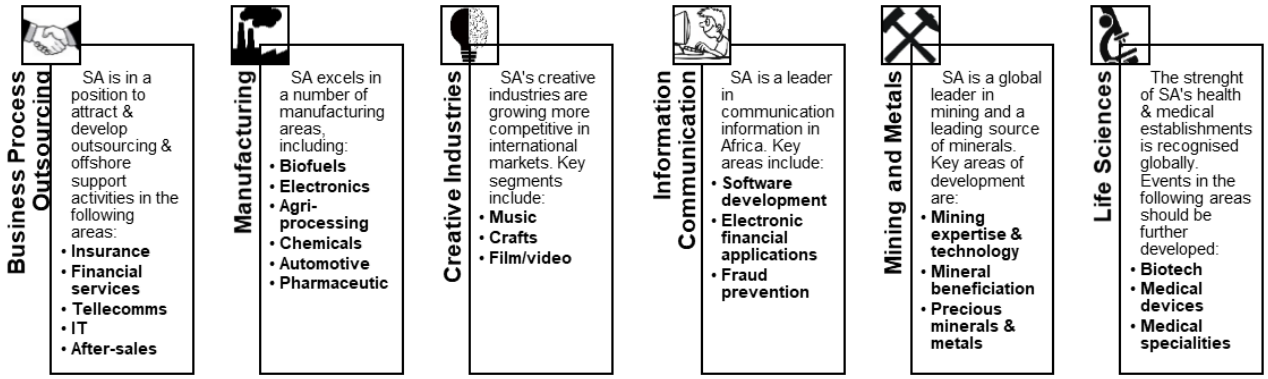

Figure 2-5: SA's current market priorities and key industries around which to plan corporate events

Source: Adapted from Kotze-Nhlapo (2019:internet)

For business tourism to be advantageous for a developing country, Marques and Santos (2016:7-8) identified features that may improve the development of business tourism growth for the host community, namely:

- The presence of significant **industrial area**, attracting a substantial number of MICE trips;
- The locations with **diversity and tourism richness**, enhancing the growth of different products and tourism attraction;
- The existence of **universities** used as facilitating agents of scientific events, also generating global attention;
- **Network access** and the topographical location, improving interconnection amid main urban centres and surrounding regions;

- Good quality and upgraded **infrastructure**, venues and facilities, allowing travelling to (and staying in) this area and the awareness of a significant and assorted range of business events;
- Conceptualising **partnerships** amid private and public agents;
- Attention to the training of expert **human resources** to provide professional and good-quality business tourism services; and
- **Promotion** and more comprehensive broadcasting of the product offering related to the destination, at national and global levels.

As an opportunity to further develop corporate events in developing countries, the window is presented for successful corporate events to positively modify attendees' work conduct, as attendees obtain new ideas, skillset or knowledge from joining corporate events (Thomas, 2012:6). Events tourism grants visitors the opportunity to be entertained and satisfy an array of needs, such as joining sporting events and sample local traditions and cuisine. The domestic tourism market remains dynamic by hosting local and regional events. However, the uniqueness of the local host community is the main attraction for event attendees (Getz, 1997). Business tourism is seen as an area with immeasurable possibilities for more growth (Marques & Santos, 2016:1). Kotze-Nhlapo and the SANCB agree with this statement and explains how there is an opportunity for Africa to host more global association conferences in the future – around 12,000 global association conferences were held in the last five years globally, and 9% thereof (178 in SA and 592 in other African countries) took place in Africa. There is an opportunity for SA (as a developing country) and Africa to obtain a larger part of the global association market share, as 6,738 of the 12,000 association conferences are rotation events (Kotze-Nhlapo, 2019:internet). According to Kotze-Nhlapo (2019:internet), a developing country (such as SA) to host MICE events are as indicated in Figure 2.7 below. In the figure corporate events, incentives, conventions and exhibitions all have four to five key destination requirements listed. Evaluating the requirements in detail - accessibility, costing, facility requirements, and supporting services-seems to be prevalent across the board.

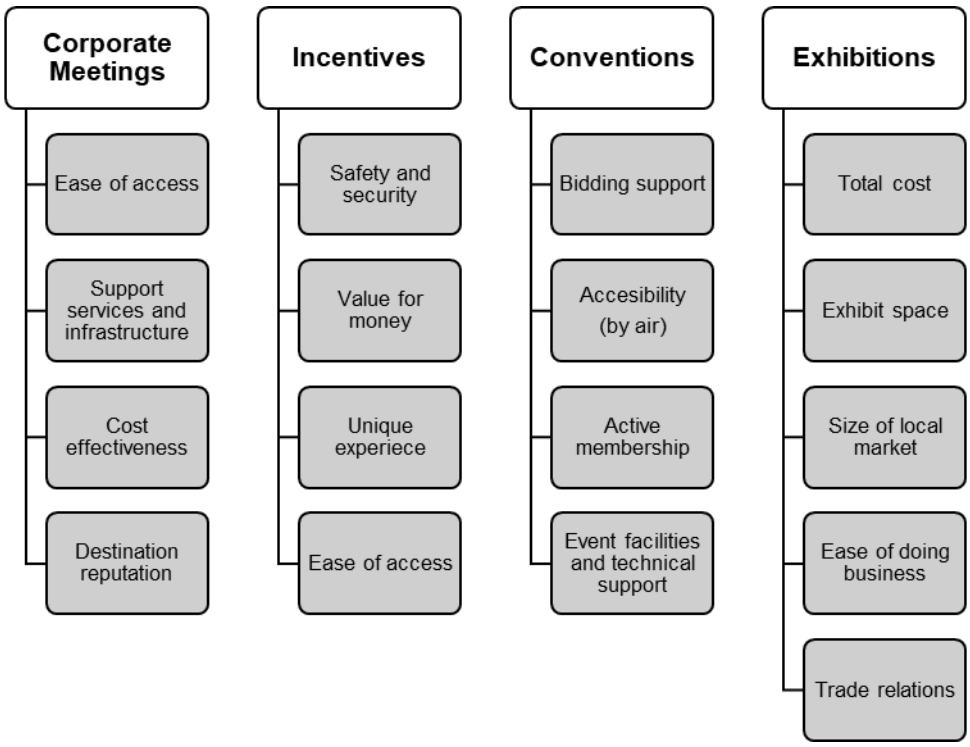

Figure 2-6: Key requirements for a developing MICE country
Source: Adapted from Kotze-Nhlapo (2019:internet)

From this literature, opportunities are identified for corporate events in developing countries, and there are definite economic roles that corporate events fulfil, as indicated within the following section.

2.5.4.1 Impact of corporate events on the economy/ Economic roles fulfilled by events

Prior economic and tourism literature studies undertaken by Kulendran and Wilson (2000); Milne and Ateljevic, (2001); Poole (2010); Santana-Gallego *et al.* (2016); Sinclair (1998); Swarbrooke and Horner (2001); Tsui and Fung (2016); as well as Tsui *et al.* (2017:388), established the affiliation between worldwide trade, business tourism and economic development. The impact of corporate events on the economy is much easier to measure than the intangible social and physical impacts (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:504). Hussain *at al.* (2017:504-505) also explains the measurement scale used to calculate the impact of corporate events on the economy as follows:

> A standard economic impact analysis traces the flows of money from tourism spending, first to businesses and government agencies where tourists spend their money, and then to other secondary businesses - supplying goods and services to tourist businesses,

households earning income by working in tourism or supporting industries, and; government - through various taxes and charges on tourists, businesses, and households. The total economic impact of tourism includes all direct, indirect, and induced effects, where indirect and induced effects are also known as secondary effects. Changes in production, which are associated with the immediate effects of changes in tourism expenditures, are known as direct effects. Indirect effects are the production changes resulting from various rounds of re-spending of the hotel industry's receipts in other backwards-linked industries. Changes occurring in economic activity due to household spending of income earned directly or indirectly can be called induced effect.

Business tourism is of strategic importance to the economic development of a country (Marques & Santos, 2016:6-8). It is documented as the tourism industry's high return sector, primarily through MICE event business (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:499). The success of corporate events is consequently dependent on the dynamism of a destination's economic activity (Tichaawa, 2017:182). MICE is a competitive money-spinning segment of the tourism industry; hence destinations implement various approaches to capitalise on human resource expansion and better infrastructure (Haven-Tang *et al.,* 2007:109). As Rogerson (2019:82) points out "…the competition for MICE tourists, both domestically and internationally, is extremely intense". Corporate events have extensive commercial impacts on local, regional and national economies (Getz & Page, 2016b). This sector is weighed as the most profitable and fastest developing tourism sector (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:497). Furthermore, host communities provide attendees with the best possible experience all year round (MICE events take place throughout the year), with the hope of attendees returning in the future on their own accord and spend more as tourists (leisure and business).

Because MICE events are hosted throughout the year, permanent jobs are created within the tourism industry (Kruger, 2006:3). MICE attendees spend three times more than a leisure tourist when visiting a destination (Donaldson, 2013:26). The result holds amplified economic benefits for the host destination and better return on destination marketing and newly updated infrastructure. On the other hand, a country's economic development is reliant on strategic business tourism (Marques & Santos, 2016:6-8). The impacts of corporate events on the global economy are considered a direct contribution and total contribution to the larger economy (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:497). The purpose of corporate events for a country's economy can be demarcated as follows (Jago & Deery, 2009, cited by Thomas, 2012:2-3):

- to create an opportunity for further growth by attracting powerful participants and investments;
- to display investment opportunities, local services and products;

- conveying new expertise (local and global) to hosts and local professionals; and
- the opportunity to develop innovative prospects and showcasing the latest advances by supporting the introduction of new technology.

When it comes to the development equation's supply side, many key players are involved within the public, private and non-profit sectors. Not all events are shaped with tourism as the end goal but will attract tourist interest or entertain casual visitors. Event planners might want tourists as one segment, even if they emphasise appeals to residents. On the other hand, they are event development corporations with the explicit mandate of bidding on events, creating them, and marketing destinations through the appeal and imagery of events. Corporate events are capital intensives (Getz & Page, 2016b:21). Successful corporate events endorse long-term impacts within destinations, and typical positive impacts include an increased tourism experience; improved visitation during the quiet season; being a catalyst for constant development; and the advancement of economic benefits (Goldblatt, 2000:5). Getz (2000:12) sees economic performance as the leading indicator of event success for most event stakeholders. Below are several economic roles that events fulfil, namely those indicated by Reynolds (2007:15) and Yusoff *et al*. (2015:1318):

- **Tourist attraction**, as it spreads demand and attracts quality attendees;
- **Animator**, reassures first and repeat visits by attendees;
- **Place marketing**, as it advances the quality of life and generates positive images;
- **Image maker**, for events destination; and
- **Catalyst**, events assist urban renewal and therefore stimulate infrastructure development.

Tichaawa (2017:182) states that investments in destination infrastructure are designed mainly for corporate tourists (i.e. transport, restaurant, hotels, attractions, communication amenities), and can also be enjoyed by the host community and leisure travellers. Successful corporate events endorse long-term impacts within destinations, and typical positive impacts include an increased tourism experience, improved visitation during the quiet season, being a catalyst for constant development, as well as the advancement of economic benefits (Goldblatt, 2000:5). Getz (2000:12) sees economic performance as the leading indicator of event success for most event stakeholders. Hussain *et al.* (2017:497) accentuate that the business tourism industry's economic importance should not be underrated, as it directly contributes to the larger economy. For this study, a detailed analysis of SA’s corporate events industry follows, also outlining its benefits and challenges.

2.5.4.2 The South African and Gauteng corporate events industry

The formal South African MICE sector can be traced back to the 1960s and early 1970s (Fenich *et al.,* 2012:40). The Financial Mail (1967), cited by Rogerson (2019:86), reported how in Johannesburg, (SA as well as Gauteng's main commercial and economic hub), **conference facilities were very unattractive** in the 1960s and that public relation officers were not making any assertive efforts to plan prestigious conferences or conventions in the dreadful city also called the "Golden City". The Financial Mail (1967), cited by Rogerson (2019:86), explains how conference planners during that period would instead make use of the Union Castle ocean mail ships as conference venues, as better-quality conference facilities and accommodation were offered aboard these ships between Cape Town and Durban. The main reason for the poor conference industry in SA during this period is the **meagre hotel industry** (Rogerson, 2019:86). During 1965 the SA hotel industry experienced a thorough restructuring, which required all hotels to be classified by the department responsible for liquor control. In this process, hotels had to meet specified minimum standards in terms of accommodation to reward an automatic on-consumption liquor license. This initiative introduced a **first-time grading classification of tourist hotels** in SA to ensure that the hotel quality standards align with international levels (Rogerson, 2019:86).

These legislative changes ushered in a turning point in SA's hotel and business tourism industry, as corporate event infrastructure standards increased strongly. Rogerson (2019:87) points out that at the beginning of the 1970s it was documented that conferences and conventions hosted by business and professional organisations developed a substantial revenue base for SA hotels, with an average of 5-10% of the total revenue. In 1975 the SA Department of Tourism established the South African Congress Bureau (**SACB**). Regrettably, the launch's timing occurred only 18 months preceding the infamous **Soweto uprisings** in June 1979 (SA History online, 2018:internet) which advanced SA's exile status in the worldwide tourism economy, and the accomplishments of the SACB were unavoidably modest. Furthermore, during the isolation of **apartheid** in SA, the conference industry in SA was challenged by many problems, i.e. violence and recession (Kruger, 2006:25).

The first recorded accomplishment of this industry in SA was the launch of a "**prestige congress marketing brochure**" during 1977, wherein SA's corporate events facilities were marketed and presented overseas (Rogerson, 2019:88). Two new conference centres in the late 1970s – the **Good Hope Centre** (Cape Town) and the **CSIR Conference Centre** (Pretoria) was also a positive indication of the development of a better conference tourism infrastructure in SA (Rogerson, 2019:88). However, after the 1978 Annual Report, explaining SA's political turbulence and little business tourism achievements, the decision was made to instead, start

encouraging incentive travel in SA (Kruger, 2006:16). During the late 1970s and early 1980s gambling venues were forbidden in SA. However, within that period, large conference facilities were established accompanying gambling facilities outside the country's major metropolitan areas within the territories of the group of so-called independent Black Homelands (created by SA apartheid planning). These **casino resorts and large conference facilities** were very successful in areas, i.e. Ciskei, Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda. The most significant of these venues to date is the Sun City Resort (in early Bophuthatswana) situated about two hours' drive away from Johannesburg or Pretoria, established in December 1979 (Sun International, 2019:internet). The former South African Deputy Minister of Science and Technology (2004–2012) and minister of Tourism (2018 – 2019), Derek Hanekom (2015:internet), advised that the prejudiced apartheid system preceding SA's first democratic elections in 1994 had adverse consequences on SA's tourism industry. According to Weed and Bull (2004), cited by Mxunyelwa (2017:2), soon after **SA's post-apartheid regime** in 1994, former president Dr Nelson Mandela spoke to the South African nation about the positive role the **1995 Rugby World Cup** had, by uniting and building the nation. By hosting mega-events like this, placed SA on the global map as a competent event host country.

The development of the South African event industry since 1994 is evident, as the business tourism industry aligned itself towards gathering the benefits of inbound tourism opportunities to the nation (Bosch, 2018:103-112; Fenich *et al.,* 2012:40; Manners, 2014:1; Manners, 2011:19-20; Tassiopoulos, 2000:3). Rogerson (2019:82) explains as follows:

> Under apartheid, conference tourism was primarily a domestic affair, lacked professionalism and quality infrastructure in dedicated proposed built conference venues. By 1994 while the country's conference industry did not have any global standard facilities, such convention centres' planning was in process in the country's three major cities.

However, SA has developed into a leading corporate events destination for tourists, attributing to SA's international marketing and image. Hosting successful international events reinforced SA's position as a leading MICE destination (Fenich *et al.,* 2012:40). A pragmatic trend in the early 1990s was to develop a few **non-hotel conference centres** (Rogerson, 2019;89). Before that, SA could not appeal to major international corporate events, due to the lack of standard purpose built convention centres (with a capacity of 1000 attendees and more). This however changed with the succeeding openings of the **Durban International Convention Centre** (1997), the **Sandton Convention Centre** in Johannesburg (in the year 2000); and the **Cape Town Convention Centre** (2003), which enabled SA to be a more competitive destination in the international meetings industry (Kruger, 2006:26-27). Today, the formal business economy

in SA is echoed in the presence of groups of **upmarket accommodation services and convention centres** in capital cities/ main commercial centres, which target the corporate traveller. As a corporate events destination, SA and Gauteng have the unique opportunity to display its growth, capability, natural beauty, culture, and vast diversity (Knott, 2012:120). Currently, SA hosts, on average, one million attendees annually at corporate events, directly and indirectly supporting 250,000 jobs in this industry alone (GL Events, 2018:internet; Naicker, 2019:internet). **SAACI** (South African Association for the Conference Industry) was also established during this period, in 1987 – the only organisation truly represented the entire South African conference industry. "One of the main aims of SAACI was to improve standards in the conference facilities, meeting venues and allied services within Southern Africa to conference buyers, both locally and abroad" (SAACI, 2019:internet). Destination marketing establishments have also identified the corporate events industry in SA as a significant growth market-place for provinces (Donaldson, 2013:24). The three provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and Gauteng are the utmost active provinces in corporate events (Donaldson, 2013:24).

In SA's business tourism environment, the largest section by capacity and worth is meetings, which can be subdivided into (Donaldson, 2015:25):

- corporate meetings – SA's largest market, with local and regional attendees;
- association meetings – SA's second largest market, meetings accompanied with pre- and post-tours; and
- medium and large meetings – with more than 250 attendees; these meetings guarantee repeat visits from attendees.

The SA meeting industry is still young with scarce data and research trustworthy to offer statistics on the industry's magnitude, growth and position. However, the ICCA and Union of International Associations (UIA) collaborate to produce annual statistical data in this regard (ICCA, 2019d:internet). Their research aims to screen international meetings, detect trends, and provide annual rankings of the most successful destinations (Davidson & Rogers, 2006:221). This research provides destinations with more insight into their position within the international meetings market. According to Rogerson (2015a:190), corporate travel is the third most significant reason for South Africans to travel, with visiting friends and relatives and leisure travel as the top motivators for travel. SANCB confirms that SA hosts an average of one million international corporate event attendees annually, whose key purpose of the visit is to attend MICE events (Kotze-Nhlapo, 2019:internet). Furthermore, SA hosts approximately 211,000 international and national MICE events annually, in the total amount of 2,620 venues listed in SA (Kotze-Nhlapo, 2019:internet). SA has the opportunity of prospering as a top corporate events destination due to exceptional service levels that are well-maintained (Reynolds,

2007:34). According to the SANCB delegate tracking study between 2014 and 2016, 30% of SA's conference attendees originated from Europe, 25% from Africa, 20% from Asia, and 15% represented North American attendees. The study also elaborates on where the average corporate events attendee chooses to overnight while travelling on business to SA, with 80% in hotels, 6% in guesthouses and another minor 6% chooses to stay with friends or family. The typical corporate events attendee spends seven days in SA and approximately five days attending the corporate event. Before and after the event, the main purpose of travel is 60% of the time for holiday purposes, where attendees spend on average R12,600 on accommodation, shopping, and tours. (Kotze-Nhlapo, 2019:internet). "Today, concerning the MICE sector and the African context, the country has progressed significantly, hosting 23% of all business tourism meetings on the continent." (Fenich *et al.,* 2012:41.) In 2006 SA ordered the eighteenth most popular meeting country globally, founded on an estimation taking into account the number of events scheduled at that time to take place between 2005 and 2016 (Marais *et al.,* 2017b:2). Also, SA boasts with a stellar past performance record in hosting international world-changing events such as the 2011 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP17), the 5th BRICS Summit in 2013 and the 21st AIDS conference (2016) – all held in the coastal city of Durban (SANCB, 2019a:internet).

Events tourism provides visitors with the opportunity to be entertained and satisfies an array of needs, i.e. to join sporting events and sample local traditions and cuisine. The domestic tourism market stays dynamic by hosting local and regional events. However, the uniqueness of the local host community is the main attraction for event attendees (Getz, 1997). SA's economy benefits vastly from tourism, and qualified expert human resources are more and more critical to support the tourism industry, as the number of local and international tourist grows (Thapa, 2019:30). The SA MICE business is measured as an important part of the progress of urban tourism in SA; instead of making use of traditional hotels, newly developed multi-purpose venues have been developed nowadays (Fenich *et al.,* 2012:41). In recent years, SA offered more than 1,700 state-of-the-art meeting venues across the country, with international convention centres located in Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Durban and East London. Some of the prime meeting venues can accommodate 20,000 attendees and more (SANCB, 2019b:internet).

I Schema of checklists n the latest Meeting Planners Guide, Nonnie Kubeka, the Head of Gauteng Convention & Events Bureau, describes Gauteng as a corporate events destination in a nutshell, (Kubeka, 2019:1):

> Gauteng is a province like no other. As Africa's economic powerhouse, it drives the continent forward through innovation and an incredible business offering. The heart of

South Africa's business-events industry resides in Gauteng, and delegates flock from all over the globe to experience the unique blend of distinctly African culture and world-class infrastructure. Whether it is a convention for 12 000 or a meeting for ten, Gauteng will deliver venues and services that surpass expectation. Globally recognised professional conference organisers are waiting to assist you, while the Gauteng Convention Bureau is ideally positioned to facilitate the creation of a memorable and first-rate event. Gauteng has thousands of star-graded accommodation options to suit every budget, and many leading international hotel brands call the province home. Gauteng offers a plethora of pre- and post-show opportunities; from delving into the country's fascinating political past to visiting some of the finest culinary destinations in Africa, marvelling at our incredible wildlife, there is an experience for everyone. South Africa has long been open for business.

The SA corporate event sector is a foremost niche tourism market, with wide-ranging growth potential, and substantial efforts are being made to grow this industry (Venske, 2018:79-80). There are, however, specific challenges that present itself that requires prompt action from corporate event stakeholders.

2.5.4.3 Corporate event challenges and threats

Thomas's (2012:12) research lists the following items that can threaten corporate events: legislation; a meagre image of the country through inappropriate corporate event offerings and condensed "viability across national industries due to poor inflows of knowledge from poorly run business events". Gauteng and SA face several challenges, which may circuitously and directly impact the hosting of corporate events. Herewith follows a literature summary of the challenges compiled from Gauteng–City-Region Observatory (2018b:internet); Hussain *et al.* (2017:504); Knott *et al.* (2012:120); Knott *et al*. (2015:47); Marques and Santos (2016:2); Naicker (2018:internet); Raseroka (2018:internet); Reynolds (2007:36,46-48); Rogerson (2018;389); SA Department of Transport (2017:3-9); Taylor (2006); Thomas (2012:1-12); Tourism Bee Charter (2019:internet); Venske (2018:79); and Wilder (2007:145):

- High levels of **unemployment, poverty and social exclusion** – SA is one of the furthermost unequal societies globally, especially in Gauteng cities and towns. Spatial concentrations of large wealth alongside big informal settlements are a reality. Different population groups are still concentrated in specific dedicated areas previously designated for them (by apartheid) and remain to this day;
- **Inadequate nation branding** – Widler (2007:145) refers to nation branding as a "discourse", further describing it as "a body of shared knowledge about a particular thing

in the world". It is additionally defined as: "the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all its target audiences" (Knott *et al.,* 2015:47). SA is an emerging nation brand still in the process of overcoming undesirable public and media attention. A sordid base of knowledge and awareness of SA brand characteristics is a specific challenge in developing SA as a desirable corporate events destination. What adds to SA's branding challenges (alike most developing nations), is the newness of its brand and potentially out-dated, inappropriate or stereotyped connotations. There is also the problem of "Brand Africa", where SA is associated with the African continent's negative problems (i.e. civil-war; crime; exploitation; scarcity; illness). It has been proven to be extremely challenging to reverse a negative country image, as it may require a momentous event or experience to modify;

- How it is **administered** – the determination to build on its potential and meet specified challenges is how Gauteng is administered. Locally, the province is governed by three separate municipalities and a sum of two-tier local government structures comprising regional and resident municipalities. A few general state departments, large state-owned entities and parastatals also play a part, i.e., freight and air transport, water and power facilities. This is a suitable administration process because Gauteng is too large to be administered by a single entity. However, in order for the said challenges to be addressed, for Gauteng to reach its full potential, all the mentioned government fragments need to work hand-in-hand;
- **High crime rates** – Mounting crime levels threaten SA's business tourism growth projections and are a challenge for SA and Gauteng's corporate events industry. Currently, a crime against tourists in SA mainly takes the form of robbery. An example of how it directly affects corporate events refers to the Sandton Convention Centre which lost conference bids in the past due to the high crime rates;
- As per the latest ICCA statistics, **the declining scope of corporate event**, business tourism demand patterns are altering globally. However, there has been a surge of 10% annually in the average number of corporate events hosted; the size/ scope of these events are decreasing drastically. Corporate event planners, therefore, need to work harder to attend to more events, but the size of events is smaller, which means less revenue per event;
- The shortage of **more accommodation options** closer to major Gauteng convention centres currently is a huge challenge, as convention centres cater for thousands of corporate event attendees and most of the popular hotels only for an average of 200 guests per night;

- The **labour market** is not yet energetic enough to meet the ambitions of all potential employees;
- **Economic motion** is still patterned by conventions and communications heredity from the apartheid era that often limit the opportunities for new market entrants, especially young work-seekers;
- **Sub-standard road infrastructure** is a major challenge in Gauteng, which goes hand-in-hand with the following challenge;
- According to Raseroka, the chairman of Bridge Taxi Finance, Gauteng travel time and traffic by the year 2037 travelling time between Johannesburg and Pretoria would take up to six hours, should phase two of the Gauteng Freeway Improvement Project (GFIP) not be executed. This theory has been confirmed by Electronic Toll Collection (ETC), the company responsible for collecting tolls on behalf of the South African National Roads Agency (Sanral). However, there are also other options to consider for easing traffic congestion in Gauteng, particularly implementing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes. Phase two of the GFIP includes a further 158km of new roads to diffuse traffic from congested Gauteng traffic areas, including a highway between Sandton and Soshanguve; a new road between Johannesburg and Soweto; and a ring road around Johannesburg. Phase two has been sternly delayed by Sanral and ETC's failure to collect e-toll fees. There are about 5-million licensed vehicles on the Gauteng roads, growing at a rapid rate of 0.2% monthly. With only two operatives, consistent and moderately safe ways to travel between Pretoria and Johannesburg in Gauteng, by car or the Gautrain. 70% of commuters make use of minibus taxis for their day-to-day commute, but Gauteng is not devoting more resources, time and energy endorsing public transport and high occupancy vehicle lanes, reserved for public transport vehicles or carpooling vehicles (with more than two adult passengers). This will conserve fuel and energy, cut down travelling cost (through sharing costs and lower fuel usage) and lower emissions. This was piloted in Gauteng in 2006 but failed due to inefficient planning. Raseroka (2018:internet) further suggests that "the easiest and most cost-effective ways to avoid congested highways in the short term might be to implement well-regulated and policed high occupancy vehicle or taxi lanes on the highways";
- Deficiency of adequate **security** – SA needs to overcome acuity barriers relating to attendee safety, political instability, corporate event security and direct international access;
- Lack of ample **air access –** direct commercial flights and air capacity and are key areas for the MICE sector to address in SA;
- No **Business Tourism specific BEE strategies** in place – the Tourism BEE Scorecard and Charter addresses the issue of transformation and redistribution and concentrates

on two key objectives: to embrace a further diverse representation of SA's population and be converted as more globally competitive through broad-based black economic empowerment. The challenge, however, is that the current scorecard for rating an organisation's BEE status is generic to the tourism industry and does not highlight strategies specific to business tourism;

- No separate **Business Tourism bodies** – Business Tourism Worldwide convention bureaus are inclined to be separate bodies from leisure marketing groups, with their targeted focus, policymaking boards and self-governing funding. In SA, however, the Business Tourism Portfolio sits as a unit within SA Tourism, an established arrangement that the industry, has questioned in terms of its effectiveness. It is a definite challenge for SA's capital, Johannesburg;
- Event-management teachers in SA are challenged with training **culturally diverse students** for progressive workplaces in the corporate events sector. The dynamic event-management sector requires skilled event planners at entry-level positions that are already work-ready;
- **Tourism boards** with limited serving time – many tourism boards in SA only serve three-year contracts, which limit their ability to produce determined benefits for the industry. Whereas, with international trends, a lengthier tenure of five to ten years' obligation allows for more substantial growth in MICE and other business tourism;
- Below-standard **hotel service** – according to Michael Tatalias, the former Southern Africa Tourism Services Association CEO, service excellence of high-end hotels needs to be reviewed. SA used to be recognised worldwide for its brilliance in training top hotel-industry staff. However, due to factors such as black economic empowerment and skilled staff leaving for foreign currency earnings, SA and Gauteng finds it challenging to recollect its prior superior skills;
- The **dearth of interest in membership** by South African PCOs in international bodies such as ICCA, MPI and SITE (Society for Incentive Travel Excellence) is challenging for the future corporate events industry development. Within the MICE bidding process, belonging to the above-mentioned international bodies will provide the event planner with a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage refers to any value a business offers that persuades its customers to obtain its product/services instead of those of its opponents;
- A particular challenge is also posed from the **event planners**' side due to insufficient research, strategy and delivery of the corporate event it might not be successful
- High **unemployment**, a lack of access to basic services such as housing and education create challenges, which is coupled with the subsequently listed challenges;

- **Xenophobia** (the Oxford dictionary [2019:internet] defines it as the dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries) in SA towards non-South Africans is a further problem, safety issues and crime in inner-city Johannesburg generate major business tourism challenges;
- **Negative media** reports that denote SA and Gauteng as a homogenous, regressive and violent destination, home to the famished and unethical affect the hosting of corporate events negatively;
- A corporate event destination has a certain **tolerance perimeter of carrying capacity** to control the extent of tourist impact, within its physical, social and economic structures. This is currently very unclear in SA and poses a challenge in hosting corporate events;
- SA's **high HIV-infection** rate is a challenge for the country's business tourism perception. HIV/AIDS used to have a substantial effect on shaping the demographic profile of SA's population formerly and is foreseen to continue doing so. However, perhaps in the future, it will be at a lesser rate; and
- Business Tourism Industry Bodies are not successful in **marketing** SA as a MICE destination, as chair holders have other political motivations; and
- Several further trials challenge business tourism development in SA, i.e. the country's bad image; inadequate service infrastructure; poor quality of accommodation amenities; inadequate tourism support services; lack of qualified human and financial capital; widespread corruption; and the conflict of interest between the different business tourism stakeholders.

Event planners from the supply side need to be aware of the challenges and integrate proactive approaches during event planning to triumph the mentioned challenges. The below-mentioned benefits also need to be taken into consideration and be integrated into SA and Gauteng corporate event planning to further local corporate event success rates.

2.5.4.4 Corporate event benefits and opportunities

For SA, the effective hosting of a critical event (i.e. 2010 FIFA World Cup) is also seen as a means of enhancing the country's "scorecard" and **destination appeal** as a host country for future events (Knott *et al*., 2012:119). This goes together with **destination competitiveness**, which refers to a destination's capability to provide services and goods that, when compared with other destinations, are seen to be better by the event attendees or tourists (Tifflin & Balkaran, 2014:433). SA, including Gauteng, is a competitive corporate event destination with a great deal of destination appeal, due to further benefits. **As a tourism-related variable, Visa requirements are** an important determinant of business tourism and the hosting of corporate

events (Tsui *et al.,* 2018:391). SA home-affairs regularly grant visa-free status to nationals from new countries for business tourism purposes to increase corporate event attendee statistics in SA and reap the accompanying benefits. A current example – recently Aaron Motsoaledi (SA Department of Home Affairs minister) announced: "as from today, 15 August 2019, travellers from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and New Zealand will no longer require a visa to visit South Africa for holidays, conferencing and business meeting visits" (BusinessTech, 2019:internet). SA is also in a similar **time zone** as Europe and can be sold as a short-haul corporate events destination, as one can board a plane in Europe at 20:00, eat, sleep and wake up in Gauteng. Therefore, the **flying distance** is a benefit and used to encourage new MICE business (Drewe, 2006 cited by Reynolds, 2007:48; Tsui *et al.,* 2018:391). Growth of the corporate events industry goes together with the demand for **qualified and highly trained employees** (Fenich *et al.,* 2012:39), which benefits Gauteng. There are also individual players in the MICE industry that have been instrumental in driving the sector's development. Through vigorous promotion locally and internationally by **influential and persuasive individuals**, consequently inspiring media hype, SA is now acknowledged as a global MICE destination (Reynolds, 2007:46). SA's **incentive market** (part of MICE events) is very attractive and a lucrative corporate events segment, as businesses spend large amounts on incentive packages (Reynolds, 2007:37). Gauteng also benefits from this, as it is one of the major hubs for inbound incentive travellers to fly into, who enjoy pre- and post-incentive tours in Gauteng.

The significant determining aspect when selecting a destination remains **value for money** (Reynolds, 2007:17). Internationally SA is seen as an affordable business tourism destination, and Gauteng, as the country's economic hub, offers the benefit of being an affordable and 'good value for money' corporate events destination. Gauteng hence has a competitive advantage as a corporate events destination with adequate **hotel capacity and rates** (Tsui *et al.,* 2018:391). Another benefit highlighted by the Gauteng Tourism Authority (2019a:internet) is SA's **Pink Tourism**. SA is one of the most liberal constitutions worldwide, welcoming all business tourism/ corporate event attendees irrespective of race, belief or sexual orientation. SA's post-apartheid composition was the first globally to ban sexual discrimination. Also, SA was the fifth country in the world and first in Africa to legalise same-sex marriage. Its niche tourism market (pink tourism) developed globally, dedicated to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) travellers. Gauteng welcomes LGBTQ+ business tourism attendees at most establishments, to mingle freely.

A destination (in this case referring to the Gauteng province) can use a variety of resources to its benefit. These resources are divided into competitive and inherited/ endowed resources and resources (Fang, 2006, cited by Tifflin & Balkaran [2014:433]). **Competitive resources** include

items such as business tourism infrastructure (i.e. hotels, attractions, transport system); events; festivals; management quality; workforce skills; government policy etc. The capital of Gauteng, Johannesburg, offers a good nightlife experience at bars, casinos, cinemas, township venues and nightclubs. It also offers an assortment of restaurants (formal and informal dining) from fine dining to fast food. While **inherited resources** comprise the flora, fauna, climate and scenery, to mention a few. Johannesburg's climate (sunny and dry) is perfect for its great sidewalk café-culture and outdoor corporate event activities. **Heritage sites** are also a significant tourist attraction for MICE attendees, benefitting the country and provinces (Mudzanani, 2017:4). SA offers eight world heritage sites for corporate event attendees to view and experience as part of their MICE event or during pre- and post-tours. These include: the Cradle of Humankind situated in Gauteng (second most visited); Robben Island (the most visited); the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park; the Vredefort Dome; Mapungubwe Cultural Landscape; the uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park; the Cape Floral Kingdom; and the Richtersveld Cultural and Botanical Landscape (Mudzanani, 2017:2).

Furthermore, SA's corporate events industry supports **voluntourism**, and this refers to corporate attendees generously providing their time to work for international development programmes and other similar organisations, for a good cause. Voluntourism can help to satisfy key conservation and community needs and is currently one of the fastest-growing business travel trends. In SA conservation projects such as working with endangered animals is both striking and very satisfying. Other Gauteng voluntourism options range from applying skills to HIV/AIDS volunteer work to paying to be a helper at a lion research facility (Gauteng Tourism Authority, 2019b:internet). Another benefit is **greater income opportunities** in Gauteng and SA, the general day-to-day expenditure of corporate tourists are more than leisure tourists irrespective of their length of stay, which is usually shorter than leisure travellers (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:500).

Seeza Destination Network is a business acquisition and sharing network of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the SA tourism industry. According to the director, Septi Bukula, there are many **opportunities for SMEs in the** SA business tourism/ corporate events industry. The SME opportunities in SA MICE include entertainment; venues; security services; accommodation; airport transfers; medical assistance; branding suppliers; corporate event registration; catering; translation; speaker management; cleaning services; pre- and post-conference tour operators to name but a few (Javan, 2018:internet). By supporting local SMEs, i.e. local handcraft, SA and Gauteng benefit and enrich the local community and sustainability. Lately, various corporate events choose to provide attendees with a hand-made or local gift to give back to the local community. An example of this is the Event Greening Forum (EGF), a

non-profit organisation endorsing sustainability in the corporate events industry. EGF is a forerunner for SA Tourism's event greening efforts and introduced the Sustainability Village concept to the Meetings Africa show in 2017. Meetings Africa is the major marketing platform for Africa's business tourism industry (Meetings Africa, 2019:internet). The Village is a curated space for carefully chosen local (within 50km radius) black-owned SME businesses to display their handcrafted, locally made products inspired by SA heritage and culture. Instead of gifting corporate gifts to international and local hosted buyers, the Meetings Africa team give gift vouchers to them to select their present at the Village space (Meetings Africa Daily News, 2019:internet). Gauteng Tourism Authority (GTA) was established to endorse, advance, organise and enable sustainable and responsible tourism in the Gauteng global city region. The GTA aims to develop a first-class global destination that appeals to business/ corporate tourists, benefit the local host communities, improve economic growth and create job opportunities (Gauteng Tourism Authority, 2019:internet). SA improved **health services** to provide for business tourists, as the 2010 FIFA World Cup afforded the Department of Health (DOH) with the prospect to fast-track and order the advance public health care. Medical infrastructure and equipment were upgraded to benefit future travel and business tourism in SA (FIFA 2010 World Cup Legacy Audit:2011:21).

Additionally, the four aspects that influence a destination's competitiveness (referring to Gauteng) consist of economic stability, infrastructure, political stability and access (Tifflin & Balkaran 2014:433). The aspects mentioned above are explained in further detail below and applied to Gauteng/ SA:

- **Infrastructure** – most of a destination's infrastructure (in this case SA) is primarily intended for business tourists and MICE, i.e. transport; hotels; conference venues; restaurants; attractions; and communication facilities (Tichaawa, 2017:82). These destination investments, however, benefit both leisure travellers and host communities. Also, SA and Gauteng offer state-of-the-art technologies and facilities and international convention centres to cater to corporate events (Rogerson & Visser, 2007:88). Since 2010 (due to the hosting of FIFA World Cup) SA and Gauteng, underwent positive changes, which now benefits the province and country as a business tourism and corporate events destination. This includes positive service and infrastructure changes, i.e. airport upgrades; better-quality public transport systems; upgraded and advanced roads; accommodation (i.e. lodges, hotels); new iconic design venues and stadiums; and the introduction of the first high speed rail in SA, the Gautrain (Knott *et al*., 2012:119; Mxunyelwa, 2017:2). Mudzanani (2017:4) agrees that SA's strengths included its significant number of world-class business tourism infrastructure. In Gauteng, infrastructure was introduced to improve the environment before the FIFA World Cup,

the street furniture initiative, for example, was very successful, where street furniture in the inner city was replaced and upgraded, more dustbins were introduced and street lighting upgraded (FIFA 2010 World Cup Legacy Audit, 2011:39-41).

- **Economic stability** – Corporate MICE events promise better growth and a higher return on investment, as there is only one decision-maker in place for a group to travel than individual leisure travellers (Reynolds, 2007:45). Donaldson (2015:26) agrees that corporate events have a direct economic impact, as it assists in gaining entree into new technology and reinforcing previous commercial ties. Development of business tourism SMEs also contributed to a healthier economic standing (Visser, 2016:6). SA economy performs well on macro-level, providing a sound basis for all industries, including business events (Reynolds, 2007:45).
- **Political stability** – Numerous developing destinations use events as a tactical tool to attract tourism investment. This is evident in SA with its recent apartheid political history but the evolving economy. Therefore, events hold the potential of positively boosting the host destination image by increasing tourist traffic (Mxunyelwa, 2017:1). SA is more stable internationally on an economic and political level, which produces better international investment opportunities and foreign visitation (Reynolds, 2007:45).
- **Access** – During the apartheid years in SA, most of the population did not have spatial mobility; therefore, a national tourism system could not be fully developed. Post-apartheid international tourist arrivals are more than 10 million annually (Visser, 2016:3).

As pointed out in Jurakanit's (2018:18) recent study in Thailand, a corporate events destination is required to offer certain benefits, for it to be a successful business tourism destination. As per literature reviewed thus far, all of the below currently are evident in SA and Gauteng and correspond with Jurakanit's declaration: assorted venues; varied geographically isolated venues; business facilities; modern facilities; quality accommodation; telecommunications; traditional and cultural welcoming; professionalism of MICE employees; kindness towards tourists; transport networks; good air connectivity; adequate hospitality and services; stunning art and culture; infrastructure constructed by means of modern approaches and innovative technology; and financially worthwhile food and products, notwithstanding shifting political security. In the following section of the literature study, the researcher investigates previous corporate events examinations to provide an accurate overview of up-to-date literature, identify gaps in current research and highlight opportunities for new study direction within the corporate events sector.

2.6 PREVIOUS CORPORATE EVENTS RESEARCH

The researcher goes through current corporate events research with a fine-tooth comb for local (SA) and international studies.

2.6.1 An overview of previous corporate events research in South Africa

A summary of the literature shows that a minority of authors provide a comprehensive content analysis of published papers based on the topic of corporate events in SA currently. The researcher can identify nine studies within the past decade, as specified in Table 2.7 below.

Table 2-6: Summary of previous corporate events studies in SA

Author(s) & Year	Corporate Events Study Focus	Key Research Findings
Rogerson (2019)	**Past challenges** of conference industry development (in SA).	Post-apartheid SA developed into a competitive MICE destination, with ample supply of conference venues, especially in the small and medium-sized category recently. Of SA's major conference cities, only Durban provides marketing support from the municipal government. Although corporate events in SA were more successful post-apartheid, it remained the SA tourism sector's poor relation. Openings of the Durban, Sandton and Cape Town Convention Centres between 1997 and 2003 began a new chapter in developing SA's conference tourism.
Spencer & Bavuma (2018)	Identify the **DI Buyer's Day programme's economic contribution to the corporate event, exhibitors, buyers,** and Cape Town as a business tourist destination.	Exhibitors and buyers view the programme as an important platform to access future business opportunities and build their brands. Evolving entrepreneurs and creatives require additional pre-event assistance to maximise networking opportunities with buyers who view their products/ services.
Venske (2017)	**Graduate personal skills/ attributes** essential to the SA corporate event tourism management sector to grow responsive higher education qualifications.	Provides new insights into how graduates and employers observe the workplace capabilities significant to the SA corporate event tourism management sector and suggest the deeper engendering of graduate attributes in higher education curriculums for corporate event tourism education. Key corporate event workplace competencies include communication, conflict and stress management. Noteworthy graduate limitations in this field comprise a lack of stress and conflict management.
McCallaghan	Determine conference attendees' **service expectations** in relation to	The key attendee expectation is functional conference equipment; satisfactory food and beverage service; and

(2015)	the service delivered at the Quest Conference Estate (in Vanderbijlpark, SA).	hygienic, safe and secure conference environment. Attendees expected more from the actual conference service but will still attend future conferences and recommend the conference centre to others.
Tifflin & Balkaran (2014)	To examine Durban as a **conference destination**, from a demand perspective.	Attendees overall perceive Durban as a decent corporate event destination in terms of good value for money. The following facets require improvement: public transport; reception in SA; banking and access to foreign exchange; and sightseeing.
Donaldson (2013)	Aims to fill a gap IN SA's conference tourism by deliberating the experience, motivation, observation and non-conference related **experiences** of attendees. The study also determines the direct **economic advantage** of conference tourism in SA.	Countries are using the corporate events industry as part of their main tourism strategy, due to the proofed economic benefits. Due to increasing competition, corporate event host cities and countries are aware of the need to identify KSFs and attract more convention attendees and planners. Classifying destination weaknesses and strengths can inform policy managers of ways to increase their competitiveness. All attendees from the study travel to Cape Town to attend the conference only. Attendees' primary motivation for attendances are networking prospects and the appeal of Cape Town as a destination. Corporate travellers spend more money than leisure tourists. Event planners do not include enough leisure activities for attendees in order to generate interest in return visits. MICE marketing needs to be amended to propose more pre-and post-conference breakaways, for SA and Cape Town tourism to benefit more from MICE.
Fenich *et al*. (2012)	Aims to address proposed limitations by examining and evaluating corporate events **educational offerings** and programming in SA.	The research is of valuable interest to students/ academics who wish to study in the field of corporate events. SA only offers limited recognised qualifications in the field. Most SA corporate event qualifications are offered at private colleges, with only two offered at the university level. Both SA's university MICE qualifications are only presented at universities of technology (more practical and technical) in the form of diplomas. The development of event research, theory and industry growth must be applied to the increasing number of event qualifications and the amendment of current qualifications. A greater understanding of the MICE field of study could

		provide a basis for forthcoming curricular development.
Thomas (2012)	To examine **the value** of business tourism from the perspective of the value of its corporate events and improve an organisation's performance.	Event planners and attendees recognise corporate events' role as significant in terms of a prospect to obtain new opportunities and newfound knowledge for organisational performance. How an organisation's staff members affect the design of a corporate event: Event planners' actions are important in designing corporate events and the productions thereof; Human resource management seems not to impact imminent organisational performance through the environment of corporate events; Organisational function managers (other than HR) are regularly influential in who attends a corporate event and how it is designed. Variables that influence corporate event attendees' experience: Socialisation (the opportunity for behavioural transformation of attendees); event planners influence corporate event design; Event planners and attendees are conscious of the need to have strategic objectives for corporate events the inclusive, balanced scorecard of organisational strategic intent. The actions in corporate event design organisation that help to create event designs as a strategy map for knowledge that supports the overall strategic goals of an organisation - any ROI (request of information) model used for a corporate event evaluation such as this must be part of and contribute to a bigger system of overall organisational objectives. There are numerous gaps in how the corporate event knowledge value potential for improving organisational performance is accomplished.
Burger & Saayman (2009)	To identify the achievements in **managing a conference centre** (in SA).	Key achievements to manage a conference centre, includes: human resource management; providing a good layout of facilities and an assortment of activities; executing effective marketing; adequate operational aspects (i.e. high hygiene levels, good air conditioning, appropriate lighting); providing a striking venue and leading a post-conference evaluation; and directing effective corporate event planning.

Source: Researcher's compilation

Current national studies focus on the *economic contribution* of specific corporate events (Spencer & Bavuma, 2018; Donaldson, 2013). Fenich *et al*. (2012) investigate the *educational offerings* for the corporate events field within SA. While Venske (2017) examines the corporate event *graduates*, by determining which personal skills and attributes are essential to SA's corporate events industry. Furthermore, both McCallaghan (2015) and Donaldson (2013) research *service expectations* at corporate events. Thomas's (2012) research also looks at the expectations but further examines the value of corporate events and how it improves an organisation's performance. Burger and Saayman (2009) identify achievements in *managing a*

conference centre in SA. Rogerson's (2019) study takes one step back, in reviewing *past challenges* of SA's conference industry and highlighting deficiencies within the market nationally. Durban is in the spotlight for hosting some of SA's biggest international conferences, Tifflin and Balkaran (2014) scrutinise *Durban as a conference destination*, from a demand-perspective. From this overview, it is evident that current corporate events research in SA is not focusing on identifying: KSFs for corporate events management; strategic management within corporate events management; or a proposed updated guideline/ framework for best practices in corporate event management. Therefore, this study is distinct in its attempt to assess the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events and provide a proposed guideline for planning effective corporate events during the three stages (before, during and post) of a corporate event. Furthermore, a vast number of international studies focus on corporate events. A comprehensive summary of these studies is explained in the next section.

2.6.2 An overview of previous international corporate events research

The candidate researched all studies that focussed on business events, corporate events or MICE events within the past decade. Then highlighted the common research trends and topics throughout. As illustrated in Figure 2.8, there are 12 main corporate events research topics and trends represented in current international research, depicting: sustainability, destinations; attendee behaviour and decision-making; type of events; career paths; education; economy; management; globalisation; technology; site selection; and others. A chart is drawn up to illustrate these main topics through the following calculation: 82 identified studies are divided by 12 sections (main topics covered). The sum of studies per topic was calculated and presented in the form of a percentage of the total (82) studies.

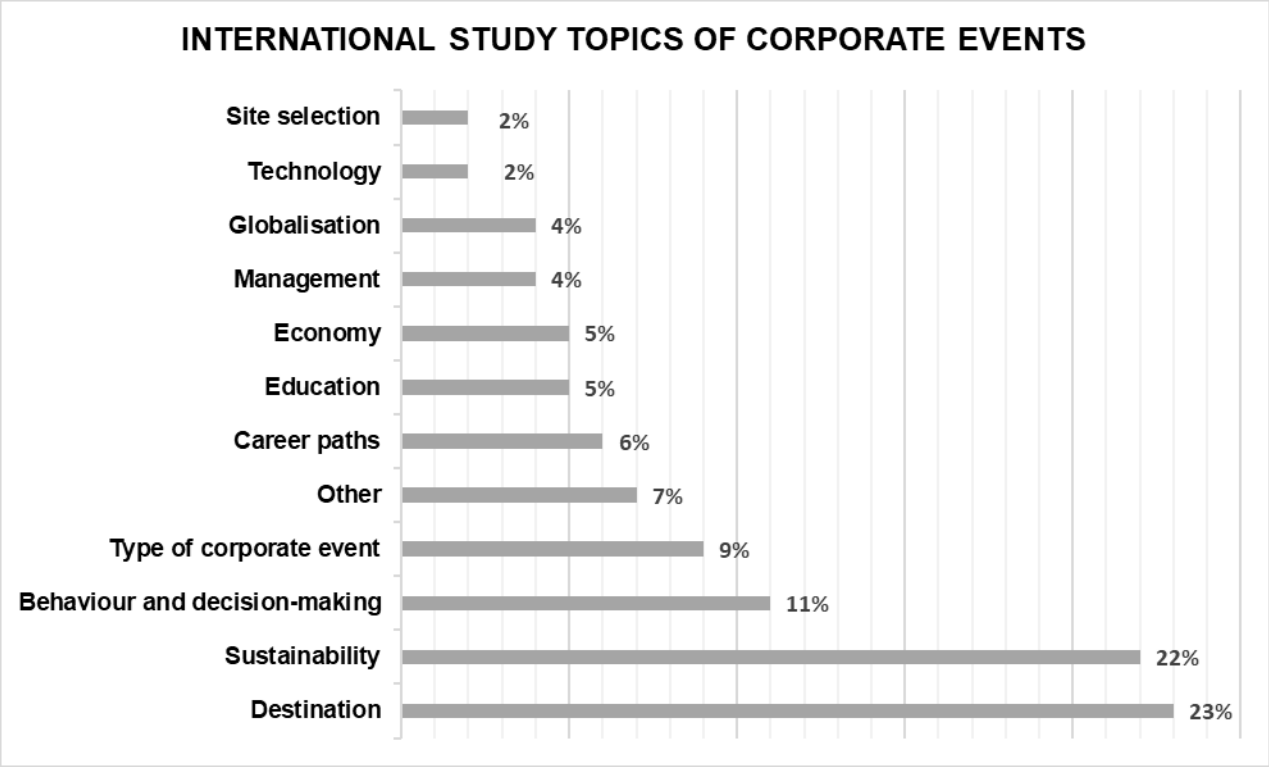

Figure 2-7: A breakdown of international corporate event study topics, from the past decade

Source: Researcher's compilation

During a critical analysis of current research (published articles and peer-reviewed literature) online, the researcher compiled a list of nine South African studies and 82 international studies, conducted on corporate events throughout the past decade. Table 2.8 below provides the reader with a comprehensive summary of each of the 82 international studies; specifying the author, the year the study was concluded, the study topic and research findings. During the intensive search, 12 main research themes were identified and gaps in current research. Moreover, throughout the research mentioned above, it is evident that too little attention to attendees' perspectives in the corporate events field is available, as highlighted by Abdullah (2011:ii). International scholarship on corporate events tourism is also growing, although it mainly focuses on contemporary challenges that face industry expansion (Rogerson, 2019:90).

The main research theme throughout is unquestionably **sustainability and greening** of corporate events (see Buathong & Lai, 2019; Devenish & Moital, 2019; Tunming *et al.,* 2019; Day, 2018; Millar & Park, 2018; Buathong & Lai, 2017; Jones *et al*., 2015; Ranacher & Probstl-Haider, 2014; Whitfield *et al.,* 2014a; Lee *et al.,* 2013; Sox *et al.,* 2013; Hamid *et al.,* 2012; Rittichainuwat & Mair, 2012; Tinnish & Mangal, 2012; Draper *et al.,* 2011; Horvath, 2011; Mair & Jago, 2010; and Park & Boo, 2010). The global corporate events sector has been a leader in adopting sustainability practices, but challenges persist (Day, 2018:5); therefore, a significant

number of corporate events studies focus on “green” corporate events and sustainability. As per Buathong and Lai (2017:15), further studies should be led on sustainable corporate event growth, emphasising corporate venues and hotels.

Another foremost research theme is **corporate event research studying a specific destination** (see Chaigasem, 2019; Tunming *et al.,* 2019; Jurakanit, 2018; Martin *et al.,* 2017; Skinner, 2017; Smagina, 2017; Khan, 2015; Seebaluck *et al.,* 2015; Mccartney, 2014; Park *et al.,* 2014; Whitfield *et al*., 2014b; Chiu & Ananzeh, 2012; Kauppinen, 2012; Sikosek, 2012; Wu & Xiao, 2012; Yang & Gu, 2012; Monge & Brandimarte, 2011; Wan, 2011; and Sanypikul & Kim, 2009). These listed studies focus on a variety of corporate event research within a destination, investigating attributes; limitations; capacity; policies; industry conversions; industry potential; service quality; attendees etc. From the in-depth review of current studies, the researcher established that most corporate events studies from the past decade, focus on the following destinations: Thailand; Israel; Indonesia; China; Bangkok; Malaysia; India; Hong Kong; and Taiwan. Therefore, it is unquestionably a trending research field in Asia, the world’s largest and most populous continent (World Atlas, 2019:internet). Another trending location for many corporate event studies is Europe (Italy, United Kingdom, Lapland, Hungary, Slovenia).

Corporate event attendee **behaviour and decision-making** criteria is also a key research theme in current corporate event studies. Chiang *et al.* (2012a) concluded a cross-cultural study of attendees to explain information searching and travel behaviour among attendees. Attendees’ socio-demographic variances are similarly explored in a study by Chiang *et al.* (2012b) later in that year. West (2017) had a closer look at how corporate events influence social culture. Wang and Lee (2011) studied attendees’ behaviour, in comparing the spending behaviour of corporate event attendees with regular tourists. Whereas, Fenich *et al.* (2014) explored attendee preferences and behaviours, focusing on the Millennials market. Mair and Thompson (2009) delved deeper into attendees’ behaviour and perspective, investigating why they attend conferences. Themes of decision making within corporate events include studies directed uniquely at factors influencing convention decisions (Mohammadi & Mohamed, 2010); proposed decision-making criteria of when to host a face-to-face corporate event (Duffy & McEun, 2010); attendees’ decision to partake in a corporate event (Skinner, 2017; Yoo & Chon, 2010); and a study explaining how attendees decide on destination attributes (Chiu & Ananzeh, 2012). Furthermore, Chiang *et al.* (2012a:i) advise that there is a shortage of inquiry of corporate event attendees' comparative information search behaviours, particularly based on their cultural background and country of origin.

Evaluating studies on meeting planner **site selection criteria**, former studies focused mainly on performance and quality of the facilities/ destination (Elston & Draper, 2012:206). Elston and Draper (2012) however found throughout their research of reviewing ample literature studies on the subject, that the size, availability and quality of meeting space/ hotel rooms are frequently found to be imperative criteria of site selection. Sirivaneepagorn's (2018) very recent research also focuses on hotel selection in the industry. The researcher found six current studies that principally focus on a **specific type of corporate event**. Vaid *et al*. (2016), as well as Lee and Joo (2015), focused their research on *exhibitions*, Kuznetsova and Silcheva (2014) studied *incentive* events, and Tanford *et al.* (2012) evaluated an international *convention*.

Furthermore, Zhong and Luo (2018), Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010), as well as Reychav (2009), studied topics related to *tradeshows*. Corporate events are the most economically beneficial form of tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:75). The tourism literature consists of extensive deliberations on how increasing convention attendee numbers at a destination underwrites the local economy (Park & Boo, 2010:95). Nevertheless, only a few researchers sought **economic effect** studies of corporate events within the past years. Researching the economic value of attendees (Hussain *et al.,* 2017), the economic impact of corporate events (Pearlman, 2016; Horvath, 2011) and the connections between convention markets and the rest of the economy (Hanly, 2012). Pearlman's (2016) study focused on globalisation practices within corporate events, which focusses predominantly on the industry's economic and political trends. **Globalisation** has been widely deliberated and written about, but tourism and hospitality literature concerning this phenomenon are scarce (Pearlman, 2016:55). Two more studies focused on globalisation within the corporate events industry. Investigating the link between globalisation and the corporate events industry which refers to the destination development (Smagina, 2017) and another to validate the strategic operation of institutional arrangements of the corporate events industry, due to international variations to advance the internationalisation of business activity structures (Smagina, 2014).

Gu (2018), Millar and Park (2018), Tang (2014) and Hsieh (2013) currently researched **education and studies** within the corporate events field. Another research trend parallel to this is corporate events **career paths.** A handful of studies fixated on the trend of corporate event graduates' different career paths (see Wang & Luo, 2018; Lei *et al.,* 2016; Ladkin & Weber, 2010; Formadi & Raffai, 2009 and Weber & Ladkin, 2009). Martin *et al*. (2017) explain how corporate event employees' skills should be improved with suitable training courses, focusing on service quality in the industry. According to Martin *et al.* (2017:13) there is a shortage of research on service quality in the corporate events sector, as most literature studies on service

quality in tourism commonly refers to hotels. Sou and Mccartney (2015) focus solely on the human resource challenges accompanying the corporate events career path.

On the other hand, Banjongprasert (2017) studies corporate event venue staff, monitoring their change-readiness capabilities and service innovation readiness -as the industry needs to be better equipped to respond to the changing trends and more innovative to deal with strong competition in the market. On the topic of innovation, interesting research topics includes a couple of studies by Kim *et al.* (2016) and Lee (2016), investigating **new technology** within corporate events. Developing technology plays a significant role in corporate events, as a key technological shift took place when augmented internet-use revolutionised corporate event tourism (Westcott, 2015a:internet). There is an opportunity for researchers to develop innovative prospects and showcase the latest developments by supporting new technology through their research. Consequently, there is a gap in current corporate event research that can be filled by incorporating new technology studies. These supposed studies may include new digital solutions that transform the industry and makes corporate events travel more streamlined.

The research by Schroeder *et al.* (2014) considers **terrorism** and crisis communication during corporate events. With only one study found focusing on this relevant global phenomenon, there is an opportunity for more research to follow converging this relevant subject. Supposed studies may investigate which corporate event countries are on high terrorism alert, how terrorism affects corporate events, corporate event destinations, corporate event venues and the decision-making process. Moreover, only three recently conducted studies focus on **planning/ strategic management** of corporate events (see Palo, 2018; Yusoff *et al*., 2015; and Locke, 2012). Nunes's (2018) study goes further by examining the negative impacts of mismanaged corporate events. Also, Funchal and Pinto's (2018) research look at successful corporate event performance and the relationship of that to corporate governance.

Table 2-7: Summary of preceding international corporate events studies

Author(s) & Year	Corporate Events Study Focus	Overview of Research Findings
Buathong & Lai (2019)	Understanding difficulties that influence **sustainable** corporate event development (in Thailand).	Private organisation and government sectors are actively promoting sustainability in the corporate events industry, but there is a need for more extensive environmental education and course curriculum.
Chaigasem	Measures taken to **convert** a historical **city into corporate events destination** (in Ayuddhaya Province, Thailand).	Proper administration in the following areas is essential: Tourist Needs identified: tourism holding capacity, area

(2019)		management, suitable usage of technology, uniqueness, historical image, and historical scenery management. Tourism Sites: Attention to be paid to tourism activity pre- and post-corporate events, conference tourism diversity, tourism extent, and the promotion of Learning Tourism. Tourism Activities: Adjustments to be made regarding staff capabilities, souvenir shops, tourist support, car rental systems, the staff members' foreign language abilities and problem-solving skills. Tourism Personnel: changes should be made to the city's political image, and a variation of platforms to be used for data inquiry (i.e. brochures, websites, information centres).
Devenish & Moital (2019)	Studies the barriers and facilitators to event **greening** within the corporate sphere.	Barriers to corporate event greening include a lack of knowledge, resources, management support and formal policies within the industry. Many barriers are interconnected, stemming from a short-term cost benefit standpoint.
Qian *et al.* (2019)	**Detecting** corporate event from the headlines and leads of **online news articles**.	Findings show that the verbal terms in online news article headlines have an important effect on identifying corporate events by refining the method's performance on Recall and F value. The approach of combining an online news article headline with its lead is a practical decision for detecting event information from massive online texts.
Tunming *et al.* (2019)	A study on the growth of potential in tourism logistics **supply chain.** The results contribute to the proposal of Khon Kaen becoming a nominated area for sustainable tourism by strengthening the domestic corporate events industry's competitive competence.	Recommendations for development guidelines: tourism logistics and transport services; integrated transport systems; innovation/ technology in public transport development; human resource development; green logistics and transport; organise boarding and landing space; improve pedestrian and bicycle paths; and add the route boards.
Day (2018)	Challenges corporate events face in their attempts to become more **sustainable**.	The study emphasised the difficulty of implementing sustainability across the corporate events system and suggested a systems-thinking, which produced significant insights, including that: Sustainability is a complex activity which requires the execution of a large number of activities at all stages of the system; Activities required to achieve sustainability are circumstantial, determined by a variety of factors (businesses, location, people, government and non-government entities); Sustainability entails enduring performance management; Distinguishing corporate events as a Complex Adaptive System reassures a dynamic approach to sustainability programs; systems approach to sustainability provides a beneficial way of dealing with the intricacy of sustainability management; Sustainability needs change through many levels of the system, and different methods must be implemented.
Funchal & Pinto (2018)	To study the relation between **corporate governance** and **corporate events' performance.**	After controlling for governance levels, corporate event measures and control measures shows comparable performance.

Gu (2018)	The introduction of corporate events as a **foundation course for universities/ colleges** (in China).	As an underpinning course for a new discipline, introducing the corporate events industry directs students to comprehend the exhibition profession better. By constantly improving and revolutionising the curriculum, students' interests will be inspired and the student–teacher interface will be promoted, further refining students' practical ability and professionalism.
Jurakanit (2018)	This study **examines the corporate events industry** (in Hat Yai district, Songkhla, Thailand).	This MICE industry's strengths are security; good quality souvenirs; accommodation; venues; food and drink; entertainment; tour operators; event planners; tour operators and transport. Areas for further MICE improvements include transportation; security and mementoes. MICE can further be encouraged by presenting development strategies and improving the MICE city quality in harmony with the Thai context.
Millar & Park (2018)	Corporate event professionals' perceptions of **sustainability** in corporate event education help educators prepare students with the required knowledge.	Professionals suggest students should learn about sustainability as a business case for corporate events, not only as a general concept. Measuring and tracing sustainable impacts of corporate events are important.
Nunes (2018)	Studies the **impact of negative corporate events** on supply chain partners.	Most supply chain partners researched suffered market value losses due to negative corporate events. Investors react negatively to announcements of negative corporate events related to a supply chain partner. Factors such as placing the partner in the supply chain, the nature of the event, and the fact of the source company itself influence investors' reaction.
Palo (2018)	To clarify the **process of planning a successful corporate event**, a case study (Situation Room).	A Situation Room corporate event was held to form business opportunities, create new networks and gain new insights for Case Company X (an international and sales-focused accelerator for innovative software companies), through a Situation room corporate event. The Situation Room was successful in gaining insights and creating great networking opportunities, the prospect of gaining new business opportunities was less successful. There is a need for the future development of the company's future corporate events, including improving the presentations, a new RSVP system, creating more business opportunities, improving the networking and better marketing of the corporate event.
Sirivaneepagorn (2018)	Foreign customers influence when selecting a **hotel for corporate events** (in Bangkok).	Selecting hotels for corporate events in Bangkok between different demographics, occupation, educational status, marital status, income status and age groups are insignificant. Females are more likely than males to make corporate event hotel selection decisions.

		Marketing mix influences when selecting a hotel for corporate events in Bangkok include promotion, price, process, physical evidence, people, place and product.
Wang & Luo (2018)	The **corporate events career path** (in China).	A wide-ranging career path exists in the corporate events industry in China. Three main types of career paths and two different kinds of promotion mechanisms are identified, which fluctuate according to the scale, type of ownership, and further organisational characteristics. A feedback mechanism, linking social community characteristics and social-world events, affects corporate event employees/ their career paths- leading to advancement in or withdrawal from the corporate events industry.
Zhong & Luo (2018)	Mechanism of **knowledge diffusion** at corporate events.	Knowledge diffuses through a mechanism that comprises knowledge adopters and knowledge suppliers. The type of information distributed at trade fairs where the temporary proximity of new professionals/ products aid as a knowledge supplier is termed “apparent tacitness”. Trade fairs are “new-oriented” communities comprising professionals in cognitive proximity. Knowledge is diffused in vertical and horizontal ways based on rigorous and varied knowledge pools/ objects.
Bandhuseve, Limnarat & Tangthong (2018)	How corporate event managers view their **organisation’s effectiveness** (in Thailand).	Variables that have a direct/ positive influence the MICE industry's organisational effectiveness include MICE organisational effectiveness (service quality, customer relationship management and capacity). Variables having an indirect influence include supplier relationship management, supply chain management, information computer technology, service quality and customer relationship management.
Banjongprasert (2017)	To study employees’ **change-readiness** capabilities and their **service innovation readiness**, responses taken from corporate event venues as an approach to address the study objectives (in Thailand).	Adaptability, collective capabilities & communication have positive relationships with service innovation readiness. A positive connection exists between innovation performance and service innovation readiness. The corporate events industry needs to be better equipped to respond to the changing trends and be more innovative to deal with strong competition.
Buathong & Lai (2017)	Supposed attributes of **event sustainability** in the corporate events industry (Thailand).	Too little existing research examines sustainable corporate event development. Future corporate event research should focus on the sustainability of hotels and venues in Thailand. Further devotion should be given to environmental education for event industry stakeholders and

		international participants in the industry. It is critical for meeting facilities to implement environmentally comprehensive practices and policies, and attendees must be mindful of these practices and policies. Meeting planners mainly look for energy efficiency, recycling and sustainable policies in venues, in order for it to be environmentally friendly. The APEX/ASTM environmentally sustainable meeting standards focus on nine distinct sustainable areas within the corporate event-planning process: accommodation; food and beverage; audio-visual; exhibits; marketing materials and communication; destinations; meeting venue; on-site office; and transportation. Thailand's private sector and government agencies drive sustainable corporate event development. However, more focus is required for: conservative standards for event sustainability; environmental education and course curriculum; enhanced knowledge and understanding of sustainable event development; budget management and related national policies. Green certification at corporate events can add value, but currently, many eco-labels are redundant, as there are too many and are all in competition with one another. The responsibility lies with corporate event marketers to educate stakeholders to strive for sustainable events. The political stability of the host nation is a significant point of deliberation for global MICE organisations.
Hussain *et al.* (2017)	Studying the **economic value and size of corporate event attendees'** market (in Malaysia).	Corporate events are a higher yield segment of the tourism sector in Malaysia (lucrative and competitive). Corporate event attendees in Malaysia spend 2.4% more than leisure tourists. In 2014 the Malaysian corporate events market created 325,437 career opportunities in the local economy. Malaysia may grow into a lucrative revenue-generating MICE destination and the Asian-Pacific and Middle East hub by 2020.
Martin *et al.* (2017)	To resolve a multidimensional problem that assesses the **service quality** of conferences hosted (at the Technical University of Loja, Ecuador in 2013).	There needs to be a stronger obligation regarding coordination between different departments so that improvements take place simultaneously. Attendees form an overall opinion of the corporate event by weighing up on an individual basis the different dimensions that make up the overall quality of the event. Corporate event employees' skills should be improved with suitable training courses.
Skinner	Studying corporate event **attendees' perceptions of conference destinations**	The conference destination is a significant inspiration in a corporate event attendee's decision to join an event

(2017)	(comparing Dublin and Cardiff)	and can also be a deciding factor not to attend (too expensive, inaccessible, unsafe or unattractive). The novelty of an unknown corporate event destination can promote and encourage attendance. The theme remains the primary consideration for attendees to join a corporate event. Corporate event attendees like to book pre- and post-corporate event breakaways; hence corporate event destinations need to be promoted accordingly to fulfil these needs. Corporate event attendees are willing to travel further away from the main conference venue to enrich their experiences (scenic, cultural etc).
Smagina (2017)	Examine the link between the corporate events industry and **internationalisation**, referring to destination development.	The public-private partnership tool can strengthen the trust between government and business representatives on the regional level.
West (2017)	To investigate whether the cash spent on corporate events has a constructive influence on the host organisation's social culture and to study the many ways in which a corporate event **influences social culture**.	Corporate events should create a striking experience and entertain attendees. Organisations should allocate suitable funds to align with the required outcomes. Technology should be used effectively to maximise the positive impacts created by staging corporate events. By applying these findings, corporate events can have a lasting and positive impact on an organisation's social culture.
Kim *et al.* (2016)	An examination of **smart beacon-based corporate event services** using "big data".	An alternative target to improve convenience for each corporate event contributor and improve the value of corporate events using big data and beacon technologies. If the results are widely used across the domestic corporate events industry, it will contribute to the virtuous cycle of value in smart corporate events.
Lee (2016)	To study consumers' decision-making processes for the use of **mobile applications** in the corporate events industry.	Multifaceted domains, including attitudinal, cognitive, motivational, habitual and emotional processes, impact customers' decision-making processes to use mobile applications in the corporate events industry. Perceived usefulness/ ease of use plays a dynamic role in MICE participants' mobile applications adoption decision formation.
Lei *et al.* (2016)	Explores the **career development paths** of (corporate) event-management graduates by linking to notions of person-job fit and the self-discovery theory.	The study outcome highlights three career development routes of former students' early years and the dominant role of an encouraging work setting as a major determinant, enforcing encouragement on former students' early career progress. Study outcomes also define the different roles of the two types of person-job fit.

		Contests faced within the early career development of corporate event planners are identified. Consequences for career counsellors, educationalists and employers are discussed.
Marques & Santos (2016)	To identify **development strategies** for corporate events in areas that are not always provided with enough attention, particularly at local and regional development policies (in Portugal).	The main measures for MICE development are better requalification and structuration of MICE facilities (i.e. hotels, venues and restaurants); primarily concerning the upgrading of service quality; better tourism activity management and resources through the existence of promotion and communication of the MICE product; participation of different agents; and enhancing the complementary tourism offering.
Pearlman (2016)	Studies **globalisation** practices within the corporate events industry (in US).	The industry's acceptance of globalisation approaches varies in scope and length of practice. The corporate events industry serves the diverse meeting requirements of people. A globalisation strategy is a rational consequence of political and economic trends where national borders are waning, consequently reducing growth barriers. The US corporate events industry is engaging in such growth strategies.
Vaid *et al.* (2016)	Studying the **dynamics** of the corporate event at the Auto Expo 2016 (in Asia).	Word of mouth and social media are the prevalent sources of circulating expo information. Attendees spend, on average six hours at the exhibition. Half of the attendees are repeat visitors, to purchase a new vehicle. Exhibitors partake in the event to showcase their offerings. Half of the exhibitors take part regularly. Noteworthy differences in satisfaction are found in the attendees categorised, based on income level, age groups and occupation. Exhibits that attract the most attention: BMW & Audi.
Jones *et al.* (2015)	A satellite account approach presents an approximation of corporate event activity's **direct economic impact** (in the UK in 2011).	Prior sections show that it is possible to refashion existing TSA frameworks and structures into a 'first-cut' meetings satellite account, with little structural alteration, Any attempt to populate reliable/ topical data is only possible by meeting with exhibitors, attendees, event planners and venues.
Yusoff *et al.* (2015)	Accomplishment in **organising a corporate event** (in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)	Accomplishment factors in organising a corporate event from event managers' perspective include venue location, code of conduct, clear objectives, financial resources, event sponsorship, promotion and marketing.
Khan (2015)	To deliberate **corporate events tourism forecasts** (in India).	Every destination is trying to develop MICE further. Most global countries recognise the monetary importance of MICE and the positive impacts on a country. MICE generates more revenue than leisure tourism. MICE leaves smaller negative impacts on host communities than do ordinary touristic activities. More countries are trying to host corporate events year-

		round to counterbalance tourism seasonality. India has great potential as a MICE tourism destination, but the country needs to develop further and promote its MICE destinations.
Lee & Joo (2015)	The effects of **exhibition service quality** on exhibitor satisfaction (in Hong Kong).	Results indicate that three proposed exhibition service quality factors expressively affect exhibitor satisfaction, and exhibitor satisfaction then leads to exhibitors' behavioural intentions.
Seebaluck *et al.* (2015)	Highlights the **characteristics** of business tourism, focusing on the corporate events market (in Mauritius).	Corporate events have the potential to generate economic benefits for Mauritius. There is more focus on corporate events at the destination marketing level as an element of MICE than the outmoded exhibitions element. Mauritius corporate events prospects include hotels with high standard services to accommodate attendees and facilities to hosts corporate events. There is a need for improved roads. Corporate events occur in a short amount of time in restricted settings which creates few economic benefits and social linkages for the host community. Corporate event infrastructure should be wary of over developing the picturesque island.
Sou & Mccartney (2015)	**Corporate event human resource challenges** (in Macao, China).	Macao needs to expand its tourism industry beyond gaming, hosting corporate events identified as one of these fundamental developing tourism pillars. There are gaps in human resources to staff this sector efficiently. Identified human resource challenges hindering the development of the MICE industry include lack of training; high staff turnover rates; high salaries; labour deficiencies; quality concerns of MICE programs; harsh imported labour policies; scarcity of skilled local labour; and the unique job requirement of the MICE industry.
Fenich *et al.* (2014)	Focusing on **preferences and behaviours of Millennials**, related to corporate events.	Millennials are impatient, and they value technological innovation and creativity at corporate events; they are very computer savvy. Corporate event planners should integrate internet-accessible activities/ programmes into corporate events. They prefer casual, structured, engaging and intimate corporate event environments. Event planners should include Millennials on planning committees and incorporate what Millennials value highly within corporate events: interactive games and education with entertainment. The preferred communication channels are e-mail communication and face-to-face communication. Providing Millennials with career networking, career coaching and job opportunities will encourage them to partake in corporate events.

Kuznetsova & Silcheva (2014)	Evaluates the historical background of the development and incentive-tourism and analyses the sustainable progress of tourism and reflects the results of practical experience of the off-site corporate event.	The study signifies modern specificity of incentive-tourism and classifies the goals and types of incentive-programs. It provides statistical data about the current state of the corporate events industry market. This paper considers the format of implementing the business activities and provides their classification according to various criteria. Attention is paid to managing and conducting off-site training seminars for specialists in the field. Subject to the analysis of the off-set events conducted, the conclusions shall be formulated and summarised for the participants and organisers of such events. The information obtained allows the gathering of positive experience and negative points for this sector's future development.
Mccartney (2014)	Further **corporate events expansion** (in Macao, China).	Corporate events need to be raised as a larger strategic partner in driving incomes. A better understanding needs to be presented on how revenue spent on the convention industry impacts hotels, job creation, casino revenues, restaurants, retail sectors, tax contributions to the Macao Government, small-medium enterprises, and other business consumption areas, i.e. audio and visual equipment and communication.
Park *et al.* (2014)	Meeting planners' observations with regard to choosing **Beijing as a global convention destination**.	Corporate event planners value the quality of convention planning assistance, city image and quality of convention services. Experienced meeting planners attach more importance to research and development collaboration opportunities as well as accommodation options. Beijing needs to improve the quality of convention services and planning aid and decrease government policies related to international conventions.
Ranacher & Pröbstl-Haider (2014)	The study is devoted to the insight of **eco-certified green corporate events** and the certification process involved (in Austria).	Mindfulness of the availability of this certification among corporate event stakeholders is low. Attendees see an eco-certified green meeting as positive and beneficial to the corporate event quality. Catering green elements raises more attention than energy efficiency and waste management. Eco-certified green corporate events are advantageous for the event manager's organisation, can be used for marketing/ image drives. Green corporate event metings are dependent on an event planner's sense of environmental responsibility (sociocultural, personal and situational factors play a role).

		Event planners perceive green corporate events as resource-intense (workload and cost). The research found that green certification only involves a small increase of workload and cost. Event facilities need to provide event planners with detailed environmental impacts and encourage eco-certification for green corporate events. Incentivising environmentally friendly travel to corporate event facilities/ venues remains a challenge (i.e. public transport, attendees driving together).
Schroeder *et al.* (2014)	Tourism **crisis communication** from the perspective of corporate event planners and attendees (surrounding the Westgate Shopping Mall **terrorism** attacks in Kenya).	Response time is important. Consistent and coordinated communication after attacks is critical. All stakeholders to be advised. A key spokesperson needs to continue to provide constant, up-to-date information personalised towards explicit stakeholder groups. Websites should be in place to update event planners during a crisis.
Smagina (2014)	To validate the **strategic operation of institutional arrangements** of the corporate events industry, due to international fluctuations to improve the internationalisation of business activity structures.	The study proposes a public-private partnership tool, which can strengthen trust between business representatives and the government at the regional level. An inclusive review of the totality of the procedures related to the regional market of business tourist, allowed to develop numerous guidelines that make it possible to achieve substantial practical results.
Tang (2014)	To construct a competence model for assessing and **educating** skilful English international professionals for the corporate events industry (in Taiwan).	Ranking essential competence indicators that are critical for English-proficient international corporate event professionals. The most important core competencies include MICE professional competence (i.e. corporate event work skills and business tourism-related knowledge); communicative competence (i.e. discourse- and sociolinguistic competence) and intercultural competence.
Whitfield *et al.* (2014a)	An **environmentally friendly review of corporate event venues** using the "Greener Venue" framework (in the UK).	Conference venue sector impacts can be alleviated by: legislative measures, operational, organisational and managerial and operational practices summarised in the proposed "Greener Venue" framework. Applying the proposed framework to UK corporate event venues discloses that most venues are eager to be more sustainable.
Whitfield *et al.* (2014b)	Presents an importance-performance study of multi-level **attributes** (event, facility, destination) assessed by exhibition attendees of a **corporate event in a "complex MICE venue"** (in mainland China, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan).	Explains the significance of various attributes considering the development of destination resorts and complex MICE venues. It highlights the significance of a face-to-face destination facility and fundamental event-related features towards determining exhibition attendance.
Hsieh	Explores the syllabus frameworks of the	Objectives proposed to the needs of the corporate

(2013)	MICE course for continuing **education**, rather than the baccalaureate program (high school program), educating the future workforce to be immediately available for the corporate events industry.	events profession includes operations-focused and planning-focused programmes. The projected curriculum frameworks provide methodical planning for corporate event programmes and propose a labour deficiency solution in the industry.
Lee *et al.* (2013)	Explored the performance and importance of 20 **green characteristics** pertinent to the corporate events industry.	Results are valuable to sustainable marketing research, convention sales managers and green quality growth for the corporate events industry. Findings show that the green industry identified attributes that are important from an event attendee viewpoint.
Sox *et al.* (2013)	Studies the importance of **sustainable apprehensions** among meeting attendees and planners at convention centres.	Planners are willing to pay more to plan corporate events at sustainability certified facilities. Attendees are willing to pay more to attend meetings at facilities with trained staff (in aspects of sustainability). There are no statistically significant differences between importance attached to sustainable issues by groups but differ based on demographic characteristics.
Strick & Fenich (2013)	**Sustainability and greening certifications** in corporate events.	Determined that while corporate event greening and sustainable certifications are credible, there is currently no instrument for event professionals to measure one certification against another. Event professionals therefore need to practise the concept of caveat emptor.
Chiang *et al.* (2012a)	A cross-cultural (English-, Japanese- and Chinese-speaking) study of **corporate event attendees** (in Taipei, Taiwan).	The primary language spoken, and country of residence are important factors in explaining the travel behaviours and information searching of corporate event attendees/ travellers.
Chiang *et al.* (2012b)	To inspect corporate event attendees' **socio-demographic and motivational characteristics**, to identify prominent market segments (in Taiwan).	Substantial socio-demographic variances are found between the segments. Three motivation-based MICE segments are recognised: education seekers, no-value seekers and value seekers. Results provide insight into corporate event attendee decision making showing the role of education, business and leisure-related motivations.
Chiu & Ananzeh (2012)	Studies the role of corporate event **destination attributes** from an attendee viewpoint on developing the touristic image (of Amman and the Dead Sea in Jordan).	Local attendees rated corporate event destination attributes higher than global attendees. Local attendees are concerned with affordability, while global attendees perceive accountability and attractions as the most significant characteristics. Females have sophisticated insights on all corporate event destination attributes. Attendees older than 60 years are concerned with attractions, accountability and accessibility. Attendees between ages 31 and 40 years embrace affordability. Attendees aged 30 years and younger rate amenities as a high priority. Bachelor's degree groups rate accessibility higher and the doctoral level group is concerned with destination attractions.

		The regression of attributes of corporate event destination on the cognitive image indicates that accountability is the most significant forecaster of the cognitive image, followed by affordability, amenities and accessibility. Amenities are the most important predictor of the affective image, followed by attraction and accountability.
Donnelly & White (2012)	This study reports on applying the **ServQual model** to a conference and hospitality venue operated by a Scottish local authority.	The study investigates distinct customer segments including meetings, performances, conferences and receptions. The expectations-perceptions gaps are assessed for these segments using the ServQual model and the size and qualifications of ServQual Gap is examined. This study approves the ServQual instruments' trustworthiness to evaluate service quality in the public sector conference and hospitality venue business. Comparative analysis of different target markets reveals variance performances by the venue in meeting the different market segments' requirements. There is a need to develop a better-shared understanding of customers' prospects between contact staff and venue managers in their key market segments.
Elston & Draper (2012)	To evaluate empirical studies concerning **meeting planners' site selection procedure**.	Each study is reviewed, and numerous elements documented to assess historical and current research regarding meeting planners' site selection criteria. Since the 1990s, the cost of hotel rooms, food and drink, meeting space and other costs have constantly been significant measures.
Hamid *et al.* (2012)	To evaluate corporate events' sustainable tourism development practices at hotel venues (in East Coast Region, Peninsula Malaysia).	Most of the MICE venues in the East Coast Region, Peninsula Malaysia hold the potential of applying sustainable tourism development practices in their day-to-day operation. Presenting sustainable development in MICE Tourism requires a constant devotion from various stakeholders (i.e. NGOs, host communities, governmental bodies and suppliers). It entails detailed investigation from political, environmental, sociological, economic, technological and cultural perspectives. Malaysia's East Coast Region perceives sustainable development as a strange/ new concept in the hotel industry, and more efforts are needed to implement sustainable development.
Hanly (2012)	Studies connections between the **convention market** and the rest of the **economy** (in Ireland).	More than two-thirds of convention disbursement is spent in sectors with above-average backward linkages. Convention spending has substantial employment-

		creating potential, as it generates 15 full-time equivalent jobs per €1 million of spending.
Kauppinen (2012)	To **attain information on conference tourism** and determine whether there is a **demand for conference packages** (in Lapland).	Developing domestic conference tourism at Pyhätunturi should take place through evolving services and securing supply during low seasons to get low-season gaps filled with corporate event attendees. Corporate event tourism does not form the most important part of their business operations. Attendees travel from all parts of Finland and stay for approximately two nights. Many organisations offer corporate event packages, built bearing in mind attendees' needs. Tourism seasons influence conference tourism. Corporate event decisions are made within a short lead time and service providers need to react speedily.
Locke (2012)	**Strategic management and planning** for the corporate events segment (in Auckland, New Zealand).	Prior MICE studies are limited in Auckland. It is a significant aspect of the Auckland tourism industry, and there are however opposing views regarding the future of MICE Auckland. MICE attendees are high-yield visitors and valuable to destinations. With limited negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts, MICE can assist in overcoming seasonality issues. MICE strengths include a good selection of venues and supportive suppliers; offers an assorted range of built and natural environments. MICE weaknesses/ challenges in Auckland include a lack of overall strategic leadership for the segment; limited teamwork between stakeholders; worldwide economic climate after the economic crisis of 2008; inadequate marketing to attract more MICE business; the geographic distance of Auckland from the large MICE-generating markets of North America and Europe. The study stresses the importance of developing a strategic plan for warranting that the Auckland MICE segment accomplishes its full potential.
Rittichainuwat & Mair (2012)	Convention attendees' perceptions regarding **green meetings** (in Thailand).	Attendees at four large corporate event venues were surveyed for their views on green meetings. Herewith the results: attendees are optimistic about green meetings; mostly attending corporate meetings and overnighting in the same hotel; recycling stationery from preceding conferences and eating home-grown food. Attendees are not keen on paying more for green meetings.

		Sponsors perceive the atmosphere of green meetings to be less striking than non-green meetings.
Tanford *et al.* (2012)	To study **convention loyalty of attendees** at a major international convention.	Factors influencing satisfaction and attendance include external activities, networking, programme, cost and location. Fulfilment surpassed motivation for destination-related qualities and corresponded with motivation for program-related attributes. Emotional commitment is found to be the strongest prognosticator of loyalty. Program satisfaction is a key determinant of intentions to return in the future or switch to a different convention.
Tinnish & Mangal (2012)	Studies the topic of **sustainable marketing** to help planners react to the challenges of producing more sustainable corporate events.	A former forestry industry marketing model can successfully be modified to create a framework for planners to build an integrated sustainable event marketing plan, focusing on the planning process, the corporate event, and communication to attendees.
Sikošek (2012)	To **research** the corporate events **industry** (in Slovenia).	The corporate events industry is underdeveloped in Slovenia. The study attempts to initiate the discussion on research in the field
Wu & Xiao (2012)	**Policies/ patterns** of the corporate events industry (in China mainland).	The government's support for the corporate events industry is limited in China mainland. The industry is also neglected in state-level planning. Corporate event policies/ regulations are made individually by local governments (Beijing, Hangzhou, Dalian etc.). A unified administrative authority is deficient, which cripples further development. More support is essential to support the SMEs/ young enterprises in the corporate events industry. The administrative style of the corporate events industry is engraved with the planned economy.
Yang & Gu (2012)	To identify the optimum corporate events **capacity** (in Las Vegas).	The cost of the over-capacity is greater than the cost of under-capacity. Las Vegas will experience severe over-capacity from 2010 to 2014.
Abdullah (2011)	Evaluate the possibility for **Saudi Arabia to become a global conference destination**.	Saudi Arabia faces problems such as fears of over-dependence on petroleum price and output, rising unemployment and a rapidly growing population. The country seeks new sources of national revenue and employment opportunities. Overall evolving an international conference sector is measured an appropriate way to meet the current local and global requirements to change, and the challenges

		these present.
Draper *et al.* (2011)	To compile a list of **sustainable practices at convention facilities** and assess these items' importance to meeting planners.	Recycling is seen as the most important factor. There are noteworthy differences between third-party and association meeting planners' levels of importance in energy efficiency, recycling and water resources. Length of being a certified meeting planner did not relate to the importance of sustainability practices. Females place more value on energy certification programs and capture separate organic waste for composting than males in the industry.
Horvath (2011)	Studying **the economic impacts** of conference tourism (in Siófok, Hungary).	From the local entrepreneurs' perspective, conference tourism upsurges taxis, food and beverage wholesalers, wineries, cafés and restaurants. Corporate event baked goods are ordered from local bakeries. However, greengrocers, beauty salons, hairdressers, health and fitness centres do not have direct business connections with conference venues. From hotel and restaurant experts' perspective, corporate events surge whole-year employment, increase local government income, increase profits of local enterprises and suppliers, and increase the number of touristic products that have been successfully sold are the most significant economic effects of corporate events tourism. Satisfied attendees may return during their holidays with their friends or families. The local community's perspective: corporate events grow employment data, increase tax incomes of the local governments, and increase restaurants' quality. On a negative note, they perceive corporate events to worsen traffic, cause overcrowding and increase services/products' prices.
Monge & Brandimarte (2011)	Describing an ongoing effort to foster corporate events tourism (in Piedmont Region Turin). To gather some preliminary results to show the significance of the initiative and to gather political support.	Results were positive. Future questionnaire designs need to be improved/ more specific. Different reviews should be carried out with participants, local PCOs and event planners, as they all have different aims. More emphasis needs to be placed on comprehensive questions regarding specific points that require improvement.
Wan (2011)	Evaluates the **weaknesses and strengths of Macao** as a corporate events destination.	Strengths include strong government support; have passionate locals working within the industry; adequate entertainment, hotel and convention facilities; and as a location, it connects the East with the European

		countries. Weaknesses include a limited capacity of the border gates; poor transportation and infrastructure; poor business climate; a shortage of human resources; a lack of attractions; a deficiency of legal regulation to coordinate the industry; and absenteeism of an industry base.
Wang & Lee (2011)	Studies the **difference** in inbound tourism expenditures between **conference and regular tourists** (in Taiwan).	The highest expenditures for both groups are on accommodation, transportation and shopping. Daily expenses for corporate event attendees higher than regular tourists. Situational factors play an important controlling role between the regular and conference tourists' shopping expenditure. Time constraint limits the spending power of the corporate event attendees.
Duffy & McEuen (2010)	To streamline the decision-making process by recommending a set of decision criteria for when an investment in large group **face-to-face corporate events** will have the greatest impact.	Face-to-face corporate events/ meetings are favoured above virtual meetings. It is the best option when an organisation needs to focus attention on a new or changed relationship, strategy, or product and build a positive emotional climate that influences decision-making and performance and inspires attendees. It builds strong relationships. It is the only option for festivity and acknowledgement rituals that brightens the human spirit and shape the organisation's cultural norms.
Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010)	To explore essential factors that will shape the future of **trade shows** as a **marketing instrument**.	Three distinct scenarios were recognised. Each shows a different level of importance for tradeshows as a marketing tool in the future. None forecasts that tradeshows will be totally substituted by other means, but all the scenarios predict an extremely competitive market for future tradeshow planners.
Ladkin & Weber (2010)	Examines the challenges, career paths and inspirations of exhibition and convention industry professionals (in Asia).	There is no explicit career path into the corporate events industry. Experience is generated in a diversity of sectors and mainly grown in sales, management and marketing roles. Professionals face many challenges (customer-related, environmental, job demands) and demonstrate a high career commitment level.
Mair & Jago (2010)	Inspects the procedure of **greening** within corporate events and proposes a general conceptual model to support the process.	The universal model can be applied to many industry sectors. The model-specific to corporate events may be used to reinforce future research in this area.
Mohammadi & Mohamed (2010)	Aims to gain an improved understanding of **convention decision-making** components by studying previous convention decision-making models.	Factors influencing convention decision-making are location, cost, conference factors and personal/ professional factors, from the attendees' perspective.
Park & Boo (2010)	Assesses the **environmental position of the convention industry** (in the USA).	Frames recommendations for future green corporate event concepts, comparing the attitudes, perceptions and social goals of convention stakeholders (attendees,

		planners, suppliers). This study identifies the grave problem of insufficient understanding of convention activities' environmental impact and the lack of familiarity concerning ecological convention practices. Environmental impact awareness among stakeholders differs depending on which environmentally friendly practices are available to each group.
Yoo & Chon (2010)	Examines whether factors, that may affect potential attendees' **convention-participation** decision, change over time.	The following affect convention-participation decisions: safety and health situation, networking opportunities and travel ability.
Formadi & Raffai (2009)	Reveals what the corporate events industry perceives as the necessary **aptitudes, skills and capabilities** essential **for successful event managers** (in Hungary).	The nature of the work is based on the trust of the event manager and the client. The event-management sector recently showcased an entrepreneurial competence (more flexibility and independence and additional occupational control over the work). Event-management work involves training and formal education. Event-management work requires innovation, delegation, negotiating, merging teamwork and individual decision-making processes. The occupational socialisation procedure is supported by the affiliation of corporate event-related associations and develops in the workplace. In Hungary, professional associations promote the field and work out monitoring systems for corporate events and for event organisations. The professional associations are also creating aptitude standards for event management, stressing the importance of ascribed professional educational programmes. Corporate event management is now being recognised in Hungary as a professional field. Not all corporate event service providers deliver a high-level quality of service and certified knowledge. Corporate event management is still in the process of constructing quality guidelines and aptitude standards.
Mair & Thompson (2009)	Investigating **attendees' perspective on attending a conference** (in the UK)	Fundamental dimensions of the association conference attendee decision-making process include networking prospects; location; professional/ personal development; time; cost; convenience and wellbeing/ health. Cost and networking prospects are significant forecasters of intention to attend future conferences.
Reychav	To examine a ground-breaking model of	Knowledge sharing plays a vital role in trade shows. It is

(2009)	**knowledge sharing** that empowers learning during **trade shows** (in Israel).	the main process which nurtures learning of customers and suppliers alike.
Sangpikul & Kim (2009)	**Barriers** affecting the corporate events industry (in Thailand).	Barriers identified include human resources; obtainability of industry information; political unpredictability; corporate events infrastructure (i.e. transportation, venues) and industry cooperation. Recommendations are made to increase competitiveness.
Weber & Ladkin (2009)	The relation of **career anchors** with significant demographic variables and job specifics of exhibition and convention industry experts (in Asia).	For most exhibition and convention industry experts, the lifestyle anchor is the most dominant. Multiple career anchors guide a great number of corporate event experts' career decisions. Differences in ratings for various career anchors are identified in terms of gender, age and job superiority.

Source: Researcher's compilation

The summary of previous international corporate events research (Table 2.8) completes this chapter, and this current research study of KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events will add value to the little research available on the subject matter.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter aimed to examine business tourism, event tourism, corporate events and MICE. The study revealed that events are classified into different categories, each with its own goals and objectives. Business tourism activities can be traced back to BC's time, and it gradually developed throughout the ages with humankind (Kruger, 2006). The term business tourism defines individuals travelling for business purposes, and it may also include an element of leisure time. South African business tourism influences and motions are undeniably under-researched (see Rogerson 2005; 2015a; 2019). From viewing current statistics, it is evident that SA's business tourism is undergoing experiencing a slight dip (Statistics SA, 2018). Corporate events form part of business tourism and the focus of this study, within SA and Gauteng. The acronym "MICE" (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions), as well as terms "meetings industry" and "events" industry, are most often used to refer to corporate events in SA. It is a well-structured industry combined with buyers' combination (Rogers, 2003) and suppliers (Rogers, 2008).

It is indisputably evident that the hosting of corporate events makes a valuable contribution to developed and developing countries such as SA. Their potential to generate economic value, improve city infrastructure, employment and grow business tourism should be reason enough to back and promote them. Although corporate events are said to be the most economically beneficial form of tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001:75), it also shows definite signs of social and cultural impacts (Sweeney & Goldblatt, 2016) as well as environmental impacts (May, 1995; Harris & Huyskens, 2002; Lee *et al.*, 2013; Whitfield *et al*., 2014a). Event planning should be sustainable towards the impacts mentioned above. The detailed challenges that Gauteng and SA face in the corporate events industry need to be recognised and minimised. Stakeholders need to focus on the various benefits of corporate events in Gauteng and SA and plan to increase the success rate of corporate events in this destination.

The first study objective was to evaluate events and specifically the corporate events industry. Herewith a comprehensive literature analysis followed. The first objective was, therefore, successfully met by concluding Chapter 2. There is only a handful of current corporate event studies in SA. The main international research themes of corporate events currently entail research concerning: sustainability; explicit destinations; decision-making/ behaviour; site selection; and different corporate events. Other recent research trends include corporate events and its economic effect, globalisation, education and studies, career paths, new technology, terrorism and planning/ strategic management. A certain prerequisite is established for further research in SA, assessing the key success factors for corporate events' strategic management, from a supply-side perspective. The following chapter examines strategic event management and the KSFs thereof in a detailed theoretical overview by means of a literature review.

CHAPTER 3: A LITERATURE OVERVIEW OF THE KEY SUCCESS FACTORS (KSFS) IN STRATEGIC EVENT MANAGEMENT

If you don't know where you are going, you will probably end up somewhere else. ~ Laurence J Peter

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous literature review chapter examined business tourism, event tourism and corporate events. This was done in order for the reader to conceptualise a better understanding of the corporate events industry. This chapter explores the Key Success Factors (KSFs) of strategic event management through a literature study; to ultimately reach the research purpose – to assess the KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events. "The human desire to meet and exchange ideas, the basis of conventions and meetings, is as old as humankind." (Horvath, 2011:75.) As the events sector grows, event management comes under the spotlight; therefore further improvements and more research within the event-management field are necessary (Leigh, 2019:59). Marais (2016:28-29) agrees by clarifying how, due to the rapid growth of the business tourism industry, corporate events are playing a progressively important role in destination development; therefore effective event management is significantly more important. Nowadays there are numerous studies on MICE events, the management of exhibitions, congress management, trade fair development, festival management, event budgeting, event financing, and events bidding, to name but a few. The field of events is growing in diverse areas, such as credential, academic, qualification and knowledge transfer (Damm, 2012:8). Nevertheless, according to Goldblatt (2000:2) "the rapid growth of the event-management profession has produced a climate that is confusing, lacking in credibility compared to other professions, and perhaps detrimental to its future long-term health".

Hence, this study and chapter aims to conceptualise events with a specific focus on corporate events. Various terms used throughout the research are defined and explained in detail, which makes this research easier to understand and analyse. Furthermore, this chapter identifies numerous research findings on best practices identified within the business tourism academia. This study is presented from the management discipline, and event management is primarily discussed, followed by strategic management. Identifying KSFs is documented as an important principle in the strategic management of corporate events (Nieh & Pong, 2012:424); thus they are examined briefly. An investigation is done to locate previous research on KSFs in the tourism industry, and the studies found are listed in Table 3.5 as groundwork for Chapter 3. This

chapter's focus is specifically on how the effect of identifying the KSFs perceived by event planners of corporate events can be used to draw up guidelines for best practices in strategic event management. Serving as an introduction to the topics discussed in this chapter, the first section provides insights on event management.

3.2 THE SPOTLIGHT ON EVENT MANAGEMENT

Event management is a field of industrial practice, including the coordination and organisation of activities required to achieve event objectives (Abson, 2017:404). To manage a successful event, planning is the highest priority (Saayman, 2001a:125). The event-management task can be emotionally and creatively rewarding for event planners; nevertheless, the process must be approached from a business perspective, as management is an obligatory business administration function in any field of expertise (Silvers, 2010b:50). Event managers, planners and designers are the people that are responsible for working determinedly to create and manage the best experience for attendees, guests, stakeholders and sponsors (Bosch, 2018:95; Getz & Page, 2016:596). These mentioned role-players represent event management, fundamental to how events are planned and hosted (Getz & Page, 2016:596). This study must understand the part event management plays in the corporate event and business tourism landscape.

Decision-makers from emerging countries worldwide are gradually embracing the benefits of event tourism and practising event management for their economies (Manners, 2014:1). Furthermore, event management is fuelled by enhanced teamwork and education. This is only possible when experts, event planners and academicians work closely together in researching improved event-management practices (Ismail, 2014:4). Their partnership will help the event-management field realise its potential, which is needed for optimal success; this is the principal motivation for this study, which aims to improve event management understanding. Event management refers to the multifaceted task of developing, organising, supervising, and evaluating planned events (de Klerk, 2013:18; Silvers & Nelson: 2013:internet). The following section defines event management and outlines the cataloguing thereof in further detail.

3.2.1 Definitions, classification and advantages of event management

A good understanding of the word **event** has been established in the previous chapter (Chapter 2). While an event is taking place or an occurrence at a certain place and time (Getz, 2012:37), the act of managing, on the other hand, is the act of one conducting or supervising an activity (Merriam-Webster, 2019:internet). Management is derived from the Latin word “manidiare”,

originating from the Latin word “manus” (fist, team, hand) (Damm, 2012:7). Management denotes the process of applying accessible human resources and material to achieve the chosen objectives (Bosch, 2018:95-96). Henri Fayol (1916), cited by Damm (2012:7), originally defined the five principles of **management** in business as planning, organising, leading, co-ordinatiing and monitoring in an organisation productively together. Since the early 1950s until presently, joining the words “event” and “management”, the budding profession of event management developed (Damm, 2012:8). As a specific field of study associated with tourism, recreation and leisure studies worldwide, event management was established educationally as a specialised academic program in higher education at universities in the 1990s (Venske, 2018:79). Currently event management is known as the **specialised practice** of designing, producing and managing planned events, such as entertainment; festivals; recreational-; sport, corporate, art, and private events (van Veenendaal, 2017:4).

Page and Connell (2009:642) describe how event management is a hands-on approach to formulating planned events. With clear goals in mind, the process consists of a **combination of actions**, which includes planning, leading, costing, venue selection, staging, logistics, risk management, marketing, human relations, evaluation, and working close-knit with public facilities, stakeholders, vendors and government administrators (Allen *et al.,* 2008:160; Bosch, 2018:95-96; Getz, 2007:13; Ismail, 2014:13; Manners, 2014:40; Manners *et al.,* 2015b:63; Okoli, 2012:28). Manners (2011:21) adds that it is key to contemplate the atmosphere and impression created for event attendees alongside these actions. These actions are also based on project management methods and event marketing principles (Ismail, 2014:13). From the actions mentioned above, it is evident that the event-management task is a composite process, with an assortment of factors requiring to be managed. Conferring, Tassiopoulos (2000:40) states that “event management is designed to manage or control event resources on a given activity, within time, cost and performance requirements”. Events are also delicately crafted experiences, aimed to impact attendees. Event management consequently points toward **managing of an experience** (Silvers, 2004:3). Page and Connell (2009:642) explain that event management refers to “the practical aspects of preparing for and staging an event”. Therefore event management indicates the creation of events (Singh, 2009:97). Event management is further defined as the process of planning that provides event planners with a **best-practices guideline** to successfully plan and manage an event (Akram, 2017:6). It is also an established business practice that encompasses the organisation and management of numerous activities to achieve event aims (Abson, 2017:404). It is an extremely competitive industry, in which innovation and creativity are continually growing; therefore sound performed event management is critical (van Veenendaal, 2017:5).

Steyn *et al*. (2014:1498) highlight seven **main management functions** in event management**,** each associated with its own competence, as outlined below:

1. *General management* – the capability to plan long- and short-term, control, organise and lead;
2. *Marketing management* – here one establishes a marketing mix, a trademark and promotions, and develop a marketing plan;
3. *Financial management* – includes diligent financial planning, the examination of financial statements, auditing and the regulation of financial sources;
4. *Human resource management* – directing of workforce planning, job analysis and performance management. As well as inducting, motivating and managing (the diversity among) personnel;
5. *Administration* – here verbal as well as non-verbal communication plays an important role. Furthermore, also the management of meeting requests, stress, time, information, risk and ethical behaviour;
6. *Operations management* – the management of concessions, signage, communication, maintenance, house-keeping, parking, traffic, security and safety. It also includes well-planned scheduling; and
7. *Legal aspects management* – managing of contracts, assembling of policies, and solving legal issues by comprising knowledge of legal aspects.

There are numerous advantages brought forward by practising well-planned and ethical event management. Akram (2017:4), de Klerk (2013:24-25) as well as Shone and Parry (2004:2), refer to the following benefits:

- successful events *attract more attendees*;
- event planners can *save valuable time* by practising successful event management;
- the event-management industry offers ample *job opportunities;*
- it can improve a location's *social development*;
- it provides *educational growth* opportunities;
- vast *economic development* globally is evident due to successful event management;
- *a positive impact on society and the environment* is evident; and
- the progress of successful event management around the world might be an outcome of the *change* in modern business, and the shift has caused business practices to be managed and run as projects to cope with the change.

Now that the meaning of the word "event management", its management function and benefits are better understood, an explanation follows the influence of project management within event management and where the event-management approach originated.

3.2.2 Background of event management

Event management is linked to project management, as it is inclined to use numerous processes from the project management field (de Klerk, 2013:27), as explained below.

3.2.2.1 The link between project management on event management

Event management information is scarce (van Veenendaal, 2017:5). According to Tum *et al.* (2006:xxi) every event is a project. Therefore the literature on the subjects of both project management and operations may be applied to event management. Consequently, the following paragraph includes understanding project management, which can be useful to event management. Event management is closely related to project management, based on the similar concepts practised in both fields (Manners, 2014:40). The variance is only in the framework, as with event management, planners bring together the perceptible components to produce an imperceptible event experience (Silvers, 2010:50). According to Ismail (2014:13) the main similarity between an event and a project is that both have a goal and purpose. The author explains how the strong marketing element (platform to attract clients), that event planners need to adhere to, differentiates events from projects. Before the event-management process is discussed in further detail, it is imperative to first comprehend the project's connotation in context with project management.

A project is a pre-arranged set of organised tasks to be accomplished within a specific budget, detailed timeline and other restrictions (Business Dictionary, 2019a:internet). Event management's background originated from project management, based on the specific concepts practised in event management (Ismail, 2014:13). Already from the early 1950s, authors defined project management. An upright definition is that of Munns and Bjeirmi (1996), cited by van Veenendaal (2017:6), describing project management as "the process of controlling the achievement of the project objectives. Utilising the existing organisational structures and resources, it seeks to manage the project by applying a collection of tools and techniques, without adversely disturbing the routine operation of the company".

Moreover, the Project Management Institute (PMI) (2019:internet) and de Klerk (2013:27) define a project as temporary, with a distinct scope and resources. It is also unique, with a specific set of processes designed to achieve a specific goal. In project management, one uses tools, project activities, procedures and skills to meet the project requirements. As illustrated in Figure 3.1 below, the Project Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) approved an international **standard project management process** consisting of five steps: planning, i.e. initiating; planning;

executing; monitoring and controlling; and closing (de Klerk, 2013:27-28; PMI, 2019:internet). Throughout this process, project management knowledge **draws on ten areas**, which includes integration; scope; time; cost; quality; procurement; human resources (HR); communications; risk management; and stakeholder management (PMI, 2019:internet). This process can confidently be implemented for successful event management.

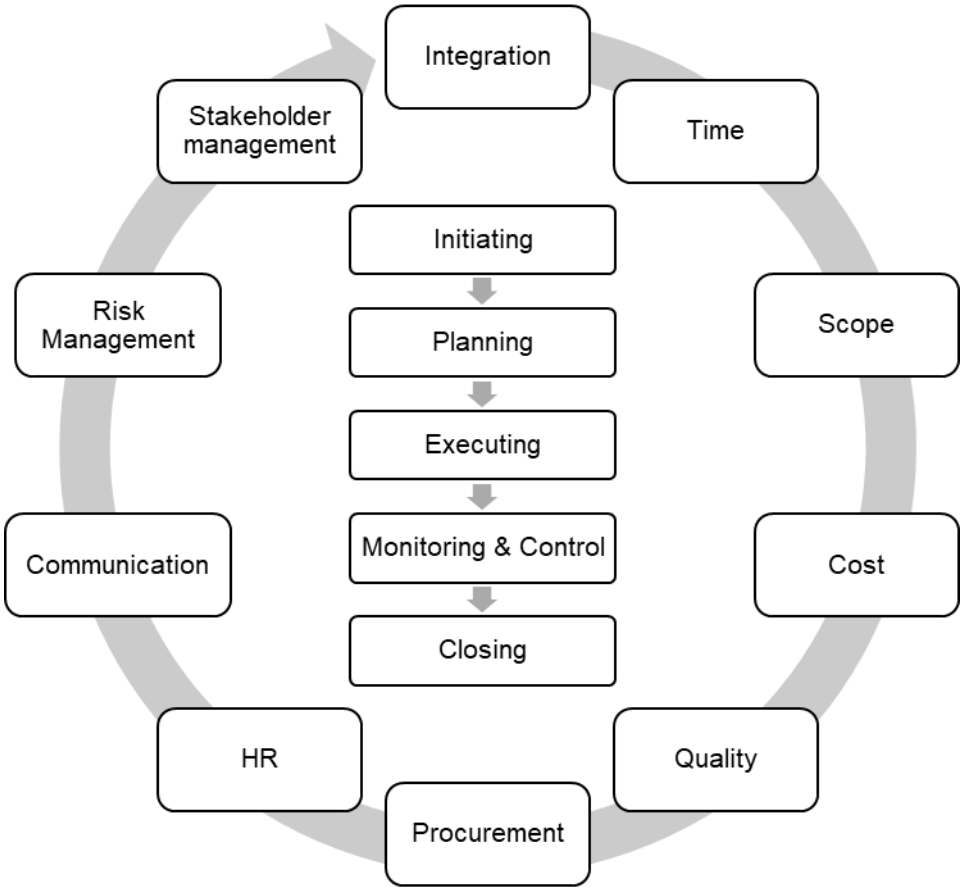

Figure 3-1: The project management process and ten areas around it that project management draws on

Source: Adapted from Bowdin *et al*. (2006:265), de Klerk (2013:27-28) and PMI (2019:internet)

Bowdin *et al.* (2006:267) and de Klerk (2013:31-32) highlight the following latent **benefits** event planners can gain, while **using project management** skills for events management processes:

- project management is a *logical process*, that may assist in improving future events;
- a *team* and *methodical process* is mandatory, this requires planning, monitoring and controlling of event responsibilities, which can increase the success rate of events;
- affording all stakeholders with clear *roles and responsibility*, is an important management area in project management;
- the process provides a system that allows for *future training and development* of the team;

- it forms a *framework* or checklist for event planning and can be utilised multiple times, for any event;
- *common management terminology* is used throughout, to be understood by all;
- the entire management team is *supportive* of the cause;
- the event offers *clear communication* lines;
- a clear *scope* will be defined for all stakeholders to monitor; and
- event stakeholders comprehend the event *objectives*.

Some authors and **researchers are sceptical**, with different opinions about the role of project management in event management. Nowadays, where event management is becoming more intricate, planners turn to project management guidelines to provide a systematic procedure (Ismail, 2014:13). This is currently executed in a jerry-rigged manner, as some large events are enthusiastically using a project management system, whereas smaller events use selected oddments of planning processes (Ismail, 2014:13). In O'Toole's (2000:1-12) article on the incorporation of event management by project management procedures, event management's structural framework is more entrepreneurial than project management. In event management, it is important to meet deadlines and respond to changes within a fast turn-around time. The latter entails diverse aspects, such as the competence to make swift and wise decisions which involve painstaking knowledge/experience, also a specific skill set, which entails the competence to communicate decisions and follow through on these choices during implementation; with a sound delegation and leadership accountability (van Veenendaal, 2017:5). Although several advantages are mentioned, there is reasonable doubt about implementing event management based on a project management process. Nevertheless, only as little as 25 years ago did academics collectively start to research improved event-management practices; therefore event management is perceived as a newcomer in the social sciences field (Damm, 2012:9; de Klerk, 2013:18; Ismail, 2014:3). A summary of the history of event management is discussed next.

3.2.2.2 A brief history of event management

Cristea (2012:178), Reynolds (2007:7) and the LocalHop (2018:internet), a popular events application in the United States of America (USA), outline the evolution of event management in a nutshell as follows: During the **ancient Egyptian period** Cleopatra was the first known event planner in history; she hosted sumptuous meetings in pursuit of romantic partners. Back then, communication was time-consuming and restricted – only possible by means of free labour (servants). With popular musicians and glamorous costumes, extravagant events continued throughout the medieval period and **French Revolution** where wealthy aristocrat females (i.e.

Marie Antoinette, Madame Pompadour the mistress of King Louis XV of France) were responsible for event management. During the Industrial Revolution, with amplified manufacturing businesses and a stronger global economy, meetings and events grew beyond get-togethers for the royal and wealthy into business event management. During this era, there was more money to spend on events, and new transportation systems were invented to assist in event logistics. **Currently**, with the introduction of technology such as the internet and electronics (mobile phones, and Garmin), communication has become more mobile, faster and streamlined.

Johnson (2007:5) explained that event management was only documented as an actual occupation in America as late as 1972, and the International Special Events Society (ISES) was only established as late as in 1985, numerous years after that. Due to SA's political unrest, the SA chapter of ISES was only established in 1995; providing the SA events industry with growth. Primarily global event-management trends were formally investigated by Getz and Wick (1994), with the ensuing outcome:

> Event practitioners belong to a new and rapidly growing career field. As with other emerging quasi-professions, the managers, marketers and coordinators occupying full-time positions have organised professional associations and are seeking certification. Those wishing to enter the field look to the associations, and increasingly to formal educational institutions, to provide appropriate certificates, hopefully ensuring access to better jobs. Consequently, the situation is somewhat unclear and continuously evolving.

Manners (2011:2) echoes how event management over the first decade of the 21st Century has grown aggressively, along with its professionals and suppliers. Within this growth spurt, tourists certainly signify a potential market for planned events. Tourists are motivated to travel for this industry; therefore most destinations focus on planned events and the event management (Getz, 2007:403). Getz and Wicks (1994:108) clinched their investigation by stating "…there are clear technical skills for event management, but less convincingly can there be said to exist theories of event management".

Although many disciplines and fields of study should be contributing to event studies, a review of research reveals a heavy concentration of studies based on economics and management (Getz 2000:13). Perry *et al.* (1996) cited by Damm (2012:9), led a research project at the Australian Events Conference. The research results acknowledged ten conversant qualities and areas essential for an effective events industry, namely project management, human resource management, time management, budgeting, business planning, networking, marketing, attaining sponsorship, and contingency management. The researchers then further categorised the proposed qualities/ skills into five main areas to form a knowledge base for future event

planners: finance/ legal; management; marketing/ public relations; analytical/ economic; and ethical/ contextual. Other essential characteristics for successful event management include flexibility, vision, leadership and organisational skills (Damm, 2012:9). Although event management is widely practised globally and has evolved immensely over the past decades, the question remains: is it a documented professional field? The following section addresses this issue.

3.2.3 Event management as a recognised professional field

As stipulated by Nelson and Silvers (2009:32):

> …the professionalisation of a field is an indication of its growth and maturity. What was once the purview of independent "party planners" with degrees in various fields, none of which included event management appears to become professionalised.

During the following sections of the literature review, the researcher will attempt to detect whether event management is a recognised profession by looking into the educational requirements, career paths and requirements in event management as a recognised profession.

3.2.3.1 Event-management educational requirements

As illustrated in Figure 3.2, the researcher decompartmentalised the event-management educational requirements into four parts, including formal education; practical training and experience, and skills and leadership. Each requirement is described in further detail below.

Figure 3-2: Preferred event-management educational requirements
Source: Researcher's compilation from the literature review

Leadership aptitudes

Abson's (2017:405) research confirms that the most anticipated **personality attributes** event managers require are high enthusiasm, motivation, dynamism, creativity, obligation, precision, resourcefulness, flexibility, openness, reliability, maturity and compassion. Nevertheless, ultimately **leadership** is a crucial element of event management (Abson, 2017:404). It is critical for event managers to be qualified, knowledgeable and always show a high level of professionalism (Phat, 2014:2). For event managers to practice **leadership skills**, they require first-rate knowledge of their level of expertise, responsibilities, strengths and weaknesses; their colleagues' weaknesses and strengths, and different leadership methods (Abson, 2017:405-406). As stipulated by Leigh (2019:29) "management is about operationalising work, while leadership is about creating a vision and inspiring others to pursue". Leadership is known as the primary required skill for event managers, as they need to understand and develop human capital efficiently (Abson, 2017:404). Event managers head up complicated, creative, energetic, or stakeholder-reliant events by practising successful leadership and vision (Abson, 2017:404). The three identifying leadership tasks of management include encouragement for stability, problem-solving, and endorsing creativity vision and change (Leigh, 2019:29). Because events are temporary, errors during an event can rarely be remedied and have major aftermaths; therefore event managers need to be engaging, lead the team and alter circumstances to have strong decision-making skills to embrace a creative vision (Abson, 2017:404-405). Bladen *et al.* (2012), cited by Abson (2017:404) adds that goal-oriented **leadership** is not pertinent in the

event-management sector, as events mostly take place in an unstable environment (temporary and intangible). Moreover, Abson's (2017:403) research, by analysing data using ranking lists and thematic analysis, recognised six **significant leadership practices** essential for the development of successful event planners/ managers, namely: resource management; strategic standpoints; emotional flexibility; engaging communication; critical examination and judgement; as well as interpersonal compassion. On the other hand, Goldblatt (2005), cited by Leigh (2019:57), highlights the three prominent leadership styles in the context of event managers as democratic (self-governing), autocratic (repressive) and laissez-faire (unrestrictive).

Formal education

Globally, tourism as a distinct area of study developed more than 40 years ago, from disciplines such as anthropology, geography, sociology, economics and linguistics (Razack, 2017:33). Well along, the study field progressed into other specialised areas, including event management. In countries such as the United Kingdom, the USA and Australia recruitment of event-management staff is done through migrant labour, due to insufficient inhabitants to staff this growing field (Marinakou, 2019:512). This is however not the case in SA. In developing countries, such as SA, government support is important to expand the event-management industry's potential (de Klerk, 2013:18). According to Tassiopoulos (2010:29) a decade ago, the SA government noticed a dire need to train event planners, attempting to transfer skills across the industry. According to Saayman (2019:123) SA is a booming global tourist destination, attracting more events to be hosted and creating further employment opportunities. With the viewpoint of SA hosting more international events and reaping the benefits thereof, it is essential to include event management in tourism curriculums. In SA, the youth event-management labour market's success is vastly inclined by social capital, education and soft skills capabilities (Venske, 2017:34). Consequently, there is an augmented emphasis on expert corporate event tourism specialists' educational growth to warrant international competitiveness in this industry (Venske, 2017:34).

At present, the Council of Events Professionals Africa (CEPA) aims to set a high standard for individuals practising within the events industry and warrants practitioners' ongoing education through a self-regulated and well controlled professional development programme (CPD). CEPA was shaped by SAACI, the International Festivals and Events Association (IFEA) Africa and EXSA (SACIA, 2018:internet). Currently, the South African academic establishments also play a vital part in developing tourism sectors such as the corporate meetings industry; "which have ushered in demand for new curriculum and skilled employees" (Thapa, 2019:30). Back in 2007, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) founded SA's first formal event-management qualification, shortly after that several national Universities of Technology (UoTs) followed suit (Venske, 2018:80). There are currently only a few standard event-management

qualifications available in SA, with most obtainable at private colleges and two at university level (diploma qualifications at UoTs) (Donaldson, 2013:34).

Therefore, formal education in the form of hospitality and tourism management is a rather new academic field in SA (Thapa, 2019:31). There might be a few professional organisations that offer voluntary event-management certification programmes, but in order to continue one's education within the event-management field, no compulsory licensing or governing requirement applies (Goldblatt, 2000:4). Getz's (2000:20) observation on the matter carries much weight, as it explains how education and research for the events industry should commence with broader management subjects and touch on all types of events before event specialisation begins. In the past, marketing, economic and tourism-related issues have dominated event-management research instead of other valuable issues such as community recognition, the value of events and social services (Getz 2000:21). Furthermore, prior management education is advisable and largely beneficial to event planners (Getz 2000:11). Steyn et al. (2014:1492) 's research highlights a significant gap between the existing event-management syllabus outcomes at South African higher education institutions and the expected skills of practising event planners and event managers. Therefore, south African Higher Education Institutions must aim to advance guidelines for event-management training at these institutions to address the proficiencies required by event managers.

Post-apartheid tourism-related qualifications have been transformed and expanded, including qualifications such as event management. Doors were also opened for previously disadvantaged students, which previously was not an engrossed government policy 1994 (Venske, 2018:81). Formerly it mainly served to develop professional skills for instantaneous employment. However, today via degree and diploma programmes, it has been extended to advance managerial capacity in numerous organisations, with admiration to the fundamental facets of hospitality and tourism and management education (Thapa, 2019:31). "Increased interest in event-management educational programming in academic, vocational, professional development and credentialing contexts has increased the need for strategies to ensure curricula parity" (Silvers, 2013:internet). Therefore a standard against which programmes can benchmark their current and future offerings, the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) was conceptualized, discussed in further detail under event-management models and frameworks in this chapter (c.f. 3.7). The proposed EMBOK framework can serve as a model for curriculum assessment and development for event-management educational programmes (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet). Event-management education should follow Getz's (2016:5) approaches from the researcher's recent work, which highlights two separate and theoretically corresponding approaches to events education, which includes:

- An *interdisciplinary* approach. Based on the academic basis of higher education, with a logical approach supported by new subject areas as well as traditional disciplines; and
- The *professional bodies* approach grounded on skills with problem-solving and factual knowledge forming the basis of the curriculum.

Employing educated event planners above experienced planners seems to be more beneficial. As per the researcher's experience, and proven by prior research, in the scenario of employing event-management graduates, over, for instance, a candidate with no formal qualification and a few years of event-management experience; the information in Figure 3.3 stands to prove that event-management graduates have more attributes to offer and can add value to the workplace. Likewise, Venske's (2017:38-39) research data show how graduates are usually higher-calibre employees, with the ability to better manage their time and stress levels. Also, graduates tend to portray a more professional nature and have ample developed personal characteristics to offer the event-management workplace.

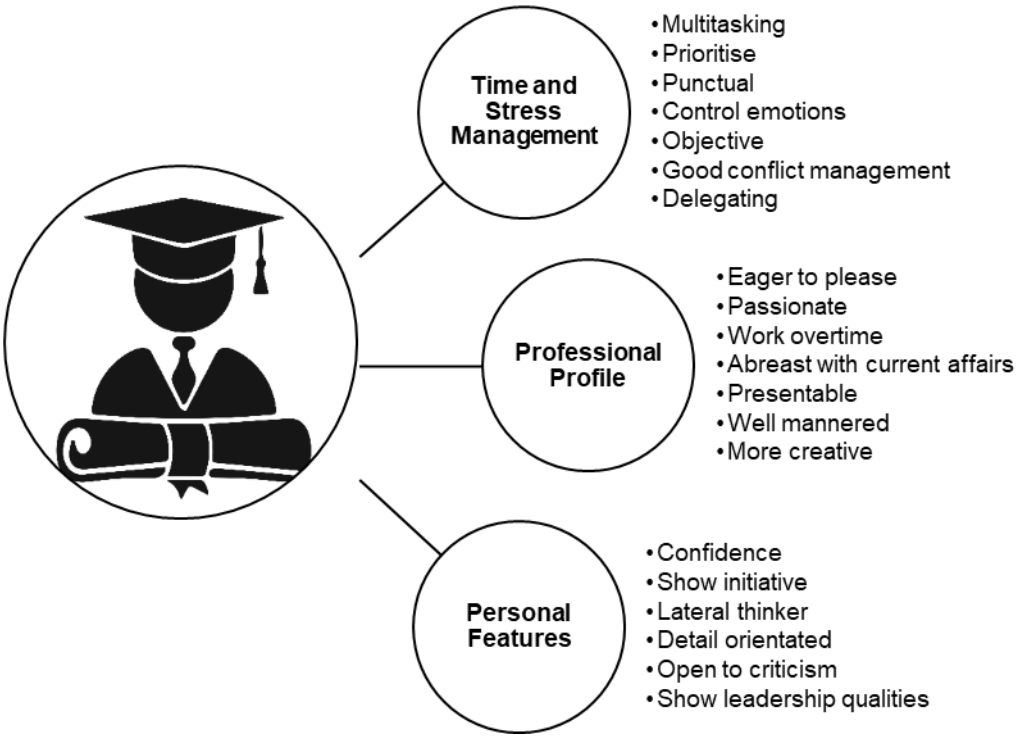

Figure 3-3: Event-management graduate attributes in the workplace
Source: Adapted from Razack (2017:44-45) and Venske (2017:38-39)

However, Razack (2017:iv) made a valid point by stating that these days

> …employers expect graduates to have gained the necessary skills, employability attributes and knowledge during their studies. However, if the skills and learning areas in

the academic programmes do not match the needs of the industry, this leaves graduates and employers in a precarious situation.

Furthermore, according to Venske (2018:81) university-level event-management courses of late are a more prevalent specialisation choice for first-rate hospitality- and tourism-related studies worldwide. Also, MICE as a career choice is measured to provide excellent prospects and fast-tracked promotion potential for candidates within the field. Due to event-management experts' constant need, formal qualifications in event management have grown continuously (Venske, 2018:81). Venske (2018:81) suggests that event-management syllabuses should include soft and technical skills to upskill students and prepare them for the day-to-day corporate event operations and professional social office relationships. Captivating this section's research, specialists and frontrunners within the industry recognise the need for event-management qualifications; which entail education, training, several skills and leadership aptitudes. The SA government also stepped in and noticed the event-management qualification prerequisites. However, for this to realise, current *challenges* related to tourism (and event-management) qualifications need to be improved; which include (Hawkins *et al*., 2012:110; Razack, 2017:43,118):

- graduates' lack of basic industry knowledge (i.e. professionalism, customer service, commitment);
- the gap between graduate perceptions and employer expectations;
- a shortage of opportunities for graduates to be placed in the industry;
- too few prospects available for students to complete their work-integrated learning; and
- curriculums that are too hypothetical/ academic and do not accommodate changes in the local economy and global trends.

Considering these challenges, it will be beneficial for educators to work together with the event-management industry to ensure improved consistency amid the meeting industry's requirements and educational outcomes; due to the industry's practical nature (Venske, 2017:36).

Training and experience

Instead, specialists in the field prescribe constant training for event planners to stay abreast within the dynamic sector (Goldblatt, 2000:4). The responsibility of managing events staff, predominantly the training element, is imperative to gain a competitive advantage in the current events market (Leigh, 2019:61). Once academic qualifications are gained, successful event planners must obtain compulsory training (specific to the event-management niche market, the organisation, client, obligatory tools, technology etc.). As highlighted by de Klerk (2013:19), due

to the rapid development and growing expectations of the events industry demands and governments, a need for more skilled event professionals arises. This change saw the arrival of training and education for the events field (de Klerk, 2013:19). It is proposed that event-management training should include the following information (Harris & Jago [1999], cited by Damm [2012:10]): event locations; demand and supply trends; the production of events (who and why); unique event operations, marketing and management; event programme ideas and styles; categories of events and its historical evolution; history of celebrations, festivals, rituals and other events; required event benefits and motivations; as well as event impact within the economy, society, culture and environment. Training brings along more experience. Lei *et al.*'s (2015:345–361) study emphasise that for a student to facilitate an easy transition into the self-motivated event- management sector after graduation, experience is needed. That said, many companies within the industry long for experienced event planners. It is said that graduates entering the workplace for the first-time lack valuable years of intensive event-management knowledge; which is required in order to meet the high standards required by professionalised credentialing such as the Certified Special Events Professional (CSEP) designation, offered by the International Special Event Society (ISES) (Venske, 2017:35-36). The term *experienced event planners* also refer to well-trained individuals.

Skills

Training and experience generate skilled professionals. Manners (2011:78) states that it is recommended that event-management employers hire intending to accumulate managerial skills, which comes with experienced and trained staff in the niche market. Deery and Jago (2015), cited by Marinakou (2019:512) also anticipated that individuals entering the events industry should have numeral skills; encompassing strategic thinking, creativity and strategic management. The term “skill” denotes an individual's ability to do something well by integrating their knowledge, attributes, personal traits and aptitudes (Razack, 2017:44). The most beneficial skills (learned abilities) to develop for event management is said to be: specialist skills; leadership and decision-making; organisational and planning skills; self-reliance; time management; stress management; communication abilities; multi-tasking; attention to detail; people skills; problem-solving; practical skills enhancement; and technical skills (Abson, 2017:405-406; Khuong, 2016:149-161; Kokt & Strydom, 2014:119-130; Razack, 2017:45; Venske, 2018:80; Venske 2017:39). At the Tourism Education Futures Initiative Summit in 2007, the following five skill groups were identified to form the foundation of all tourism programmes going forward: political skills; improved human resource skills; destination stewardship skills; ethical skills; and dynamic business skills (Razack, 2017:45). According to Marinakou (2019:512) it takes a particular type of individual with specific capabilities and skills to succeed within the event-management field. The researcher explains how event planners

need explicit technical skills and require the aptitude to manage the aesthetic and emotional labour required in event management. Hence the event-management industry should consider planners outside the traditional recruitment pools for jobs in tourism, hospitality, and event trades (Marinakou, 2019:512).

Furthermore, Venske's (2018:80) research clarifies how meetings industry employers are becoming more and more reliant on academic institutions to produce graduates with hands-on skills to function independently during provoking situations and students with a comprehensive theoretical understanding of the hospitality and tourism field. Experimental learning may be the solution, as it is beneficial to industries where transferable skills need to be developed. However, academic institutions find these high expectations daunting due to the challenge of educating progressively culturally diverse students for liberal workplaces and the challenge of joining the knowing-doing gap between university philosophy and workplace practice. Unfortunately, these challenges are enlarging in event management education due to the practicality within the diverse sector. Findings from Venske's (2017:42-43) research established that companies in the South African corporate event tourism management sector require various graduate characteristics and individual soft skills. Readiness to learn, multi-tasking abilities, stress-management aptitudes, time-management, creativity and excellent communication skills were specified as important for the event-management industry. In events, skills related to project management such as detailed accuracy and the ability to work cross-functionally in multifaceted event environments are also important event planners' skills (Bladen *et al.,* 2012:2-27). In recent years, the quantity of global MICE events has dramatically increased, resulting in a mounting demand for event specialists (Lei & Loi, 2016:53). Next, event-management career paths are defined in further detail.

3.2.3.2 Career paths and opportunities in the event-management sector

Getz and Page's (2016b:598) thorough research study concluded that minimal prior research on event tourism careers exists. Their study indicates how previously McCabe (2008; 2012), as well as Ladkin and Weber (2010), researched convention and exhibition career planning, whereas Baum *et al.* (2009) studied conventions and events careers. Additionally, the Barron and Leask (2012) study focused on event education debates. Furthermore, Getz (2013) researched experience in the events industry and event education pathways (Getz, 2014).

Event management is an industry employing determined employees to work in a high-demand sector with infinite opportunities and trying challenges (Damm, 2012:8). Event management speedily emerged as an occupation that requires advanced knowledge and skills and is a booming field of study at universities worldwide (Getz, 2000, cited by van Veenendaal, 2017:4).

An event-planning/ organising committee's extent or requirement is primarily reliant on the event size and scope (Bosch, 2018:97). Therefore a wide variety of careers are available in the event-management industry. Due to the countless interdependencies, choosing an event-management career can direct one in different multi-disciplinary directions (Getz, 2000:12). The events industry has a wide range of career opportunities to offer; including exciting internship positions and satisfactory permanent employment prospects (Nelson & Silvers, 2009:34).

An extensive list indicates the assortment of event-management industry **job titles and** *career paths* available, which includes (Getz & Page, 2016:598; Nelson & Silvers, 2009:34): event planner; meetings planner; meetings manager; event coordinator; event designer; event manager; designer; event producer; catering manager; conference coordinator; conference planner; operations manager; tradeshow manager; convention services coordinator; director of events; director of meetings; PCO; special events director; public relations manager; and account executive, to name but a few. This list also demonstrates the lack of consistent and clear terminology in the industry; creating difficulty in entering the industry and possible career development (Bosch, 2018:97-98; Nelson & Silvers, 2009:35). Furthermore, when one seeks a career in the meetings and events industry, there is an endless list of potential *employers* of event-management practitioners, comprising hotels; resort properties; incentive houses; government agencies; communication firms; convention centres; country clubs; congress organisations; broadcasting companies; attractions; casinos; associations; civic organisations; NGOs; exhibition producers; tourism bureaus; universities; festivals; event venues; country clubs; destination management companies (DMCs); wedding venues; event tourism analysts concert organisers; catering companies; corporations; human resource departments; political organisations; retailers; festivals; museums; parks; restaurants; shopping centres; and sport leagues amongst others. (Nelson & Silvers, 2009:34). For event-management graduates to be successful, they are advised to adapt to the modern corporate world and challenges that play a role in altering the industry (i.e. technology; globalisation; social insinuations; and financial hitches) (Venske, 2017:36).

To date, the main career paths in event management include the roles of the event manager, event planner, event designer, event producer, event director, event bidder and event policy analysts or researcher (Erasmus 2012:42; Getz, 2000:11; Getz & Page, 2016b:596; Nelson & Silvers, 2009:34; Rogers, 2008:73). Each one of the mentioned career paths is summarised as follows:

- **Event Manager**

Event management is a fast-paced and complex industry, making event managers' responsibilities even more challenging; there is thus a greater need for trained specialists in the event-management field (Phat, 2014:17). Event management typically takes the shape of a planning group with assigned responsibilities, with the event manager serving as the committee leader, while the other associates serve as managing representatives (Getz & Page, 2016:595). Erasmus (2012 42) points out that "…the event manager is the individual who is responsible for directing and planning of an event, for achieving pre-determined goals, to monitor and control the setting, people and length of the event". Event managers are also accountable for producing event outcomes that present economic and social profits (Tassiopoulos, 2010:68).

Furthermore, event management ought to be open to the needs of its customers, suppliers, customers and the host community, leading to long-term event success (Bosch, 2018:99-100). Event managers are expert individuals who plan and manage events. They are actively involved in the planning, implementation, brand building, marketing and communication strategy of events (Gulati, 2019:internet). To organise a successful event, the event manager must aim to join in the different management plans (from the different knowledge areas) into one practical and unified project plan (Erasmus, 2012:42). The event manager's main duty is to satisfy attendees' needs, identify the KSFs and achieve the projected event objectives and goals (Erasmus, 2012:52). The event managers' *responsibilities* also entail the following (Abson, 2017:403; Erasmus 2012:43; Page, 2003:251):

- managing finances, time, information and people;
- inspiring and empowering others, working in teams and continually growing team members;
- managing and packaging the event experience;
- developing a complete picture of the final event, integrating the concept into the various event elements, and joining in all the operational and logistical practices into a combined plan;
- detecting elements to build on previous successes and managing elements that will take advantage of strengths and opportunities;
- administrative matters, supervision over logistics, legal implications, marketing implications and risk management; and
- setting management goalmouths.

As previously mentioned, the management goals need to be based on the SMART principle. Goals must therefore be S = specific, M = measurable, A = assignable, R = realistic and, T = time related (Abraham, 2006:33-34; de Klerk, 2013:30; Lau, 2016:32-33).

Bowdin *et al*. (2006:27) and Gulati (2019:internet), identified the following crucial *skillset* required by an event manager: creativity; administration; event management and planning; marketing; risk management; and human resource management. Excellent communication skills, flexibility, people management skills, vision, the ability to apply logic well, competence and leadership are the obligatory *characteristics* of a dynamic event manager (Abson, 2017:405). Ultimately, event managers must have the ability to complete elementary tasks within the managerial process successfully. This includes preparation, organising, leading and supervisory tasks (Steyn *et al*., 2014:1497). Steyn *et al.* (2014:1498) also elaborate on event managers' seven main managerial function (c.f. 3.2.1).

In summary, event managers are: problem solvers; the number one support system for the event planner team; responsible for growing leadership skills in the individuals they manage; ought to understand the social nature of an event organisation; and essentially hold all the parts together as a dependable leader (Venske, 2018:81). During the event-planning process, a lack of resources can be explained as a weakness of the event manager (Bosch, 2018:99). Therefore, event managers must be well-organised, work under immense pressure, and showcase exceptional multitasking abilities. This will assist them in saving valuable time during event management (de Klerk, 2013:18).

- **Event Planner**

Event planners are defined as professional event consultants. They are often called “account managers” or “event coordinators”; and they can be named “meeting planners”, but they offer their services to all types of events (Getz, 2000:11). These individuals are accountable for the following main *tasks* and work systematically while ticking all the compulsory boxes (Akram, 2017:8; Palo, 2016:8):

- Event *design* – includes the content and theme development, production programme, entertainment, event content, environment, food and beverage, and event management;
- *Administration* – coordinating the financial, systems, human resources, stakeholders, information and time management;
- *Operations* – see to the attendees, event communication to the attendees, technique and site production management and logistics. Also coordinating the venue, caterers, equipment hire and contractors;
- *Marketing* – responsible for the marketing plan, promotions, merchandise, sales and public relations management; and
- *Risk management* – encompasses management of an emergency, insurance, compliance, decisions, health and safety, legal and security. Also, be informed of all

current applicable laws, regulations, by-laws, approved and associated codes that might impact the event.

The trained event planner is required to possess a wealth of knowledge within the niche market; together with the ability to reflect upon how their choices will shape specific business decisions and the broader implications of events in society, and the environment. The event planner's well-developed sense of ethics and professional responsibility should be based on a solid foundation that includes philosophy and comparative cultural studies (Getz, 2016a:5). It is important to note that event planners are responsible for the planning, organising, and hosting events, but so too can other event stakeholders (Bosch, 2018:99). An effective event planner must detect the range of stakeholders in an event and manage their specific needs, which might occasionally protrude and be inconsistent (Bowdin *et al.,* 2006:98). Constant communication and maintaining professional relationships with stakeholders through briefings, awareness-raising, and promotion can encourage teamwork and lessen negative impacts (Erasmus, 2012:38). Deakin (2015:internet) mentions how seasoned event planners will request the correct event questions upfront, to avoid hidden costs. They will also relieve the client/ organisation from stress by managing the event from end-to-end. Experienced event planners use their insight based on best practices from past experiences to create memorable events (Deakin, 2015:internet); as they are responsible for all the logistical and operational event requirements (Palo 2016:8).

Currently, for events on a smaller- and medium scale, event planners also fulfil the trade responsibility of the designer, producer, director, bidder and policy analyst/ researcher of events. These trade responsibilities can, however, be managed by a single individual per task and entail the following responsibilities (Getz & Page; 2016b:596; Nelson & Silvers, 2009:34):

- **Event designer**: In the past, when event concepts were merely a loose brief/ informal objective, the event designer stepped in. The event designer will then create a picture-perfect experience, augmenting the company brand/ product in an inspiring and focused manner. Event designers are naturally creative beings, conjuring up smart ideas that will bring events to life.
- **Event Producer:** They create events exclusively for their tourism value. The event producer is also responsible for stakeholder management with many event planners.
- **Event Director:** This individual heads up the event responsibilities, mostly for the association, corporate, educational, government, or non-profit events.
- **Event Bidder:** This person's sole priority is to bid on events; they are usually professional tender-writers. The event bidder is also responsible for developing relationships that may lead to the further events business allocation. Furthermore, the tasks include the conduct of feasibility studies and risk assessments for potential bids.

- **Event Policy Analyst and Researcher:** They work closely with policy-makers to facilitate event tourism and conduct research (demand forecasting, feasibility studies, performance evaluations, impact studies).

During the following sub-section, the researcher concludes the status of event management as a recognised professional field.

3.2.3.3 Event-management's attempt as a recognised profession

Getz and Page (2016:595) described "event management is an applied and professional field devoted to understanding and improving the management of planned events". However, Abbott (1988:10) holds that industries only become professions as a series of events occur within the field. These proposed events comprise:

- government-sponsored licensing legislature;
- national-level journals;
- progress of a professional association;
- a code of ethics;
- university-based qualified education;
- accreditation of schools (i.e., accounting, medicine, law); and
- specialised examinations as an entry standard into the profession.

Assessing the above-listed criteria becomes evident that the event-management industry has accomplished much towards becoming a recognised profession since the industry offers *industry certification examinations* and has a *code of ethics* and *professional associations* in place. Unfortunately, the shortfalls are also evident. One thereof is the accreditation process; although the CMP (Certified Meeting Professional) and CSEP (Certified Special Events Professional) offer meeting and event industry *certifications*, eligible candidates require ample years of industry experience, it is therefore not certifications to qualify as an entry standard into the profession (Nelson & Silvers, 2009,32-34). Furthermore, academically, event management also lacks professional schools (dispersed from other professions). Therefore, according to the conditions mentioned above, event management is not a professionally recognised profession yet. Van Veenendaal (2017:4) agrees that event management is not widely regarded as a true profession. Although event management is only a true profession in the making, many stakeholders are involved in the event-management process. They can be demarcated as organisations and persons with a real interest in event outcomes (Bowdin *et al.,* 2006:98; Shutko, 2015:7) as discussed in further detail below.

3.3 THE RELATIONSHIP OF BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS AND EVENTS

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2019c:internet), a stakeholder is defined as a person or entity, involved within an organisation and consequently has responsibilities towards it and an interest in its success. For this study, stakeholders refer to the various parties involved in the events industry. Furthermore, event stakeholders are defined as those who can cooperate with and impact the event organisation/ event, or are impacted by it (Getz, 2007:92). All events involve a network of symbiotic elements and event-management stakeholders' structure (Manners, 2014:37; Tassiopoulos, 2005a:37). Thomas (2012:7) explains that the key stakeholder groups in a corporate event are the event planner, the organisations that support/ fund the corporate event and the event attendee. Dr Joe Goldblatt is a world-renowned leader in the event management field. Herewith his guidance into key role-players (2000:9): “This modern profession is establishing a strong foundation for future success leaders of this emerging profession… they must now assume the responsibility of building a future that respects the noble traditions of the past, anticipates and responds to future needs, and provides a rich legacy for all who will follow in our footsteps”. The reason **why stakeholders become involved in events** (attendance, hosting, sponsoring) incorporates the following motives (Allen, 2007:8), namely to:

- produce brand awareness;
- grow business and new business opportunities;
- advance employee learning;
- stimulate sales through motivation;
- capitalise on performance;
- increase the company profile; and
- nurture loyalty.

Erasmus (2012:36-37) contends that accomplishment hinges on every stakeholder involved in the event to punctually finalise their tasks, to a high standard and in the right place, which requires good communication across the board and versatility. An event includes multiple stakeholders (Shutko, 2015:4) as subsequently discussed.

3.3.1 The different event stakeholders

Event-management stakeholders typically provide valuable resources and directly impact the planning, production, and execution of an event. Stakeholders describe the many industry parties (suggesting any individual or organisation) involved in the event, with expectations attached to its activities and working together to attract event attendees (Getz, 1991:15; Marais,

2016:28). These stakeholders contribute key resources; hence planned events rely on them (Bosch, 2018:99). As per Erasmus (2012:38) and Shutko (2015:7), event stakeholders can be sub-categorised as either **external stakeholders** (suppliers, customers, special interest groups) or **internal stakeholders** (owners and employers); as explained in the following two sections.

3.3.1.1 External stakeholders

As illustrated in Figure 3.4, external event stakeholders include the media, sponsors, the government, host community, event attendees and the event owner (Shutko, 2015:7).

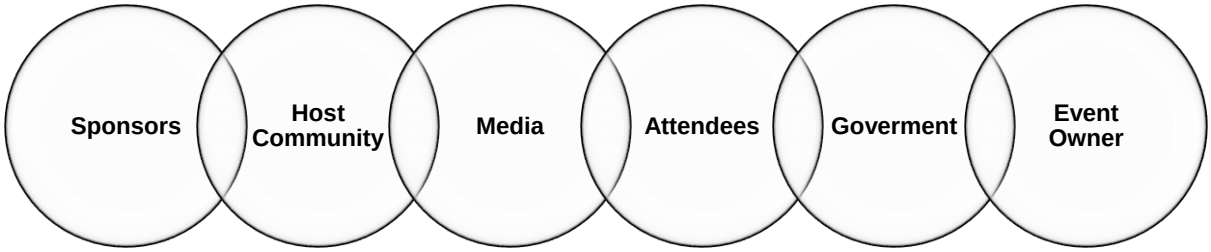

Figure 3-4: External event stakeholders
Source: Shutko (2015:7)

Herewith a summary of each of the event stakeholders and their roles as external stakeholders follows:

- **Sponsors**

According to Tassiopoulos (2010:70) event sponsors (referring to companies or organisations) provide support or financial contribution to an event, in return for specific profits. The main aim is for sponsors to reach target markets, to gain publicity and further exposure during events (Shutko, 2015:9; Tassiopoulos, 2010:68). Moreover, sponsors can provide resources to an event, which entails publicity; merchandise; sampling; funding; and VIP reception (Bosch, 2018:100; Erasmus, 2012:39-4).

- **Host communities/ locations**

The host community plays a dynamic role in an event, as they offer many of the public and hospitality services to attendees before, during and after the event (Erasmus, 2012:39). Gaining support from the host community has a vital impact on the event attendees' observation of the event destination. As soon as communities feel they are not involved in events, or the event contradicts their traditions, they might boycott the event (Oklobdžija, 2015:94). To curtail the negative impacts/ problems and upsurge the positive impact events can have on the host

community; the different stakeholders should plan and manage the event in a united manner (Erasmus, 2012:38). Mostly event staff and other human resources originate from the host community (Dimmock & Tiyce, 2001:372). It is the event manager and planners' responsibility to use the host community's skills during event planning (Manners, 2011:77).

- **Media**

Event planners need to select a favourable media group to brand, communicate and boost their event to the optimum. Media in the events industry can embody digital media (blogs, social media, websites), traditional media (radio, television, books, newspapers, magazines), or both (Shutko, 2015:9).

- **Event attendees**

The event customer is the third-party individual to attend the event, referred to as an event participant, delegate, attendee, invitee, visitor or guest (Gers-Couto, 2013:38). They are the recipients of knowledge during an event (Thomas, 2012:5). Event attendees need to be physically present at the event venue (Manners, 2014:37). Without attendees, none of the stakeholders would benefit from an event, as attendees have a physical presence at events; their spending behaviours, numbers and experience play a treasured role in event success rates (Bosch, 2018:100). Attendees are for whom the event is organised and who can negatively or positively influence the event; therefore, attendee needs should always be met (Dimmock & Tiyce, 2001:372; Bowdin *et al*., 2006:98). Marais and Saayman (2010:150) agree with this statement in pointing out that numerous individuals are involved in event management, with attendees being the most important role-players. Event planners must, therefore put in the effort to understand all the attendees' demands. Also, there should be a clear understanding of the target audience before an event commences. As soon as the target audience is decided on, the event planner should consider the gender, age and occupation of attendees (Palo, 2016:10-11). Attendees have an array of motives for participating in an event. Carvalho *et al.* (2018:64-65) intently researched policies to increase business tourism income. Their dynamic panel study revealed that attendees' main motives to join an event or meeting entails the obligation of distinct decision-making procedure based on location factors, personal/ business issues, association/ conference factors, and aspects linked to intervention opportunities. Also, meeting venues and suppliers' status of sustainability practices is invaluable, and attendees are willing to pay more for educated staff and a venue with a bigger environmentally friendly footprint. Attendees appreciate the convention *service structure*; high quality operating staff *service;* countless *educational* benefits; to be exposed to *promotions;* and products and conference *convenience* with state-of-the-art venue *equipment*. Attendees are motivated to attend an event when good *accommodation* service is available and the meeting *programme is of high quality*.

The event *entertainment* and *networking* opportunities also encourage attendees to join an event or meeting.

- **Government**

According to Bowdin *et al.* (2006:99-101) and Tassiopoulos (2010:69), a host organisation can be embodied by the government sector. The government might observe the events as an image-maker/ place of promotion, generate a representational image of the destination; to attract and maintain more tourists; and create more local job opportunities (Bosch, 2018:101; Shutko, 2015:8). It is important to bear in mind that local authorities are essential to providing tourism facilities in a country (Erasmus, 2012:39-41). Other profits introduced by government-supported events include fostering art, health, and social integration (Tassiopoulos, 2010:69). Furthermore, governments might also support economic reasons, create entrepreneurship, employment, and welcome more income into a destination (Bosch, 2018:101). The local government can also assist with research to overcome and understand different policies and guidelines (Erasmus, 2012:39-41).

- **Event owner/ client/ organisation**

The event owner/ client is the organisation or individual who owns the work process (Thomas, 2012:9). The planner firstly needs to identify the client, its requirements for the event and the necessary brand experience. The client also refers to the individual who is commissioning the event and can either be an internal or external client (Gers-Couto, 2013:38). Thomas (2012:2) is of opinion that "…an individual event organisation's behaviour affects the national business tourism of a country which, in turn, has competitive implications for nations competing to host mega business events in the global business tourism market.".

Successfully managed events lead to great gratification for all event stakeholders. It also confirms their commitment to forthcoming events (Venske, 2018:82). The following group of stakeholders are referred to as internal stakeholders. Internal stakeholders respectively need to possess certain competencies; which refer to the personal features, knowledge and skills required to complete a job effectively (Steyn *et al*., 2014:1497), as explained below.

3.3.1.2 Internal stakeholders

"Internal stakeholders are affecting how an event is being carried out and determine its nature." (Shutko, 2015:10.) Internal event stakeholders can be professional associations; industry government bodies; organisations acting as direct event suppliers; or companies accountable for the event execution process (Shutko, 2015:10). Business tourism is broad and complex,

which may cause research challenges. When researching event-management stakeholders, different authors refer to different terms and stakeholders. Marais (2016:28-29) agrees that studying event-management literature, numerous authors use different terms and refer to diverse main players within the industry which also proves to be problematic for this literature study. The internal event-management stakeholders identified in the literature include the following stakeholders, as illustrated in Figure 3.5:

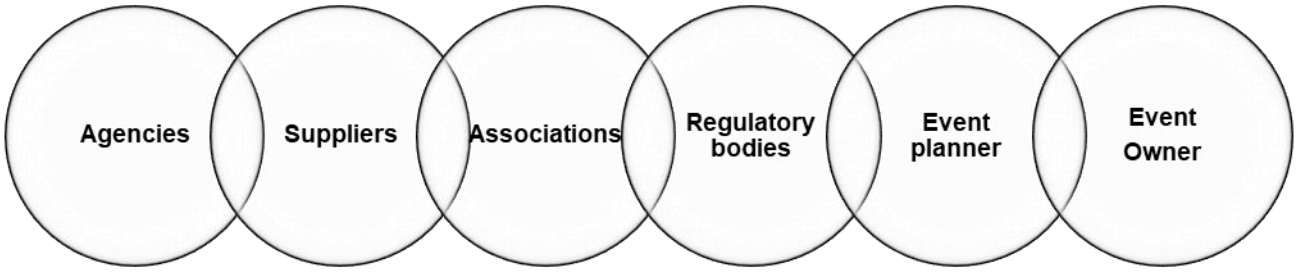

Figure 3-5: Internal event stakeholders

Source: Adapted from Bosch (2018:99-102); Bowdin *et al*. (2006:98); Erasmus (2012:39-41); Fenich (2012:15); Gers-Couto (2013:38); Getz and Page (2016a); Jago and Deery (2005:25); Marais (2016:28-29); as well as Nelson and Silvers (2009:34)

- **Agencies**

Agencies are hired to manage events when MICE are not planned and managed by event planners employed by the buying organisation (Davidson & Cope, 2003:113). These agencies include venue finding agencies, Professional Conference Organisers (PCOs), Incentive Travel Companies (ITCs), Travel Management Companies (TMCs), Conference Production Companies (CPCs), Destination Management Companies (DMCs) and exhibition coordinators (Davidson & Cope, 2003:113-212; Rogers, 2008:60-74). Occasionally DMCs, PCOs and ITCs collaborate to plan and manage events (Davidson & Cope, 2003:116). **Venue-Finding Agencies** typically render a service to the client at no management fee as they receive a venue commission. Venue-finding agencies, therefore, provide a valuable but restricted service offering. They deliver a shortlist of suitable venues that the client requires in terms of location, scope, budget and date (Davidson & Cope, 2003:115; Rogers,2008:66). **PCOs** are event-management companies that help businesses to shape and manage their meetings and events. They will recommend the venue, manage the conference programme, conduct the delegate registration process, head up the event marketing, confirm accommodation, manage, and reconcile conference finances (Rogers, 2008: 61). **ITCs** are businesses that provide incentive travel to reward and encourage their employees, sellers and suppliers. These companies offer clients professional incentive travel exploration, assessment and end-to-end planning services (Rogers, 2008:69-70). Several businesses build stronger relationships with their existing and

latent clients by inviting them to corporate events where clients are dined and entertained (Rogers, 2008:72).

TMCs/ corporate event companies act as the agent who compiles packages around certain corporate, cultural or sporting events for businesses looking to provide clients with a unique experience at these events (i.e. Cape Town Jazz Festival or Sun City Nedbank Golf Challenge). Other more low-key events include the compilation of team building events for a business who needs to fortify relationships with clients or personnel (Rogers, 2008:72). **CPCs** assist with designing and constructing conference backdrops as well as special effects and audio-visuals. These event planners render their services in complex, high-profile events such as product launches, which require more knowledge and technical equipment. Furthermore, CPCs often partner with PCOs to add their expertise to the event (Davidson & Cope, 2003:116). **DMCs** are the ground handlers of a destination and are situated in a specific destination, city, region or country. DMCs are extremely knowledgeable about specific destinations, with strong professional relationships through local suppliers. They also understand the homegrown culture, language and customs (Davidson & Cope, 2003:116). DMC tasks comprise suggesting venues, planning accommodation, organising logistics/ transportation, compiling detailed itineraries etc. (Rogers, 2008:71).

- **Event industry suppliers/ vendors**

With the development of a large and multifaceted events industry, originates the establishment of a wide variety of professional suppliers (Gers-Couto, 2013:38; Shutko, 2015:11). Event suppliers may operate in associated areas of the industry (Shutko, 2015:11), i.e. transport, plant hire companies, advertising corporations or visa firms. Otherwise, in areas directly linked to event-management services (Shutko, 2015:11), i.e. décor, catering, staging, AV production or entertainment. Specialists within the events industry also refer to suppliers as vendors (Gers-Couto, 2013:38). Before an event planner reserves the venue, it is important first to consider which vendors will be contracted. Reason being, if the event requires staging, carpeting, draping or any additional technical factors, it would be wise first to acknowledge what the technical teams' requirements are for the event before approving the venue (Gers-Couto, 2013:38). There are many supplier event stakeholders, which include (Bosch, 2018:99-102; Fenich, 2012:15; Jago & Deery, 2005:25; Marais, 2016:28-29): transport services; accommodation; restaurants; attractions; venues; ancillary services; other service providers/ suppliers (i.e. speakers, entertainers, AV, printing), to name but a few.

- **Industry associations**

Shutko (2015:11) explains that the development of an events industry accompanies professional associations, which provide cooperation within the events sector, networking opportunities and open communication channels. Reynolds (2007:43-49) compiled the following list of business and general tourism *associations in SA*: South African Meetings Industry Federation (SAMIF); SAACI; EXSA; Society of Incentive and Travel Executives (SITE); International Special Events Society (ISES); and the Technical Production Services Association (TPSA). *International* industry associations comprise various organisations such as the ICCA; Union des Foires Internationales (UFI); International Association of Congress Centers (AIPC); Global Association of Exhibition Industry; Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA); and the Union of International Association (UIA) (Hussain *et al.,* 2017:502). A further example of associations working together includes the Event Industry Alliance (EIA), which is a professional body formed by three event industry bodies; the Association of Event Organizers (AEO), Association of Event Venues (AEV) and Event Supplier and Services Association (ESSA) (Shutko, 2015:11). AAXO is another concerted platform worth mentioning, mainly embodying exhibition organisers within Africa (AAXO, 2021:internet).

- **Regulatory bodies**

Bowdin et al. (2006:25) explained events these days take place in an intricate environment with amplified parameters. For that reason, controlling/ regulatory bodies were shaped to anticipate the safe production of events. These bodies review the events industry's laws, looking into employment contracts, safety issues in the workplace and taxation. CEPA; EXSA; IFEA; and SAACI are all examples of such regulatory bodies (Event, 2018:internet; EXCA, 2019:internet).

- **Event Planners**

The individual or team responsible for the planning and managing an event, is referred to as the meeting planner. As a stakeholder, the meeting planner can refer to the event manager, the event planner, or the entire team directly responsible for the event conception and management thereof. Furthermore, the “company” refers to the event planner or the event planner's employer, which is typically an event-management company paid to manage the event (Gers-Couto, 2013:38). Event managers are intended to act as a “signpost” to inform and direct event planners in the right direction (Akram, 2017:9). Abson (2017:404) defines the term *event manager* as encompassing a profession in which development, planning, and implementation of an event plan is the key focus. Within the event industry, event managers often have a team of event planners to assist with the successful execution of events. The event planner is the key stakeholder, with the main responsibility to act as an intermediary between all the event

stakeholders; also creating a vision so that the goals/ strategies are set to inspire others to follow that vision (Erasmus, 2012:39-41).

Events rely on stakeholders' support and resources for the survival of events (Bosch, 2018:99). To practice well-organised event management, it is further advised to methodically split-up the process in different stages, managing each stage separately according to a strict timeline. The next section provides the reader with the differentiation of event-management stages and summarises what each stage entails.

3.4 STAGES OF EVENT MANAGEMENT

Adams (2008:200) describes event management as an ever-changing and complicated process, with a definite beginning and end. Nonetheless, careful consideration should be paid to different event-planning stages (Farris, 2006:174). The reader should bear in mind that the event event-planning process will vary depending on whether it is a repeat or new event (Bowdin *et al*., 2011:189). As per Manner's (2015:1) research, it is also apparent that the pre-event, during-event and post-event-planning stages differ immensely from one event to another. The proposed stages of event management are for this study, relevant to corporate events.

Figure 3.6 provides a holistic view of each stage (pre-, during and post-event) of event management and stipulates an essential action plan with steps to follow during the proposed stages, as discussed in further detail during the literature review event-management stages.

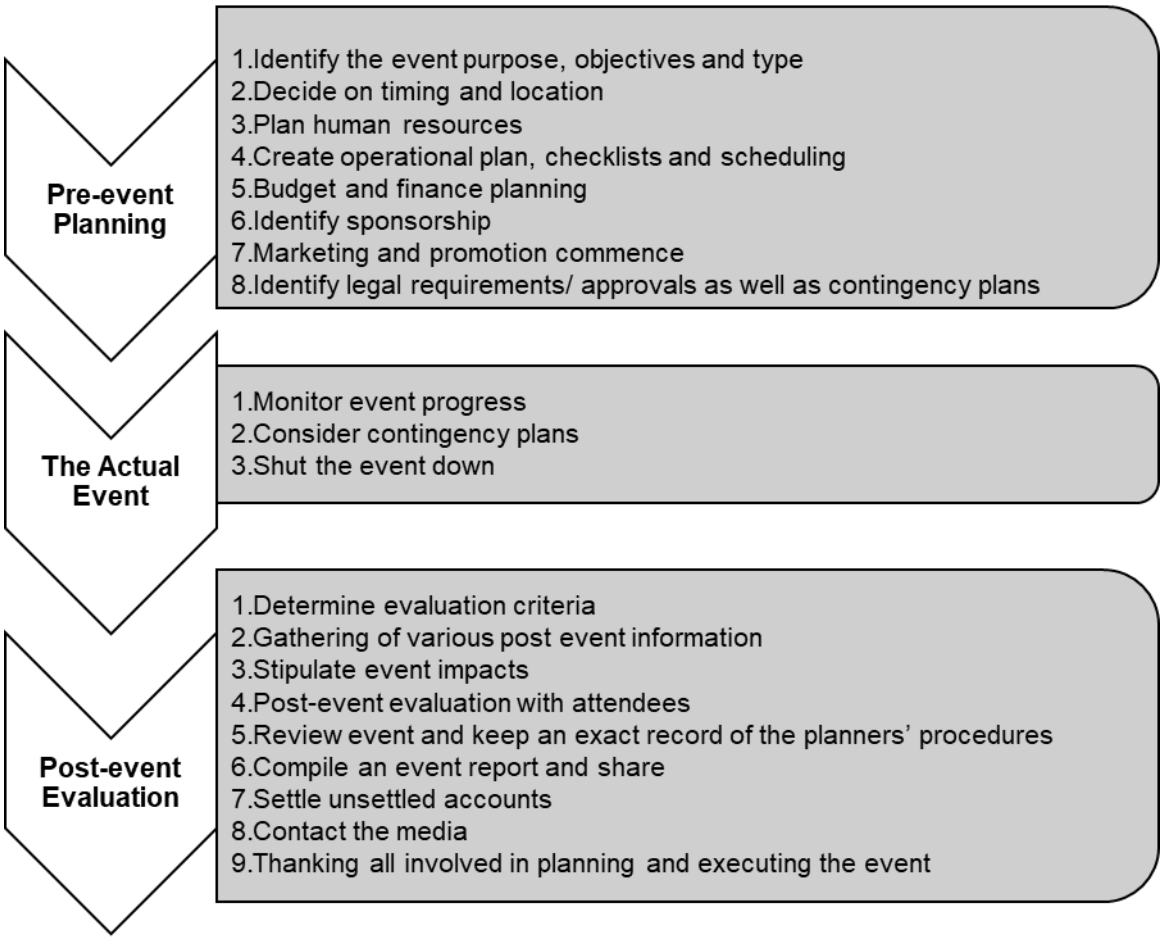

Figure 3-6: The stages of event management, and essential action steps to follow
Source: Researcher's compilation based on the existing literature

Shaping a successful event always requires a thorough planning process and added effort before it commences (Phat, 2014:ii). The following section elaborates on the pre-event-management stage, which refers to a detailed planning process.

3.4.1 Pre-event-management stage

The preliminary event-planning stage comprises numerous intricacies that are important for successful execution (Venske, 2018:81). Abraham (2006:16) and Emery (1997), cited by Manners (2014:42), find it to be a very time-consuming stage (the longest); that can involve up to 90% of the total event duration. A successful event can only take place after a careful planning process. First, the steps for accomplishment need to be identified and carried out as planned (de Klerk, 2013:33). As stated by Abraham (2006:29), "planning is the process which identifies aims and objectives and establishes the methods of achieving them. Project planning should be undertaken in a structured and logical manner". De Klerk (2013:33) defines the event-

planning process as one that designs the event concept and allocates resources and responsibilities to reach the proposed event goals and objectives. Once a plan of action is in place, a strategy can be established, which should be communicated to the rest of the events team. As soon as all key players are aware of the plan, it can be successfully executed (de Klerk, 2013:33).

Various researchers, including Abraham (2006:31) and Veenendaal (2017:7), propose a feasibility study first to be implemented during the pre-event-planning stage since it may add value to successful event management. This, however, refers to all events in general and not the niche market of corporate events. An event feasibility study aims to outline how to realise event achievement; detailing event structures, staffing requirements, commercial sources and an event accomplishment timetable (Abraham, 2006:31). Smith's (2017:16) research also shows that some event-planning models comprise a feasibility study section, especially for larger and more intricate events as this is an effective way of evaluating potential event success rates. However, no feasibility study is proposed in the strategic management guideline for this study's corporate event management. The researcher's opinion is that a feasibility study is not required during corporate event planning and as per Shutko (2015:13) a feasibility study can only add value for bigger and more public events; especially when the large event is hosted for the first time.

Planning elements during the pre-event-management stage includes the identification of the following elements of the (corporate) event (see Abraham, 2006:31; de Klerk, 2013:35; Engblom, 2010:22-37; Events Tasmania, 2019:internet; Holley, 2001:3-27; Phat, 2014; Shutko, 2015:12; Silvers & Nelson, 2013; Smith, 2017:16-21):

1. Purpose, objectives and type;
2. Timing and location;
3. Human resource management;
4. Operational plan, checklists and scheduling;
5. Budget and finances;
6. Sponsorship;
7. Marketing and promotion; and
8. Legal requirements/ approvals as well as contingency plans.

Each planning element (mentioned above) during the pre-event-management stage are summarised as follows:

When establishing the **purpose, objectives and type** of event, event planners should ask the following questions during this step in the pre-event-planning stage (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet): *Why is the event being held?; What type of event is it?; Who it is for?;* and *Who will benefit from it?* Well-defined objectives and focus will effectively assist in guiding the planning process. Smith (2017:17) holds that to successfully manage an event and choose an event-management model to implement for the step-by-step event process, the planner should first classify the event type. Next, by developing the event's purpose, event planners guarantee that event planning and implementation are well-conducted, and the introductory intent is deepened and understood (Phat, 2014:24). Thereafter the main event purpose must be broken down into smaller detailed and specific objectives; framed to assist event managers/ planners to comprehend the initial intent (Phat, 2014:24). The event evaluation process will be more streamlined when objectives have been developed in more detail and precisely (Phat, 2014:24). During the development of event objectives, event planners should consider the SMART objectives (Phat, 2014:24). The SMART objectives should be (Abraham, 2006:33-34; de Klerk, 2013:30; Lau, 2016:32-33; Phat, 2014:24-25):

- *Specific* – the purpose should not be abstract or general, but well-defined to guarantee accurate planning steps;
- *Measurable* – the event statistics should be calculable;
- *Attainable* – the event objectives need to be reachable for all key players;
- *Realistic* – objectives should be genuine and relevant to the people accountable for achieving them; and
- *Time bound* – referring to a planned event timetable, with firm time-management.

Deciding on a location and specific timing for the event will impact the event success rate. This decision needs to be made much earlier on during the event-planning stage (Holley, 2001:13; Manners, 2014:43). More venues should be highlighted within the vicinity and take the type and quantity of attendees into consideration (Shone & Parry 2004:122-123). This will leave event planners with more available options. Venue finding is the most important aspect of the event checklist during the event-planning phase (Smith, 2017:19). However, before the event planner decides on an event location or venue, all event requirements need to be pre-listed (event wish-list) and understood. Event planners should also take time to contemplate the best time (of day, month and year) to host the event (Holley, 2001:13). One needs to consider other events that may complement the planned event (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet).

Similarly, attendees' travel time, cultural awareness, host resources, seasonality, flight schedules, holiday calendars, company schedules and many more factors should be considered when deciding on an event location and time (Holley, 2001:13-14). According to

Shone and Parry (2004:122-123) measures to bear in mind before venue selection include that the venue location is evaluated, and the event objectives to tie in with the choice of venue location. Facilities mainly include event site selection, cost, location, size, availability, services and capacity (Holley, 2001:16; Smith, 2017:19).

Human resource management (HRM) in staging and designing events is one of the most distinctive features and significant event management priorities (Leigh, 2019:60). Talent management should take priority during this step of the event evaluation stage. Marinakou (2019:513) and Michopoulou *et al*. (2019:492) describe talent management as the orderly operation of HRM actions, intending to recognise, attract, grow, and hold onto talented employees. Talented individuals are considered to be high-performance employees, with significant potential (Marinakou, 2019:514). Furthermore, staffing can either be voluntary or paid (Engblom, 2010:36; Leigh, 2019:2). It is argued that event staff that deliver exceptional service can overcome many weaknesses in an event facility; vice versa, bad service can destroy a good venue's value (Manners, 2014:44). A detailed HR plan required for warranting event employees and stakeholders (Smith, 2017:20). Also, Smith (2017:20) recommends event planners make use of the *Harvard framework* for HRM. This model by Harvard Business School is one of the most dominant HRM models to date (HRM Guide, 2019:internet). Harvard (HRM Guide, 2019:internet) explains that employees are resources but differ primarily from other organisations' resources. They also need to be managed differently from other resources, as they are human resources (with their own apprehensions and needs) and important stakeholders in an organisation.

Furthermore, the Harvard approach identifies "an element of mutuality in all businesses, a concept with parallels in Japanese people management". As illustrated in Figure 3.7, the Harvard model outlines four HR policy areas, applicable to the majority of corporate companies and also to be applied to HR planning during event management (HRM Guide, 2019:internet; Smith, 2017:20):

- *HR movements* – recruitment, selection, appointment, assessment and appraisal, promotion and termination;
- *Recognition scheme* – payment schemes and incentives;
- *Employee encouragement* –delegated levels of authority, accountability, influence; and
- *Work systems* – classification of work and placement of employees.

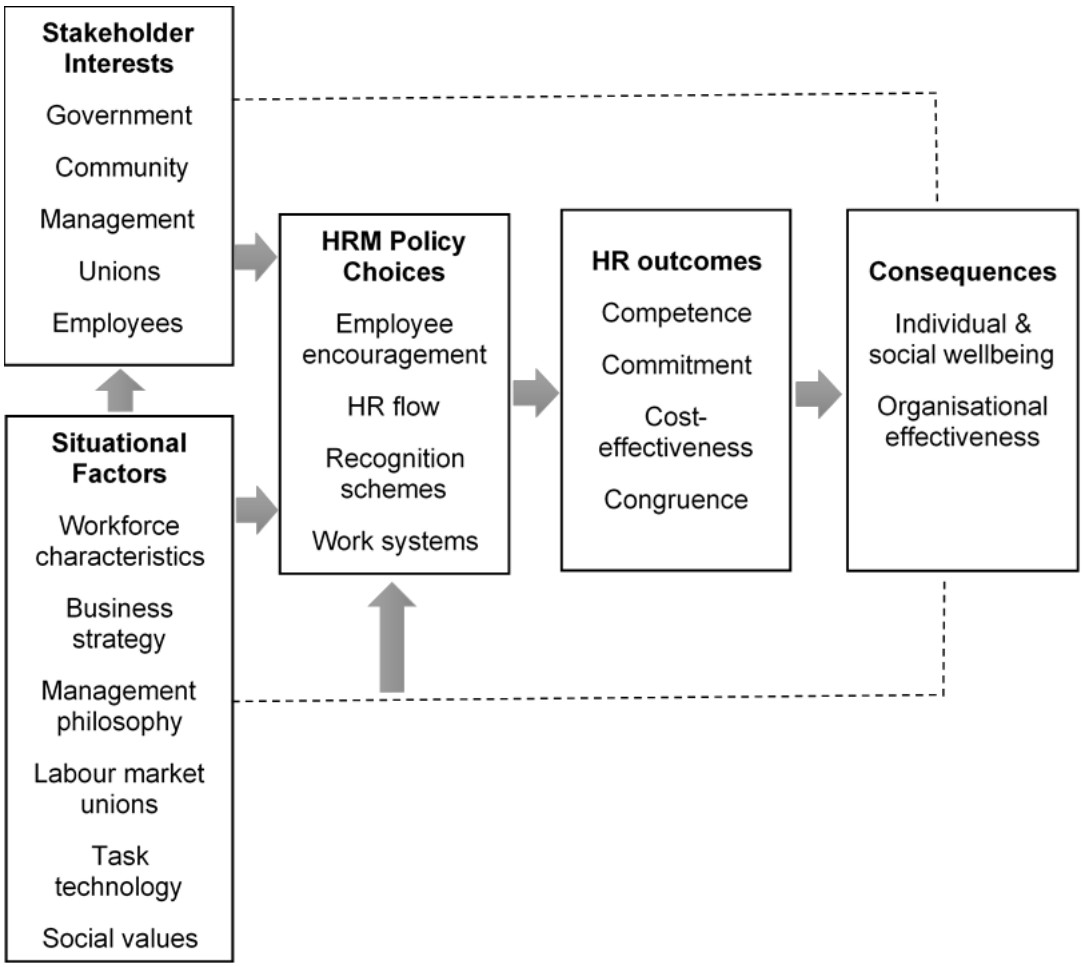

Figure 3-7: The Harvard Model for HR management during event management
Source: Adapted from Smith (2017:21)

The HR outcomes to be achieved includes commitment, congruence, competence and cost-effectiveness (also known as the four "Cs") (Lapina *et al*., 2014:582). This supreme model shows how HR is carried out and narrates how employees are paid, treated and allocated workload; it is also useful for tracking how an alteration in HRM policy choices affects HRM results within the public sector (Smith, 2017:20). When an event planner uses the Harvard model, it allows them to know HR procedures during an event while also encompassing corporate responsibility and ethics (Smith, 2017:20-21). To stay conversant with the ever-changing events industry human resource development requirements, event-management practices need to be endlessly scrutinised for effectiveness (Leigh, 2019:63). In conclusion, the event planner team should be assigned during this step (Holley, 2001:3). As event staff play a significant role in establishing a good event that reaches its objectives; the level of labour intensiveness hinges on the event uniqueness and complexity (Phat, 2014:16). Within the events team, job descriptions and responsibilities should be allocated (organisation charts) and an action plan developed with strict timelines (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet; Holley, 2001:3; Phat, 2014:30).

The next step entails that the event planner must draw up an **operational plan checklists** and lay out **an event schedule**. During the operational plan, important factors to take into consideration are staffing, resources, the production schedule, logistics, services, and equipment (Phat, 2014:29). Additionally, it is important for a smooth-running event to take time management and the activities timeline into consideration during *event scheduling* (Smith, 2017:20). A carefully planned schedule provides event staff with transparency and clarity in their nominated work roles and order (Holley, 2001:3). Event scheduling is a simple task for smaller events and becomes more complicated as events grow (Smith, 2017:20). Lists, tables, models, checklists, organisational chart maps, run sheets, graphs and Gannt charts can all be used as event scheduling/ planning tools (Abraham, 2006:40; Holley, 2001:4; Palo, 2016:13-14). Event checklists need to consider all aspects of the event; it should read in chronological order and consist of keywords only (Palo, 2016:13-14). “The main benefit of checklists is that no task will be forgotten” (Palo, 2016:14). With the assistance of a checklist, event planners can organise and allocate: individual responsibilities; the venue; staffing; catering; hospitality; logistics; equipment; communication; garbage; toilets; money handling; prizes; medical requirements; ceremonies; entertainment; and all other suppliers (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet). “At the most detailed level of planning, a checklist is indispensable. It is a control tool that ensures that the individual performing the tasks has not forgotten a single detail.” (Abraham, 2006:44.) The different parts of an event checklist include planning, arrival, entrance, onsite, the end of an event, event activities and communication; each with a separate set of elements (Palo, 2016:14). For the event to run seamlessly, all these parts should be implemented on an event checklist.

Palo (2016:14) proposes a diagram of a checklist for successful event planning. As indicated in Figure 2.8, the different parts of the suggested checklist plan include planning, arrival, entrance, on-site, post-event, event activities and communication. The planning fragment includes venue choice, venue map, budget, supplies, and venue facilities, whereas the arrival portion of the checklist includes: welcome, parking and attendee transport. The entrance part consists of queuing, registration and ticketing. The onsite part of the checklist comprises power, stage safety, budget, security, and event manual. The post-event portion of the checklist includes shutdown and follow-up. Furthermore, the event activities portion includes food, beverage, speakers, hospitality, entertainment, team building, and other activities present on the day of the event. Lastly, the communication part of the checklist includes promotion, signage and the web. Palo (2016:14) suggests for all these parts to be present for an effective unified event checklist.

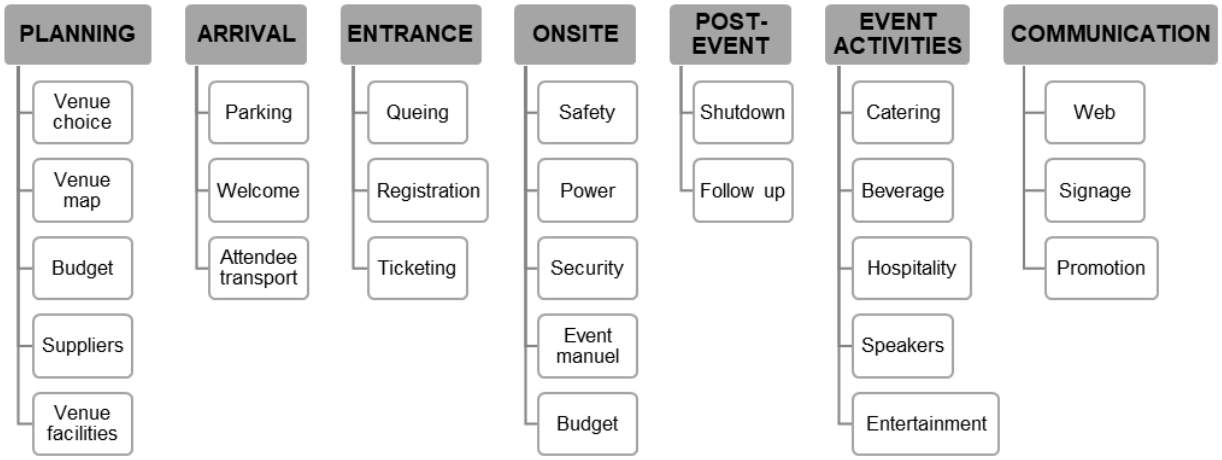

Figure 3.8: Schema of checklists for event planning
Source: Adapted from Palo (2016:14)

Finances and budget planning are essential, to monitor event income and expenses, regardless of the event size (Holley, 2001:6). Getz (2007:282) emphasises that too little research has been led on events as running businesses; hence, their proportional financial operations are not fully understood. According to Engblom (2010:27) "a budget is a plan described in numbers, as an estimation of revenue generation on the one hand, and expenditures on the other, during a given time". Phat (2014:27) agrees that preparing the budget plan is the first step in planning event finances, as event planners estimate probable event spending and revenue. It is important to note that expenditure should be estimated during the event budgeting process, but not underestimated (Engblom, 2010:27). Budget planning within event management is an ongoing process and should therefore be planned pre-, during and post-event; assisting event planners during the different planning, decision-making and control stages (Bladen *et al.,* 2012:146). The budget consists of exact quotes provided by the event suppliers and in-depth research to make sure that all possible expenses are correctly considered (Phat, 2014:27). It is advisable to establish an event checklist before preparing the budget, to ensure all budget items are considered (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet). Also, an exact record-keeping tool is an important component of the budgeting process (Holley, 2001:6). Bladen *et al.* (2012), cited by Smith (2017:18), provide event planners with an in-depth budget-planning process to follow; linking the budget to the SMART (S = specific, M = measurable, A = assignable, R = realistic and, T = time-related [Abraham, 2006:33-34; de Klerk, 2013:30; Lau, 2016:32-33]) objectives of the event, to ensure that the budget and the event are well-matched. Last of all, Bladen *et al.* (2012:147) and Holley (2001:6) refer to the seven steps of immaculate event budgeting (see Figure 3.9) as follows: define the goals and objectives; evaluate the

resources; place strategies into operation; assign responsibilities; prepare the budget; implement the budget, and lastly evaluate the performance.

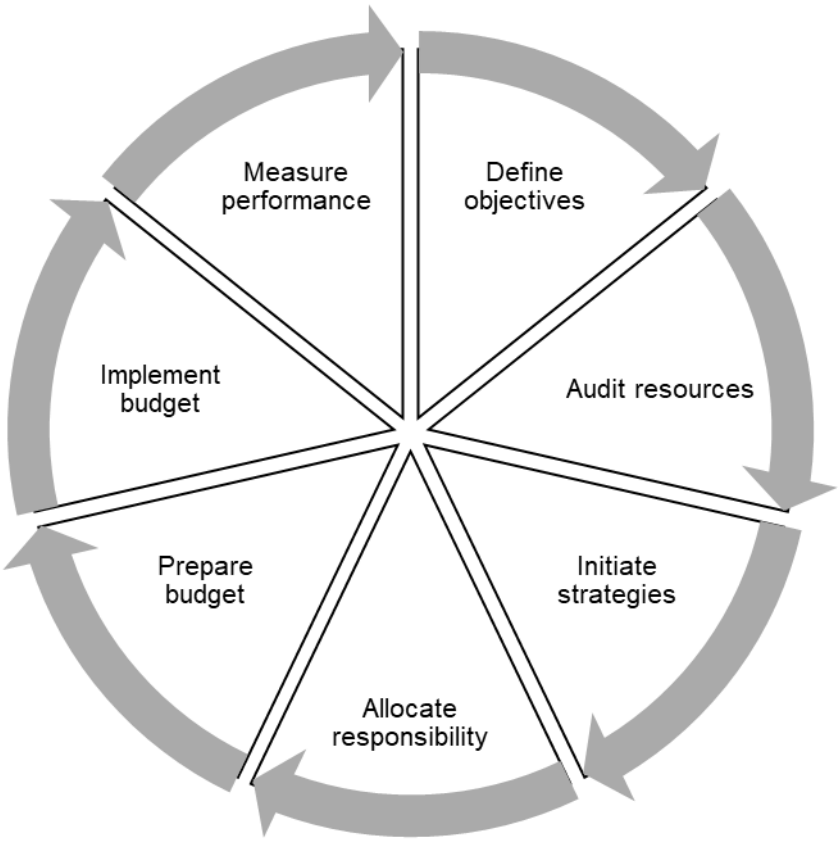

Figure 3-8: The seven steps of perfect event budgeting
Source: Adapted from Bladen *et al.* (2012:147), Holley (2001:6-9), Phat (2014:26) and Smith (2017:18)

Next, event planners should establish whether **event sponsorship** will contribute to the planned event, i.e. free publicity, discount, prizes, goods or services (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet). "Sponsorship is the purchase (either with cash or in-kind support) of exploitable rights and marketing benefits (both tangible and intangible) that arise from the direct involvement with the personality/ player, special event, programme, club or agency" (Bowdin *et al.,* 2006:228). As stipulated by Engblom (2010:28), event sponsorship is on no occasion an act of charity or any donation; instead, businesses act as sponsors only for commercial gain. Event sponsorship agreements are mostly of a short-term nature (Manners, 2014:38). Event sponsorship is not obligatory. However, if event planners do strategize to apply event sponsorship to the planning process, they must find a suitable sponsor and guarantee that the event's strategic vision and the sponsoring company's visions are aligned (Phat, 2014:28). It is also important for planners to identify and announce how sponsors may potentially benefit from the event, i.e. media coverage, product exposure, publicity, free advertising, access to the

target audience niche or naming rights (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet; Shutko, 2015:18). Sponsorship occurs in many forms; event managers and planners need to establish what type of sponsorship is required for their event type (services, goods, techniques) (Phat, 2014:28). It is time-consuming and hard work for event planners to source and manages event sponsors (Engblom, 2010:28); therefore adequate time and resource should be allocated to this function.

The level of **promotion and publicity** required for the event needs to be considered. Marketing is said to be the process of successfully classifying and meeting humankind's social requirements (Kotler & Keller, 2012:28). "An effective promotional strategy can serve as the foundation on which to build a successful event" (Holley, 2001:19). Event marketing is the first aspect of the event that attendees are exposed to; it therefore forms an important part of the event-planning process. It sparks interest in possible attendees and sponsors to create an image of attendees' expectations and for the event to continue (Smith, 2017:18). Depending on the target audience, the existing event profile and event aim, some events may need minimal promotion or publicity. However, event planners need to take caution, as leaving this task for last may result in poor event turnout, minimal exposure, and unsatisfied sponsors. Also, several media forms (online, print, television and radio) should be considered (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet).

According to de Pelsmacker *et al.* (2010:2) the process of marketing entails planning and implementing the start of an event; price estimation; promotion; spreading of concepts, goods and services so that values are traded and objectives (of organisation and individuals) are content. Event planners need to share unique event information with potential attendees during the event promotion/ marketing stage, i.e. event venue, date, sponsors, prizes, entertainment options etc. (Holley, 2001:19). It is also critical for event marketing to target the correct audience (Holley, 2001:19-20; Smith, 2017:18). In the 21st century, social media marketing has become the fastest growing marketing medium (Smith, 2017:19). Digital media transformed how event marketing commence; hence one needs to be up to date with the latest technology (Smith, 2017:19). Bowdin *et al.* (2006:182) and Phat (2014:43-44) relate to the importance of a marketing mix, which refers to a set of activities utilised in the promotion of a product/ brand in the market, consisting of the following four "Ps":

- *Product* – the item sold to consumers, to satisfy their needs. It encompasses three main layers: the core product (the unique product benefits), the augmented product (service-oriented aspects such as delivery and after-sales services) and product features (such as design);
- *Price* – the cost of the product to consumers;

- *Promotion* – marketing communication to promote the product, this is the most feasible element; and
- *Place* – bringing the product to consumers.

Moreover, Smith (2017:18-19) refers to O'Toole's Marketing Process, showcasing each section to be considered during event marketing. As illustrated in Figure 3.10, during the marketing process, researching the market (expectations, requirements) is an event planner's priority, according to the proposed event objectives. Once the marketplace is segmented and the target market identified and further analysed, the marketing mix can successfully be applied based on the behaviour and requirements of the selected target markets (Viljoen & Kruger, 2019:430). Market segmentation is an indispensable component of strategic planning (Viljoen & Kruger, 2019:430). The final step is defining the product/ event (scope, design, communication promotional strategy). Once concluded, the event can be launched and commence.

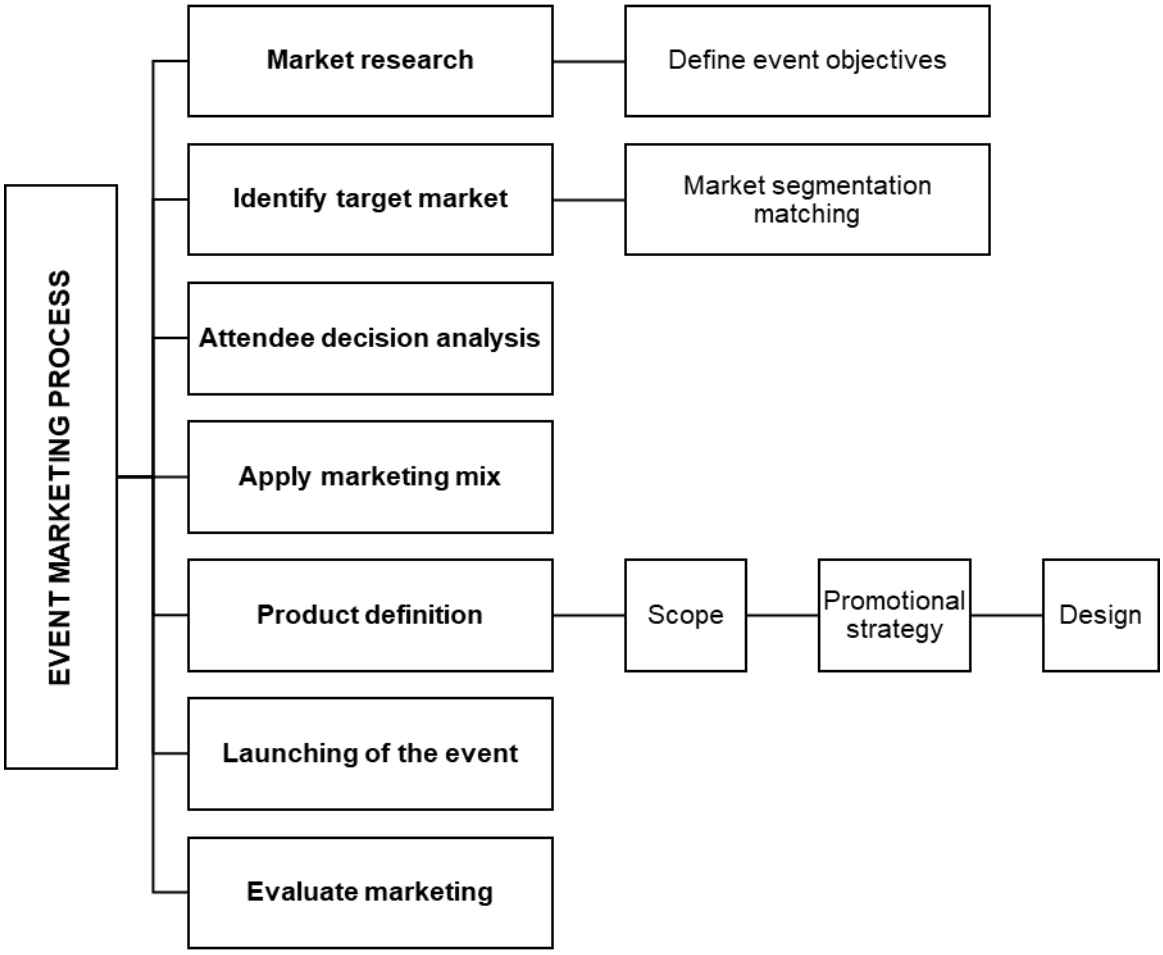

Figure 3-10: Marketing process for planned events
Source: Adapted from Smith (2017:18-19)

A well-thought-out marketing plan will unquestionably improve an event's profitability and image. Hence it is fully understood by all event stakeholders (Phat, 2014:43).

The necessary **legal requirements and approvals** further need to be obtained. "Successful event planners leave nothing to chance" (Holley, 2001:25). This refers to permits, licenses, approvals from property owners, insurance for risk management and alcohol licensing (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet). Shone and Parry (2004:172) suggest for event planners to follow the following four risk management steps during event management:

- *Assessment* – identify possible event perils;
- *Evaluation* – recognise what the odds are of event problems to arise and its results;
- *Control measurement* – use a risk moderation form as control measurement; and
- *Recording* – all risk management activities should be recorded and learned from.

The main risk management focus is to forecast, avoid and curb unforeseen costs, problems and losses for the event, organisations, attendees and other event stakeholders (Phat, 2014:39). In conclusion, Abraham (2006:45-46), Bladen *et al.* (2012:202), Shone and Parry (2004:169,172) and Shutko (2015:13-14) highlight some primary event-management risks that event planners need to look out for (also see Figure 3.11):

- *Physical risks* – insufficient crowd management, health problems, attendee danger, security complications;
- *Economic risks* - unsuccessful sponsorship, commercial losses;
- *Performance risks* – i.e. failure due to incorrectly booked speaker, insufficient technology at the event;
- *Psychological risks* - undesirable location, bad venue experiences or unpleasant previous event reputation;
- *Human resource risks* – risks to staff and others owing to a poorly disciplined organisation, lack of substitutes; and
- By being overly optimistic about event forecasts, *marketing risks* are unrealistic about event goals and objectives, lack of attendees, and negative media coverage.

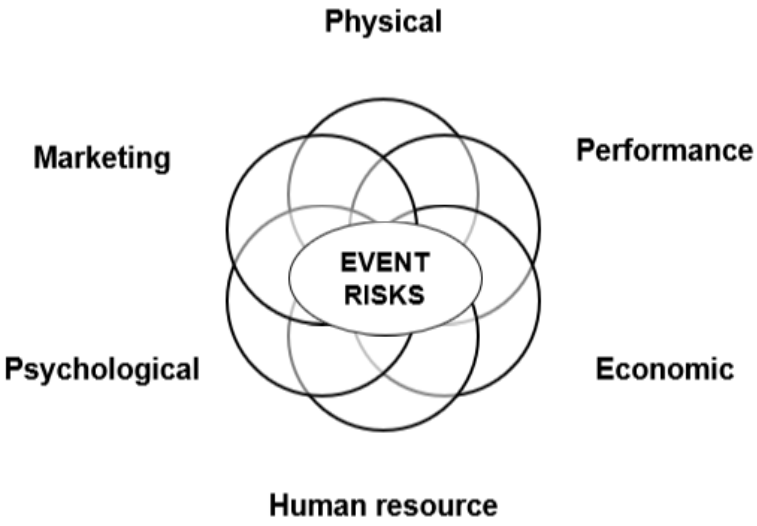

Figure 3-11: Main event-management risks
Source: Adapted from Shone and Parry (2004:169)

Events Tasmania (2019:internet) holds that, if the appropriate effort and time have been put into preparing and planning an event, it should run seamlessly. This leads to the following stage of event implementation.

3.4.2 Event implementation stage (during the event)

The event implementation stage is the crucial second stage of the proposed event-management life cycle (Manners, 2014:45). As demonstrated in Figure 3.12, event planners monitor the event progress during this stage, consider contingency plans, and “shut the event down” (Smith, 2017:21-22). Manners (2014:45) explains that this stage only takes up approximately one percent of the total event time but utilises more than 95% of the staff numbers involved throughout the event.

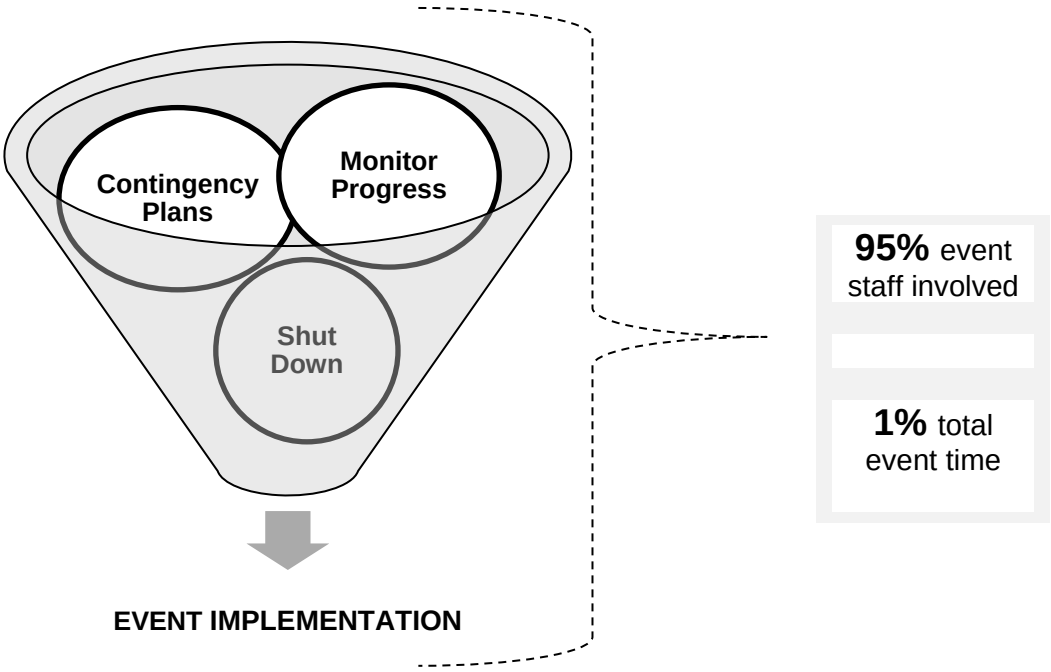

Figure 3-12: Event implementation stage
Source: Adapted from Smith (2017:22) and Manners (2014:45)

By **monitoring the event progress,** it will limit errors. When an event is successfully monitored, it will assist the planner for future events and improve the quality of the event (Smith, 2017:22). The event's progress is tracked through the various implementation stages, allowing for adjustments of governing factors (Manners, 2014:45). Events can be monitored by keeping a close eye on the budget, monitoring attendee numbers and observations during the event (i.e. event steadiness, keeping up with the proposed schedule, attendee behaviour and feedback) (Smith, 2017:21-22). The event planner should have a checklist of responsibilities with specified time frames to keep the event on a path. Communication is also vital to guarantee that the event goes as planned (Phat, 2014:17).

There might be small challenges along the way. However, expectantly most of these will have been considered within the **contingency plans** to address problems that might arise. As stipulated by Holley (2001:25), it is essential for event planners to always have a contingency plan in place, engaging precedence on the monitoring of attendee behaviour and safety. An event may be hindered by various factors such as unfavourable weather; traffic; terrorist attacks; catering complications; insufficient staffing; crowding; unruly attendees; natural disasters; and major problems with the event venue (Holley, 2001:25-26; Phat, 2014:39; Smith, 2017:22). Armstrong (2001), cited by Smith (2017:22), suggests for event planners to take several safety measures in order to create an active contingency plan:

- launch a dedicated team to investigate potential event disasters;
- create an emergency plan;
- produce a chain of command;
- review the plan with all event staff; and
- summarise key plan elements in the event programme.

Closing off an event also refers to **"shutting down"** an event, which is the second last task of an event (Smith, 2017:22). Here both physical (such as packing up of equipment) and administrative aspects (such as filing) come into play (Engblom, 2010:37). The event team should be aware of what an event shut-down entails and their roles during the process. Aspects for deliberation during the event shut-down should include (Events Tasmania, 2019:internet; Smith, 2017:22):

- leaving the venue as per contract;
- taking a comprehensive itinerary;
- paying suppliers up to date;
- closing of suppliers who are no longer essential; and
- the open acknowledgement of event attendees and contributors throughout the event.

As Holley (2001:28) states: "the event planner's job does not conclude once the event has ended". After the planning phase and the actual event execution, follows the significant component of post-event evaluation (Shutko, 2015:19).

3.4.3 Post-event evaluation

During the final stage, post-event evaluation is beneficial for determining event disappointment or accomplishment (Smith, 2017:23). This is also an important stage of event management, as it enlightens future decision-making and pinpoints areas for improvement (Phat, 2014:49). Before the post-event evaluation process can commence, **evaluation criteria** should be determined. Effectively assessing an event requires the **gathering of various sets of information**, which include: satisfaction rates; losses or revenue; return event attendees; supplier sentiments and much more (Smith, 2017:23). As per the guidance of Engblom (2010:38-39), Events Tasmania (2019:internet), Holley (2001:28) and Manners (2014:50), event planners should complete the following significant **post-event tasks**:

- officially thanking all involved in planning and executing of the event;
- offer sponsors and all the event planners with an event report;
- conduct a courtesy post-event follow-up/ evaluation with attendees;
- contact the media with regards to possible media releases;

- settle unpaid accounts; and
- review the event and keep an accurate record of the planners' procedures and activities, to learn from blunders and accomplishments.

Additionally, der Wagen (2001:244) reminds event planners to **stipulate event impacts** within the formal evaluation. Included event impacts as referred to in Chapter 2 (c.f.2.4) are political, economic (c.f. 2.4.1), environmental (c.f.2.4.3); social and cultural impacts (c.f.2.4.2).

Events can be evaluated based on the KSFs from both attendees and event planners' viewpoints (Manners, 2014:51). To evaluate an event, quantitative and qualitative data/ information needs to be collected (Bladen *et al.,* 2012:373). The **sources of information for event evaluation** can be obtained from the following eight role-players (Shone & Parry, 2004:221):

1. Attendee observation – attained from questionnaires (surveys) and attendee's perceptions;
2. Police or security – about traffic problems, crowding etc.;
3. Council – reporting back on the event access, host community views and parking;
4. Event planners – with their event notes and observations;
5. Event staff and volunteers – evaluating their logbooks, comments and views;
6. Sponsors – the level of awareness and views of publicity;
7. Specialists and department leaders – their notes and reactions; and
8. Mystery attendees – also taking their notes and observations into consideration.

Notably, Bladen *et al.* (2012:372) refer to several hands-on **principles for inspecting management resources** and time in the process of event evaluation: see how management can be bettered; recognise and measure impacts; please event stakeholders and sponsors; measure disappointment or achievement; detect and resolve difficulties; determine the event's value; and gain acceptance, reliability and sustenance. This allows for comprehensive event evaluation and can be valuable for future event management. In summary, Engblom (2010:39), as well as Shone and Parry (2004:220), recommend for event planners to ask the following three questions in order to record and implement the feedback and solutions for future event planning:

- Which elements during the event-management process worked very well, that should be included at the next event?
- Which elements during the event-management process was successful, but can be improved on for future event planning?

- Which event-management element was badly organised, that should be changed for future event planning?

The post-event evaluation stage concludes the event management-lifecycle and leads one to the comprehensive summary of previous research on event management in SA, as stipulated in the next section.

3.5 PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON THE MANAGEMENT OF EVENTS IN SA

During an analysis of current research (published articles and peer-reviewed literature) online, the researcher was able to compile a list of ten South African studies conducted on event management, from the year 2006 until the present. Table 3.2 specifies the author, event-management study topic, type of events researched, the research approach and a summary of the research findings.

Table 3-1: Summary of previous research on the management of events in SA

AUTHOR(S)	STUDY TOPIC	TYPE OF EVENT	RESEARCH APPROACH	FINDINGS
Bosch (2018)	Assessing video-gaming events in South Africa	Video-gaming events	Demand-side (Quantitative) Supply-side (Qualitative)	Recommendations to guide video-gaming event organisers on KSFs, how to approach different markets and guarantee satisfied visitors. The research contributes to the local video gaming industry.
Venske (2018)	Experiential learning experiences of event-management students at a South African university, a UoT	All events - no specification	Qualitative Supply-side	Students experience the need to be coached as future event managers. Academic and industry supervisors

				need to develop mentorship strategies to close the knowing-doing gap to enhance student experiences.
Venske (2017)	Graduate attributes for contemporary business event tourism management qualifications: Employee and graduate reflections at a UoT	Corporate events	Qualitative Supply-side	Event tourism employers recommend a range of graduate attributes and personal skills. From an event graduates' perspective, gaps are found in the soft skills required after graduate university studies. Challenges within a developing country are identified.
Steyn *et al.* (2014)	Sport event-management curricular outcomes in the South African higher education context	Sport events	Qualitative & Quantitative Supply-side	Providing outcomes for sport event-management training in higher education to address the competencies required by managers.
Venter (2014)	Implications of the Goal Theory on-air show programs planning	Air shows	Quantitative Supply-side	Most event attendees have pre-set goals based on the air show event program. A better understanding of these will assist event planners in meeting attendees' expectations. Then planners can design the air show program to meet more visitor goals; thus increasing the positive affect and reducing the negative experiences at air shows.
Manners *et al.* (2015a)	Managing a live music performance: a supply-side analysis	Music event	Qualitative Supply-side	The KSFs differ significantly from one tourism sector to another. Comparing the results of qualitative research reveals

				more in-depth information conducted on critical success factors. Pre-event, during-event and post-event-planning phases differ from event to event. There is no standard guideline to create a memorable visitor experience.
Manners *et al.* (2015b)	Different venues, different markets, different experiences: evidence from live music performances.	Music event	Quantitative Demand-side	Results indicate statistically significant differences between the various locations based on visitor profile, economic impact, and what factors visitors regarded as important for memorable visitor experience by researching visitors who attend the same live music performance at four different destinations.
McCallagha n (2015)	Service quality management in conference tourism: expectations versus delivery	Corporate Events	Quantitative Demand-side	Service delivery of a specific conference venue is measured. Main expectations of attendees are identified. The expected and perceived conference service do not line up.
Manners (2011)	The KSFs for managing the visitor experience at a major musical event	Music Events	Quantitative Demand-side	Identifying what visitors regard as KSFs for a memorable visitor experience at a major music event.
De Witt (2006)	KSFs for managing special events: the case of wedding tourism	Special Events – Weddings	Qualitative Supply-side	To identify KSFs for owners and planners of wedding tourism products, consider and apply to grow the industry and create sustainable products.

Source: Researcher's compilation

It is evident from the research compilation that researchers Manners and Venske are currently the local contemporary frontrunners for event-management research. Current event-management research (referred to in Table 3.2) focuses on the management of a variety of events, including **music events** (Manners *et al.,* 2015a; Manners *et al.,* 2015b; Manners, 2011); **corporate events** (Venske 2017; McCallaghan, 2015); **sport events** (Steyn *et al.,* 2014) and other **special events** such as air shows (Venter, 2014), weddings (de Witt, 2006) and video-gaming events (Bosch, 2018). Previous corporate event-management studies in SA have been conducted from both the demand- and supply-side, by means of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Both existing corporate event studies add value to current research as their research approaches are unalike. Venske's (2017) research is fixated on the supply-side, and her data was qualitative, whereas McCallaghan's (2015) examination is quantitative from a demand-side. During the thorough search, gaps in the current research were identified, whereas prior research focused on the successful management of events and how to create a memorable visitor experience. No prior research listed above and per the researcher's knowledge has been directed to assess the KSFs for the event management of corporate events in SA and the strategic management thereof. This study will thus fill this gap. This study focuses specifically on the strategic management of corporate events, which requires the term and practice to be further explained in more detail.

3.6 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Event planners are responsible for practising professional event management during the planning, production, and supervision of events to reach strategic goals (Getz, 2008:404) ultimately. Now that the reader is provided with the operational aspects of event management, the following section will amplify management methods and approaches and management functions to identify the strategic management requirements for planners to practice and incorporate during event management as strategic management represents the higher order construct of KSFs.

3.6.1 Management methods/ approaches

Over the years, various management models, methods and approaches have developed. They are all unique and offer different management solutions. Event planners need to possess the knowledge of the different models, as one or more management frequently approaches direct managerial action. Some of the most common approaches include (Marias, 2016:31-32):

- The **contingency/ situational approach** that provides a framework of situations in which management methods have the finest chance of accomplishment;
- The **management science approach** – that concentrates on refining organisations and solve operational difficulties by means of mathematical procedures and scientific techniques;
- The **behavioural approach** – focussing mainly on understanding the unalike ways people conduct themselves in the corporate/ working environment;
- The **systems approach**, founded on general systems theory, which concerns several co-dependent parts operating for a specific management purpose; and
- The **classical approach**, which is well-known and one of the earliest approaches. It recommends that managers incessantly strive to increase organisational efficiency for productivity growth by leading; planning; organising and controlling (also generally known as management functions).

According to Silvers (2010b:50) the business function, referred to as "management", is essential in any professional field. Also, while investigating the skills and roles required for event planners, there is almost no difference between general management and events management. The following paragraphs elaborate on the management functions of event management.

3.6.2 Management functions in events management

Since corporate events play a progressively significant role in destination development, effective management is increasingly important (Marais, 2016:28-29). As illustrated in Figure 3.13, the functions of management refer to the overall administrative duties by planners for the event to be managed according to management's definition.

Figure 3-13: The four functions of management

Source: Adapted from Cassidy and Kreitner (2011:16), de Klerk (2013:29), Erasmus (2012:44-45), Marais (2016;32-34) and Saayman (2007:71)

Management entails the following **functions** (Cassidy & Kreitner, 2011:16; Erasmus, 2012:44-45; Marais, 2016;32-34; Saayman, 2007:71):

1. *Planning:* Management sets goals and outlines tasks, specifying how and when it should be achieved. Forecasting of different analysis takes place and managers prepare for change and plan how to deal with uncertainty by articulating a future course of action. Planning assists event planners in various aspects: to sensibly manage event costs, time management and ensure high quality. The event plan is used as the best course of action to monitor the event's progress and schedule to confirm that everything is running according to plan.
2. *Organising:* Delegating of human resources and assigning tasks to numerous individuals. It is the development of a framework within which individuals should collaborate to attain perceived objectives.
3. *Leading:* Keeping individuals motivated while directing and guiding activities in an appropriate direction.

4. *Controlling:* Making sure what is supposed to happen is what is transpiring. The gathering of information to measure current performances and compare them with pre-established performance standards ensures improvements follow suit.

On the other hand, Cassidy and Kreitner (2011:16) propose eight management functions due to the intricate overall administrative duties of event management. These include planning; decision-making; organising; staffing; communicating; motivating; leading and controlling. Moreover, Bowdin *et al.* (2006:266) believe that event management embraces quite a few management areas, while project management joins all of them simultaneously. The areas are planning; leading; marketing; design; control; budgeting; risk; and logistics.

Furthermore, as an event expands, different **levels of management** are formed, creating a hierarchy. The hierarchy varies from top management, to lower management and operatives, as indicated in Figure 3.14 (Cassidy & Kreitner, 2011:238; Marais, 2016:33-35).

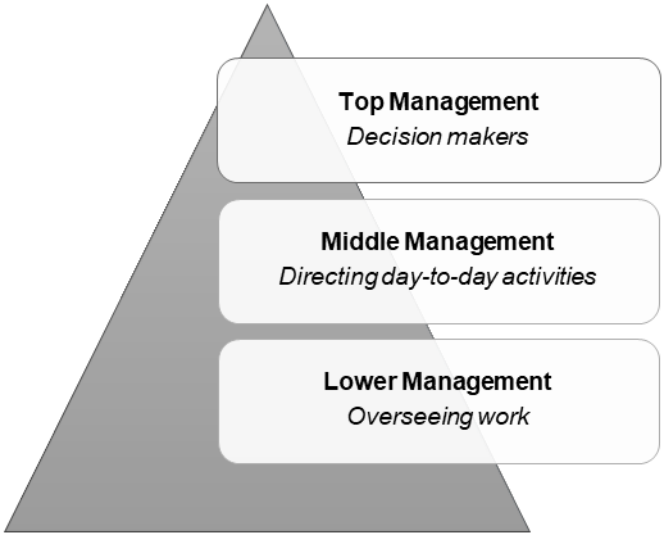

Figure 3-14: Levels of management and their tasks
Source: Adapted from Cassidy and Kreitner (2011:238) as well as Marais (2016:33-35)

A strategy considers deviations in the operating environment and guides an organisation (Saayman, 2002:99). Usually, it is top management's task to carry out strategic management, as they govern the organisation's direction. However, the following section explains strategic management requirements during event management performed by corporate event planners.

3.6.3 Strategic management during event planning

The word *strategy* resulted from the Greek word *stratçgos;* stratus, meaning army; and *ago*, meaning moving or leading (MSG, 2019:internet). A strategy is the blueprint of decisions in an organisation and can be defined as “a general direction set for the company and its various components to achieve a desired state in the future” (MSG, 2019:internet). Kruger (2006:41) explains that there are two significant forms of strategy. They include *intended strategies*, which involve the developed plans and guidelines to achieve set goals and objectives; and *realised strategies*, referring to past activities that had taken place over time and the developments from a set strategy. It is an enduring process (Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:40), with planning as the first strategic management function (Marais, 2016:34). The planning process, which is essential for successful events, is one of the most significant facets of strategic event management (de Witt, 2004:11). During event management, strategic management is a hands-on task by event planners to predict changes and formulate strategies and objectives (de Witt, 2004:11). Throughout strategic management-specific aspects, the mission, vision, objectives, internal and external environment of an organisation (Jones & Hill, 2009:7; Slabbert & Saayman, 2003:40). Strategic management must therefore frame and implement changes to corporate strategies (Jones & Hill, 2009:7). According to de Klerk (2013:30) and de Witt (2004:11), an event planner must ask and understand the following questions during the planning phase:

- Why is the event taking place?
- What is the event goal/objective?
- Who is the event hosted for?
- Who will be responsible for various event tasks?
- What is the time allocation of each task?
- What resources are available/ required to complete the event successfully?

After strategies are verbalised, it should be put into action (Jones & Hill, 2009:7). By performing strategic management, event planners and managers need to manage the “bigger picture”. Moreover, identifying KSFs has become a significant strategic management notion (Marais *et al.*, 2017b:3; Nieh & Pong, 2012:424).

Figure 3.15 demonstrates the strategic management process of event planning during the three phases of strategic inputs, strategic actions and strategic outcomes. For actions to occur, inputs are required, leading to desired outcomes (Marais, 2016:35). The process also illustrates how the preparation and execution of strategies are inclined to the proposed mission, event objectives and vision; which is partial to both the external and internal environment (Kruger, 2006:14; Marais, 2016:35). After the event-management strategy formulation, the event planner

can go ahead, meticulously implementing the event plan. Next, evaluation is key to success in future event planning.

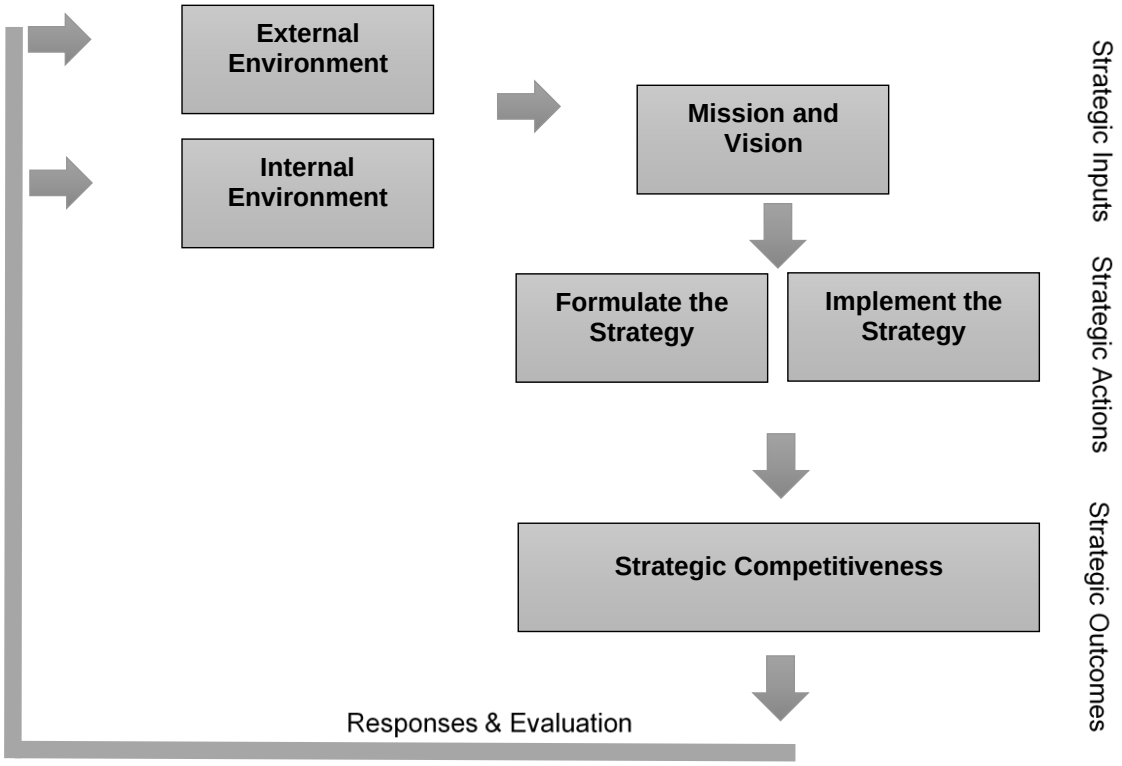

Figure 3-15: The strategic management process
Source: Adapted from Kruger (2006:44) and Marais (2016:34-36)

The proposed **mission and visions** should be accompanied by clear guidelines and action plans of achieving the set objectives, and strategies need to be monitored throughout the strategic management process (Thompson & Martin, 2005, cited by Marais 2016:36). By developing a successful mission and vision statement, event planners and managers must analyse historical missions and visions and consider whether they were fruitful. Moreover, strategic management comprises more than only planning; all stakeholders' interest should be taken into consideration during strategic decision making. The **environmental analysis** step in strategic management is summarised as follows (Kruger, 2006:44): forces outside their industry may influence events. Therefore, a detailed SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the *external environment* (competitors, KSFs, economic, social, technological, and political factors) and *internal environment* (facilities, marketing, programmes, human resources, finances, KSFs, general management) is required. During the environmental analysis, various possible impacts (economic, social, environmental) need to be identified, and provision needs to be made for this once the event strategy is formulated. It also proves

beneficial for event planners and managers to investigate the key elements of events (logistics, activities, attractions, hospitality, services and facilities) during this step. An event plan needs to be decided on by **devising the strategy** while focusing on the key event-planning elements. This includes logistics, hospitality, activities, marketing, security and safety, human resource management, legislation, and financial management, to name but a few (Kruger, 2006:44). Pinto and Slevin (1987:32) agree that after identifying the KSFs, the management team needs to develop action plans for the event to progress. During the **implementation of the strategy**, the following elements are crucial: adequate human resources; mint leadership from management; a well-thought-out organisation structure to allocate workload; financial resources and a strict budget; as well as a managing culture that supports successful strategy implementation (Kruger, 2006:64-65). Strategic outcomes need to be borne in mind, for the event to be competitive. By considering all **stakeholders' responses** post-event, a thorough **evaluation** can take place; to add value for future event planning.

The advantages of strategic planning and management include (Bramwell, 1997:167):

- a sense of proprietorship among all event stakeholders
- an inclusive approach;
- the assortment and exact description of objectives to work towards;
- a structure to screen and respond to transformation; and
- identified measures.

This concludes the importance of strategic management and demonstrates the detailed process for event planners to follow during strategic event management. It is important to understand how previous authors and researchers framed the process of successful event management. A wide variety of event-planning models is available for event planners and other stakeholders to use as a successful event-planning framework (Smith, 2017:8), as explained in the next part of the study.

3.7 EXISTING EVENT-MANAGEMENT MODELS AND GUIDELINES

Many event-planning models are available for event planners to use as a successful event-planning framework (Smith, 2017:8). Research conducted by Smith (2017:38) on event-management models, and the necessity thereof, leads to a profound comment by one of the senior lectures interviewed by the researcher for the study:

> …when I am planning an event, I do not think of any model. Unfortunately, I think, although I work in the lecturing and education industry, people try and make something that is not academic out of it. Which is why I very rarely use academic models in events.

The interviewee unquestionably commented from experience-based rather than theory-based practice. Nevertheless, the controversial comment is thought-provoking for Smith (2017:38) and brought the researcher to the realisation whether an event-planning model is, in fact, essential, after an event planner has gained enough experience within the niche market. Other event-management researchers strongly disagree with this comment in their emphasis on how important formal guidelines and models are during the event-management process, as indicated in the following sections.

3.7.1 Event-Management Process by Gers-Couto

According to Gers-Couto (2013:27-28), it is important to have a blueprint to work from when planning an event, as it outlines the steps involved in event planning and the order of completion. The author further explains that having a clear step-by-step guide will ensure that an event planner covers all the event-planning areas and considers the risks throughout a consistent manner. The benefits of an event-management guideline, therefore are countless. The guideline formalises the event-management process for all stakeholders involved, ensuring a strong direction and a definite start and finish. Furthermore, no event-management KSFs will be neglected (Gers-Couto, 2013:27-28). Gers-Couto (2013) advanced an event-management model that serves as a guideline for South African event planners and managers. It is referred to as the *Event Management Concept Relationship* – a concept that SA event managers from the high-raking TMCs are trained by through The Hedgehog Event, a recognised event and training solution. As indicated in Figure 3.16, four important event-management concepts play a role within the overall event-management process:

- Concept one: The *nine steps* to managing an event;
- Concept two: *ADMOR* (administration, design, marketing, operation, risk);
- Concept three: *WHs* (what, why, who, where, when, how); and
- Concept four: *Event Stakeholders* (CCCVVS: client, company, customer, vendor, venue, speaker)

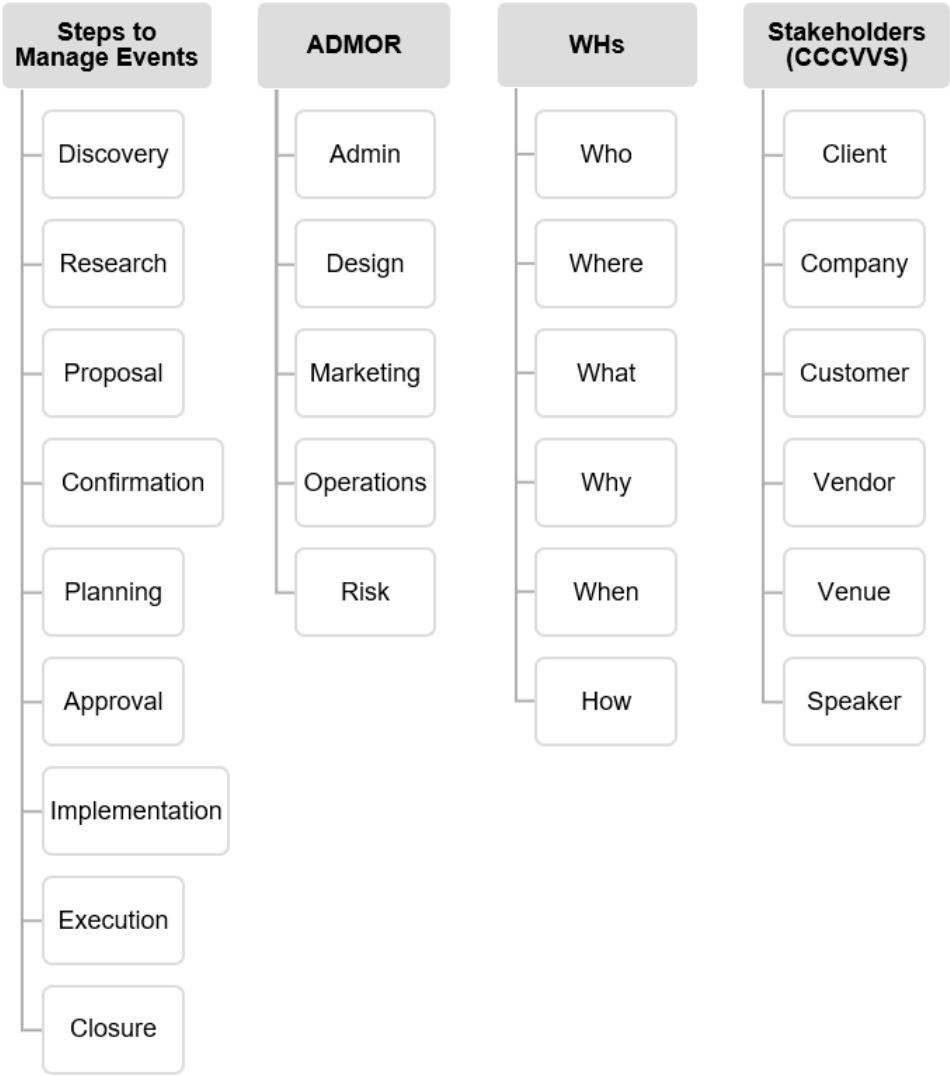

Figure 3-16: The Event-Management Concept Relationship
Source: Adapted from Gers-Couto (2013:105-121)

Concept 1: The nine steps to managing an event (Gers-Couto, 2013:27-33,106-112):

1. *Discovery*: During this period, the event planner is notified by the client about the proposed event. After that, the event planner develops the project scope by asking several event-related questions to identify the what, where, when, and how.
2. *Research and Development:* During this exploratory period, a new event concept is created – the feasibility thereof is thoroughly measured by meticulously identifying the manufacturing and design stages of a successful event. During this step, event compliance and risk management take place by reviewing the six stakeholders.
3. *Proposal Delivery*: Here, the event strategy proposal is written and assembled. The proposal provides a guideline from which the event will be established, designed, executed and accomplished.

4. *Confirmation Stage Gate:* Now, the progress is inspected, and imperative changes or decisions are made regarding the budget and resources. It is advisable for event planners to obtain the necessary sign-off and final approval during this stage, not to incur unnecessary costs due to scope changes later during the event. The following are confirmed with the completion of this step: budget; final attendee numbers; event date and location; programme; administration; marketing; design; operations; risk management; and the event concept.
5. *Planning and Design:* This is the course of managing key elements of the event, including costing, timelines, booking event locations, obtaining licenses, confirming catering, directing logistics, theme development confirming activities, choosing speakers, ordering equipment, continuous risk management, and implementing contingency plans.
6. *Approval Stage Gate:* Here, the stipulations for the event are determined, and final approval and pre-payments to the event planner take place.
7. *Implementation:* At this point, logistical and operational requirements are coordinated; services and goods are contracted, and deposits are paid to suppliers.
8. *Project execution:* Event strategies and plans are executed. The steps include: following the event operations manual; set-up and break down timetable; AV prompt sheets; food and beverage matrix; design implementation; marketing accomplishment; operations execution; and continuous risk management.
9. *Closure:* At this point, procedures are performed to conclude actions across all event-management phases to finalise the event officially and its prescribed obligations. Feedback via a post-event report is provided to the client, indicating problems experiences, savings obtained, and lessons learned.

Concept 2: ADMOR

During each one of the nine event steps, a further five areas need to be considered, i.e. *administration, design, marketing, operations* and the *risk* domain (also referred to as ADMOR). These domains illustrate the event planner's scope of responsibilities and embody the most important action areas during event management (Gers-Couto, 2013:33).

Concept 3: The scope WHs

WHs refers to questions to which responses are measured to gain elementary information concerning the event. Throughout every event step the what, why, who, where, when, what if, and how should be well-thought-out (Gers-Couto, 2013:37).

Concept 4: The event stakeholders

Gers-Couto (2013:38-39) refers to six event stakeholders: the client, company, customer, vendor, venue and speaker. Before event objectives are recognised, the stakeholders and their desires need to be identified. Each stakeholder needs to be taken into consideration during every step of the event-management process.

It is advisable that before event planners start designing, implementing and managing an event, they need to comprehend and follow the four concepts discussed above fully, to execute a successful event.

3.7.2 Kestner's Event-Management Guide

Kestner (1996) formerly formulated a complete event management-guide, as demonstrated in Figure 3.17. The guideline provided by this event-management model is respected for this study, as the strategic event-management process is an end-to-end offering, as demonstrated in detail by Kester's event-management guide.

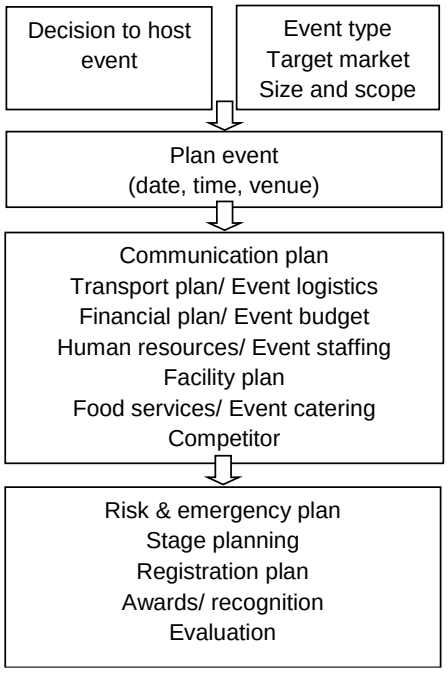

Figure 3-17: Key aspects of event management

Source: Adapted from Henry (2003:11), Damm (2012:52) and Kestner (1996)

With this paragraph follows a summary of what *Kestner's Event Management Guide* entails (Damm, 2012:52; Henry, 2003:10-13; Saayman, 2001a:125-136). Accurately following this proposed guideline throughout the pre-, during- and post-event process, is said to guarantee a successful event. As soon as the decision is made to host an event, much **planning** needs to

take place before an event planner can go ahead staging the event. There is no room for errors due to the significant expenses and time invested during event management. The event planner/ event committee needs to determine the type of event and objective; which governs the operation's dates, location, size, and target market. An excellent communication strategy provides all event stakeholders with a well-thought-out **communication plan**. The communication medium is determined during this stage, and promotional material such as brochures and advertisements/ teasers are developed. Mostly local operators are used for supplying transport, which event planners coordinate. During the **transportation plan,** the type and scope of transportation are determined, following this, confirmed logistic arrangements are communicated to other event planners and the attendees. During **financial planning,** an event budget is prepared, and an accurate record is kept of all income or sponsors and expenses. **Staffing plans** determine the human resources required, their work scope and compulsory training. Staff need to be supervised, and a preferred communication medium is established – required for event management. Volunteers are recruited, and event staff are hired; each provided with work instructions as well as payment/ recognition arrangements. During **facility planning,** the venue is reserved, and special attention is paid to seamless venue access, security and resource to adequately prepare the venue for the event. **Food service** plans follow where menus are finalised, beverages and catering are mostly outsourced for attendees and personnel. Inventory management is necessary to inspect equipment frequently, understand what needs to be purchased or rented during the **equipment and supplies planning**, and keep it safe during storage.

Furthermore, uniforms, equipment and supplies must be distributed in an orderly and registered manner. While compiling **risk management** and emergency plan for the event, all facilities are inspected and insurance and waiver forms, are put in place. The registration period starts and ends at a specified time. With **registration plans**, event attendees/ qualifiers are determined, and the necessary information to obtain in advance from attendees. The awards and **recognition plan** is paramount for event success. By acknowledging achievement, victory can be repeated in future events. Incentives need to be awarded, planning the types of awards, obtaining and storing it, and the presentation thereof is important. **Event evaluation** is imperative before, during and after the event. Event planners compile an evaluation questionnaire to prompt them throughout the event-management process. Post-event evaluation surveys need to be completed by all stakeholders, and the comments need to be prudently reviewed and summarised.

3.7.3 Seven Stages of Strategic Planning by Mcgrath and Bates

Referring to Figure 3.18 below, the *Seven Stages of Strategic Planning and Management* (Mcgrath & Bates, 2017:156) provide a valuable overview of steps for event planners to follow in producing strategic, comprehensive and well-thought-out events.

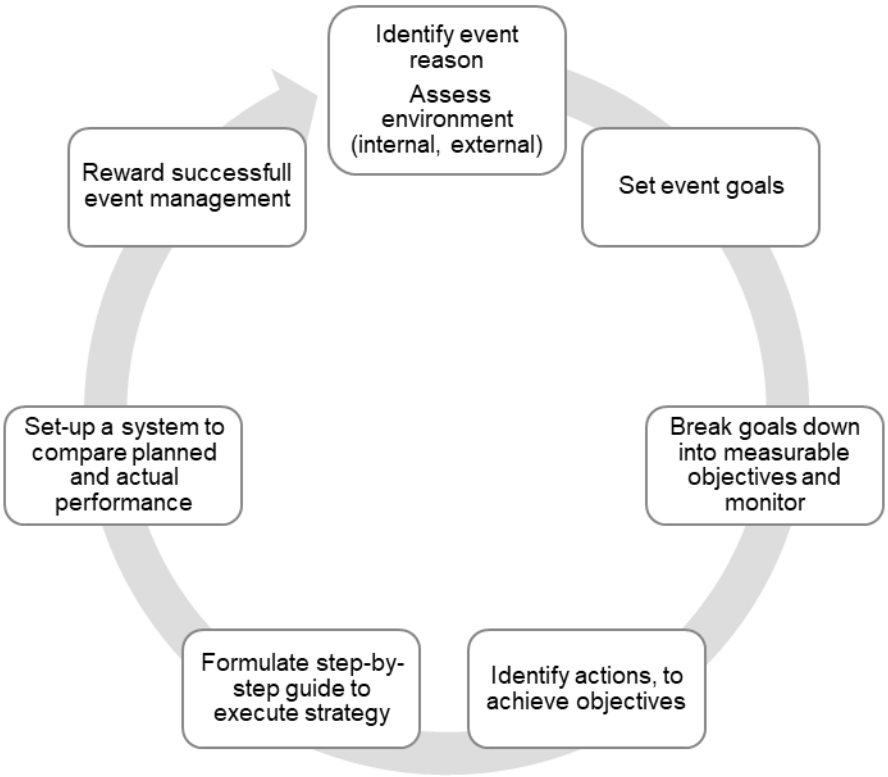

Figure 3-18: Seven stages of strategic planning and management of events
Source: Adapted from Mcgrath and Bates (2017:156)

Following this systematic approach, the event planner should first identify the reason for hosting the event while assessing the environment's possible internal and external impacts. This will allow for event goals to be set. In return, these goals need to be broken down in measurable objectives and monitored consistently throughout event planning. It is sensible to put an action plan in place, formulating a step-by-step guide for event-planning staff to follow meticulously. It is important to track and compare the planned tasks and timeline with the actual performance during the event-management process. If all is on par, the team of successful and well-managed events should be acknowledged and rewarded accordingly. By including this event-management model in the literature, the study is relevant for the research and adds immense value, as the main study goal is to provide a guideline for planners in the strategic management of corporate events. The proposed management theory, therefore, creates a basic framework for the strategic management of corporate events.

3.7.4 Getz's model of event planning

According to Bowdin *et al.* (2006:118), Getz's model is merged with an event-planning process in setting a new event, together with the stakeholders active throughout the **event bidding process**. Also, Getz's event-planning model (see Figure 3.19) demonstrates a straightforward approach to event planning and has a **more strategic approach** to the complete plan. Event planners should classify their event as either a new or reoccurring event, which will guide them in choosing an event-management model (Smith, 2017:11).

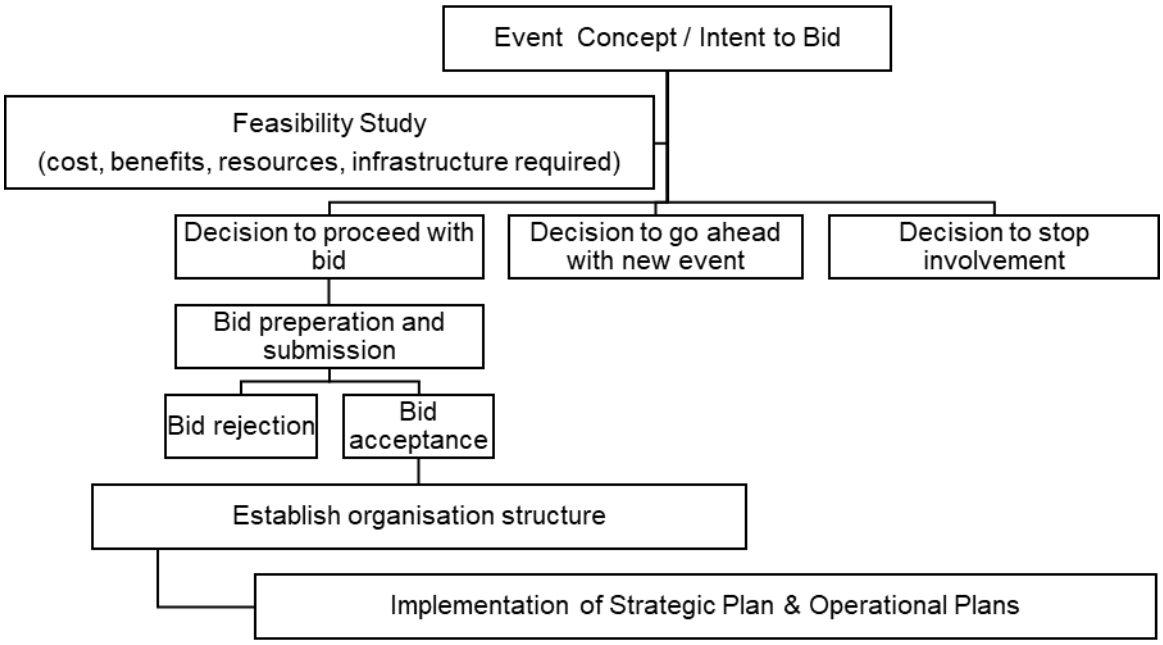

Figure 3-19: Getz's Event-planning Model
Source: Adapted from Smith (2017:12)

Getz is said to be a ground-breaking academic in the event-management field. However, Shone and Parry (2004), cited by Smith (2017:11), disapproved of Getz's model, deeming it unpractical and too complicated for event planners to implement. The researcher also understood this model to focus largely on event planning throughout the event-bidding process. Nevertheless, the event concept's basic event-planning process, establishing an organisation structure, and the implementation adds value to the compilation of viable event-management models.

3.7.5 Salem *et al.*'s Event-planning Model

As illustrated in Figure 3.20, Salem *et al.'*s. Model is divided into four sections, which includes decision-making, detailed planning, implementation, and evaluation. It also illustrates a continual process within its circular model; which is a more adaptable model (Smith, 2017:37).

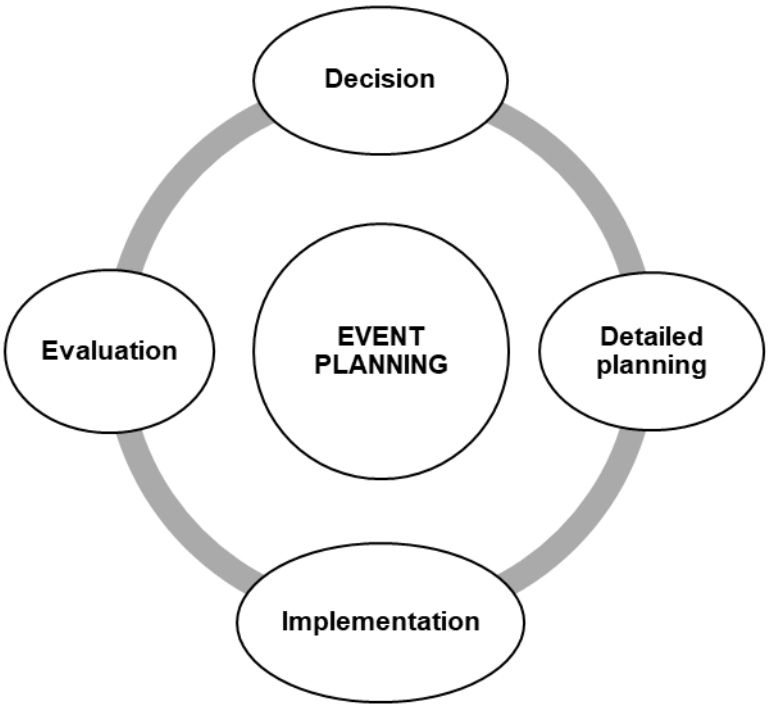

Figure 3-20: Salem *et al.*'s Event-planning Model
Source: Adapted from Smith (2017:9)

Salem *et al.*'s event-planning model can be altered and is suitable for any event set-up. Within this model lies a guideline for the deconstruction and methodical identification of the four major stages of event growth/ development, as explained below (Smith, 2017:9):

1. During the **decision** stage, event planners need to identify the event's aims and objectives and outline a feasibility study. It will also be beneficial to establish an event-management board during this stage and decide how to approach the event.
2. Herewith the **detailed event planning** takes place. The event is defined, a budget is finalised, marketing for the event takes precedence, human resource management takes place, venue planning and operational management is confirmed, and scheduling/ programme planning of the event is done.
3. In the **event's implementation stage, event planners deal with contingency plans, monitoring progress and shutting down** the event.
4. The final stage entails the **evaluation** of the event. It is important to evaluate the event outcome and process from the perspective of sponsors, the host community, event staff, event planners, customers and the environment.

Salem et *al.*'s model is a good event-management model to follow and adds value to this study for the following reasons (Smith, 2017:24):

- it is deemed an adaptive model;

- it supports an interactive event-planning approach, warranting constant event improvements;
- other researchers also used this model as a base model and adjusted from there, and it has been described as a proper guideline for the organised deconstruction and identification of the four main event-development sections/ stages.

As highlighted by Smith (2017:8), Dowson and Bassett (2015) also assembled an event-planning model, copying Salem *et al.'*s first two stages and last stage, due to these stages' usefulness. However, Dowson and Bassett's (2015) model does not include an event stage; this forms a margin of error to guarantee a fruitful event (Smith, 2017:8). Hence the Dowson and Bassett model will not be included in this study.

3.7.6 Tum, Norton and Wright's Event Operations Management Model

As shown in Figure 3.21, the Tum Norton and Wright model "…provides a way of approaching how to plan and organise each event that is staged" (Tum *et al.,* 2006:xxi). It is divided into four sections: event analysis; the planning process; event execution; and post-event evaluation. Tum *et al.* (2006:5) maintain that when making use of this model, event planners are required to be more flexible in their approach, as it is essential to go back to prior stages in the model and re-evaluate amendments as they occur. This provides event planners with more peace of mind, as they can return to any stage and change them as the event planning grows.

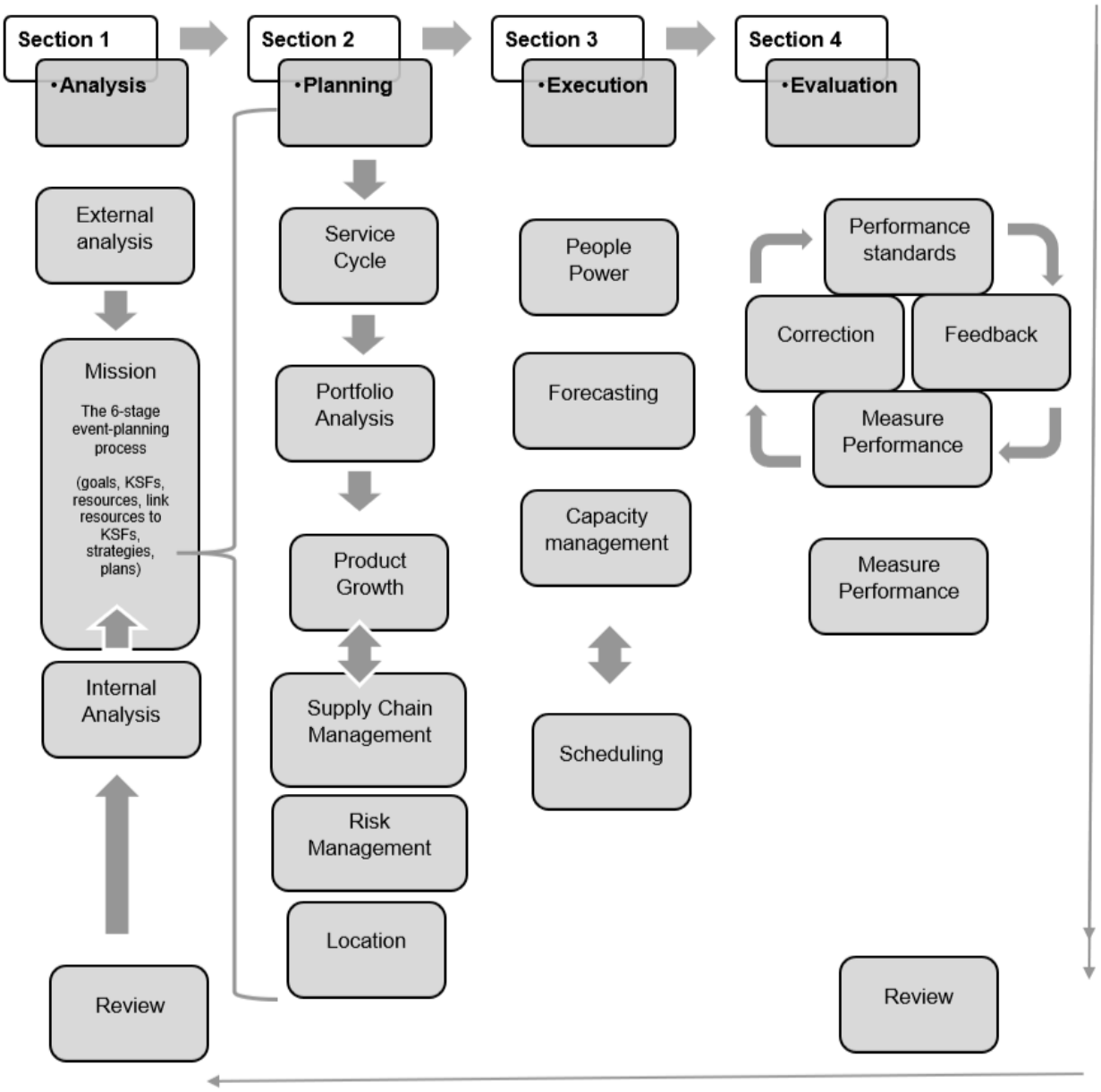

Figure 3-21: Event Operations Management Model by Tum, Norton and Wright
Source: Adapted from Tum *et al.* (2006) and Smith (2017:14)

The Tum, Norton and Wright model reflect Salem et *al.'s* Model, as it is also divided into four sections with similar titles. It is also known to be a much more linear event-management model based on the project practice and is very closely related to event management, and it will add value to the literature study.

3.7.7 The Event-Management Planning Process (Pondicherry University – MBA)

In India, the Pondicherry University proposed the following event-management planning process to their MBA tourism students, compiled by Abraham (2006), as illustrated in Figure 3.22.

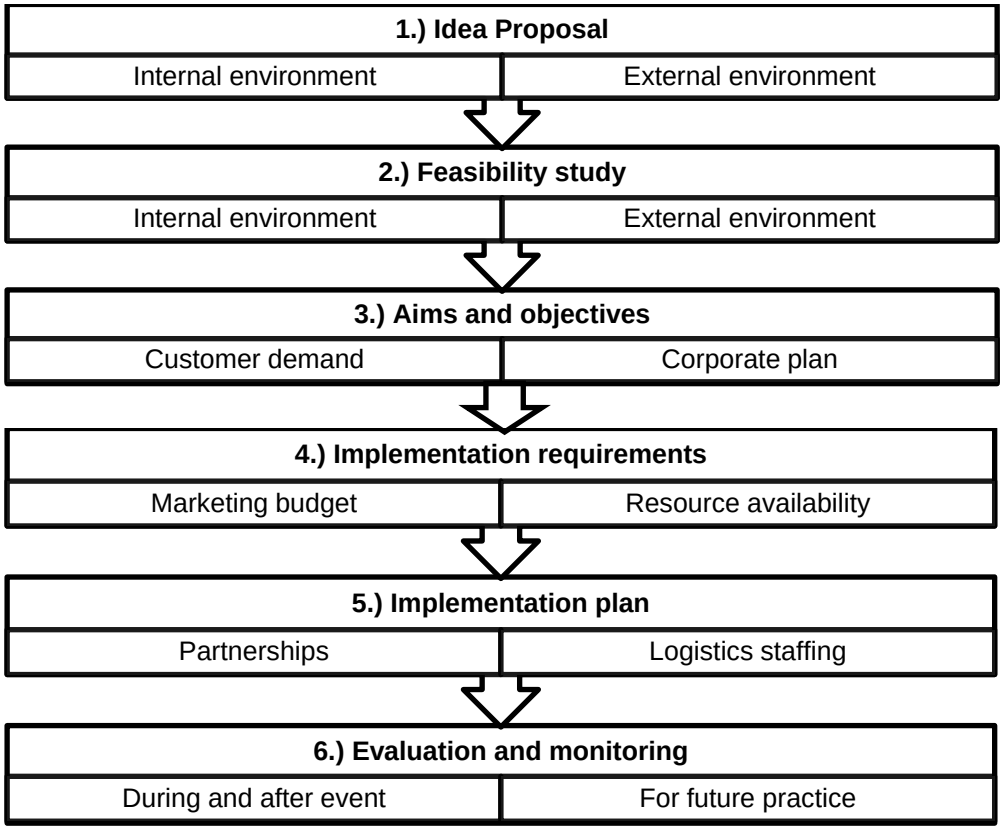

Figure 3-22: The Event-Management Planning Process
Source: Abraham (2006:30)

Abraham (2006:30-68) holds that, the anticipated event-management planning process should be applied within six steps, as follows:

1. The creation and purpose of the event is determined, taking into consideration impacts from both the internal and external environment;
2. A feasibility study is required, stipulating advantages and drawbacks of the event, once again looking into impacts from both the internal and external environment;
3. The event planner needs to identify the event's main aims and objectives for it to be operationally functional and successful in accordance with the client's requirements;
4. During this step, the event planner identifies all the requirements in order to implement the event plan, while looking closely at the budget and the availability of resources (suppliers, staffing etc.);

5. A detailed event plan is required, with action lists, before and during the event; and
6. After the event, a comprehensive evaluation is required, and all event stakeholders should be updated with the results.

Pondicherry University's MBA Event Management Model is included in this research, as it is a well-thought-out strategic management planning process and on par with top event-management models proposed by specialists in the MICE field.

3.7.8 Strategic Management Process for MICE (Tassiopoulos)

Tassiopoulos's (2000:104) strategic management process is so effective that de Witt (2006) used it as the basis of the researcher's study to identify the KSFs for managing special events. It will also add value to this study in assessing the KSFs for corporate events' strategic management. Figure 3.23 provides an overall outline of the strategic event-management process.

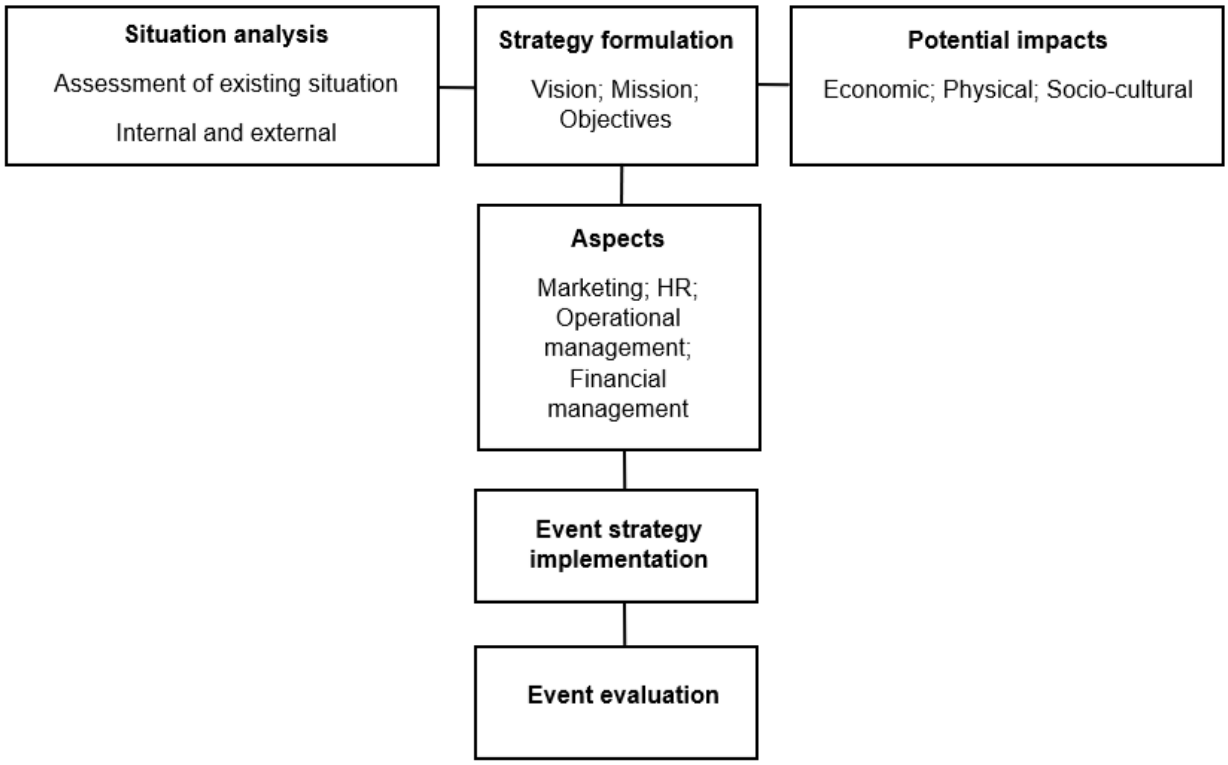

Figure 3-23: Strategic Management Process for MICE
Source: Adapted from de Witt (2006:12) and Tassipoulos (2000:104)

The Strategic Management Process for MICE entails the initial parallel steps of an analysis of the request to host an event; formulating event missions, vision, pinpointing the objectives; and

proactively identifying possible event impacts (physical, economic, socio-cultural). After that, Hereafter the event planner can focus on the event's marketing, operational management aspects, human resource management for all event staffing, and commercial management aspects. As soon as the event strategy is decided on, it can meticulously be implemented and evaluated accordingly post-event.

3.7.9 Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK)

Event management as a career has advanced from securing logistics and emerging resources to the requirement of a body of knowledge that integrates desirable leadership skills for longstanding career success and strategic planning (Goldblatt, 2008:xiv). A body of knowledge is defined as the total amount of information accumulated for a specific field (Burke, 2006:16). Academics created a theoretical framework of an event-management body of knowledge (EMBOK) to enable the capacity to define, map and align existing event-management standards; to be consistent with the global event-management environment (de Klerk, 2017:37; Silvers *et al.*, 2006:185). According to de Klerk (2017:37) EMBOK refers to the "acknowledged practices in a field; the preferred method of practice". While completing his master's thesis in 1999, comparing the management of events with project-management methodology, William O'Toole identified the need for an EMBOK. He compiled a website to promote discussions on the subject and gather further data. Studying the scope of core competencies for event management, Julia Silvers contacted O'Toole two years later showing interest in the development of an EMBOK, which concluded the launch of Silvers' EMBOK project in 2003 (Silvers, 2004:internet).

Consequently, "an initial event management body of knowledge domain structure was developed… based upon an affinity analysis of 28 event management industry programmes and knowledge systems from five countries plus a bibliography of industry-specific and general business literature" (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet). Ultimately, researchers and practitioners created EMBOK to collate the knowledge and skills required by professional event planners. As a result, EMBOK provides a source of information for event management, deep-rooted within business management. The EMBOK framework can be accustomed to an event planner's requirements, and it is also a complimentary and open-source tool in the public domain. A variety of stakeholders can benefit from the EMBOK, namely (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al.,* 2007:13):

- *Governments* – to create sensible employment opportunities, bearing in mind policies and regulatory legislation to protect their community and lessen their legal responsibility;

- *Associations* – to produce achieving professional development credentialing products and programming that offer global acknowledgement and career advancement for the members;
- *Suppliers* and *event practitioners* (current and upcoming) – for clear direction towards the continuous upgrading of excellence, competence and cost-effectiveness;
- *Education establishments* – to create pertinent research opportunities, also to uphold and further develop quality curriculum programmes; and
- The *event-management industry* – to improve their image by pronouncing the occupation's scope and intricacy.

Julia Silvers explains in a detailed presentation (Silvers *et al.,* 2007:1-16) the introduction to EMBOK, as illustrated in Figure 3.24 and summarised in the section below.

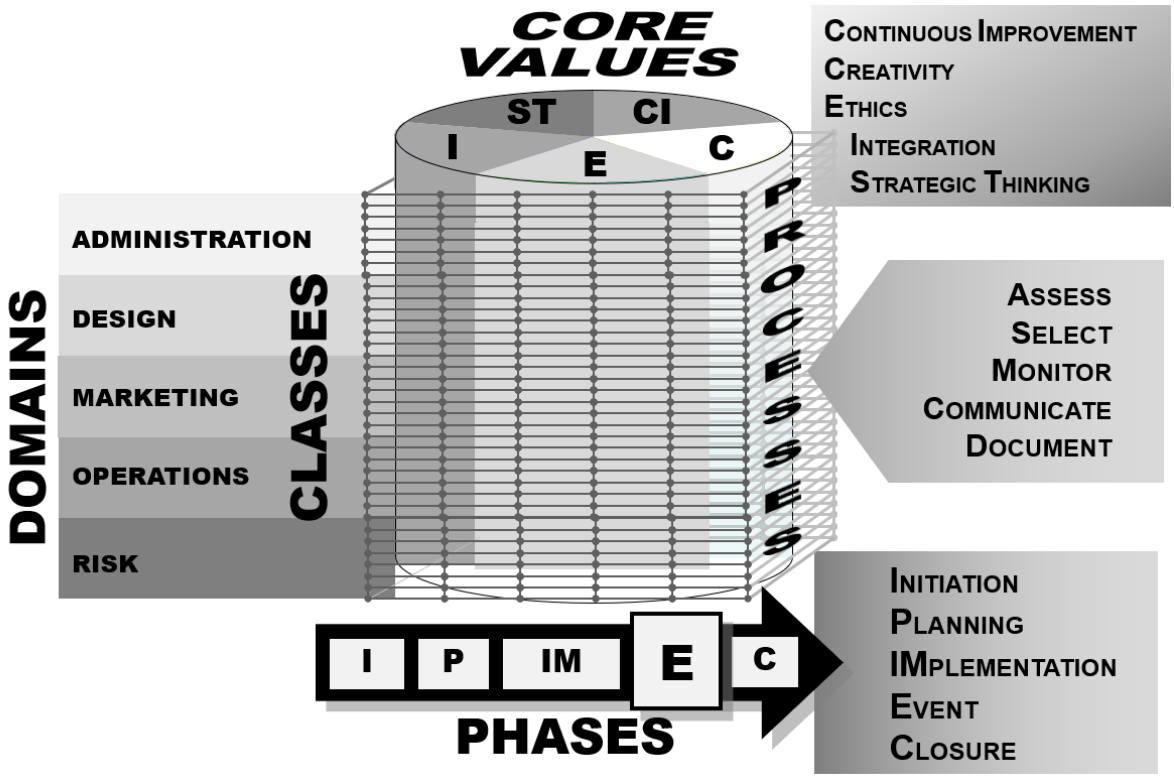

Figure 3-24: The international EMBOK Model
Source: Adapted from Silvers *et al*. (2007:3)

The EMBOK consists of 35 elements included within five domains; with four main facets that include phases, processes, core values and knowledge domains (de Klerk, 2013:37; Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet). Together these signify the event-management scope and offer the key categories for an event-management system (Silvers *et al.,* 2007:3). The EMBOK **phases** facet

illustrates the chronological nature of event management, stressing time management during the event. The phases comprise initiation, planning, implementation, the event, and closure – resulting from original project-management jargon (de Klerk, 2013:37; Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al.,* 2007:4). The **processes** side of the EMBOK represents both a successive and iterative system that encourages an energetic approach to the changing nature of events and a wide-ranging sequence of action (Silvers *et al.,* 2007:5). The processes include assessment, selection, monitoring, communication, and documentation – founded on widely acknowledged process structures (de Klerk, 2013:37; Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al.,* 2007:5). The model suggests for all event-management decisions concerning each element, phase, and process of an event to be infused by the proposed core **values**, which is no specific order includes ethics, creativity, strategic thinking, integration and constant improvement (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al.,* 2007:6). Additionally, EMBOK is divided into five **domains**, signifying events management's predominant areas of activity and event planners' responsibilities. It includes, without any implied order: administration, design, marketing, operations and risk management (Sealy, 2018:471; Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al*., 2006), with a time dimension, tools and techniques allocated to each element in the knowledge domain. It is a unified procedure, chronologically integrating each element and phase in the event-management process.

The *administration* domain mainly deals with the direction, allocation and regulation of event resources (i.e. financials, human resources, information, procurement, stakeholders, systems and time) (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al*., 2007:8). Furthermore, the *design* domain concentrates on the creative appearance and interpretation of the event's objectives and goalmouths and its experimental magnitudes. This domain embraces catering, content, entertainment, environment, production, the programme and theme (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al*., 2007:9). The *marketing* domain shapes the event image, and it covers the functions that encourage political and economic support and enables business development. This domain also deals with the management and growth of the: marketing plan, materials, merchandising, promotions, public relations, sales and sponsorship (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al*., 2007:10). The *operations* domain focuses on the coordination of products, equipment, people and services brought together on-site to create the event and the tasks, roles and applications associated with each. This includes various elements, namely attendees, communications, infrastructure, logistics, participants, site and technical (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers *et al.,* 2007:11). The *risk* domain deals with the lawfulness and protective obligations conventionally associated with an event, including compliance, decision management, emergency management, health and safety, insurance, legal and security (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet; Silvers et al., 2007:12).

Through each researcher's own education and understanding, *opinions* are shaped. They may refer to similar principles in a field but may disagree on how it is regarded (de Klerk, 2013:41). Tassiopoulos (2010:54) claims that EMBOK advances event management, identifying possible event challenges, opportunities, and investigating the event's need. EMBOK can also be used to develop academic programmes and add value in examining event outcomes, which is helpful data for future event planning (Tassiopoulos, 2010:54). However, there are growing concerns in the events industry, with a visible divide between the real world of working in the MICE industry and trained in the classroom. According to Venske (2018:82), there is a dire need for more experiential/ practical learning in even-management education.

Furthermore, Sealy (2018:471) acknowledges how EMBOK is truly detailed in classifying various knowledge-based disciplines to support the event industry; but states that EMBOK is not enough. Sealy (2018:471) stresses that event management is a very hands-on career, demanding soft skills (i.e. problem-solving; listening; attention to detail; personal selling; negotiation; high-level cognitive skills; emotional intelligence; pitching; time management; and leadership) that cannot be taught by a transmission-reception model of scholarship and schooling. Getz and Page (2016a) also notice flaws within EMBOK. They explain how administration, marketing, design, risk and operation are the main knowledge fields of EMBOK, mostly derived from managerial literature. Although problem-solving and managerial skills are stressed within EMBOK, no theory is addressed.

Moreover, EMBOK excludes valuable soft skills employers require, such as attentive listening; negotiation; attention to detail; high-level cognitive skills; pitching; problem-solving; time management; selling; leadership; emotional intelligence; listening; and attention to detail. These listed skills are not developed from a textbook but through practice in the event-management field (Sealy, 2018:471). EMBOK also poses difficulties for cross-border job movement and permits/ licensing. Getz and Page (2016b:597) believe that EMBOK does not establish knowledge in event planners, or the means to obtain it. The authors go on by stating that EMBOK purely lends itself to certification processes and curriculum development. Overall the EMBOK model is very narrowly scoped; only considering the event-management sector's skill-set, it is largely concerned with identifying knowledge fields and the event planning process. It is also known as a scalable system, used to organise and develop syllabuses for the event-management field (Silvers & Nelson, 2013:internet). EMBOK is included in this literature study, due to its popularity as the most renowned event-management model. It also provides a detailed theoretical process of event management, which will assist in the study towards strategic management of MICE.

3.7.10 A critical synthesis of event-management models and guidelines

Event managers are supposed to pinpoint specific factors that need perfection before the event commences to increase the success rate. Therefore they use a systematic framework in the form of an event-planning model (Smith, 2017:2). Each event-planning model varies, based on the event-planning structure being used for and who the author is. After reviewing available event-management models and guidelines, the researcher discovered that previous researchers and specialists repeat several event-management processes/ steps within the field. Table 3.3 provides a summary of the nine event-management models discussed and their event-management processes.

Table 3-2: Summary of event-management models and their processes

	EVENT-MANAGEMENT MODEL	THE PROCESS/ STAGES
1	**Event-Management Process** Gers-Couto (2013)	1. Discovery 2. Research 3. Proposal 4. Confirmation 5. Plan event 6. Approval 7. Implementation 8. Execution 9. Closure
2	**Event-Management Guide** Kestner (1996)	1. Decision to host event 2. Plan event 3. Recognition 4. Evaluation
3	**Seven Stages of Strategic Planning** Mcgrath & Bates (2017)	1. Identify event reason/ assess the environment 2. Event goals 3. Set objectives 4. Action plan 5. Step-by-step strategy guide 6. Monitor performance 7. Recognition
4	**Getz Model of Event Planning** Smith (2017)	1. Plan event concept 2. Feasibility study 3. Organisation structure 4. Implement a strategic/ operational plan
5	**Salem *et al.*'s Event Planning Model**	1. Decision (aims; objectives) 2. Planning

	Smith (2017)	3. Implementation 4. Evaluation
6	**Event Operations Management Model** Tum, Norton & Wright (2006)	1. Analysis (mission) 2. Planning 3. Execution 4. Evaluation
7	**The Event-Management Planning Process** Pondicherry University – MBA (2006)	1. Idea proposal 2. Feasibility study 3. Aims & objectives 4. Implementation requirements (marketing & resources) 5. Implementation plan (partnerships & logistics staffing) 6. Evaluation
8	**Strategic Management Process for MICE** Tassiopoulos (2000)	1. Situation analysis 2. Vision; mission; objectives 3. Monitor impacts 4. Marketing; HR; Operations; Financial management 5. Implementation 6. Evaluation
9	**EMBOK** Silvers *et al.* (2007)	1. Initiation 2. Planning 3. Implementation 4. Event Closure

Source: Researcher's compilation

All nine mentioned event-management models add value to this study, to provide a guideline/ framework for event planners in the strategic management of corporate events; as the models stipulate step-by-step guides to follow for the strategic management of events. It is evident from the above summary that most of the models/ guidelines include similar processes for managing events. Firstly, the event planner is informed/ briefed on the planned event. Thereafter the event planner focusses on researching the mission, vision and objectives of the event. Gers-Couto's model and Pondicherry University's process for its Tourism MBA learners are the only two models to include a proposal step in the event-management process, which prooves to be very significant in corporate event proposals. Once the aim of the event is established, the planning process commences. Getz and Pondicherry University's models suggest a feasibility study (which is uncommon in corporate event management). Once the event plan is approved, event planners may go ahead with the implementation plan and execute the event. During the post-

event, all event stakeholders need to be acknowledged for their efforts, and a detailed event evaluation must follow.

The reader needs to bear in mind that event-planning models are best applied in the framework of planning new events from scratch (Smith, 2017:16). Combining all the proposed strategic event-management guidelines (mentioned in this literature study) and from the knowledge of working in the field, the researcher proposes the following steps to follow for successful and strategic planning of corporate events. The researcher also divided the various steps into the pre-, during- and post-event stage.

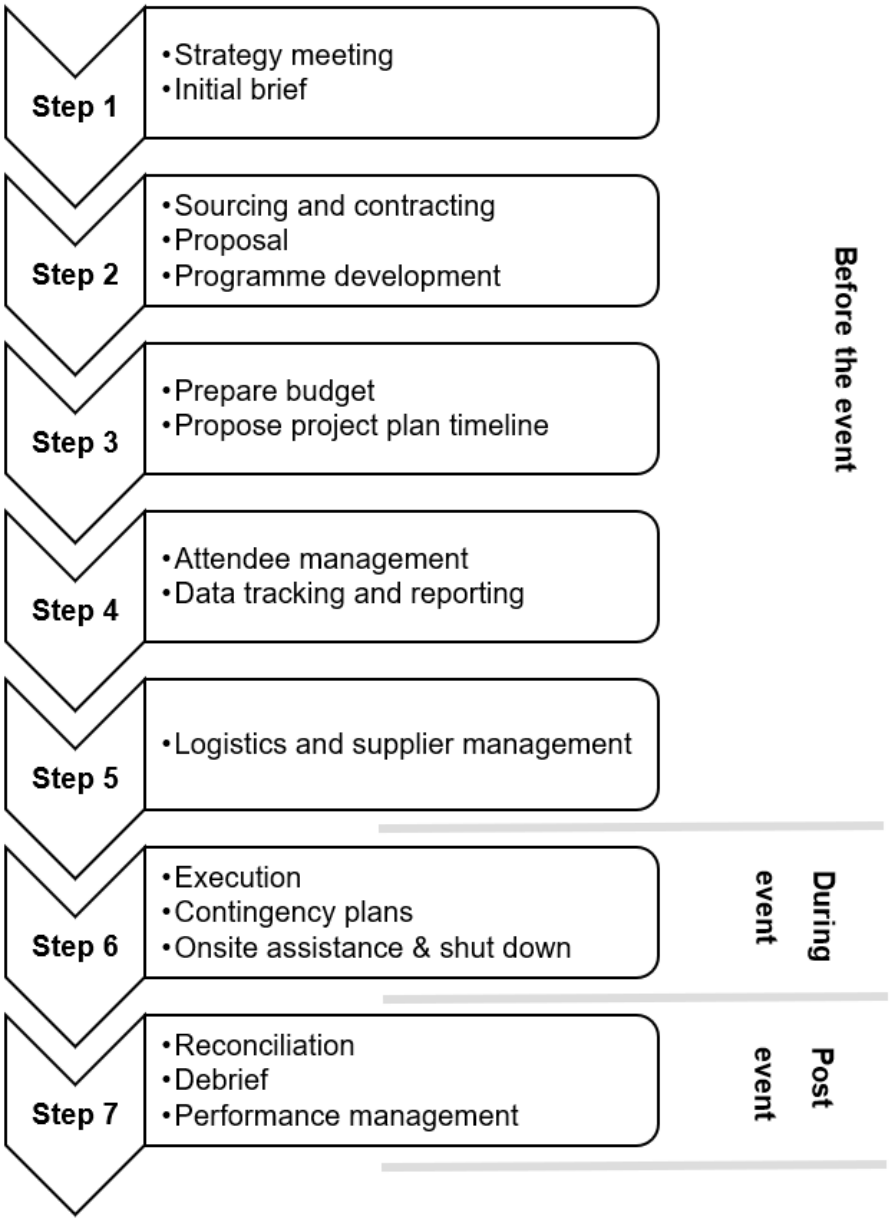

Figure 3-25: The proposed corporate event-management process
Source: Researcher's compilation

As illustrated in Figure 3.25, the customer/ client advises the event planner of a new event and that their services are needed. The first step is to brief the event planner of the event's requirements (vision, mission, objectives, aims), timeline and budget. The event planner will then go ahead and source quotations for the client and propose an event/ venue/ destination etc. As soon as the client accepts the quotation, a strict project/ event timeline will be proposed by the event planner, together with the event budget. A master list with all the event attendees (including their details/ data needed to manage the event) will be updated by the event planner and managed daily. This can be done manually or with the help of an electronic registration tool. Logistics and the event suppliers will be thoroughly managed up and till the event day. On the day of the event, the entire event plan will be executed. Mostly the event planners will also be onsite, to assist with the event accomplishment. It is important after the event to make sure that all the suppliers have been paid in full. Also, within two weeks, post-event an event evaluation should take place to debrief on accomplishments, possible improvements, budget etc. As soon as the event is evaluated, the necessary recognition should be given to all parties involved in the planning process. With this, the event-management models and proposed processes are concluded. Identifying KSFs in event management is now an important principle and should help attain competitive advantage, amid other benefits (Marais, 2016:36-37). A detailed overview of the existing literature on the KSFs in event management is subsequently discussed.

3.8 KSFs IN EVENT MANAGEMENT/ BEST PRACTICES

KSFs are essential for accomplishing any organisation since it impacts an organisation's capability to be effective and be a leader in the industry (medium- and long-term) (Erasmus, 2012:26). De Witt (2006:9) states that many factors play a role in event hosting and that KSFs are essential requirements for event success. According to Marais's (2017b:9) literature study, the main KSFs for the tourism industry are human resources, finances, customer-related aspects, and the product. The classification of KSFs in event management is discussed below.

3.8.1 Classification and definitions of KSFs in event management

KSFs are also known as critical success factors (CSFs), key result areas (KRAs), limiting factors, strategic factors, strategic variables (Marais, 2016,54) or key management aspects. For this study, the term KSFs is used. Early in the 1980s Dickinson *et al.* (1984:49) already spoke about the importance of KSFs, as they explained how KSFs are developed from features of both a company's external and internal work surroundings. These factors may develop due to various circumstances or problems that need the special devotion of management personnel (Dickinson *et al*., 1984:49). Moreover, Brotherton and Shaw (1996:131) explain how KSFs can

either be hard/ technical in nature or soft/ human (i.e. skills, morale, attitudes, training); with the latter based on service delivery, whereas the hard category focuses mainly on the budget and productivity of procedures, systems and structures, intended to offer an all-inclusive basis for product/service delivery. Therefore, to reach strategic success, KSFs need to be managed well (Marias *et al.,* 2017). In the literature, several definitions of KSFs are available. (see Table 3.4 below for the researcher's compilation of definitions.

Table 3-3: A compilation of definitions of KSFs

REFERENCE, AUTHOR, YEAR	DEFINITION OF KSFs
Rockart (1979:85)	Essential elements to consider, in order to reach business goals effectively.
Slabbert & Saayman (2003:8)	Fundamentals for success in the hospitality industry that determine the commercial and competitive success of an establishment.
Neethling (2005:13)	Managerial areas that require superior attention, to ensure success for management and higher performance within the business.
Thompson & Strickland (1999:96)	Concerns that all event planners must be capable of doing or focus on achieving; to be monetarily and competitively effective.
Erasmus (2012:18)	Aspects that influence the organisation's ability to be successful and reach their set goals timeously; they refer to crucial factors for any organisation's success.
Marais (2016:49)	A combination of things that must go well to warrant a sense of achievement, to reach management's goals and for an organisation to thrive.
Chingarande & Saayman (2018:801)	A restricted number of options (attributes, characteristics or conditions); managed correctly it ensures competitive performance and results in major success for a business or industry.

Source: Researcher's compilation

Brotherton and Shaw (1996:114) warn readers that KSFs do not refer to objectives and goals; but rather a combination of diverse procedures and actions applied to reach the proposed objectives and goals satisfactorily. Erasmus (2012:51) describes KSFs to undeniably affect

event managers' ability to prosper in the industry, including the products; strategy elements; characteristics; resources, skills; competitiveness; competences; services; stakeholders; and businesses outcomes, that govern the difference between loss and profit. All successful event planners should detect and implement KSFs while striving to achieve the said KSFs in event management; to be more competitive, sustainable and commercially successful (Erasmus, 2012:51). It is also important to note that KSFs change during an event's lifecycle (Amberg *et al.,* 2005:6). Furthermore, once event planners understand which KSFs to focus on, their actions may further develop individual tourism ventures (entrepreneurs) and business tourism in SA (Marais *et al.,* 2017b:3). It is also important to investigate previous research on the KSFs identified for tourism operations in SA to determine whether a gap occurs in current research and to establish the literature that may add value to this literature study. The following section focuses on that.

3.8.2 Previous research on the KSFs identified for tourism operations in SA

See Table 3.5 below for a complete summary of previous research on the KSFs recognised for tourism operations in SA, from 1997 to date. The table records the authors, study topic, and KSFs identified in the studies.

Table 3-4: Summary of previous research on the KSFs identified for tourism operations in SA

AUTHORS AND YEAR	KSF STUDY TOPIC	KSF FINDINGS
Getz (1997)	Event management & event tourism	Venue/ location Facilities Accessibility Hygiene Safety & emergency response Crowd management Risk management Quality service
Saayman & Slabbert (2002)	Conference Tourism	Relevance Planning Innovation Back-up

		Accessibility Chair-person Information & office aids Reporting Conference packages Promotions Facilities Accommodation Catering & theming Conference length & season
Van der Westhuizen (2003)	Guesthouse	Owner-manager is key Venue location and facilitation Employee training Hygiene Meeting guest needs HR management Good leadership
Cloete (2003)	Provincial Tourism	Attractions & activities Hospitality Transport Facilities & services Security Marketing HR Finances Legislation Competition Tourism organisations
Lade & Jackson (2004)	Regional festivals	Concept development & planning Programme (activities) Response time Strong foundation Organiser passion Facility quality Planning & management

		activities Marketing strategy Community involvement
Swart (2005)	Bidding for sport events	Economic & social impact Location Security Long-term perspective Local participation in planning Research & planning
Getz & Brown (2006)	Wine Tourism	Destination/ location appeal Tourist-oriented Quality product Variety & activities
De Witt (2006)	Wedding event	SWOT analysis/ Risk management Strategic planning Operational services Hygiene Venue accessibility Security HR management Financial management Marketing
Kruger (2006)	Conference centre	Functional layout Variety of activities Marketing management Operational aspects are in place General planning & management Attractive venue Post-conference evaluation Human resource management
Hoeksema (2008)	Marketing strategy for the wine route	Event facilities & services Accessibility

		Overall image Event perception Analyse cost to the visitor
Marais (2009)	Wine festival	Quality & good management Enough accommodation Parking Adequate facilities Marketing Security Entertainment & activities Friendly & trained staff (HR) Accessibility
Burger & Saayman (2009)	Conference centre	Layout Marketing Operational aspects Planning Design and evaluation HR
Marais & Saayman (2010)	Wine Festival	General management Wine farm attributes Marketing Route development Event attractiveness Entertainment & activities Accessibility
Manners (2011)	Major musical event	General management Marketing Souvenirs Venues & technical aspects Accessibility & parking Amenities & catering
Engelbrecht (2011)	Managing visitor's experience at the national park	General management Wildlife experience Facilities Green management Leisure & hospitality management

		Variety activities Accommodation facilities Luxuries
Erasmus (2012)	Art festival	Safety & personnel Marketing Accessibility Venues Accommodation & ablution General aspects & social impact Parking & catering Shows & stalls (entertainment)
Kruger & Heath (2012)	Mega-events	Stakeholder perspectives Marketing, branding and imaging Destination organisation Creation of facilitating resources
Neethling (2015)	Maintenance function in the hotel sector	Skill development General management Hotel management Facility management Leadership qualities Financial management Risk management Eco-friendly
Marais *et al.* (2017)	Tourism industry	Finances Quality Human resources
Chingarande & Saayman (2018)	Tourism Industry	Human resources Security & safety Economic development Trade openness Technological growth Safety of the environment

Source: Researcher's compilation

Locally, the researcher also identified five recent studies focusing on management aspects comparable to the KSFs (see Kruger & Saayman, 2012; Kruger & Saayman, 2016; Kruger & Saayman, 2017; Viljoen & Kruger, 2019; and Kruger *et al*., 2018). Furthermore, the researcher identified only two previous SA studies on KSFs based on business tourism (see Haven-Tang *et al.,* 2007, as well as Burger & Saayman, 2009). The Burger and Saayman (2009) study focuses on SA and the KSFs for managing a conference centre, while the Haven-Tang *et al.* (2007) study concentrates on KSFs for business tourism destinations. In summarising the KSFs mentioned above for tourism operations in SA, the following KSFs were found to be prevalent in most studies: general/ hospitality management; operational aspects; finance management; marketing management; risk management; green management (being eco-friendly); human resources; security and safety; accessibility; hygiene; accommodation; venue/ location; facilities and services; entertainment and activities; catering; innovation; quality; post-event evaluation/ reporting; and adequate planning.

Furthermore, the researcher identified only one recent international study focusing solely on MICE KSFs. Ismail (2014) concluded a study to identify the KSFs of event management, focusing on MICE, in Malaysia. The Delphi technique was adopted, and two rounds of data collection were performed, following a qualitative approach and supported by a quantitative approach. The feedback from 15 MICE managers, through semi-structured interviews, identified six KSFs for highly effective MICE event management: financial resources, marketing, venue location, code of conduct, detailed objectives and event sponsorship (Ismail, 2014:1-145). Irrespective of the plentiful prior research completed on KSFs in the tourism industry, Burger and Saayman (2009:26), Marais *et al*. (2017:3) as well as Mitchell and Coles (2009:3) advise that more detailed examination in the business tourism sector should be completed. This literature study, therefore, adds value to current research. However, identifying the benefits and disadvantages of KSFs in event management should be discussed before one can identify the KSFs.

3.8.3 Benefits and disadvantages of KSFs in event management

Event managers must manage corporate events successfully to reach goals and for the event to run flawlessly. Determining KSFs for managing attendee experience at events "…will result in a contribution to improved, effective management and ensure successful marketing, safety, accessibility and entertainment; based on what it is that the attendee contemplates as being important for a memorable experience" (Manners, 2011:27). Hence identifying the KSFs in organising a MICE event is significant (Ismail, 2014:4). Identifying the benefits of KSFs is advantageous to all the different event-management stakeholders (Marais, 2016:50).

Neethling's (2015:43) research found a couple of weaknesses within the KSFs approach, as not all managements find it easy to determine their information requirements using only KSFs. The further aloof managers are from senior management, the more problematic it is for them to recognise KSFs. Also, management not acquainted with strategic planning may have trouble conceptualising KSFs. Nonetheless, the weaknesses can easily be overcome the informed and vigilant application of the KSFs method (Neethling, 2015:42). On the other hand, KSFs offer operative support for the inclusive planning process. Furthermore, it grows a better understanding of information services, influencing the company's competitive position. Another undeniable strength is that KSFs are classified as the highest structural analysis level, also promoting the controlled analysis procedure. Senior management is generally passionate about KSFs, as they identify with its possibilities and drive (Neethling, 2015:43).

Identifying and applying KSFs of management will result in the following **advantages for the event** (Kruger, 2006:62; van der Westhuizen, 2003:210):

- Improved *employee participation*;
- Enhance *morale* within the organisation;
- Initiate a continuous *improvement procedure* (business process re-engineering);
- *Objectives* are chosen and specified;
- Proceeding towards producing a successful event and applying aspects vital to attendees;
- The KSFs will act as a *system* to screen, and reply to change;
- Better *marketing* is possible; and
- The *host community* will be more included in the development and accomplishment of events.

The principal KSFs are co-dependent and function in totality, forming the heart of business tourism. It includes transport; accommodation; attractions/ facilities; and entertainment (Saayman, 2001a:198). Saayman (2001a) goes further by suggesting that event planners can compile a checklist to score the event KSFs by listing the primary KSFs' appropriate secondary factors, i.e. media; political situation; marketing; security; hospitality; destination infrastructure; recreation; image; accessibility; and price, to mention a few. In conclusion, the **benefits of identifying KSFs** include (Burger & Saayman, 2009:1,15; Engelbrecht, 2011:5; Ferreira & Fernandes, 2015:165; Freeman & Thomlinson, 2014:14; Jones *et al.*, 2015; Kruger, 2006:62; Marais, 2016:49-50; Manners, 2011; Marais & Saayman, 2011:149; Nieh & Pong, 2012:424; Thompson & Martin, 2005:505; van der Westhuizen, 2003:210; Wang *et al.*, 2011):

- high-value *management*;
- well-organised *allocation of resources*;

- greater *visitor experience* and fulfilling attendees' needs;
- increased *revenues* and reduced operational costs**;**
- gratified *customers;*
- improved *success;*
- more *opportunities;*
- by implementing a strategy, that competitors are unable to or find too costly to duplicate, provides an organisation with a *competitive advantage;*
- advanced *return on equity;*
- by controlling the known KSFs, provides the opportunity to increase *sustainability;*
- *development,* financing in resources to grow new capabilities and skills, this might be a timeous process;
- *effectiveness,* by identifying KSFs assists in reaching management goals;
- KSFs are identified to provide a *better-quality event*; and
- *positioning,* when one is aware of the KSFs, positioning can be carried out and be a basis of competitive advantage.

As the literature study focuses on corporate events, it is important to close this chapter off by concluding the proposed KSFs of corporate event-management, as explained below.

3.8.4 KSFs of corporate event management

KSFs are a significant area within the event-management sector (de Witt, 2006:60-61). According to Perry *et al*. (1996) cited by Damm (2012:21), cutting-edge knowledge about KSFs in event management could lead to a successful event management career. It is, therefore, imperative to pinpoint the KSFs of corporate event management. Pinto and Slevin (1987:32) formerly identified the following KSFs common to all projects/ events, which includes: an event mission; support from senior management; a thorough event programme; good **communication**; client **consultation**; troubleshooting and **contingency** plans; human resources/ trained staff; technical tasks; **client acceptance**; as well as **monitoring and feedback**. Getz (2000:15) and Holley (2001:1-25) revealed that event KSFs are mainly based on better-quality **facilities**; attracting more attendees by practising better event promotion/ effective **marketing**; **strategic planning**; **safety and security**; trained **staff**; improved **networking**; and an **enhanced depiction of the event sector** to government, institutions and the industry. In Kruger's (2006:1-216) KSF study based on corporate events (management of a conference centre in SA), strategic-; marketing-; financial-; human resource-; and operational **management** featured predominantly. Furthermore, Burger and Saayman (2009:15-28) identified the KSFs in managing a conference centre as marketing; planning; layout and

activities; operational aspects; human resources; and design and evaluation. Numerous sources have also identified **creativity** as a KSF for creating extraordinary events. Creativity allows for uniqueness in events, and it is the factor that distinguishes events (by the same planner or company) from one another (Allen *et al.,* 2008).

Another KSF is **memorable visitor experience**. Many factors are responsible for offering an unforgettable and successful visitor experience (Manners, 2011:5). It is also referred to as the "wow factor" of an event, the valued memories once an event is over (Manners, 2015b:62). This is a tricky factor, as different attendees are not comparable; they need and expect different things from similar offerings (Manners, 2015b:62). Event planners are required to research their prospective event attendees, market, and deliver to their projected expectations. The features that effects event visitor (attendee) experience are grouped by Shone and Parry (2010:15) as being unpreserved; ambience; uniqueness; to be intangible; labour-intensive; fixed time scale; personal interaction; and a ceremony/ritual. An event is not a solitary activity, but instead an assortment of sequential activities following a system; these happenings vary from event to event (Manners, 2011:5). Hence, a variety of aspects underwrite a memorable experience and a successful event. "The success of the event depends on matching the visitor experience with the services and product offerings. This is critical for both the visitor and the event manager" (Manners, 2011:22). **Service quality** also is a vital KSF for repeat business, as a country with a skilled workforce has a competitive position when hosting events (Saayman, 2011a:197). Service quality is delivering exceptional service concerning the customer's high expectations (Saayman, 2001b:353). Tourism products can be tangible or intangible, but these products' quality influences tourism contentment (Saayman, 2001a:197) and plays a role in the attendee's experience. Quality service includes speedily service, precision, perceptible results, service delivery and procedural aspects of service processes (Saayman, 2001b:353).

The research of Manners (2011:78-79) and Holley (2001:16) show that **location** plays an important role to ensure attendees a memorable visitor experience. When an event location is far away, it is advisable to offer transportation, but it will increase the event expenses (Palo, 2016:11). Moreover, it has been proved that event attendance increases when an event is hosted nearby (Palo, 2016:11). Nonetheless, KSFs fluctuate at different locations; event planners must regard each location as unique and use KSFs pertinent to each location. Manners (2011:79-80) suggests the following recommendations can be made regarding the KSFs acknowledged for the various locations (to ensure an extraordinary visitor experience):

- *Venue and technical features* - event planners should guarantee quality seating plans (for visibility), audiovisual equipment, lighting etc.;

- *Mementos* - this refers to a tangible item (i.e. conference gift, room drop) attendees can take home as an event keepsake;
- *General management* – all staff at the event location needs to be informed concerning event information (i.e. itinerary; seating arrangements);
- *Amenities* - (i.e. menu/catering options, disables facilities, event entertainment options);
- Parking and accessibility - the venue should be easily accessible (safe; good roads; signage; pre-arranged group transport; control traffic flow for bigger events; validated parking tickets; providing directions pre-event; enough safe parking space); and
- *Marketing* - the event entertainment and unique experience should be incorporated into promoting the event.

Nevertheless, Manner's (2015:1) study results show no shared standard about creating a memorable visitor experience. Not only the venue location but also the **destination planning** is a KSF for successful event management. Haven-Tang *et al*. (2007:114-119) highlight KSFs that business tourism destinations need to contemplate to be competitive, which includes skills; networking; infrastructure; leadership; branding; ambassadors; and bidding. When an event is hosted out of the planners' country borders, they need to also take the regulations and laws of the other country into consideration (Palo, 2016:11). Furthermore, when choosing a business tourism destination, both controllable and uncontrollable determinants, play a role during the decision-making process. As explained below (Carvalho *et al.*, 2018:69; Palo, 2016:11-12):

- *Uncontrollable determinants* **-** destination size; cultural elements; natural environment; build physical environment; climate and natural disasters; and distance (physical, linguistic, cultural)
- *Controllable determinants* – hospitality; country's information; accommodation and meeting equipment; local infrastructure; security and safety; monetary vacation cost; dynamism of leisure tourism; degree of trade and financial opening; regeneration (urban, economic, commercial); cultural and recreational opportunities; degree of financial and trade opening; dynamism of industry, trade and services; and accessibility.

As soon as the destination and event location is decided on, the event planners will need to agree on a venue. Proper research is imperative when selecting a venue, as it directly impacts the number of attendees (Palo, 2016:11). **Venue selection** is, therefore, a sure KSF for successful event management. It is advisable to have a back-up venue for outdoor events, for if weather conditions rapidly change (Palo, 2016:11). The following factors play an imperative role in corporate event venue selection (Carvalho *et al*., 2018:65; Crouch & Louviere, 2004:internet; Neethling 2015:44): attention to detail; flexibility of facilities; service quality at the venue or hotel; reservation management; ample meeting rooms; availability of rooms to overnight in the hotel;

security and safety; enquiry handling; reservation management; quality of facilities; cleanliness and attractiveness; the proximity of attendees to the venue; venue capacity; corporate rates (accommodation/ conference rate/ venue); quality of food; entertainment opportunities (i.e. shopping, sightseeing, recreation, guided tours); uniqueness of the physical aspects of the site; the singularity of the social/cultural aspects of the place; and availability and diversity of audio-visual equipment. Another KSF, as explained by Palo (2016:11), is the **event theme**, which is linked to the event purpose and refers to the topic or subject of an event. Not all events have a theme, but rather the main message to send to attendees. The theme determines all event-planning elements and design while creating anticipation amongst invitees.

Knowledge is said to be king, and that also applies in the event management field. Damm (2012:21) list the key **knowledge** areas for event planners as follows: legal/ financial; management; public relations/ marketing; economic/ analytical; and ethical/ contextual. Yet, Getz and Wicks (1994:108) disagree with this statement; they argue that there are too many different types of events, and only general concepts can be trained. Getz and Wicks (1994:108) further explain that **experience** in the event-management field is essential, the more experience, ambition and energy an event planner has the better they will perform (Getz & Wicks, 1994:108). Lei *et al.* (2015:345–361) agree that within the widespread hands-on event-management industry experience is required. For that reason, the University of Technology's in SA focuses on theoretical and practical training of students as skilled event specialists and former contributors to the local economy (Venske, 2018:80).

The compilation in Figure 3.26 provides a summary of the most dominant KSFs for events, as identified in the literature study. The question, however, remains: Which combination of KSFs is more relevant to corporate events? This is an aspect addressed in this study.

Location	Destination	Venue Selection	Visitor Experience	Service Quality
Creativity	Trained Staff	Strategic Planning	Client Consultation & Acceptance	Communication
Contingency Plans	Facilities	Marketing	Networking	Layout & Activities
Experience	Security & Safety	Representation of Event	Event Management Knowledge	Evaluation

Figure 3-26: The KSFs of corporate event management

Source: Researcher's compilation from the literature review

3.9 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to analyse strategic event management and the KSFs thereof. Strategic event management's main management functions are outlined as administration, general, marketing, financial, human resource, operations, and legal aspects management. The researcher found the event-management process divided into three stages, encompassing pre-event planning, the actual event, and post-event evaluation. Each stage is accompanied by essential action steps for event planners to follow meticulously. Furthermore, the main event-management career paths are highlighted as event managers, planners, designers, producers, director, bidder, and analyst. The research also concludes that event management is not fully recognised as a qualified profession internationally but is well on its way to do so. Moreover, event-management stakeholders can be internal (agencies, suppliers, associations, regulatory bodies, event planner, event owner) or external (sponsors, community, media, attendees, government, event owner).

The chapter further investigated previous local research on the management of events, identifying only ten studies from 2006 to date. Various events have been previously researched, which entails music, sport, and special events, whereas only two researchers examined corporate events lately. During the literature study an executive summary of the nine most relevant pre-existing event-management models and guidelines provides the reader with plentiful insight to form an anticipated event-planning framework for corporate events, i.e. event-

management process by Gers-Couto; Kestner's event-management guide; seven stages of effective planning by Mcgrath and Bates; Getz's model of event planning; Salem *et al*.'s event-planning model; Tum, Norton and Wright's event operations management model; the event-management planning process by the Pondicherry University; strategic management process for MICE by Tassiopoulos and EMBOK,

Twenty-one local research studies are earmarked, concentrating on the KSFs in the tourism industry. However, only two previous SA studies are based on KSFs of business tourism. Regarding international studies, only one prior study of KSFs in event management was located and deemed resourceful. Notwithstanding the copious amounts of prior research completed on KSFs in the tourism industry, it is recommended that more detailed investigation in the business tourism sector be done. Therefore, this study fills the gap in the current literature, with specific reference to corporate events.

While exploring various benefits and disadvantages of KSFs in event management, the outcome proved much more beneficial. The main KSFs of corporate event management are identified by means of a detailed literature study and summarised as: event location; the destination; venue selection; visitor experience; service quality; creativity; well-trained staff; strategic planning; facilities; safety and security; layout and activities; marketing; client consultation and acceptance; communication; networking; event experiences; contingency plans; the overall representation of the event; to monitor event and provide feedback; and valuable event-management knowledge.

With this chapter, the researcher managed to fulfil the study's second objective, of evaluating strategic event management and the KSFs in a critical overview through a literature review. The following chapter aims to identify KSFs in strategic corporate event management to: classify the demographic profile of event planners in Gauteng; categorise challenges they experience in their professional occupation, and pinpoint challenges within the geographical location, and the motives for building a career in corporate event management, through an empirical survey.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

"I want to understand the world from your point of view… I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?" ~ James P Spradley

4.1 INTRODUCTION

From a supply-side perspective and by means of a qualitative data collection empirical survey, this chapter aims to identify the KSFs of strategic corporate event management, during the three main stages of event planning (i.e. pre-, during- and post-event). The researcher first categorises the demographic profile of event planners in Gauteng. Additionally, the challenges event planners experience daily in their professional occupation and within the geographical location of Gauteng are assessed and the motives for building a corporate event-management career. Hence, this chapter aims to discuss the methodology used to attain and analyse the supply-side data used in this study, including the results. The supply-side data was obtained through structured recorded interviews (c.f. Annexure A – interview guide) conducted with senior corporate event planners in Gauteng, SA; regarding their respective corporate events. The interviews were face to face and semi-structured. This was done across four weeks, during January and February 2020, after which the recordings were transcribed. A qualitative research method was applied for conducting the supply-side analysis, and the data were analysed by employing Creswell's six-steps method. With the participant feedback, the reader will establish a good understanding of the personalities, tenacity and passion of successful corporate event planners in Gauteng, SA. Some of their comments are not well-versed, as English is not all the participants' language of command and their formal education levels differ. However, their knowledge and expert insights are priceless. Within Chapter 4's results, the reader can expect a comprehensive summary of the main categories or points of discussion (event planning, in-depth strategic event management and KSFs in corporate event management); each with its own themes (c.f. Figure 4.2).

4.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH

The following sections scrutinise the supply-side sampling method; the development of the event planner interview guide; how the data was collected; ethical considerations; the statistical analyses used for producing the results; issues of trustworthiness; and the main themes drawn from the data collected.

4.2.1 Research design

A qualitative research design was employed for this study, and more specifically, a phenomenology approach. A phenomenology approach in research is considered to study respondents' experiences of a particular singularity and their opinion on this experience (Maree *et al.,* 2016:77). Minimal preceding research concentrates on event-management research in Gauteng and SA, and the researcher therefore pursued to listen to participants and build a better understanding based on their professional experience (Cresswell, 2014). Also, from prior research, it is apparent that KSFs vary within the many tourism segments; therefore more qualitative research is needed (Manners *et al.,* 2015a:1). Using a **qualitative research method** was the most appropriate manner of acquiring pertinent information from the nominated participants. Qualitative content analysis is an exploratory approach (Cresswell, 2014) of practical and procedural measured analysis (Mayring, 2000:2). Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) define qualitative content analysis as "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns". By making use of a qualitative research design, the researcher also obtained more in-depth information than previous quantitative studies had delivered (Manners *et al.,* 2015a:1). The research design followed a deductive approach, as the themes and content was formulated upfront through the literature review and then tested during the research process.

The **interview guide** was based on the goal of closing gaps identified during the literature study (c.f. Chapter 2 & Chapter 3). The candidate's own experience within the MICE field made it possible for the candidate to compile and pose questions logically, but still in an unbiased manner to interviewees. Therefore, most importantly - literature from Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 contributed to the instrument's development. Furthermore, questions in the interview guide are based on pre-developed themes identified in Chapter 1. This includes the section of *strategic event-management* and *KSFs of event management* (c.f. Annexure A – Section B: In-depth strategic event-management), in which the researcher interviewed in-depth what challenges, tasks and procedures transpire during the three phases of events (pre-, during- and post-event). During this section, event planners' personality attributes and educational requirements are also investigated due to the gap identified in the current literature. The interview guide further focused on Gauteng, as this is the study area and where KSFs for corporate events' strategic management were measured (c.f. Annexure A - Section C: Corporate event-management in Gauteng). The reader needs to understand the participants' event-management background and demographic information; therefore a section in the interview guide was allocated to the participants' profile (c.f. Annexure A – Section A: Demographic profile).

4.2.2 Data collection and development of the interview guide

The final drafted interview guide was pre-tested by an event planner, similar to the rest of the sampling population before the formal study interviews commenced. After 13 interviews, the data no longer sparked new insights into the study, and the themes were saturated. As indicated by Creswell (2009:185-189), during qualitative research, participants' insight and knowledge of the meetings industry are more significant than their numbers; therefore, the sample size is adequate for this study. The participants for this study shared a common feature: they all work as event planners in the MICE industry, within Gauteng (SA), with ten or more years' experience within the field. They are an appropriate population, as they are all known to be specialists in the MICE field in Gauteng. Furthermore, two of the participants received 2019 accolades for being part of the top 40 women in MICE in SA.

Data for the research was composed of face-to-face interviews, scheduled in advance, and conducted individually, with an average duration of 48 minutes each. A semi-structured interview guide was followed through-out the interviews, with 31 detailed open-ended and closed-ended questions, all of which were developed in advance. With the interviews, the researcher obtained: socio-demographic information from the Gauteng event planner participants; information on the KSFs for planning corporate events during the three phases of event management; daily challenges experienced by planners in their professional occupation and geographical location; as well as the motivations for following a career in corporate event management. By asking the interviewees these questions, the researcher could derive the relevant strategic management aspects.

The socio-demographic questions in Section A of the interview guide were premeditated to profile corporate event planners by their age, gender, home language, ethnicity, relationship status, level of education, career paths, job title, income bracket, and average weekly working hours.

Next, the posed in-depth strategic event-management interview questions in Section B determined the following: by which aspects planners measure the success or effectiveness of an event; the importance of target market needs; adjustment to changing market trends; challenges in the workplace; mandatory event-management models, procedures and strategies at work; the roles and responsibilities of the event planners; proposed stages of event management and factors to deliberate during each event stage; and the projected KSFs in corporate event management during each stage of planning.

The researcher took extra care not to be bias during the empirical study. During the data collection, no sample selection bias took place, as participants' demographic profile clearly shows that a wide variety of cultural backgrounds were taken into account during the research. Also, participants' interview answers were interpreted systematically and included verbatim responses. Participant responses were represented in the data analysis, even when their responses differed from what previous literature confirmed. The findings were reviewed by the researcher's study mentor and peer, who provided affirmation that the interview conclusions are reasonable and sound. Furthermore, the empirical study findings are supported by in-depth literature review studies (Chapter 2 and 3). The researcher's experience in the corporate event management field certainly assisted with the compilation of the interview guide (firmly based on found literature), but did not influence the participants' answers in any way. The interview guide also includes open-ended questions, where participants could freely provide their opinion, as reported during the empirical study results.

Lastly, Section C of the interview guide investigated corporate event management in Gauteng. Enquiring whether it is a preferred events destination and what the provincial offerings are to event planners, highlighting various impacts, challenges and benefits.

4.2.3 Ethical considerations

Creswell (2014) and David and Resnik (2015:internet), find it imperative to follow ethical norms in research today, as these rules endorse research aims, such as truth, knowledge and circumvention of error. Attention was directed towards ethical considerations before conducting the study; at the commencement of the study; throughout data collection and analysis; and sharing reporting and storing the data (Cresswell, 2014). Ethical values encourage the principles critical to collaborative work and promote various social and moral values. Furthermore, by adhering to ethical norms, the researcher is held responsible to the public, which, in return, aids the researcher to build public support and funding opportunities for research projects. The research was approved as a minimal risk study. In August 2019, an ethics number NWU-01316-19-A4 (c.f. Annexure C – ethical clearance for study) was given for three years of ethical clearance from North-West University's Ethics Committee (EMS-REC). During the interviews of all 13 participants the researcher took all ethical steps into account regarding values, desires and civil rights (Creswell, 1994:165). Participants were advised in advance about the type of questions they could expect and the study's overall purpose. Before the interviews took place, permission was obtained from all participants using an electronic consent form (c.f. Annexure B – interview consent form template). All the participants

contributed voluntarily at a venue, date and time that suited them best. The transcribed interview documents, hard copy interview notes and original interview recordings are kept confidential in a password-protected computer, by the researcher. All individual identification was removed from the hard copy of the transcript. Participant identity and confidentiality were concealed by remaining anonymous - a modest coding system was devised (i.e. EP1 – Event Planner 1). For legal purposes, data will be transcribed into a compact disc and transmitted to an NWU faculty member for secure and ultimate disposal after three years. Extracts from the interview are included in the final dissertation report. However, no names or identifying characteristics appear in these writings.

*** Note to reader: No Gatekeeper permission letters were required since the case study approach was not followed at a specific event management company. The participants from this study are employed at various event management companies. Therefore, the participants' informed consent was followed and approved by a rigorous scientific and ethics committee process.

4.2.4 Data analysis

Content analysis has been applied productively in an assortment of research applications over the years (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:1). For this study, the 13 interviews with respective event planner participants were recorded (with the participants' permission) and transcribed by an accredited transcriber (c.f. Annexure D – letter of accreditation from transcriber) into text and offered in a narrative form. Subsequently, content analysis was applied to identify the themes under each question using Creswell's (2014:209-210) six steps in qualitative data analysis and interpretation (see Figure 4.1).

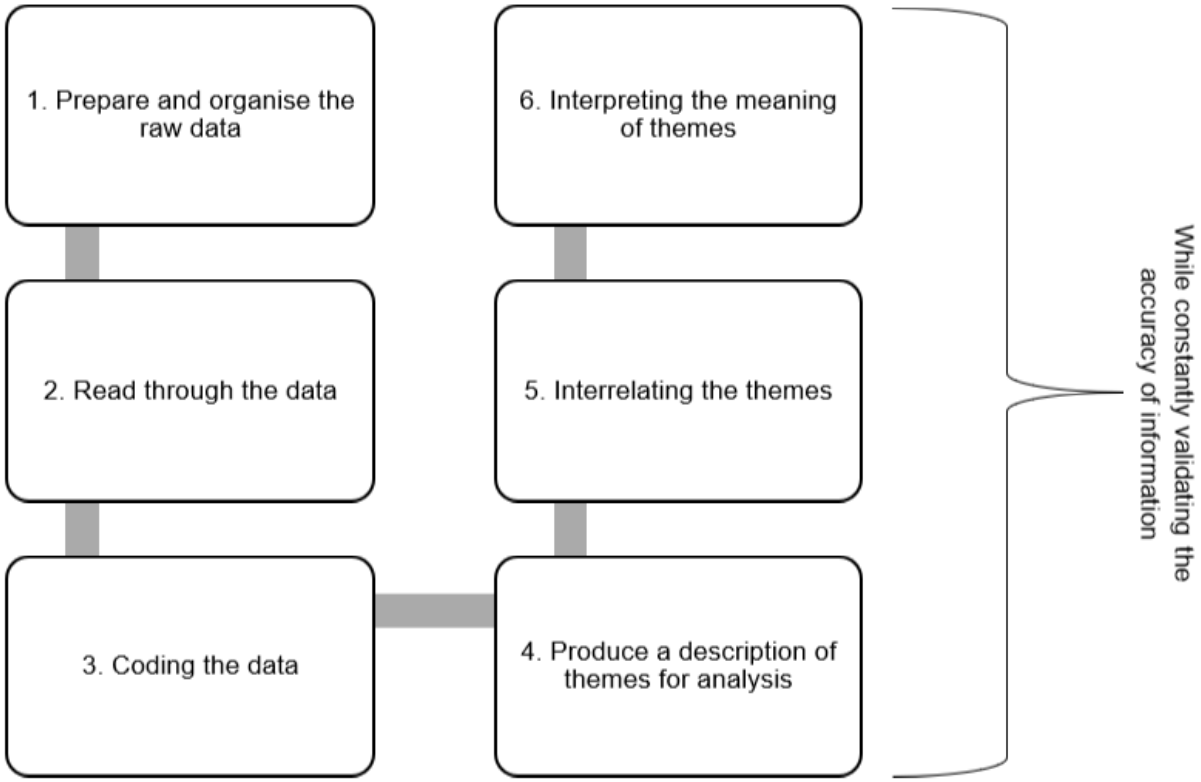

Figure 4-1: Six steps in data analysis and interpretation
Source: Adapted from Cresswell (2014:247-250)

The various steps in the data analysis included the following:

1. **Prepare and organise the raw data**

During step one, the data were pre-arranged for the inception of the data analysis process. It involved the typing up of interview notes; transcription of the 13 recorded interviews; double-checking transcriptions to make sure there are no noticeable mistakes; merging all transcripts into a single Word file, and cataloguing the responses from each participant below every question.

2. **Read through the data**

A more profound sense of insight developed as the researcher read through the data numerous times to understand the content better, while gaging the general credibility, profundity, and usefulness of the information obtained. The researcher made notes recording the wide-ranging views regarding the data at this step of the analysis.

3. **By using a coding process, start a detailed data analysis**

During this step, the data were organised by segmenting and linking masses of raw data to a word/ phrase representing a specific category in the margins. An outsider also double-checked the re-coding process to guarantee reliability. After that, the results were compared with the interpretation to form an overall empirical study view.

4. **Use the coding process to produce a description of themes for analysis**

The acknowledged coded data were separated into various categories and themes, grouping comparable coded data together. These categories were used as headings in the research findings section – presenting multiple perspectives from the participants (event planners) and were supported by diverse quotations and detailed evidence. Based on the responses, key themes were identified.

5. **Explain how the themes will be depicted in the qualitative narrative**

The themes were then ordered in chronological order of importance, deliberated and discussed in further detail.

6. **Interpreting the data and meaning of themes**

During the final step, the researcher interpreted the information to formulate an understanding of the results. Next, the results were also compared with preceding research literature, based on the supply-side of events planning.

4.2.5 Issues of trustworthiness

As Holloway and Wheeler (2002:254) put it, trustworthiness is an indication of operational reliability and competence in qualitative research. Trustworthiness for this study was obtained by coding and recoding of data, as well as making use of peer examination. *Credibility, dependability, transferability* and *confirmability* are the four criteria (Creswell, 2014:251; Guba, 1981:84-88; Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:6) followed throughout this research study, for evaluating informative research work. Furthermore, the researcher's experience and MICE knowledge impacted the research results' credibility (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009:6).

4.3 RESULTS

The empirical study results provide the reader with a comprehensive overview of each one of the research participants, focusing on their demographic profile and event-planning background. After transcribing the audio data, three main categories of discussion (event planning, in-depth

strategic event management, and corporate event management in Gauteng) were identified, each with its own themes (c.f. Figure 4.1).

4.3.1 Profile and background of participants

During January and February 2020, 13 successful interviews were conducted with specialist event planners. Table 4.1 provides the reader with a background of the interviewed participants, focusing on their demographic profile and event-planning background. Please note, the abbreviation "EP" stands for Event Planner.

Table 4-1: Interviewed participants' demographic profile and event-planning background

Profile aspects	Background of event planners												
	EP1	**EP2**	**EP3**	**EP4**	**EP5**	**EP6**	**EP7**	**EP8**	**EP9**	**EP10**	**EP11**	**EP12**	**EP13**
Age	44 years	40 years	33 years	63 years	36 years	37 years	39 years	55 years	56 years	53 years	44 years	41 years	53 years
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female
Home language	English, Afrikaans	English	Xhosa Sotho English	English Italian	Afrikaans English	Afrikaans English	Tshwana English French	English German Afrikaans	English Greek	English Afrikaans German Spanish	English Portuguese	Afrikaans English	Afrikaans German English
Ethnicity	Chinese (South African)	White (South African)	Black (Xhosa)	White (Italian)	White (Afrikaner)	White (Afrikaner)	Black (Tshwana)	White (German)	White (Greek)	Coloured	White (Portuguese)	White (Afrikaner)	White (Afrikaner)
Marital status & dependants	Married (1 child)	Divorced (3 children)	Married (3 children)	Married (1 child)	Married (1 child)	Married	Divorced (1 child)	Divorced (2 children)	Single	Single (1 child)	Married (2 children)	Married (2 children)	Married (2 children)
Highest level of education	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma	Degree	Degree	Degree	Diploma	Diploma	Diploma	Honours Degree	Honours Degree
MICE Job title	Senior MICE Planner	Senior MICE Planner	MICE Team Leader & Planner	Senior MICE Planner	Team Building & Events Specialist	Founder & owner of events & tours company	Director of MICE and business owner	Founder & owner of events & tours company	Coordinator, founder & owner of events & tours company	Conference Director & Company Owner	Senior MICE Planner	Business Manager MICE	MICE business owner
Experience	24 years	20 years	15 years	15 years	15 years	20 years	19 years	27 years	35 years	19 years	22 years	18 years	23 years
Annual income bracket	R200 000 – R400 000	R200 000 – R400 000	R200 000 – R400 000	R200 000 – R400 000	R100 000 – R200 000	Fluctuate	R600 000 or more	R600 000 or more	R600 000 or more	R600 000 or more	R400 000 – R600 000	R400 000 – R600 000	R600 000 or more
Weekly working hours	40 hours	40 hours	50 hours	40 hours	35 hours	70 hours	85 hours	50 hours	50 – 60 hours	60+ hours	40 hours	50+ hours	60+ hours

The following descriptive results are evident from Table 4.1:

- **Age:** The participants vary in age, from 33 to 63 years old. They are older due to the participant requirement of an average of ten years' experience in the industry.
- **Gender:** Within this study, most of the event-planner participants were female.
- **Home language:** Participants' home language is mostly English. The researcher noticed that the experienced event planners were typically bilingual and conversant in two or more languages.
- **Ethnicity:** The participants varied in ethnicity, covering a broad spectrum of cultural backgrounds – i.e. black, white, coloured and Chinese. It includes Xhosa, Tswana, Greek, Portuguese, Chinese, Afrikaner, and German from a variety of ethnicities.
- **Marital status and dependants:** 62% (8) of the participants were married, and 85% (11) of the participants have dependent children.
- **Highest level of education:** All the participants have a level of tertiary education, including Diplomas (8 participants), Degrees (2 participants) and Honours Degrees (2 participants).
- **Occupation:** All participants were event planners but employed in different levels of seniority; varying from senior event planners (5 participants), team leaders/ managers (2 participants), director and events company founders that actively plan events (6 participants).
- **Work experience:** The study prerequisite was at least ten years' experience in the niche market, but all participants had 15 years or more experience.
- **Income:** The annual gross income of participants averaged between R100,000 and R200 000 (1 participant); R200,000 and R400,000 (4 participants); R400,000 and R600,000 (2 participants); and R600,000 or more (5 participants).
- **Working hours:** Senior event planners must work overtime from time-to-time; with an average of 40 working hours per week. However, as their level of seniority increases, so does their working hours. The team leader and manager (EP3, EP11) work on average, ten hours more than the senior coordinators (EP1, EP2, EP4, EP5, EP10). The event directors and company founders (EP6, EP7, EP8, EP9, EP12, EP13) spend on average 60 to 80 hours weekly on event planning; which is essentially double that of senior coordinators.

4.3.2 Identified categories and themes

According to Creswell (2014) in qualitative research, five to seven identified themes will suffice. The researcher fine-combed every question under Sections B and C and outlined an identified theme

under each. The researcher further created sub-sections that correspond with each of the questions in the interview guide. Moreover, appropriate verbatim quotations from the transcribed interviews were provided for authentication to strengthen the themes' significance. For concealment purposes, participant names, company names, and related events were removed from quotations and replaced with brackets. The reader needs to note that not all participants had an excellent command of the English language, which is apparent in some of the upcoming quotations. The identified themes are subsequently discussed under the following categories: event planning; in-depth strategic event management; KSFs of event management and corporate events – all of which apply to Gauteng. Figure 4.2 summarises the four main categories and various sub-categories related to the main category. The discussion of the results revealed the themes under each of the sub-categories. The study researched corporate events, which for the remainder of the discussion on identified categories and themes will simply be referred to as “events”.

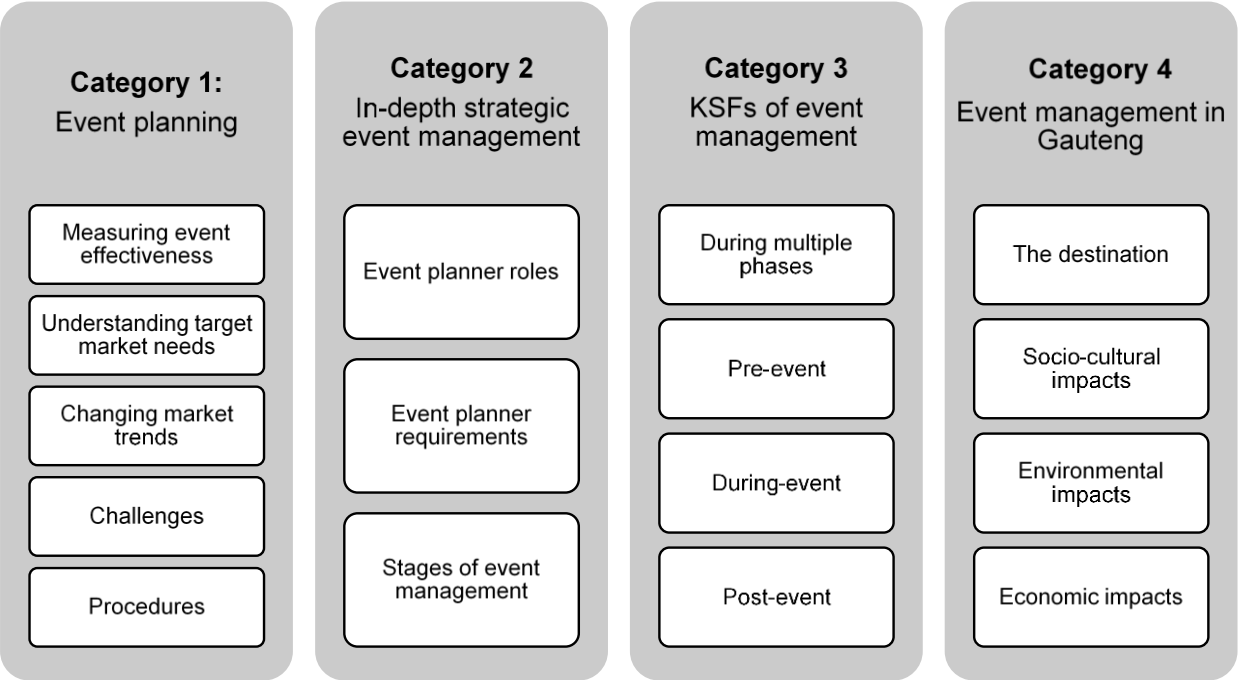

Figure 4-2: Summary of the study categories and sub-categories

Source: Researcher’s compilation

4.3.2.1 Category 1: Event Planning

Event planning is the first identified category subdivided into five sub-categories, comprising event effectiveness, target market needs, changing market trends, challenges, and procedures. These sub-categories are deliberated in more detail in the next sections.

a) Sub-category 1: Aspects to measure the effectiveness of a corporate event

As indicated in Figure 4.3 below, six themes emerged from the responses. Event planners measure corporate events' effectiveness in various ways; with positive *feedback*, *recognition*, high *satisfaction levels*, *monetary value*, staying *within the budget* and *return business* as the top six aspects for gauging a successful event. These themes are subsequently discussed in detail.

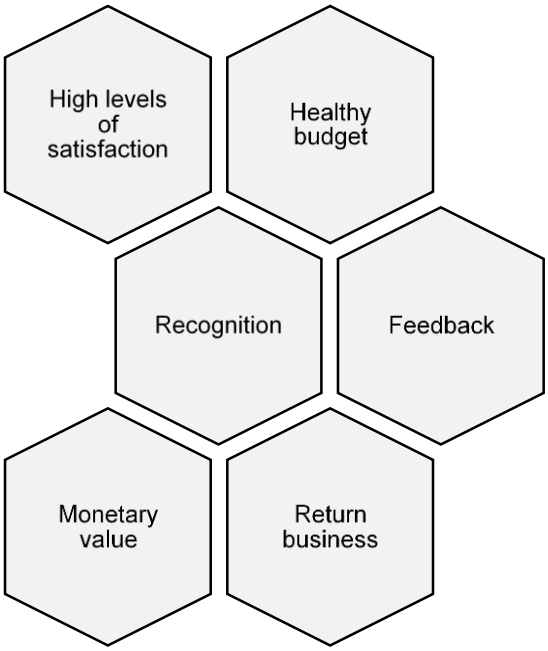

Figure 4-3: The top six aspects for measuring the effectiveness of a corporate event
Source: Participants' feedback

The participants in this study mostly prefer positive and constructive **feedback** (from clients, suppliers and delegates), as a medium for measuring the success of a corporate event, which is evident from the following quotes: "I measure…positive feedback from clients or delegates and if the client comes back for return business…is the most positive way I measure it" (EP1). "Definitely from the positive client feedback. If your client is happy and gives you positive feedback, that in turn then will bring return business opportunity" (EP2); "Positive client feedback and if you have met the client's requirements and needs for that event" (EP3); "…that is what you aim for in the event

industry, is to get that positive feedback" (EP5); "Look, the first thing is always the client's reaction…then it's always your suppliers as well" (EP7); "With feedback, the post-meeting with the client. Because criticism is always constructive" (EP8); "It's always about client feedback, delegate feedback, and return business" (EP10); and "I think the feedback of the clients" (EP12). According to EP6, content clients tend to be very vocal on social media, which is a good indication of a successful corporate event.

Recognition goes together with positive feedback. A couple of participants voiced their appreciation for recognition expressed by client's post-event, as the ideal way of measuring event effectiveness. This is evident from EP10's remark: "So when I approach something…I want to create a great experience for my client…because it's my passion…I get such joy when they say 'wow that was so amazing ( ), that just gives me the greatest pleasure". EP5 agrees, with the comment: "…it just builds you up and wanting to do more, for clients when after the event they come to you and say it was an amazing teambuilding".

High **satisfaction levels** among the delegates and clients are required, "I would definitely say a happy client" (EP2). EP5 also noted: "the people's reaction". When event planners deliver a service as promised and even exceed expectations; then one knows that it was a successful event. EP9 confirmed: "if the experience we sold was delivered as promised".

The success rate of an event is also measured according to the **monetary value**, according to EP4: "I think…it has got to be profitable". On the other hand, EP10 suggested: "Monetary is always at the bottom for me…the monetary aspect will come if you always having your clients returning to you". Furthermore, a **savings opportunity** for the client is also a great way of measuring an effective event; as noted by EP9: "If I stay within a client's budget which is always important". EP13 agrees that an event's effectiveness is measurable by monitoring if one stayed within the projected event budget: "another one is monitoring money of course".

Lastly, participants also mentioned that **return business** is a good indication of successful post-events. This is true to EP7's comment: "…we've had a lot of people that have attended an event and then from there, they actually asked us to plan another event for their company, so we've gotten a lot of recommendations by word of mouth". EP10 also proclaimed: "it's always about…return business" (EP10).

b) Sub-category 2: The importance of understanding the target market's needs, behaviours and trends

Event planners must understand their target market's requirements, behaviours and tendencies. This way, they can provide a *tailor-made* service offering, reach event *goals* without difficulty, provide a *higher level of service, retain clientele*, apply *service adaptability*, and effectively use their time and resources. These are also the six identified themes, illustrated in Figure 4.4 and accordingly discussed in detail.

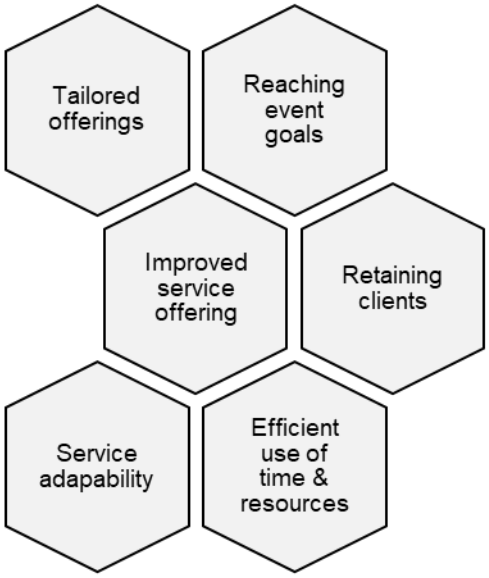

Figure 4-4: The importance of understanding the target market's needs, behaviours and trends
Source: Participants' feedback

When event planners have a good understanding of their target market's needs, they are in a position of delivering 100% **tailored offerings** based on their clients' expectations. As commented by EP1: "It is important to understand clients' needs so that we can offer the best venue according to their brief". This is achievable by conducting an intense and detailed briefing session pre-event and researching the client (i.e. company vision, delegate demographics, previous events hosted etc.). This is evident from the following quotes: "…and what company they come from as well. So, what type of staff they have" (EP1); "You have to give the client what they need" (EP2); and "…it's very important because if you know your client, you know actually what they want and what the demographics are; and you can put the right kind of things together for them" (EP12).

Moreover, when event planners fully comprehend the client's needs, behaviour, and trends, it is easier for them to reach the various event stakeholders' main event goals. EP3 agrees: "It is important because to reach the main goal, you have to understand what is required". EP9 adds: "Research your audience, stay within their budget and keep them within the content of what the event should be".

Also, once event planners understand the target market, they can **provide the best available service offering** on the market and **adapt** to different industries, which is evident from EP4's comment: "…once you know what the client wants you can then from experience give them the best options…". Event planners might furthermore be employed by an event-management company with a wide variety of corporate clients (i.e. pharmaceuticals, financial institutions, telecommunication corporations, petroleum etc.); each with their own behaviour, needs and strict compliance guidelines. In such circumstances, the event planner must be well-informed regarding each client's trends. By not servicing clients as per their specific needs, can be detrimental to the event management's reputation, the event planners' career and possible global relationships – as event-management SLAs (service level agreements) and longstanding MICE contracts might be terminated. This is apparent from the interview with EP7: "So our clients are corporate, but within that obviously you've got different industries, and different industries require different things you know, and then you've got your local clients and your global clients – different needs there. You've got global sometimes that's, has a mandate and you need to localise things…it all depends on clients' requirements".

During this current economic climate, event planners need to be ground-breaking and continuously upskill themselves by staying on top of the latest MICE trends; otherwise, they might lose clients to other event planners that are more educated about the current trends. To **retain clients**, event planners should read, study, attend workshops and international MICE exhibitions; to be well-informed regarding MICE trends. The same idea is also evident from EP5's feedback: "If you do not understand that concept of their needs, then they will use different suppliers or different companies. So, you need to be on top of the trends. What is happening out there? If you do not…then they will use different suppliers or different companies…you have to be innovative…come up with new ideas".

As soon as the target market's trends are known, it is **easier for event planners to adapt** their service offering accordingly. EP7 clarified it as follows: "100% – you need to adapt. So, you do a little bit of research on the company and then after that when you sit in a briefing session, that's

when you really know what the client's requirements are…research is key. And also, just to keep abreast with the things that are offered". Once event planners decide on a specific service offering, also referred to as their niche market (i.e. high-end incentives, local team buildings, exclusive conferences for pharmaceutical companies, symposiums for only 200 or more delegates, sport groups etc.); it is then easier for event planners/ event-management companies to target the correct market. This will **eliminate wasting time and resources** by quoting clients that are not within the niche market. EP6 explained this argument as follows: "It's important because I think each company offers different…kind of products. So, you have to differentiate yourself in terms of what you bring to the table that can assist them…for me it's important to know in our space, we cater, for example, for the luxury high end. So, there's no point in going to the middle-class category client, because that's not my target audience".

c) Sub-category 3: Dealing with changing market trends

Two themes emerged from the interviews regarding changing market trends: *adaptability* and *innovativeness;* as demonstrated in Figure 4.5.

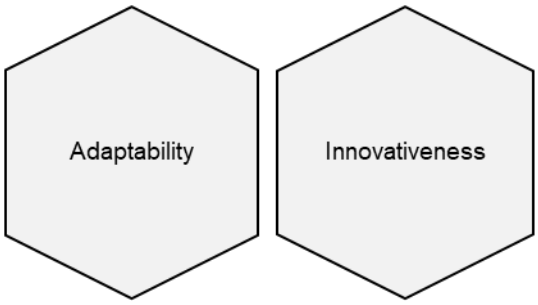

Figure 4-5: How event planners deal with changing market trends
Source: Participants' feedback

Event planners need to stay up to date with the changing market trends, be flexible and **adapt** accordingly to stay relevant as a successful event planner. The largest market trend among participants was that clients lately tend to be more budget-conscious. EP6 also explained: "These days clients spend less or they're more budget-conscious". EP2 commented: "…first you need to adapt to it, stay relevant". The key objective is to conduct ample research into changing MICE market trends. According to EP7 one must: "research, stay abreast with trends". EP3 agreed by stating: "Adapt. I think we handle the changes as they come. Industry changes a lot". EP1 noted that clients are more budget conscience and confirming more local corporate events currently: "You have to adapt because when clients now have a limited budget and they conference more locally. So, I have been seeing that as market trends. We just source more local and budget venues…if

there is a limited budget." Another identified market trend is that clients are travelling for reduced periods of time, with fewer delegates in the group. This is evident from EP6's comment: "they travel for shorter periods or the group size are smaller than previous groups". Event planners need to adapt to these market trends, upsell and cross-sell where possible. Because event planners guide clients along the way of confirming corporate events, event planners need to show where they can add value, provide the client with a savings opportunity, and be more innovative. EP6 provided the following feedback in this regard: "You really just have to adapt and try and still make yourself sellable so where they still want to see the need of travelling, of investing in your services". Lastly, event planners should take on all types of MICE business they can get their hands on, due to the declining number of groups and delegates travelling for MICE. As noted by EP12: "I think you just have to be willing to take on more like for instance, you know, take on their FIT (free independent traveller) business…smaller groups…you must be open to, to take on any kind of, you know, size or never mind how small it is…every little bits and pieces that they give you. You can't turn away business".

Innovativeness is another key aspect to deal with in respect to changing market trends. Event planners must be more creative in the workspace, EP2 actively suggested: "…if they have changed budgets ideas, you then need to start looking at different suppliers". Event planners need to be mindful at this point that more affordable suppliers might offer a substandard service offering. Furthermore, implementing different technology types during MICE events will demonstrate that the event planner is keeping abreast of the technology changing market trends. EP13 replied: "…stay and keep abreast of the tech and with new things that are happening".

d) Sub-category 4: Challenges in the workplace

Upon asking participants about challenges they face within the work environment and how they overcome these challenges, the feedback was thought-provoking as participants highlighted: *technology; administration; lack of motivation and high stress levels; restricted event budgets; unorganised, impatient and indecisive clients/ travel bookers; unfavourable response time from service providers; high- pressure work environment; ethical apprehensions; and the absence of good MICE-regulating bodies and accreditations.* These nine identified themes are illustrated in Figure 4.6 and subsequently discussed.

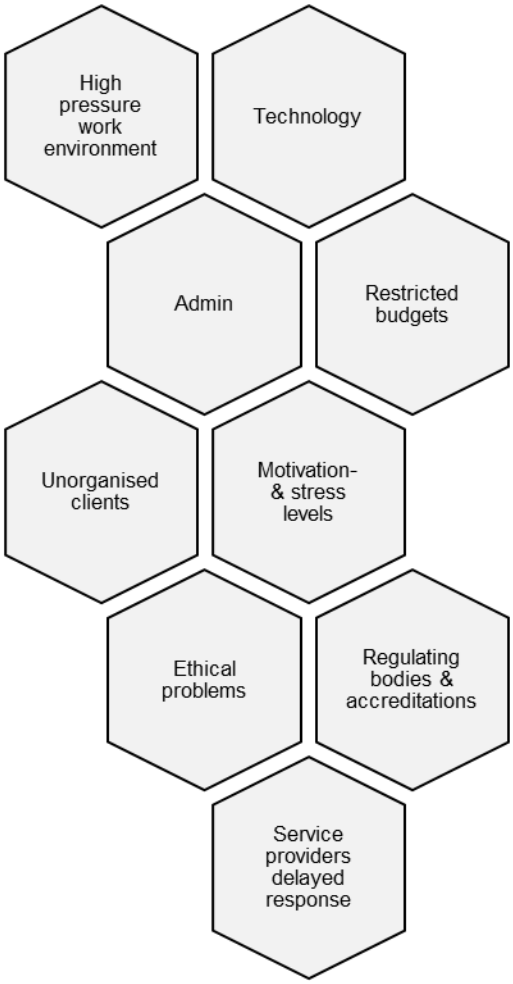

Figure 4-6: Challenges in the event-planner workplace
Source: Participant's feedback

Surprisingly 30% (4) of the participants blamed **technology** for most of their challenges. Once event planner tools or technology fails, event planners fall behind with their workload and cannot provide clients with timeous proposals, feedback and reconciliations. Event management is also an **administrative** task that most event planners find very dreary, as confirmed by EP4: "…the admin side is tedious". Furthermore, EP2 identified that maintaining high **motivation** levels can be challenging for planners: "I guess some days it's just to stay motivated…you do much work and put much effort into a booking or a quote, and then the client comes back and they knock it down and they want it cheaper and they just start taking things away. And you feel like your creative side of the quotes is not good enough for them". **Budget cutting** and **limiting the event planner's creativity**, by further budget-cutting are therefore challenging in this industry. The following participants candidly explained: "…clients are very cagey when it comes to how much they want to spend" (EP7); and "It's budget you know. You get clients now that have basically champagne taste

on beer money" (EP10). EP6 showed concern by adding: "You sitting day in, day out quoting, doing proposals and your conversion isn't always as high as what you like it to be. And we don't charge for proposals. It's an industry problem". According to EP8: "…budget, always your first challenge. Well everybody is cutting". EP13 also added: "…at the moment, smaller budgets, but that is the last two years and I always thought it was the South African thing, but it is not, it is international". Participants are concerned about all the time and effort placed into proposals instead of the **low booking conversion rate**. Participants also find it challenging to provide the clients with the correct proposal when clients do not disclose **their event budget** upfront. According to EP7: "…a huge challenge in that sometimes you might miss it just because clients are not upfront with what their budgets are…when you put that budget forward, and it might be a Rolls Royce version…that you put out there because you want to put your best foot forward, and you might miss the mark completely".

Clients are also unorganised and hesitant at times, which causes more redundant work for event planners. EP10 admitted: "They're very indecisive, clients". Another valid challenge is when the initial event **request is not communicated to the decision-maker's event planner**. According to EP5: "…one of the biggest challenges is you get an enquiry from the person that is not making the final decisions. So, it is almost like a broken telephone. They give you what they want. They go back to the decision-maker, and it is not at all what the decision-maker asked for. It would help a lot if you can get more senior people enquiring and giving you the requirements of their teambuilding because you can suggest a couple of activities and that person phoning you says oho that sounds amazing, I love it and then it is not at all what the boss wants". This process wastes time for both the planner and client; also causing unnecessary frustration and confusion. EP13 grippingly added that today's decision-makers' age can be challenging. As decision-makers tend to be educated and younger individuals, with different visions (i.e. millennials) than those of the more mature and experienced event planners in the industry: "The decision-makers or the inventing girls, I now work with…they are not my peers anymore…ten years ago, the decision-makers were my peers. But now you know, we are like in our mid-50s…So that is quite a challenge…see you as an old archive dinosaur".

Due to the **high pressures of the event industry**, participants also at times struggle with proper time management. EP12 explained how: "Time management is a challenge. And I think in the actual MICE industry is, there's obviously a lot of competition. So, it's always just about I think level of service and attention to detail". According to their specific corporate SLAs, event planners have a specific turn-around-time wherein they need to reply to clients. When **service providers do not**

respond timeously to event planners, the process gets delayed. It is also exasperating for event planners when service providers do not act in the same ethical and disciplined manner as themselves. This is evident in EP5's clarification: "…another thing is the turnaround time from suppliers. In the 15 years I worked on a thing you do not leave the office unless all your work is complete because tomorrow is a new day, new challenges and waiting for suppliers to get back to you with quotes if you need something and you have to wait two or three days then immediately it reflects badly on you as the event organiser". EP6 frankly added: "I think suppliers that don't read their e-mails…they don't have vested interest in what you're trying to accomplish…It's very drone-like mentality".

Furthermore, EP9 highlighted an **ethical concern** towards event-management service providers (venues, hotels etc.),by stating: "Suppliers undercut us…rather let the clients go directly through to them… we are paid very little commission these days, less than what we got paid in the past…venues and suppliers buy outs happen, management changes and say venue upgrades…It's consistently changing and it affects us as agents". In the past, event planners were paid higher commissions by airline and hotel suppliers. Airlines and larger hotel chains provide minimal commissions or quote nett rates only, which negatively affects event planners' financial position. Participants find **clients to be impatient**, as they require event proposals within a short lead time. However, the event planner needs to contact various suppliers and place a lot of time and effort into proposals before they can provide the client with a copy. EP7 raised the concern: "Another thing is clients wanting things to happen immediately – that is a huge challenge. When you're doing an incentive and you've got your operators and your hotels outside the continent it takes a while. There are time differences, so it takes a while for people to get back to you, but the client wants the proposal in two days…it's just the… ridiculousness of it all when it comes to that".

Lastly, a grave concern raised is the lack of respect towards event planners in the industry due to the **absence of an adequate regulating body** and formal **event planner accreditation**. EP10 elevated the apprehension: "…most important for me is that this industry is not regulated. It's a huge challenge for me. We had to have accreditation in place. There's got to be a proper body that deals with it…there are some bodies out there, but I just feel they haven't made a clear standpoint. And we need that". If event planners received the essential accreditations, their occupations will be more respected, it will provide them with a higher income opportunity, and the industry will be better regulated; limiting untrustworthy event-planner services.

e) Sub-category 5: Operational procedures

It is evident from the researcher's interviews that each event-management company operates differently, with its own set of procedures for operational purposes. Mandatory event-management procedures can cover a wide variety of event-planning facets, including accommodation and venue restrictions; the serving of alcohol at events; payment terms; how many delegates may travel together on the same flight; the number of quote options to provide; the event planner's turn-around time; preferred suppliers to quote etc. Here the four themes of *tailored procedures* (based on the needs of the client), *substitutable procedures* (a standard procedure that can be applied to different settings), *proposed event-management models/ guidelines*, and experience-based procedures were identified highlighted in Figure 4.7.

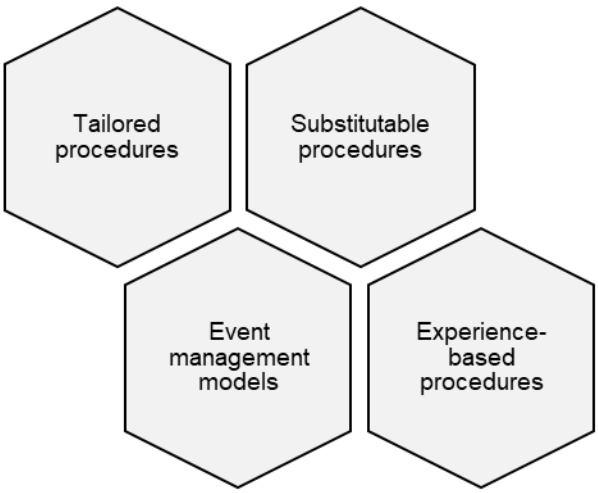

Figure 4-7: Event-planning procedures
Source: Participants' feedback

Grippingly, 23% (3) of the participants had **no substitutable- or obligatory procedures**, strategies or blanket service level agreements in place for strategic corporate event-management purposes within the event-management company they are employed with. EP5 shared the following insight: "Every enquiry is unique and different…so there is not really a structure that you follow. You listen to what your client wants. Make notes. Try and remember what they want. I have got quite a good memory with regards to my work. I remember my clients from five, six, seven years ago, what they have done. When they did it. Where they did it. I think it is just printed in my brain".

The interviews also make it apparent that mandatory procedures can be based on that of a certain **client's specific service-level agreement**. EP1 identified that: "…we have service level agreements in place for each client and the client file is open to advice what the management fees

are, PO (purchase order) numbers and account numbers are et cetera. This helps with standardising all our quotes". EP3 agreed: "…it differs per client because agreements are just drafted per client". Experienced event planners tend to facilitate MICE bookings in a **case-by-case** manner. As soon as they have established the clients' requirements and the magnitude of the booking; then only do they decide which action/ procedures to follow **based on their own experience**. This is true to EP2's comment: "…it depends on the client. So, with each request, we treat it as an individual…I do go case by case. Some people just need a basic booking. Others want the full entertainment, prize giving".

Other event planners work from multiple procedural forms, with **separate instructions for the event's three phases** (pre-, during- and post-event). It is obvious from EP6's reply:" …there is standard operating procedures in terms of pre-site. Before we get to the site and on-site and how to just…what our company culture is and how they need to handle themselves personally. It's in several document forms". EP8 interestingly relayed how at their event-management company there is one standard document with necessary procedures. However, the document is drafted in such a manner that it can be **used substitutable** between different types of MICE events: "…same one for all types of events, but they are interchangeable, so some items might apply to one event, but not to the other". Other event planners have separate instructions and procedures in place, **one for every type of MICE event**. As noted by EP9: "Yes. A scope of work document for conferences and one for individual incentives that coordinators rigorously follow for each event. This document will prompt you on how to manage an event strategically. It is basically like a checklist; it works effectively for us from like an operational point of view".

Furthermore, event planners use several online tools and technology (i.e. Lanyon and CVent) that the client is subscribed to practice strategic event management towards their clients. These tools guide the event planners on what is compliant for the delegates; the preferred turn-around-time; budget requirements; booking requirements; booking limitations etc. Weekly reports are provided to the event planners and client, broadcasting whether the mandatory procedures were adhered to. EP11 explained it as follows: "It is online…they have got many rules in place. You know we have got our SLA that we need to adhere to and so on…the challenging is the online tool. Because you have to keep updating…reason for clients using SMM (Strategic Meeting Management); Well, it automatically pulls on their side, automatically pulls a report of their expenditure, you know what was offered, how much they saved…It is just less paper trial and globally they can click anywhere, they can just see on the background". EP13 also added that it is essential for event planners and event management companies to update the mandatory procedures and SLAs constantly: "Oh, and

I fine-tuned…after every project I literally go and I add what needs to be added. New things. Because you always learn".

Astonishingly, 77% (13) of the participants do not use a **proposed event-management model**, framework or step-by-step guide during event management. According to EP7, not having a structured plan in place to follow during event management is that "…there is nothing that is set because every event is different". As experienced event planners, most of the participants are confident in managing events on a case-by-case basis from **applying experience** and general know-how throughout the strategic planning of an event. This is evident in the following quotes: "…you've got in your mind certain things that need to happen…it comes with experience" (EP12); "But you know I got the experience…you have got to just follow those steps and modify them as you need them to suit your particular event" (EP8); "We don't have to be sitting with huge spreadsheets…it's called evolving" (EP10); "You always sort of follow these steps anyway. I mean it is not like I completely…but it then all just falls after each other. Eventually no you don't really…then get used that list" (EP11); and "I try to follow the steps, but sometimes it's a bit difficult because when you're dealing with different clients, you need to try and work in a way that your client is comfortable as well. And it's not only by the book, but you're also a bit flexible" (EP3).

Most of the participants do not use a framework because they are convinced that the more experience you have as an event planner, the easier it is to automatically navigate through the strategic event-management process. Inexperienced event planners are therefore advised to have a well-thought structured model in place before formal planning commences. As noted by EP12: "…for a new person, you'll need more step-by-step framework. If you are experienced then the steps will come more automatically; then obviously you just have to have your diary every day on things that you need to do". The participants that do have a framework in place, mostly developed the model themselves and adapted it according to every new event they manage; but the fundamentals and process remain the same. The steps followed throughout all the frameworks are very similar in style, as it includes: client briefing; sourcing of suppliers; client quote; preparing budget and project timeline; logistics and supplier management; implementation; on-site assistance; post-event feedback and reconciliation.

Furthermore, it is apparent from the participants' tasks that all follow a similar event-management method pre-, during- and post-event as per the researcher's compilation (c.f. Figure 3.26 - The proposed corporate event-management process). The difference is that most participants follow a step-by-step approach from memory (out of their heads), which they adjust as they go; instead of a

formal written document set in stone. These knowledgeable event planners will filter their know-how down to future event planners and trainees, sharing their experiences and methods; it mostly is a practical process.

This sums up the first category, event planning - by contemplating what creates a successful event; understanding the target market's desires; being conscious of changing MICE trends; discussing daily challenges and amassing further insight on mandatory procedures. The second category focuses on strategic event management.

4.3.2.2 Category 2: In-depth Strategic Event management

In-depth strategic event management is the second category, which also comprises three different sub-categories. The sub-categories cover event planners' *roles and responsibilities* pre-, during- and post-event. Thereafter the researcher deliberates event planner *requirements*; by investigating skills and personality characteristics of event planners and their level of education and training/ experience requirements. Followed by a painstaking explanation of the different *stages* of event management, discussing research, designing, planning, coordinating and evaluating.

a) Sub-category 1: Event planner roles and responsibilities during event management

The event planner roles and responsibilities identified by the empirical study, for pre-, during- and post-event (themes), are demonstrated in Figure 4.8 and explained below.

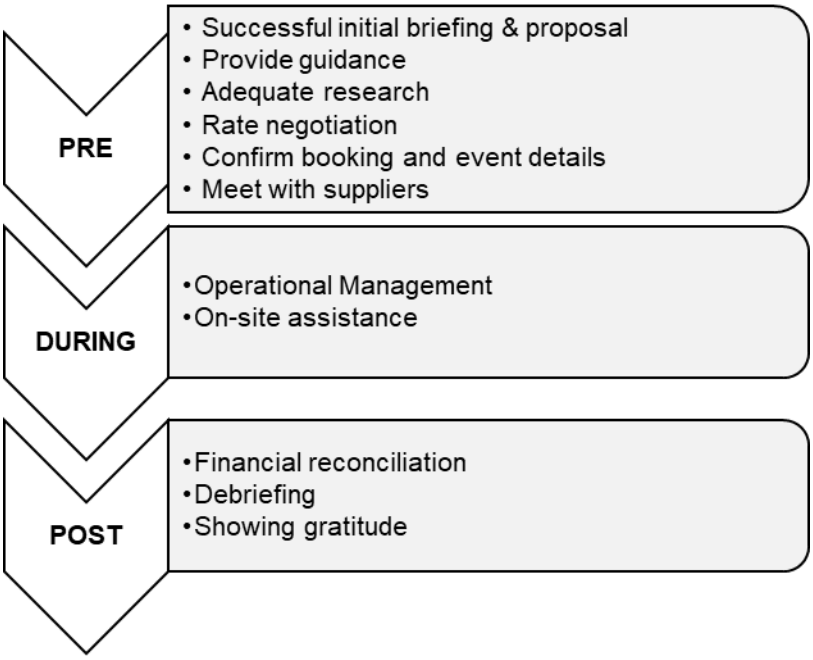

Figure 4-8: Event planner roles and responsibilities pre-, during- and post-event
Source: Feedback from study participants

- **Pre-event**

Here the event planner provides the client with a successful initial *briefing and event proposal*; professional *guidance*; adequate *research*; *negotiated rates*; and the event *booking confirmation*. The planner will also visit the venue and *meet with the necessary suppliers*.

The event planner's first responsibility is to respond to the initial **brief** or MICE booking request, which is evident from EP1's comment: "my main role is to respond to the client when they send through the brief…so we acknowledge them and then you start source…the venues or transports, flights, decor, teambuilding etc. and create the quote". During the briefing phase, it is the event planner's responsibility to *ask all the required questions* and gather adequate information to send through a detailed MICE **proposal**/ quote to the client. According to EP2: "…the main thing is we will first meet with the client to discuss their needs of the events…if they've got a budget in mind, an event, a location, a theme so…as much information from the client as we can get". EP6 added that here: "…you make sure that the client's vision is what you can translate into actual execution". The participants explained how they are not only order takers but also the opportunity to further inform and guide the client. As specified by the following quotes: "…people phone and say we want to do teambuilding….but they do not know what they want to do…then you need to guide them as the professional…I have never been on a sales training course but with the experience, you need to tell your client in a way that they know they can trust you in what you are selling to them" (EP5); "I

provide recommendations" (EP9); and "…subtlety lead them and convince them to what I think would be the best" (EP13). EP10 interestingly commented that: "pre-event for me…I like to always find out the culture of a company…and what policies are in place. Because otherwise, I might be going in a different direction to where they should be…then I'm wasting time".

Therefore, **researching the client**, their culture, previous successful events and their mission statements may add value and direct the event planner in the true direction of successful sourcing proposals. Most participants advised that it is standard practice to send through three proposals for the client to choose from. At that time, the event planner **negotiates better rates** with the various suppliers to add further value to their service offering as an event specialist. EP3 confirmed that it is here where one is: "…managing budgets through negotiating quotes with suppliers". Most clients are very budget conscience, therefore: "…you make sure all fit within the budget of what was negotiated and agreed upon" (EP6). As the event planner decides on the various event venues to propose to the client, it is advisable to complete a transitory risk assessment on the potential properties, especially when you are quoting corporate clients with strict compliance terms. As noted by EP10: "also with your venues you work out what are the risks you know". After providing the proposals, the event planner will then await feedback from the client, including further questions about the proposal offering, possible amendments or the go-ahead to confirm the specific event. EP2 noted the following: "They'll tell me if they want to take something out, put something in and yes, once they the client gives me the go ahead, I will then let the suppliers know. We will book everything".

As soon as the client has decided on an option, the event planner will **confirm the booking** with various service providers and ask the client to sign the SLA; where the client acknowledges the booking terms, cancelation policies and cancelation footings. This document also encompasses the payment terms (deposit/ full payment upfront) as well as a form of payment (i.e. credit card, cash, electronic payment). EP10 emphasised: "I make sure that I get a proper SLA agreement in place…all the terms and conditions have to be right, not only for me but for my client as well". Once the groundwork is done and the major service providers are confirmed, the event planner can look into the **finer detail of the event**, this is something EP6 wished to achieve in the quote: "…so you first work on a skeleton and then you start with the finer details such as gifts…the small things that are not essential but nice to have".

Still, during the pre-event-planning phase, the event planner will most likely draw up an **operational manual**, also referred to as a function sheet or working document by the various participants, this

document will include: the detailed timeline of the event/ project; contact details of the various suppliers and event stakeholders; each role-player's responsibility during the event; and many finer details. A copy of his document is then shared with the client, the event planners on-site and service providers. As stipulated by EP7: "that working document has everything from what the weather will be that day to the programme for the day, the suggested itinerary...your timelines, your flights, your visa requirements, your breakaways, your hotels that you're staying at…the supplier's details…". Before the event commences, it is advisable for the client and event planner to **visit the venue and meet with suppliers beforehand**, to iron out any possible misunderstandings or problems. As noted by EP5: "…we will go for a site inspection…we will meet clients at a venue if the venue is booked already to confirm what we can do where, when and how". It is key to regularly update the client on the event progression and stay within the negotiated budget. EP10 also remarked: "I like to be very much in control and basically update my clients on this...how far we are…need to be able to show them this is what we are doing basically…they want to be briefed, as well you know…they want to know how far you are…like all the budgets and everything". The strategic event management during pre-event is the bulk of the workload for all the event planners (c.f. 3.4.1, Pre-event-management stage), this is also apparent in EP9's comment: "pre-event is the biggest workload".

- **During-event**

During the event, the event planner is required to be *on-site* and exercise immaculate *operational management*, i.e. problem-solving, time-management and seeing to all the event role-players' requirements.

Through the actual event, all the participants commented that it adds value for them to *be* **on-site**; they prefer being on-site during the event and enjoying it thoroughly. They therefore urge the client to make use of the opportunity to have the event planner on-site, as this will benefit the client and add value to the strategic event management during the event; as the event planner can *solve problems* as they occur and manage the event as per the *planned timeframe* and operational manual. This refers to **operational management** and is evident from the following passionate quotes: "While on-site make sure that everything is running smoothly. Front of house and back of house. Anything that's the client needs. I know that some people draw the line…But really when you're face to face with the client you can't put limitations on what you are going to do. You do it. Everything. And yes, make sure that your suppliers are happy during the event they are fed and know where to go. That they are on time…you are the runner" (EP2); "we all have a hands-on approach…we will also assist with the packing, setting up of the events. Running.

Presentation…assist with the facilitation of the event…it is the physical work as well" (EP5); "We can't manage if we're not on-site. I love it…I'm a little bit of a control freak" (EP7); "I am always on-site, when it is my client nothing is impossible for me" (EP8); "…prefer to be on-site and oversee the event. I will always deal with management issues on-site, myself…I will be the first point of contact for the client on-site. If there is a problem, I will sort it out on-site" (EP9); "So, you are virtually there to make sure that everything will be to the tee" (EP11); and "Yes, it's hard work. But I don't think any event can be successful if the person that's arranged it is not present every moment…during the event, you must be obviously in charge of all aspects beyond the ground. Reconfirm services constantly. Deal with…problems, solve it immediately. Meet and greet all people, be present…hands-on in terms of your service…attention to detail on the ground. I think just to like be present and deal with every situation" (EP12). There are no limitations to an event planner's tasks while being on-site during an event. However, adequate planning will most likely provide the event planner with more confidence and control during the event phase. As specified by EP10: "My planning is very important. So, during the event It must fall into place for me. It's just tick that tick, tick…problem is prior to the event, not during the event".

- **Post-event**

After the event, the planner's most important responsibility and roles are to finalise the *financial reconciliation*, attend to a debriefing session with all event role-players (for valuable feedback), and *thank all* (express gratitude) involved during the event-management process.

As soon as the event is finalised, the event planner will stay on-site and *oversee the "breakdown" event*. Thereafter, a detailed **financial reconciliation** is prepared by the event planner. Event planners should update the budget systematically throughout the event-management process to stay within the proposed budget and relieve themselves from a mass workload of budget updating after the event. EP 10 concludes: "…remember when it comes to my budget, I'm constantly doing it". Most participants commented that they would provide clients with a copy of the reconciliation within two weeks' post-event. As soon as the *final payments* are settled to the event planner and the various service providers, the event planner will ask the client for a **debriefing** session or some type of *feedback*; in the form of a telephone call, face-to-face event post-event session or by surveys. According to EP9: "I'll debrief the client and allow them to give me constructive feedback". EP3 observed the following regarding debriefing: "I think it's dependent on the event. For the bigger ones, we always set up a meeting with the client so you can meet with them personally. I think it's not difficult for the smaller ones to have a tele-conference with them or even on e-mail. So, for my side, it depends on the size of the group". However, half of the participants do not trust surveys as

a viable format for debriefing; they prefer rather have an informative two-way conversation with the client. This is evident from the following comments: “I think it is a bit old fashioned, a survey” (EP13); “Really and truly I don't believe that surveys always work…Because you're not getting to what it is that they really liked…cause it's just a tick” (EP10); and “No…I think you get one or two that would answer. But not a lot of clients, everybody is always rushed for time. And if it is any survey locks you know when you receive from a hotel, a survey, 90% of us, it went well, so you just delete…” (EP11). By gathering informative feedback from a client post-event, will assist event planners *to be even more successful in future* event planning; as highlighted by EP7: “So the debrief session with clients is what you want because you want to know…obviously what works for the next events because that's what you’re gunning for”. Interestingly EP10 concludes surveys in the following manual format: “Handout A4 paper to guests on their way back to the airport. And they basically have to answer a ten-point form”. On the other hand, EP8 runs surveys in an electronic format: “We often run a survey. We use that…Survey monkey…and on that they give us feedback”. EP5 also mentioned the importance of **showing gratitude** to the client, for making use of the event-management services: “…just follow up and say thank you for the booking and show your appreciation again”.

b) Sub-category 2: Event-planner requirements

During this sub-theme, the researcher identified three main themes: *favourable personality traits* and *skills* of event planners; *formal education*; and *training and experience requirements*; see Figure 4.9 and clarification below.

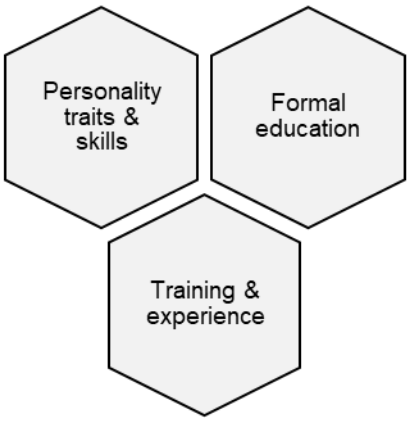

Figure 4-9: Event planner requirements
Source: Participants’ feedback

- **Personality traits and skills**

Traits are superior behaviours that one possesses from birth (Greenhalgh, 2011:5). Greenhalgh (2011:2) further notes the following about traits: certain people are gifted with “an aura, or set of talents, which sets them apart from others”. While on the other hand, skills are more challenging to attain, as it entails training and commitment over a period; therefore, it can be taught (Greenhalgh, 2011:10). The participants acknowledged 14 essential personality traits and 15 skills that will help event planners excel in their career paths; skills and traits are showcased separately to the reader (see Table 4.2. The reason for this is that skills can be taught; it, therefore, has educational implications. This study's skills information can be used for future recommendations of skill improvement among event planners by human resource management, tertiary institutions, and educational course purposes. Furthermore, what is valuable to this study is to identify preferred personality traits/ attributes, as the information can help recruitment agencies and event-management employers - in the process of headhunting model event planners.

Table 4-2: Personality traits and skills of successful corporate event planners in Gauteng

TRAITS	SKILLS
Honesty (being ethical)	Financial management
Determination	Experienced and knowledgeable
Firmness	Go-getter
In good health and fitness	Flexibility
Energetic	Alert (quick thinker)
Passionate	Trustworthiness
Good listener	Team worker
Positive Outlook	Problem solver
Peoples person	Negotiation skills
Perfectionist	Stress management
Creativity	Time management
Disciplined	Detail oriented
Tenacity	Patience

Obligated (responsible)	Networking
	Competence (professional)

Source: Researcher's compilation from participant interviews

As an event planner, personality-wise, one needs to be **passionate** about the events industry and show a certain level of **creativity**. According to EP12: "You got to love what you do if you deal with this kind of job". This is accompanied by being a **go-getter** and instil confidence in your clients; while practising excellent **networking skills**. Event planners are also required to be highly **energetic**, as noted by EP2: "You can't sit to be lethargic at any event…". Event planners are required to have a **positive demeanour**; the same idea is also evident in EP11's comment: "Oh you will have to be the type of person…to always have that smile and be all bubbly, and nothing has ever too big for you to handle. Even though deep inside you have a big knot in your stomach".

From an operational aspect, an event planner needs to exercise disciplined **time management** and flawless **financial management**. According to EP9 an event planner must be a: "financial controller, stay within budget and understand service levels". EP5 identified that an event planner: "needs to have brilliant **organisational skills**" and be "a miracle worker because you do get the clients that phone today and expect you to be available tomorrow". EP10 also stressed how: "…you've got to be a logical thinker". Being **detail-oriented** with "an eye for detail" (EP1 & EP2) is obligatory. According to EP4: "there is no room for error in this type of field". This needs to be accompanied by excellent **problem-solving** skills. As EP12's quote states: "you've got to be able to sort the problem…there and then, always look for the solution because there will always be problems jumping…or situations jumping up, because of big events and because there are so many things involved". Furthermore, "your admin skills need to be good" (EP12) and **flexibility** (due to rapid change and crisis management) is needed and as stated by EP5: "Not to be set in your ways…Not being just black and white. You need to see that grey in the middle as well". It is evident from EP3 and EP4's reply that senior event planners are required to be **knowledgeable and experienced** within their field, constantly upskilling themselves with the required research and self-education: "Knowledge…if the person does self-research, and they know the industry well, you can have 20 years' experience, but things change all the time. So, if you are keeping up with what is happening within the industry" (EP3); and "Experience is the most important for me, it is the more you work with a project and run with a project the more experience you will get" (EP4).

Furthermore, demonstrating **patience**, presenting **determination**, practising **sturdiness** and constant **tenacity** in the corporate events industry is beneficial to event planners. EP6 simply replied that you "have to have hair on your teeth". EP7, on the other hand, admitted to not naturally being a patient individual: "…so I don't think I was born patient. But I've had to learn patience – I promise you; you have to learn patience…you need it to deal with clients, you need it to deal with suppliers". Also, event management is a very stressful occupation and one needs to be able to **manage stress** well; it is evident from EP7's comment: "So obviously, you know, anxiety comes into play, and you have to learn to deal with that type of situation. You have to learn how to keep it together". During these demanding periods, doing one's groundwork is key: "when you are well-prepared, you are more confident and so your anxiety doesn't play a huge role" (EP7). **Trustworthiness** and credibility are key, according to EP9: "…the client needs to be able to trust you at the end of the day to deliver the event". EP10 also mentioned how ethical event planners will be more successful in the long run, with a good reputation within the field. Lastly, EP13 interestingly added that an event planner's **health and fitness** needs to be of a high quality, as event planners: "have got to be able to move…being fit and healthy is very, very important… you got to hang in there and be there and I think sort of high energy and that is where the health thing comes in".

- **Formal education**

It is important for the reader to bear in mind that every participant from this study obtained a form of higher education. Yet, the participants were divided in their responses, with only 38% (5) agreeing that formal education is beneficial and desirable to be a successful event planner. The participants that did agree to formal education being advantageous, mostly referred to the skills and discipline that one obtains from formal education; not as much the theory associated with a specific course. This is apparent in EP2's comment: "You do need some sort of education because that is your base foundation. Well, formal education is your foundation". Also, according to EP8: "…it is life skills they need to teach you. How to handle challenges. How to think on your feet. How to handle stress". EP13 also talked about formal education in a positive light, by stating the following: "Yes helps, makes life easier. Make you go ahead quicker". EP7 simply replied: "What tertiary education does is it helps you create some sort of structure. And when you have structure, then I think you're just able to navigate through things a little easier. And it gives you a bit more confidence…also sometimes you experience when people have more education, even if it's just a matric that they have better communication skills, better writing skills, and all those things".

Interestingly, most participants disclosed that during their higher education they were barraged with theory only and they openly express that the lectures mostly did not possess any practical

experience to share with students; the participants further shared that they and future students will benefit from more practical examples and exercises in the higher education classes. EP9 admitted: "…students need more guidance and experience; formal education is too theory-based in my opinion". Furthermore, EP11 commented: "Can I be honest with you? I did a three-year course. And I think it wasn't worth my three-year course". The reader might think this is because only technical colleges will focus on more practical examples; but this was not true for EP5 that attended a technical higher education, the participant remarked as follows: "…just the books were given to you and you had to learn what was in the book and when you do your six months practical they are not involved and then you work it out for yourself". Even though this participant attended a technical school, the practical lessons and offering were not adequate. This highlights a possible gap between education and practice. Moreover, it was established that the event-management industry is not 100% regulated and deemed a recognised profession (c.f. 3.2.3.2 - event management's attempt as a recognised profession; therefore owning a formal education might provide the event planner with more credibility within the industry, as stipulated by EP10: "…this industry is not regulated you know, and you also can gain the respect of whether it's your client. Because they know you're coming from somewhere. You've taken the time to study …Towards whatever…".

- **Training and experience**

All participants (100%) agreed that the industry's training and experience are **valuable** and critical to be a successful events planner. EP2 avidly disclosed: "I would say experience in the workplace far outweighs a certificate and studies". According to EP4 event planner trainees need to hit "the ground running and have someone you can mentor from". Also, EP9 bluntly stated: "Experience in our industry, is everything". To train event planners according to a specific standard, a formal **guideline/ framework/ manual** is preferable. This guideline needs to be user-friendly and written logically in layman's terms. As per EP4's feedback: "I have just learned. It is all in my head really…what the process and the procedures are. But for someone that is coming new, you would need a guideline for training. But something that is simple. Easy to follow. Nothing too complex because we have had some courses…I found that manual so mind-boggling and…far too complicated. You need to have something that is short, to the point. Easy to understand".

The events industry can be very overwhelming. It is unreasonable to expect a new/ young event planner to learn the lingo and know everything about the venues and service providers shortly into their career. It will **take time to learn the trade**. According to EP5: "…you need to give yourself time because there is a lot to learn. After the first year, you will only know a tenth of the venues out there and what you can do at that. So, you need to give yourself…a decent timeframe I would say

is two years maybe? Then you can be comfortable enough to sell your products with confidence". According to EP6 it might even take "minimum three to five" years to teach an intern event planner. EP7 agreed: "…you have to have, I promise you, five years of training".

Moreover, training and experience bring more **confidence**, which is key for successful event management. EP7 noted: "…to stand in front of the directors…and present your fantastic presentation that you've put together, for you to be able to stand firm with hotels and negotiate rates, for you to be able to say no to clients sometimes and say, we are not going to be able to do this, we can't do this, this is what I advise you to do. Because those are tough conversations that sometimes you need to have with clients, the person that's paying you…there are suppliers that have been around in the industry for a very long time that think that they know everything and that don't want to change how they do things necessarily. So, for you to…stick up to them, you have to have…training". EP9 thoroughly agreed: "…training and experience are crucial as it comes with experience that you can build confidence and master all types of events and know what venues there are". EP10 provided another valid point by stating that it also depends on the type of experience the event planner was exposed to and how open the individual was to the learning experience. In EP10's opinion, certain individuals are not **willing to learn**, and all the years of experience might not make any difference: "Some people might say…you know what I've got experience…but for me experience doesn't count for anything if you haven't…tried to learn new things".

c) Sub-category 3: Stages of event management

As exemplified in Figure 4.10, during the interviews, the researcher discussed five proposed event management stages (i.e. *research, design, planning, coordination* and *evaluation*) with the participants. The factors to take into consideration during each theme is deliberated in detail below.

Figure 4-10: The five proposed stages of event management
Source: Adapted from Damm (2012:52) and the study participants' feedback

- **Research**

Research is a **significant part of the pre-event stage**, as the bulk of event-management research takes place before the event commences. The same idea is also evident in EP2's comment: "If you haven't done your research, how will you know what…type of event to have, so definitely this is the most critical part of the event, besides the event itself, is to find out what the client wants, their needs, what size is the event, what is the theme, the demographics, have they had this theme before?". In-depth research allows event planners **to be more organised during the event** by working from the operational plan drawn up during the research stage. EP10 researches the event well in advance and during the event this planner only sits back and observes; due to successful planning and research beforehand: "I don't like to be walking around with a checklist and things like that, but during the event it's basically you've got to see to the satisfaction of your delegate. What are the happy levels?". Research needs to take place throughout the event-management process (pre-, during- and post-event); as an **integral function of event planning**. EP1 explained it as follows: "…with research you have to know which area your client wants to do the value adds at and then also what the theme is. So you can offer good decor, but for pre-, you must get all the finer details on the brief like amounts of pax, date, gender and then during-, you must, you might be on-site, and then you check up the correct suppliers on time and briefed and then post-, you get feedback from clients".

Applying better research during event management will allow event planners to be more **innovative** with their ideas and event-planning approaches. This is evident from EP2's explanation: "…let's try and find something new to make the people that are attending get them excited about their events. Some people attend a lot of these events and it can…become so boring for them to just always go to these things all the time. Let's make it memorable by giving them new ideas, things that they haven't seen before". During the research stage, event planners need to **ask sensitive questions** pertaining to smaller details about the delegates, making or breaking the MICE event. This includes questions about special dietary requirements, delegates' disabilities, religious preferences etc. EP3 provided the following viewpoint: "…is the location suitable for the client, do they cater to the client, you need to check if they have any people maybe that is disabled so that you can check with venues if maybe they offer like wheelchair-friendly facilities…".

An event planner's beautiful presentation with amazing visuals will not do much to sway a detail-oriented client. Similarly, graphs and figures will not help win over a creative client interested in pretty pictures. Therefore preparation unfortunately is not enough; event planners need to **research and know their audience**. As noted by EP7: "To research who it is that you're going to be

presenting to. Who the client is, get to know your clients because if you have no idea, you don't have a pulse on the client that you're dealing with, then I promise you, that's the end of that relationship .It's the end. Yeah, 100% make connections, but you also need to know like you can't go to a client that is homegrown, like a South African company and go and present these international global ideas and not localise it. So, you'll miss each other completely. So, research 100%. Get to know who your client is". Note, during research event planners need to **ask outcome-based questions**. Clients will only truly be content with an event-management outcome if their initial goals and visions are achieved post-event. Concerning EP5, this means: "…you need to get the idea of what they want to do, the outcome of the teambuilding". It is also apparent from EP6's reply: "To understand what the event is about…you need to understand the client and what's the ethos of the client".

The **form of research for event planners has changed** over the past couple of decades, according to EP13: "I start my research obviously on the internet. In the olden days it was brochures and reading up in books". Being based in a technologically friendly and advanced era, event planners must use technology to research various elements of the proposed MICE event; i.e. the venue or location. However, bear in mind, pictures and information online are not always regulated and a true reflection of the service offering. Therefore, by physically visiting the venue will add value to the research process.

Event planners **will benefit from going the extra mile** during the research process; even though it will be a more timeous and expensive exercise. As noted by EP11: "Okay, especially if it is like a venue that I am not very familiar with. I do Google, I try to see…sometimes we go and see the venues…which I think that is very important as well. Because like I said sometimes…pictures are deceiving". EP13 also mentioned: "I know I do work in an unorthodox way. I literally get on a plane; I do research on the internet in terms of the DMC (Destination Management Company). And then I go to the destination and I narrow it down to about three or four and then I spend a day with each of them and say okay, I want to see your office, show me. Spend time to get the feeling, because I think it is very important to me when I work with the DMC, how, how you feel them. Because you become a team. And because I get very involved in my projects and it is like, it is attention to detail. Because remember the client needs to probably fork out another R20 000; R10 000 because it is your air ticket and then you know it is our hotel accommodation three, four days".

- **Design**

The design segment of event management refers to the preferred **theme**, décor requirements and wow-factor. EP3 agrees: “So with design, you look at the client’s theme, what exactly is the theme for the event, and that’s when you can plan what to bring onto the event”. Planning is also essential during the design phase. This usually takes place within the **pre-event stage**. To execute a successful event design, the event planner should **draft** a suitable event design and plan from there onwards; instead of confirming design elements separately, that might not fit into the holistic event theme/ design. EP6 merely replied: “You can't go forward before you have a draft of what you're planning to do”. Artistic event planners tend to enjoy the design stage of event management more because of the **creative** process. EP4 explained: “It is more creative. It is a creative side of things which is enjoyable”. While EP5, on the other hand, admitted: “…I am not too fond of that. I am not that creative…”.

Furthermore, the design is a **visual element** of event management. Event planners need the skillset to explain and illustrate to clients what their event will look like; before the tactical planning commences. As commented by EP7: “It is because everybody is visual, the client wants to know what they're stepping into, what it will feel like, what it will look like...so when you do your presentations and proposals, the vision element is very important. Show them where they are going to be staying, show them the different activities that they're going to be taking part in, show them the entertainment, let them see the experience so they can buy into it”. EP11 agrees that design integrates the visual element of an event: “a lot of times I do send them photos from the supplier, of what they have already done. So, they can say okay, this is more or less the set-up. Or I can, you know, give the client an idea of…still cocktail style but just different seating and then send the photos to the clients”.

Also, to plan events according to a particular theme may **fast-track the event-planning process** and reduce the event planner’s research and workload. This is evident from EP9’s comment: “during the design stage we plan the event according to a theme. Actually, we like planning the event according to a specific theme; it just makes things easier”. Some clients will require a neutral event; without colours, décor and themes because they do not want to take away from the event's professionalism and momentousness. Event planners will then focus more on the event's functionality and operational aspects (the **newfound design**), instead of the wow-factor (i.e. medical symposiums). According to EP8, that is true for certain MICE events: “No I think there is more important stuff than decor and I believe that is the last thing that needs to be done. Unless your client gives you a theme upfront, which they will put in the brief, then yes, then it is easy fall

into". Therefore event design has a direct **correlation with the MICE event type**. For certain events there are more pressing planning issues than the event's look-and-feel. EP10 enlighten the interviewer with the following: "It depends what it is you know, like as I said, I mostly do international world conferences. So, it's not like a theme…you've got to do things that's gonna work for big conferences like that. You got to be practical. Crowd management is so important".

Moreover, event design **is not always the MICE event planner's responsibility**, especially with larger events where the design factor is outsourced to specialists with more expertise; i.e. audio visual, technology, branding or marketing corporations. When the design element is outsourced, corporate event planners may be required to focus more on the event's operational and logistical elements. EP12 suggested: "…we normally deal with more the logistic sides of a conference. So, we don't really do a lot of themed stuff. No if there is opportunity, obviously, if our clients say give it to us to do, I think the more things you show you can do so I am definitely open for it. And certain clients do give us the opportunity to do that. I as such haven't really been so involved but there are small elements where I have been involved and yes, I think it is the openness and willingness to take things on and to learn new things, so I won't turn that side of things away if it comes my way... And we also offer to clients, we say that we can deal with those things". With smaller MICE events, the event planner is mostly responsible for all elements of the event. In the instance of event design being outsourced or managed by different management companies, it is important for clear communication channels and for the event planner to be well-informed regarding the technology, theme, look-and-feel of the event; in order to deliver a rounded affair. EP13 agreed: "I will sit with the event girls and they have got the design departments, the client, if it is that kind of a company. And then…we would work together. What is the look and feel? What is their message? And I will bring the elements of the destination in and then on the other side I will speak to the DMC for the physical stuff like decor and you know, things like that".

- **Planning**

During the planning segment of event management, one tends to focus on necessities such as the event date, time, destination, venue etc. Planning mostly takes place during the first stage of event management; **pre-event**. EP1 confirms this: "Well during the pre-, lead up to the conference you need to do a lot of liaison with the client and yourself and the venue". It is also evident from this comment that planning **requires communication** between the event planner, client and various suppliers. With event planning, event planners 'map' out the preferred event process, timeline and responsibilities. Which will serve as a **guideline** on the day of the event. EP7 explained: "You need to know what's going to happen at what time…So, if somebody is on stage and an MC is getting off

on stage the production guys yes, know what's happening because obviously you've gone through it with them. But you need to know what's happening…". Also, the planning phase of event management includes the task of **focusing on smaller details** that can be detrimental to the success of the event, i.e. weather patterns, date clashes, seasonality, cancelation terms and conditions etc. EP3 explained the following: "When we pick the venue, when we're planning, we also look at your weather". EP12 agreed with the following response: "…that's where attention to detail come in…make sure the dates corresponds, that is no clash in diaries. The time of the year. When you choose a destination, it can't be like rainy or cyclone time. Same with the destination that you've got to try and find a destination where most people haven't travelled before". Planning is the **biggest portion of the event-management process;** therefore event planners plan well in advance, occasionally even years in advance; but the event itself passes by so quickly. EP7 also identified that "Event Management is 90% planning and admin. And then you just have that one day of Oh, here it is". Ultimately, this stage of event management is **the pillar** of a successful event, as EP6 confidently observed: "You cannot succeed without planning". Also, according to EP12: "Planning is everything". EP7 echoes this: "It's everything. Planning is everything". With proper planning comes better confidence for the event planner…you need to be on the ball".

Event management is a **specialised job function** and event planners require a certain level of creativity, skillset and experience to plan successful events. EP12 suggested: "…you've got to be able to think as a MICE consultant, be able to be creative and think out of the box because it's not your normal… mundane tourist things". Furthermore, event planners are required to use their expertise to **guide** clients throughout the planning process: "Rather than them just suggesting things to you, you often have to prompt them" (EP12). Lastly, during event planning, one should investigate a **contingency** plan throughout operations. EP8 agreed by merely stating: "Always have a plan B".

- **Coordination**

In phase two of event management (**during-event**), coordination takes place. Here the communication plan, logistics, budget, facility plan, event staffing, catering, risk assessment, registration and on-site assistance comes into play. Various elements need to be coordinated together; it creates a successful MICE event. EP11 explained: "…everyone has its own important part in the event. You know, I mean sometimes I forgot a photographer. But I mean you are not going to have pictures, or photos let's rather say. So, I think each element is just as important". Event coordination covers a large human resource, with lots of role-players throughout the process. Consequently, coordinating an event goes along with **managing different people**. This is

something EP12 wishes to highlight in the following comment: "…you've got to have the right people in place and you often have to make sure that you rely on a lot of people, so you have to make sure that they are on the same page as you are in terms of briefing them about your client and their needs and wants. Because you might know your client…but your…catering staff or the hotel staff might not know. So, you have to be able to brief them and tell them exactly what is expected. You have got to liaise constantly with, you know, the staff and make sure that you take your client's interest at heart and you don't go over budget and things like that. When there are meals, certain meal requirements, you've got to…manage that because it's quite important for clients to be acknowledged if they are kosher and you have got to be again on the ground assisting those teams on getting the food to the right people".

Therefore **communication** is key during event-management coordination. The event planner on-site is required to be in constant communication with the delegates, client and event suppliers. The event planner is also seen as the distributor of all communication during coordination; the **middleman**. EP13 simply said: "I always like to see myself…I think I am a puppet master, you just pull it together". EP3 explained it as follows: "During coordination, you just need to make sure that you understand what the client requires, like communication is very clear between yourself, the client and the supplier because you are the middleman". EP5 agrees and said the following about communication during event coordination: "…coordination and communications because if there is a gap in the communication, the coordination will all fall to pieces. You need to coordinate and communicate the logistics, the vehicles used, the equipment that needs to be packed. So, there is a lot of that. You need to organise or speak to the venue about the set-up requirements that you need. You need to plan your staffing. You need to see if you need a paramedic with certain events". EP6 reiterated the importance of communication and how the lack thereof impacted events in the past: "So I think the biggest challenge of coordination…in my early years of events planning…I realise that I will discuss with the client and I'll have the information but I forget to tell the supplier about what we discussed. Or I'll discuss with the supplier…And I'll know what it is but we didn't communicate it to the client. So, you have to have that triangle. You have to have that communication of making sure what the supplier knows is what the client knows is what you know, and it's all a common thread that pulls through".

During event coordination, event planners are required to be **pro-active** in their approach; by monitoring the situation and taking immediate action. As noted by EP7: "…you need to be able to cue things…change things at any point the client needs change, you need to be able to let the kitchen know that the food is actually going to be delayed and they need to just hang ten a bit.

100% pro-active - your eyes need to be everywhere". When an event is well-planned, all event stakeholders can benefit from operating from the event **checklist** (c.f. 3.4.1; Pre-event-management stage) or operational plan during event coordination on-site. EP3 explained: "So normally, we'll have master list, your checklist, so that the client knows where to refer to. Or if they just want to double-check something, then they have that information…From suppliers' details, who's assisting on-site, who's the security, your food and beverage manager, the coordinator on-site, your transport company if they used ground transportation…". During coordination, the event planner should stay within the pre-arranged operational plan and only allow for amendments that will add value to the event's success. Therefore the event planner cannot listen to everyone on-site and make changes according to the various requests; it is important to **stand firm** and remain professional. This is evident from EP8's response: "You never please everybody all the time. And don't try, because it will kill you". Coordination on-site during an event is not a nice-to-have. Event planners are paid for this professional service. Delegates, suppliers and the client need to see the event planner as an expert in this regard – by asking for advice, following instructions and staying within the event plan from beginning-to-end: "Coordination is very important, that is why clients pay us a management fee. We will coordinate the entire event from beginning to end" (EP9).

- **Evaluation**

During phase three of event management, **post-event**, evaluation takes place. During this stage, event planners typically reconcile finances, complete an event post-event, request for constructive feedback and possible recognition.

Finances drive most events and its impeccable for the event planner to stay within the specified/ agreed upon **event budget**, and alternatively communicate changes to the budget throughout the event-management process. A large part of event evaluation is the monitoring process to determine whether the budget has been honoured. EP2 acknowledged that: "…you would have your… post-mortem of the event. So, you would go through your recon, check that everything has been paid for. Have you stayed within the budget? If you haven't, you need to get the clients' money and explain why it went over the budget. And hopefully it was, if it was a successful event, the client will not mind that it has gone over the budget and will happily pay in the extra money because it was memorable". By receiving constructive **feedback** from the client, event planners are informed about the services rendered and the client's contentment level. This can be in the form of a survey, physical meeting, e-mail follow-up or telephonic meeting. EP3 explained how: "…we would do directly to the client so that we have feedback about whatever venues we're using and for our service as well". Event planners need to bear in mind to also ask for feedback regarding service

providers used for event management purposes; not only for their services. The feedback process needs to be a two-way road, where the event planner and client provide feedback. EP9 reiterated: “After the event, we evaluate the results, we also ask the client for advice to better our service in the future and that’s the main purpose of it; is not to repeat same mistakes and to improve on our product”.

Event planners also use the evaluation stage to improve their relationship with the client further; by **asking about possible future events** and offering their services accordingly by promising provisional proposals in the interim. This is apparent from EP7’s explanation of event evaluation: “…it's important because it speaks to getting business the next time. If you have missed the ball in terms of the client’s objective or objectives, that's...yeah, you're probably not going to get that business again. We also sit with clients and talk about the year…what's this year going to look like and that is probably one of the best things you could do. You start having those conversations, the client immediately includes you in their year”. Positive post-event evaluation can lead to a higher chance of **return business** and positive **word-of-mouth marketing** by the party. EP7 further explained: “Yeah, most clients are return clients. But the other clients are clients that have been there for a really long time. And clients, some of the clients that have actually moved from one company to another and they recommend us at the next place that they are at”. EP12 also mentioned: “…especially if it's a new client, to keep them and to set up new meetings for them after an event…ask if you can quote again or what are their budgets for the new year, how you can get involved”.

When one refers to end-to-end event management, the evaluation also plays an important role. There are, however, event planners that do not **follow through** as soon as the event takes place and accounts are paid; then the client does not hear from the planner again. Event planners need to make clients feel important and special, by following through and completing a thorough evaluation stage of event planning. EP12 basically replied: “it's about following through”. EP7 agrees: “Ultimately, you know, they feel like you're actually invested in this. I mean, clients feel like we don't have any other clients”. Moreover, event planners do not have to wait until after the event to provide feedback. A healthy planner-client relationship requires open communication channels and continuous service- level **evaluation throughout** all the phases of an event. EP10 raised this point: “Evaluation is also constant. It is not something that I feel I need to be working on afterwards”. According to EP13: “This process helps make the client feel safe”.

This concludes the second category, strategic event management. The following category emphasises the KSFs of effective event management – which also is an imperative focus throughout the research study.

4.3.2.3 Category 3: KSFs in event management

KSFs is the third study category. According to the researcher's in-depth exploration and literature study in 2019. The following were frequently identified KSFs from previous tourism studies in South Africa (c.f. 3.8.2 - Previous research on the KSFs identified for tourism operations in SA): general/ hospitality management; operational aspects; finance management; marketing management; risk management; green management; human resources; security and safety; accessibility; hygiene; accommodation; venue and location; facilities and services; entertainment and activities; catering; innovation; quality; post-event evaluation; and adequate planning. Although MICE events are related to tourism, there are no previous studies (to the researcher's knowledge) that focus on KSFs of South African event management. The participants' feedback on the above-listed KSFs and other identified event-management KSFs are discussed in detail during the following sections. The following sub-categories were identified: general KSFs during the multiple phases of event management; KSFs pre-event; during-event KSFs; and post-event KSFs.

a) Sub-category 1: General KSFs during the multiple phases of event management

The study identified six KSFs that over-lap multiple phases of event management. These KSFs are highlighted in Figure 4.11 and encompass the *human element*; a high level of *quality*; *financial management* throughout event management; *risk management* which includes overall safety and security; *green management*; and outstanding *facilities and services*.

Figure 4-11: General KSFs during the multiple phases of event management
Source: Researchers' compilation based on the participants' feedback

One of the reasons why MICE is still flourishing, as opposed to leisure and corporate travel that is moving towards online booking tools and internet bookings, is that MICE event management requires expertise and attention to detail, which refers to the **human element**; a KSF for successful event management during *all the stages* of an event. "The human element is the innate skills, talent, emotion, drive and culture that only come from humans" (Palachuk, 2016:internet). Also, "because you're dealing with people" (EP3) as an event manager. This refers to contact between the planner, suppliers, delegates and client. As per EP4: "…pre, during and post…involves or relates to your whole team. So, your team members who worked with you have assisted you and your suppliers…to keep everybody happy…suppliers paid. Keep to time management…". EP6 shared the sentiment and noted: "I think human element in this industry is crazy…you need to be really on point with human element. You're dealing with emotion, especially in what we do". The client needs to *trust* the event planner throughout the event, as per EP7: "100%, clients buy into us". Finally, EP8 wittily added that human element during event management is: "Very key, because robots can't run conferences".

A **high level of quality management** throughout *all stages* of event management is crucial. This is obvious from EP9's comment: "Quality yes, that is the name of our game!". EP4 added: "Quality is

very important. Quality of everything, from start to finish, is key". EP1 also noted that quality in event planning "…is a very good key success factor. Especially while making sure that the hotel staff and cleanliness is up to standard. Because without quality you will get lots of complaints afterwards". The participants are passionate about delivering a quality service offering, rather than providing services to a large quantity of clients. The average event planner only works on two to three events at a time, to deliver a high-quality product. EP5 explained: "I always say, rather give *quality than quantity* and know when to say no we cannot assist. Rather give your one client that quality event than trying to book five or ten events on a day and you cannot give quality. Before, during and after". Furthermore, the level of quality provided during event management, on all fronts, are closely related to the event *budget*. The higher the budget, the higher the quality of event management and services. Also, the event planner must guide the client and *upsell* where need be, in order to guarantee a better-quality event (the client will commonly only focus on cost saving; which may compromise event quality). This is evident form EP9's feedback: "Yes. I think it's often; you know, you've got to be able to offer your clients the best for the budget they have got, but sometimes you also have to be pro-active and tell them rather spend a little bit more…to avoid disappointment".

Financial management was identified as a KSF throughout *all three stages* of event management by all the participants. Concerning EP2, this means: "I would say with finance management…with MICE it is particularly important to stay within the budgets…if you need to go over you need to have clear communication with your clients about that…pre to discuss what the budget is going to be, post to make sure that you haven't gone over it. And during if you say for instance… you have a bar bill…you are going to reach it; here you need to advise the client". EP6 agreed and simply said: "You have to stick within the budget during all three stages". *Trust* also plays a huge role during financial management of events; as breakdown in trust can be detrimental to the event planner-client relationship. The event planner should therefore be honest and transparent with the event finances. EP7 interestingly commented: "We literally itemise everything, we put our management fee so the client can see exactly…if at any point the client wants to see an invoice from a supplier…I'm happy to show them…because we haven't put anything on it. So, it's also important for clients to know that, in our industry, we get a commission from hotels, so we don't muck up with the hotels that we have the agreements with".

Safety and security management is an important KSF for *pre-event-planning* and *during* the event, especially in Gauteng and South Africa, where crime is an emphasised challenge for delegates (c.f. 2.6.3.3 - Challenges). As identified by EP1: "It is important because in South Africa

we need to ensure the security and safety of the delegates and audience, because of the country we live in". EP9 echoes: "…it's South Africa, that's always an issue…We make sure our venues and airlines are safe for all of our clients…These days…there's more threats then there were a decade or a few years ago". However, the safety and security level may vary between clients and groups of delegates, dependent on the company's regulations, compliance issues, the event location, seniority and position of delegates, etc. EP2 approves with the following statement: "I think here it just depends on the client. So, with some clients it's not a massive deal breaker and others, it plays a huge part". Event planners are advised to be vigilant of delegates' safety and security during events, as clients follow their guidance and the onus rests on the planner. If safety or security are breached during an event, the planner might lawfully be held responsible. Adding to the events' safety management can be a costly exercise but needs to be brought to the client's attention. EP7 agrees with this declaration, by stating: "That's crucial. It's, because it's something that we always sort of leave because…things don't go wrong all the time. But when they go wrong, it adds to budget, and sometimes clients don't want to spend. Right? But it's your responsibility to make sure that they do, because let me tell you one thing: when things go wrong, you can be sued as a company; as the event management company, you can be sued…I've watched it happen to other companies, small companies that have shut down because, you know, fire broke out…it's very, very important".

During the planning of larger events, event planners in Gauteng are required to complete and submit the necessary safety and security documentation two weeks prior to their event to the Joint Operations Committee (JOC); established by the City of Johannesburg to ensure that all events held in Johannesburg, Gauteng, are safe and that the event planners comply with all by-laws and city guidelines (JOC, 2020:internet). There are external companies in the industry that can assist with completing and submitting the correct JOC documentation. "The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines, processes and procedures for planning, organising and implementing events within the City of Johannesburg" (JOC, 2020:internet). Most of the participants were familiar with the JOC process and apply it for safety and security measures during their events. This goes along with risk management and risk mitigation. Therefore, **risk management** is also a KSF *pre*- and *during-event*. It is advisable to have a contingency plan in place if something goes wrong during the event. Preparing for the inevitable and proposedly applying crisis management is a pro-active approach for event planners to follow. EP1 identified that: "During the event it is good to have a crisis management in case things don't go as planned. Then to have a back-up plan or solution that can be actioned". EP5 agreed with the following statement: "Think on your feet. If you need to sort out…if it starts raining to try and see what you can change… Adapt to

change". EP9 noted: "Before and during…yes, it's important, I would like to say especially during the event, there's always a level of risk and you as a coordinator, you need to try and limit that or mitigate it completely". EP10 also added more perspective on this matter: "Absolutely. So, we're looking at crowd management you know…the external environment… Like for example now you have Coronavirus. We're looking at possible riots…In South Africa it's a very real thing…Protest action, how you're going to handle that...We've got risk factors – load shedding…the water crisis…and then you also have it during the event. For example, to give you an example, you have a pavilion …Okay. And I don't know people like to stack up chairs and, you know, they do their own thing, you know. So, you've always got to be making your client aware, you know. Because of how things should be, how many chairs we should have in a room. For example, if we're gonna go over that it becomes a hazard".

Sustainability/ **green management** is seen as a KSF *pre- and during-events.* Participants are compliant with their client's green movements; but also like to refer to it as a "trend" (EP1) or "fashion" (EP13), rather than an indispensable factor. That leaves the researcher with the awareness that the participants mostly see green management as key only to please their clients; for whom it is a KSF. EP9 noted: "Yes before the event and during the event, our clients are serious about sustainability". The various innovative initiatives the participant event planners for green event management come up with, include:

- Making away with plastic bottles and replacing it with glass bottles at MICE events (EP6 & EP10);
- Using bamboo straws at events (EP9);
- Recycling throughout the event and making use of recycled products (EP1, EP5 & EP8;)
- Sustainable event gifting (EP6);
- Being paperless (EP9);
- How meals are served (EP10); and
- "…menus that we actually made out of seed paper. So, people could take the menus and actually go plant them after" (EP7).

Facilities and services management *during* a corporate event is vital. According to EP8: "…the facilities could be *swimming pools, gym, spa*...". It is imperative to provide adequate *Wi-Fi* at MICE events as well as other *technological supplies*. This will allow for the event to run seamlessly and delegates to operate at a high-performance level. As noted by EP11: "It is, it is important because many times when they do the presentation, if it is wireless…they need the internet, the internet must be pretty fast so that they can do their presentation. The sound must be correct. And not

crackling and making noises and so it is important in an event. Make or break". EP2 simply added: "your typical things like your Wi-Fi is needed…even if I don't have a good head for technology, your delegates may have, so they will look at the venue and go – technology wasn't as great here".

Participants shared their concern that it is an ultimate requirement to have a generator and *back-up electrical supply* in place, especially with South Africa's power-cut problems. When it comes to this factor, event planners are required to ask specific questions, which EP3 highlighted: "…is the venue on par with other venues in terms of do they have the latest, say, AVs, are the facilities upgraded all the time, do you have space maybe for team building, what do they have to offer?". *Pre-event*, when a venue is selected, it needs to tick all the event facility and service requirements. EP5 opportunely added: "…venues need to have the facilities to accommodate the size of set-up we need to do…grass areas…big enough conference rooms…enough staff to help us clean up…refresh drink stations when necessary and just be all around helpful if you need something". Event planners also have *expectations* of what facilities and services need to be rendered to them for corporate event-management purposes, EP6 provided the following examples: "if you go to a conference, there should be mints on the table, and there should be a pen and pad, and there should be a data projector and a screen". The standard facilities and services should therefore, always be in place for an event to be successful.

Catering is a major event-management *service* and identified event-management KSF for *pre- and during*-event. This is evident from EP1's comment: "This is…very important. It is a key success factor…pre- and during-phase. Because pre- we, pre-select menus and advice on diets and then during, we must make sure the catering is up to standard. Lots of venues are restricted to use their on-site caterers". It is also seen as one of the *top KSFs*, as EP7 eagerly remarked: "Food! Don't mess with people's food…out of all those things, maybe food is the most important because…when people are not fed right, food runs out, you're in trouble. If food is dry, and tasteless...They forget about everything else. You can have whatever entertainment and if the food is terrible, that's all you will ever hear about". Catering services during corporate events need to be managed in an *orderly* manner, *on-time* and *hygienically.*

Furthermore, the food items also need to be *healthy*, *attractive* to the eye, *tasty*, and enough to be available to the delegates. EP4 mentioned: "make sure that it is hygienic and tasty and healthy". The way event food is *disposed* of is an element to be included in event planning. Catering during a MICE event forms part of the overall experience; that is why it needs to be *unforgettable*. EP2 noted the following about the food at event catering: "Food, people always remember food. And if

you don't remember the food, then it couldn't have been that memorable. So yes, the way it's presented, the way it tastes…definitely is a massive deal breaker!". Lately, event catering is not all about the amount of food, the *health* element is equally important. EP9 noted: "These days our clients are much more health-conscious, so health is definitely an issue, we also try and provide clients with a more creative and innovative menu based around health". Delegates have special diets and food preferences, i.e. vegan, vegetarian, pescatarians, ovo-vegetarian, lacto-vegetarian, low-GI diets, food allergies, Kosher, Halal etc., which needs to be seen to during event catering. The different types of food are required to be appropriately marked and available at separate food stations.

MICE event management consists of three planning phases, which include pre-, during- and post-event (Manners *et al.,* 2015a:8). Throughout each phase of MICE events, several event planners regard certain event planning facets to be more superior to others.

b) Sub-category 2: Established KSFs pre-event

Optimum *research* pre-event; *emotion management* (portraying a specific set of characteristics, i.e. enthusiasm, passion, to maintain a sense of peacefulness, positive attitude, energetic tendencies, being in high spirits and ultimate control); *organisational skills*; general *management skills* and being goal-oriented; excellent *communication* skills; as well as the *location*, venue and the accessibility thereof – are the six themes identified under KSFs before the event commences (see Figure 4.12).

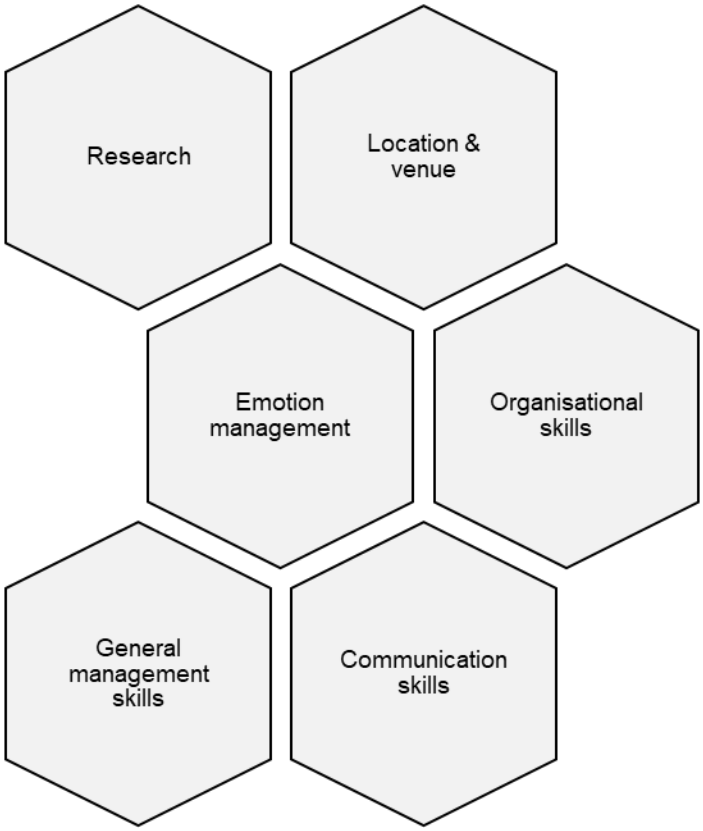

Figure 4-12: KSFs pre-event

Source: Researchers' compilation based on the participants' feedback

Successful corporate event planners **manage their emotions** well and are required to show **particular characteristics.** This is a unique KSF identified by this study that has not been recognised by previous South African event-management studies (as per the researcher's knowledge). It is key for the event planner to showcase a high level of *enthusiasm* and to be *passionate* about every event-management element even before the event commences. EP7 explained it as follows: "…if you show your positive attitude before the event, the client is going to be excited…they are going to feel no fear, for anything to go wrong. They're going to have complete trust in you". EP2 said: "Well here, I would definitely say, your passion". It is also the event planner's responsibility to *maintain a sense of peacefulness* during the event, among all role-players. This manifest in EP2's comment: "During the events, you also need to…keep the client at ease". The event planner must always be *in control* during an event, EP5's advice to event planners is to always: "be hands-on". EP10 expressed a similar approach: "By the time I get to my event, I've got to be monitoring the levels of my delegates, of my client". Furthermore, event delegates and other event role-players need to be content and in *high spirits* during the event; it is the event planner's responsibility to *maintain a high level of enjoyment* throughout the event among

all parties involved. This is done by seeing to the needs of suppliers, staffing, delegates and the client, by checking up on everyone regularly. Concerning EP7 the following needs to be done by the event planner: “During the event is, is everybody laughing and smiling? I have to look around and scan around and see if people are engaging and laughing and so then I'm like Okay, it's good…Is everybody here? Entertainment - are they here? Are they in the building? Then ja, then I’m good”.

Concerning EP1: “A key success factor for pre-event is good if the organiser has a passion for the project and is planned”. Event planners therefore also are required to practise excellent **organisational skills**, by being systematic in their approach, informed of the event brief and well-organised: “…if she knows the budget and the expectations. She must be…well-organised. Time management…I think just mainly organise, to get things timeously quoted and contacting the travel booker” (EP1). The following participants eagerly added: “Shoo, just organisational issues” (EP5); and “Goodness…it is to get the brief correct from the client” (EP4). From the event's conception, the event planner needs to show upright **management skills** by leading the event *confidently* and successfully. EP2 commented: “…showing good leadership…if you don't have a good positive attitude…an energetic attitude, it counts for nothing”. During this stage, the event planner must be goal-*oriented*, which is an important management skill. As noted by EP7: “Are we going to meet the client’s objectives? So, for me, you can put together something pretty, but if it doesn't speak to what the clients envisaged or wants or speaks to, maybe global mandate or whatever. Have we, are we going to achieve what we set out to achieve? That's what's important”. In order to plan a successful event, the planner must understand the clients’ requirements. EP2 also agreed by stating the following KSF: “Meeting your client's needs”. Also, the event planner needs to *surpass expectations* and “create a wow-factor” (EP6) for the proposed event.

Suitable **communication** pre-event is yet another identified KSF: “I think communication from the event planner to the delegates – have they received the correct information?” (EP3.) EP8 agrees that good communication will allow all event role-players will know what is expected from them: “All being on the same page and knowing what we got to do”.

It is a definite KSF if the planner **researches** the proposed event and the client hosting the event. To be well-informed of *previous successful events*, the client’s *value system*, *requirements* and office *culture*. This is evident from EP9’s response: “…need to understand the client and who you’re dealing with specifically. Also, work around them and their needs, research the company, go and read their mission statement and goals as well as their social media updates and so on to be in

tune with what the client wants". EP10 agrees with this KSF: "…it's basically the research that you are doing. It's the budget. It's what kind of venue does the client like and, you know, sometimes we like certain things, but our client might not like it…you got to understand when it comes to policies and things, what is the policy…".

The **location** of a MICE event and the **accessibility** thereof is a KSF that requires intense attention during the planning process pre-event. "Logistics, the location…accessibility" (EP11). EP12 agreed: "…think logistics is quite important. By that I mean the location or the accommodation that you choose. Accessibility, you know, you can't choose a destination that when you land at the airport, you have to travel two hours or three hours or, so the logistics for me when I plan an event is quite important". In terms of accessibility, there are many factors the event planner must be cognisant of. EP1 mentioned a few: "…you got to make sure the venue is central, and without enough parking then there will be congestion and for accessibility, you must also check disability access for wheelchairs". EP6 added that being visualant of an event venue's accessibility will assist with better crowd management, and according to EP7 more detail-oriented questions about accessibility include: "You want to know when people park - are they going to walk into the venue and if it's raining, what does it mean? A lady wearing heels, is she going to be comfortable?". One of the event planner's first tasks is to identify the perfect venue to host an event. The event **venue** is key; rendering EP9: "The venue can basically make your event spectacular or make it a complete disaster." The participants expressed their concern that a *site inspection* needs to take place prior to confirming the venue. The venue and the location thereof can be *affected by various factors*, i.e. delegate demographics, the event budget, number of delegates, event set-up, the reason for the event etc. This is something EP2 wishes to highlight: "…well definitely one of the most important aspects, we need to check the size of the venue and the location…what is the demographics of our clients? Do we need it to be in the CBD of Johannesburg or do we need a five-star hotel in a quiet suburb?".

c) Sub-category 3: Established KSFs during-event

Through the during-event phase, six KSFs were identified. It was established that an event planner adds value while being *on-site* to practise flawless *operational management* (which includes time management and team effort). It is also vital to have the right *accommodation*; high level of *cleanliness*; the correct *entertainment and activities,* and *prizes/ give-aways* available for the delegates. See Figure 4.13 and clarification below.

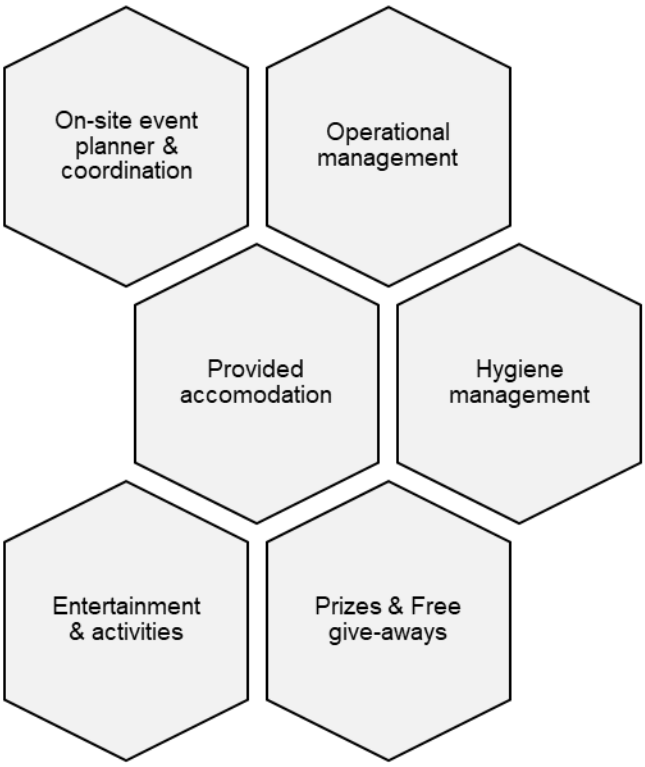

Figure 4-13: KSFs during-event

Source: Researchers' compilation based on the participants' feedback

First, the event planner needs to be **on-site** and pro-active during an event. According to EP4: "I just feel that you need to have someone hands-on to do the checks". EP11 shared the sentiment: "Being on-site…advancing on-site…attention to detail". EP12 explained it as follows: "Well, yes, *hands-on* being there on the ground…that human element we spoke about that…advancing to sites to make sure the set-up is done correctly from, you know, your number of chairs for dinner, to the bathrooms, the cleanliness, it's that little attention to detail on every element, being there to fix it when it's wrong. If tables are too close to one another, to be able for the venue to move it, you know, to say, the waiters are not going to get past, things like that…I think in every aspect of every single element that you offer". Being on-site will allow the event planner to systematically take immediate action, *manage the event systematically*; to apply the rest of the key success factors to follow below. Being on-site boils down to the task of flawless *coordination.* EP2 noted: "It has to do with coordinating your event successfully, making sure your catering is successful, entertainment, your safety and security is all taken care of, that you've stayed within the timeline that your client has requested. So yes, I think this one has to do with everything that has to do with, with coordinating".

Operational management is significant when practising event management during the event. EP6 noted the following: "…having that outlay of what you planning to do and making sure that everybody that needs to execute knows what they need to execute map work". Therefore *time management* is equally important, for an event to run successfully. EP4 suggested that the main KSF during-event is "to keep to the timelines". According to EP3, operational management also includes staying *within the proposed SLAs and deadlines*. Operational management also entails adequate *team effort* - a requirement throughout the actual event. It is advisable for the event planners and client to act as a united front, to pull off a successful event. Also, *regular catch-up sessions or meetings* throughout the event will ensure a seamless event. According to EP9: "During the event, it's important for you and your suppliers to be a good team and portray a united front in front of the client, you don't want any issues happening in front of the client, or disputes. During the event, it's key to meet daily with the client, preferably early in the morning, to iron out any issues".

Hygiene management and general cleanliness might seem like a given during events, but the lack thereof creates a negative impact; it is an absolute KSF of event management. That applies to all aspects of the event, EP1 focused on the hygiene of event *food and catering*: "It is always, I must ensure all food vendors have their certificate of acceptability…also the Halal suppliers have they certificates. So, the hygiene is important because it affects the delegates' health". Also, "…even the crockery that you're using" (EP3). The sanitation of a *venue* is the absolute deal-breaker, according to EP2: "I'd say…if there was a venue that wasn't clean and hygienic, we would definitely not consider it again". According to most of the participants, the next spot on an event planner's hygienic checklist is the restroom and bathrooms. EP6 interestingly explained how the level of hygiene during an event might fluctuate, dependent on the *luxury level* of the event; as a more formal and exclusive event requires stricter hygienic regulations: "Hygiene across the board is always important. And I find with five-star events, even more so. So, with three-star events, you can still put a bowl of peanuts and raisins in one bowl. In your five-star you kind of individually have to pack everything". In order to maintain appropriate hygiene across the board, the correct *human resources* are essential to manage the cleanliness of venues, hotels, bathrooms, kitchens, cutlery, facilities etc. EP9 described problem areas and the possible reason therefore: "Cleanliness in rooms is a big problem, especially in country estates and old venues as well as hotels, I find that these hotels have one lady that works at reception and in then the same lady needs to go and clean the rooms.

Therefore, it boils down to the fact that venues are incorrectly staffed, don't have the correct number of people, and even if they do, sometimes the people are not trained well enough. Also, the

hygiene of food is very important in dealing with catering and that's a huge aspect of our industry". Event planners need to voice their concern towards suppliers and venues if hygiene is problematic during the event. EP11 proposed the following: "…you send them a report…let them know that you…not satisfied. Or it is unacceptable. A lot of times I would tackle it right then and there…depending on how bad it is and the circumstances". Along with hygienic measures goes extreme planning and *attention to detail* by the event planner on-site. EP12 added: "…you are constantly planning, for instance, if an event is at a large venue where there is maybe not bathrooms and it's mobile bathrooms, you've got to be…planning it and making sure that…there is enough staff to clean the bathrooms, to have spray in them and hand wash. You know it is that small attention to details because often those things are not in place, but you have to put those measurements in place". The consistency of how event planners manage event hygiene, the *ultimate measures*, leaps, and bounds they implement is commendable. EP13 explained their proactivity as follows: "You can get one tummy bug there and especially in terms of food and then not just tummy, in the bathrooms. That is part that I write into the working doc. Who is going to check… and how often are they going actually to check the toilets for me? And sometimes I would have a car going in front of the bus, with, if I know they have got a stop at let's say an Ultra City, that is a bit dodgy, and I will have my people, you know sort of, I get students and they go with a mop and things and clean that… cleaning the toilet before the bus, you know, when the client gets there".

For MICE events that require delegates to overnight, **provided accommodation** is a KSF. It is advisable for event planners to only send delegates to overnight at a location if the planner is familiar with the property; hence *site inspection* or familiarisation trips are important. As noted by EP1: "Always recommend going for a site inspection to ensure that the accommodation is of a standard". Event planners need to bear in mind that most properties have different room categories, and delegates might have different preferences (i.e. non-smoking room, room with balcony, wheelchair-friendly room, room on the ground floor, interleading rooms etc.). Therefore, EP1 wishes to make one aware of the ensuing: "…make sure that the rooms are *allocated* correctly". Accommodation is part of the total MICE event experience, which needs to be unforgettable for the delegate; part of the WOW-factor. This is evident in EP2's comment: "I would say that your accommodation needs to be memorable, that you walk away from and you talk about this place where I stayed at, that had the best pillows and…". Alongside the memorable factor, accommodation is sometimes required to be empirical, as part of the overall corporate *experience*. EP7 identified that "…those things are important. You know, one is comfort, the other one is experiential. So…you've been taken out of your home to go somewhere, out of your bed that you

love, that's comfortable – You want to go and you want to sleep in a place that gives you the same feeling or better, right, because you've been inconvenienced. You've been taken out of your home, and so yeah, comfort, extremely important. And then experiential. You want to feel like you're going somewhere and your time, which is precious, is being spent in the best way possible". Above all, delegates do not want to be inconvenienced by accommodation that lacks *comfort*; "The room where I stay basically needs to the same as my room at home or better and as simple as that" (EP9).

Entertainment and activities are KSFs of event management as "It can make or break the event!" (EP1). Most of the participants echoed this sentiment. The event planner's responsibility is to *brief* the entertainment and activity role-players on the event's vision, mission, delegate demographics, event schedule etc. Entertainment and activities for a corporate event need to *compliment* the rest of the event roster and add value, as most activities and entertainments are at an *additional financial implication* for the event organisers. Concerning EP2, this means: "…you can have a band that just does not deliver, and it doesn't matter if you've got the most expensive venue or you are in the best location. People will remember the bad…always try and get well-known entertainment…brief them, so like say for instance we have got a comedian or an MC, it's a very good idea to brief them beforehand so that they know what they may or may not talk about…if the client requests that no racial issues are spoken about or religion, it's very important to get this across to the entertainer so that they don't upset the clients or the attendees".

Entertainment and activities as KSFs are most likely to be the major *WOW-factors* of the corporate event; i.e. countless teambuilding activities, musicians, DJs, bands, comedians, professional dancers, acrobats, mixologists, walking guides, professional stargazers, game drives, visual artists, celebrity impersonators, community focus, sommeliers, photo booths, horse-riding, inflatable games, custom colouring, laser shows etc. EP7 noted: "…when people are done with an event that they talk about the event or they talk about what they did when they were at a certain place…your experience what you involved in…the activities that you did, the entertainment. They want to come back with the bragging element to say: did you know this is what I experienced? It is a make or break". It is also referred to as the *fun-element* of MICE events, to place delegates in *high spirits*; as per EP10: "Entertainment is always great you know, it just creates a good feel". For activities and entertainment to be more impactful, one should try to implement *new ideas* during the planning thereof. EP9 eagerly added: "Your activities and entertainment also always need to consist of fresh and new innovative ideas". Also, MICE entertainment and activities' level and extravagance will mostly be driven by the client's *budget* and *time to spare* during the event.

Lastly, event delegates like **freebies and prizes**; it is imperative to provide delegates with extra add-ons to lure more to the event and confirm a higher attendance rate. EP2 explained it as follows: "…during the events…things like material things are important. So, if your delegates that are attending are receiving prizes…it creates huge excitement".

d) Sub-category 4: Established KSFs post-event

Debriefing with all the event role-players post-event is key, as well as completion of the *financial reconciliation*. Refer to Figure 4.14 and the explanation below.

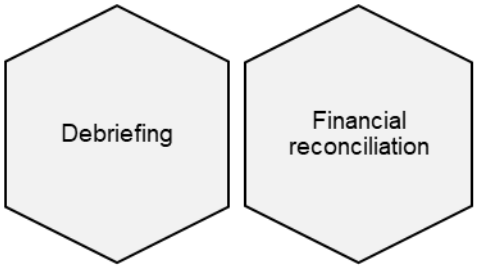

Figure 4-14: KSFs post-event

Source: Researchers' compilation based on the participants' feedback

Most of the participants specified that planning during the post-event phase mostly embraces **the actual event's debriefing** and to be open to receive *feedback* from the client/ travel booker. Debriefing and feedback to the event planner can be *done via* questionnaires, telephonic response, electronic comeback, online surveys and face-to-face meetings. According to EP9 "…the client they, keep scorecards and they rate you on everything that you do so you got to be on you're a game". It will add value during the post-event evaluation to show the client a *financial savings opportunity* for the event. EP2 explained the following: "…to show recon. A lot of the times the recon will show either if you've saved the client money or if you haven't, sometimes they are thrilled if you've saved them money". Leaving delegates and all the event role-players *feeling satisfied* post-event is key to successful event management. It is evident from EP6's reply: "…the most critical is for people to walk away going 'geez that was incredible' or 'wow that met my satisfaction – at least". The business owners' participants highlighted the importance of **finalising payments** as soon as possible after the event. The event planner needs to be compensated in full, as well as the various suppliers. Paying service suppliers timeously will also allow the event planner to keep good standing relationships with event suppliers for future events. This is something EP7 wishes to achieve in the quote: "After the event, the most important thing is to get paid…suppliers that are

waiting for their money, that you've established relationships with that you promise to pay money to".

This study is shaped around a management approach. Figure 4.15 provides a summary of the identified **strategic management KSFs** from the results mentioned above.

Figure 4-15: Strategic management KSFs
Source: Obtained from this study's research

This concludes the third category of event-management KSFs. The next category of the results distillates Gauteng as a corporate event-management destination; clarified in the following sections.

4.3.2.4 Category 4: Corporate event management in Gauteng

All the participants are based within Gauteng, and 85% (11) prefer Gauteng as a corporate event-management destination. In the fourth and final category, corporate event management in Gauteng, four sub-categories were identified which are explained below and include: the destination for corporate events; socio-cultural impacts; environmental impacts; and economic impacts.

a) Sub-category 1: Gauteng as corporate event-management destination

The participants were highly informative and shared both *advantages* and *challenges*, when practising event management in Gauteng. This led the researcher to one supporting or encouraging theme and four concerns. All of which is demonstrated in Figure 4.16 and shared in further detail within the following paragraphs.

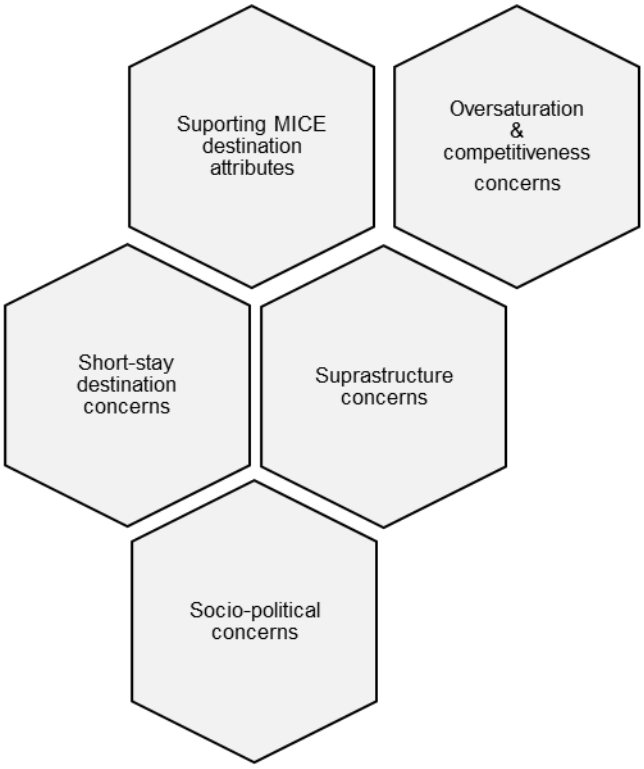

Figure 4-16: Corporate event management in Gauteng
Source: Researchers' compilation based on the participants' feedback

- **Supporting MICE destination attributes**

All the participants agreed that Gauteng has a **large variety of venues** to offer and it is possible for event planners to view the venues before event management commences, due to the proximity to their homes and offices. As per EP2: "…we are spoiled for choice with what to do with our clients". EP7 echoes this by stating: "I think we've got the biggest range". Furthermore, participants added that Gauteng offers a wide variety of unusual venues, i.e. sports grounds and stadiums to utilise for bigger events. Well-connected highways throughout Gauteng and the effectivity of the Gautrain are definite positives. It makes event venues in Gauteng easily **accessible** for event planners, suppliers as well as delegates. Moreover, the proximity of Lanseria International Airport and OR Tambo International Airport to all venues in Gauteng further assists with the accessibility. EP7 and EP9 was passionate about Gauteng being so fast-paced and the **excellent service delivery** in Gauteng, among the event-management industry.

Furthermore, EP4 explained how Gauteng event-management service providers are more **professional** and dynamic, "…the coastal areas seem more laid back". EP6 operates as an event planner in both Cape Town and Gauteng. Therefore, this participant's input was interesting as the

participant reasoned: "…the **speed** of which the province operates, the suppliers here operate a much faster speed than Cape Town does in terms of answers and reply and e-mails. I think that the general spirit of work ethic is to get things done, where in Cape Town it's a little bit…it's called 'slaap stad' for a reason". EP9 sums Gauteng up as an event-management company perfectly up as "…the power-house after all".

- **Oversaturation and competitiveness concerns**

Gauteng is a **busy** event-management destination. According to EP1, EP8 and EP12, due to the popularity of Gauteng as an event-management destination, **availability** seems to pose a problem. EP2 agrees and elaborates that some delegates and clients are very well-travelled within Gauteng, limiting the number of venues to offer for new event experiences. EP4 also added that supplier turn-around times are frequently jeopardised, due to the influx of enquiries for event management services. One participant (EP8) also mentioned that venues in Gauteng undercut event planners by allowing clients to book directly with them. This way event planners lose out on the business opportunity and commission from venues. Gauteng is also **built up and large open spaces are scares**, "it is a concrete jungle" (EP10). This causes event planners to move out of the city's hustle and bustle to find rural areas with more space for outdoor events. According to EP6, selling Gauteng as an event-management destination poses problematic at times, due to the **limited scenic beauty**, compared to provinces such as Cape Town that offers one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Thus, it is challenging to convince delegates to meet in Gauteng, competing against the Kruger National Park, Safari Lodges with conferencing facilities and other naturally beautiful provinces in South Africa.

Three participants (EP6, EP10 and EP12) also listed **staffing** as a challenge in Gauteng, explaining how, for larger events, more event staff are required, but only limited trained staff are at event planners' disposal. Furthermore, Gauteng is not **marketed well enough** as an event-management destination. EP7 proposes that "…we need to identify the key things that we can market out there that you know that people will respond to". The negative light that the media portrays around Gauteng is problematic, as bad news and crime-related articles are protruding. A **shortage of technology and the correct equipment** at certain event-management venues is problematic, as highlighted by EP3: "…some venues that are not keeping up with the trends…they don't even offer Wi-Fi". Participants also mentioned that certain venues do not offer generators during this volatile period of regular power cuts (load shedding) by ESKOM (SA's electricity provider).

- **Supra-structure concerns**

Gauteng's **roads** are deemed **unsafe** by 46% (6) of the participants. EP1 noted the following: "…unmaintained roads with potholes affect the efficiency and the look of Gauteng and this brings down tourism". Participants also raised concern about the reckless driving of *taxis* (minibuses) on the Gauteng roads, which cause a large number of accidents. Moreover, the Gauteng roads are not maintained well and pose danger due to the large number of potholes and sinkholes in the roads. Another problem voiced by EP2: "…if there is heavy rain, we have flooding". Although the Gautrain is in place, participants are concerned about Gauteng's supra-structure (EP2, EP7, EP9, EP10). As soon as one arrives at the Gautrain station, the other **public transport** in Gauteng is not on par with the Gautrain offering. According to EP7: "If our public transport system were just a little bit better than what it is, then certain places would be accessible, and people would have more movement". Also, according to participants, certain clients' travel policies do not allow them to use Uber services due to the security risk. A great suggestion by EP9 is for: "…the city, referring to the Johannesburg CBD, to invest in tuk-tuks…to get into places where your public transport can't get you, the tuk-tuks can work more effectively".

- **Socio-political concerns**

From the study, 69% (9) of the participants experienced event-management problems due to travel restrictions or advisories in Gauteng, during their careers as event planners. Furthermore, 46% (6) of the participants' delegates were restricted to travel to Gauteng due to **xenophobic threats, violent crimes, taxi violence and local strikes** that were taking place at the time of scheduled events. Moreover, previous **epidemics** such as the Ebola virus and outbreak of the current infamous Coronavirus (COVID-19) in the year 2020 caused many restrictions for group travel/ event travel, which impacted most participants. Participants also experienced cancelled bookings due to load shedding concerns and the South African water crisis; especially because it is portrayed on global and social news feeds. One participant also mentioned that previous groups cancelled due to safety concerns after the major African air crash (Ethiopian Airlines).

- **Short-stay destination concerns**

Gauteng is not a favourable long-haul corporate events destination, according to all the participants. "Gauteng is more of a business hub" (EP1, EP8 and EP13), with an average of two to three nights' stay. After that delegates like to extend their South African stay with a trip to the bushveld or coastal cities.

b) Sub-category 2: Socio-cultural impacts in Gauteng

The participants are mostly very patriotic towards Gauteng as an event management destination. Listing uplifting socio-cultural benefits, as explained in further detail below. They also provided the researcher with informative negative socio-cultural impacts, painting a complete picture of the mind-sets of event planners in Gauteng. As per Figure 4.17, *positive- and negative socio-cultural impacts* are the two identified themes for this sub-category.

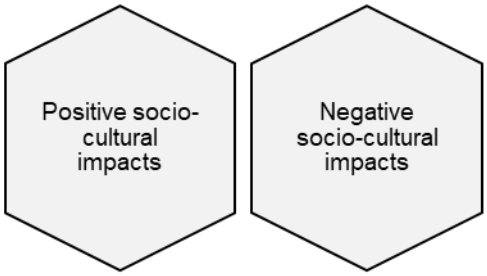

Figure 4-17: Identified socio-cultural impacts in Gauteng
Source: Researchers' compilation based on the participants' feedback

- **Positive socio-cultural benefits**

Gauteng provides a socio-cultural offering that is **unique** to only this province. Interviewing the event planner participants, one can sincerely hear, see and feel their passion for South Africa and Gauteng as a province. According to EP6: "I personally feel that it is a province that's hip and happening. Gauteng is where the culture and the livelihood and the buzz is. Western Cape is where the scenic beauty is." EP1 agrees and positively states: "…we have a rainbow nation of cultures" and according to EP9: "…there's an increase awareness of cultures". EP10 eagerly commented how "South Africans are so warm you know… we welcome you". The participants also highlighted how flexible Gauteng's **service offering** is, especially at venues and restaurants; regarding menus and packages. Furthermore, delegates mostly like to take part in Gauteng's positive socio-cultural offerings, i.e. the Soweto tours, cultural villages, cultural markets, Maboneng Precinct, Constitutional Hill, gumboot dances, drumming; shebeen experiences etc.

- **Negative socio-cultural impacts**

"Crime plagues tourists visiting us" (EP1). **Crime and a lack of safety** is a major challenge in Gauteng. The participants listed an assortment of crime that effects their occupation as event planners and the delegates, i.e. pickpocketing, muggings, smash-and-grabbing's; high-jackings and murders. Some participants honestly clarified that if Gauteng and South Africa were not their home, they would only travel here if necessary, for short periods, due to the crime issues. EP3 further

explained how they book flights for delegates to land during daylight hours; to provide delegates with peace of mind and better safety while travelling to the MICE location post-flight. Also, in the case of late-night transfers, armoured vehicles are used for delegates' transportation. **Unrest** and damage to property, in the form of riots, xenophobia and strikes are a major concern for 62% (8) of the participants. Also, **racial tension** is still a persistent socio-cultural challenge in Gauteng and South Africa; this is evident from EP9's feedback: "…there are a lot of underlining problems with racial tensions in Gauteng as you probably are aware… with our history and Apartheid".

c) Sub-category 3: Environmental impacts

According to all the participants, Gauteng's corporate event venues, suppliers and event planners are all lately more on par with a more sustainable drive towards "green" event management; but a couple of environmental concerns were also listed. The two identified polar themes (see Figure 4.18) are: *embracing green practices* and *disregarding green practices*.

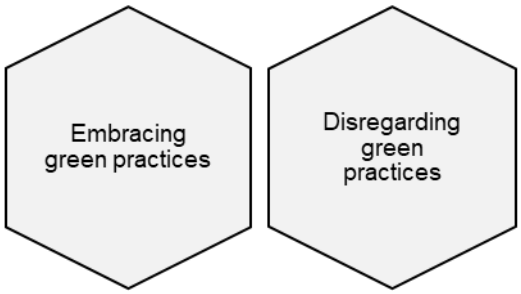

Figure 4-18: Environmental impacts of event management in Gauteng
Source: Researchers' compilation based on the participants' feedback

- **Embracing green practices**

All the participants are confident that they and the service providers and venues, do their utmost best during and after events to reduce the negative environmental footprint; by practising ethical **recycling** and **clean up** procedures. In this regard everyone "dot their Is and cross their Ts" (EP7). EP1 added that: "…you can always book **eco-friendly hotels** and have recycle bins at your events…there is a hotel in Johannesburg South that is known to grow their own vegetables and recycle". Some participants also came up with innovative ideas for **incentivising** their delegates to be more aware of environmental impacts, as per EP9's explanation: "…if guest brings their glass bottles, plastic tins, whatever it might be, back to a specific location, after an outdoor picnic, they will receive a small incentive like a coffee…".

- **Disregarding green practices**

EP5 is an event planner for a corporate team building company and explains the following: “We have got one activity like the raft building. We cannot use the rivers in Gauteng anymore due to pollution…you do not want your delegates getting into a river that is filled with, you know, debris and plastic”; which is very unfortunate and a great example of how **pollution** can negatively impact event planning. **Bottled water** is always present at corporate events, even if the venue provides filtered glass bottles of water. Delegates and clients prefer (and even pay more towards) bottled water – because they know the water is sealed and most likely not contaminated. Occasionally, event planners use venues or outdoor areas in Gauteng that **cannot manage the larger environmental footprint**. The owners will also turn a blind eye, due to the monetary benefits of hosting an event. EP6 explained as follows: “I think where we noticing much impact is also if you find a sweet cute place that's not meant for masses…and you have crowds that constantly walk through there…you can actually see the footprint…it's that fine balance between providing entertainment and stepping on that borderline of crossing the boundaries of leaving a negative footprint”.

d) Sub-category 4: Economic impacts

South Africa and Gauteng’s economic instability is evident in the 13 interviews with current senior event planners in the province. There are, however, also a couple of economic benefits, especially when the corporate delegates are travelling from countries abroad with a strong economy. See further discussions below regarding the two identified themes (refer to Figure 4.19): being an *affordable destination* and highlighting *economic growth deterrents.*

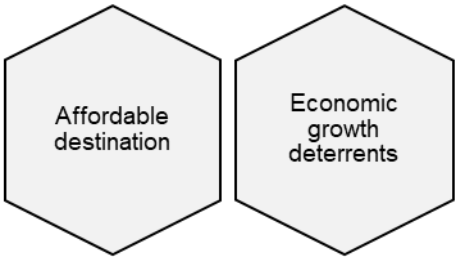

Figure 4-19: Economic impacts of event management in Gauteng
Source: Researchers’ compilation based on the participants’ feedback

- **Affordable event-management destination**

EP6 and EP9 stated that Gauteng is **more affordable** as an event-management destination than other provinces in South Africa; negotiation of service cost is also more prominent. Also, when

foreigners visit and convert their Euros and Dollars into Rand, they are provided with a positive return due to Rand's decline. When event planners are paid by foreigners travelling to Gauteng, event planners potentially earn more than what they would from local delegates in their respective foreign currencies.

- **Economic growth deterrents**

Traffic congestion is a major problem in Gauteng according to 38% (5) of the participants, due to unmaintained roads and lengthy roadworks. Therefore extra time needs to be planned for commuting in Gauteng, especially during peak-time traffic periods. EP2 explained: “People don't want to waste time sitting in traffic. They rather go to venues, areas that are easily accessible for them to, to minimise the waste in time”. Moreover, Power cuts/ **load shedding** is also problematic for Gauteng event management, according to 54% (7) of the participants. **Instability of the Rand** also comes into play; most of the participants place a disclaimer and financial contingency/ buffer in quotations; to cover possible shortfalls when the Rand value fluctuates and unpredictably plummets due to epidemic outbreaks, political instability, budget speeches, crime etc.

4.4 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter’s purpose was to discuss the method used to acquire and analyse the supply-side data. Thereafter, results were drawn from the data obtained from the senior corporate event planner interviews. The supply-side analysis was completed as per Creswell’s six steps in qualitative data analysis and interpretation, which entails: preparing and organising the raw data; reading through all the data; by means of a coding process to yield a description of themes for further analysis; describing how the themes are represented qualitatively; and finally interpreting the data and meaning of themes. The study participants were 13 specialist event planners, each with a minimum of ten years’ experience in the corporate events industry. Over-all four main categories, each with its own sub-categories and representing themes, were identified from the supply-side data, by means of an in-depth interview approach. The categories focus on corporate event management and include *event planning; strategic event management; KSFs of event management; and event management in Gauteng.* Refer to Table 4.3 below for a detailed summary of the study categories, sub-categories and identified themes (displayed in bullet format).

Table 4-3: The empirical study categories, sub-categories and themes

Category 1 **EVENT PLANNING**	**Sub-category 1: Measuring event effectiveness** • *Feedback* • *Recognition* • *High satisfaction* • *Monetary value* • *Healthy budget* • *Return business* **Sub-category 2: Understanding target market needs** • *Tailored service offerings* • *Reaching event goals* • *Improved service offering* • *Retaining clients* • *Service adaptability* • *Use time and resources effectively* **Sub-category 3: Dealing with changing market trends** • *Adaptability* • *Innovativeness* **Sub-category 4: Challenges in the workplace** • *Technology* • *Administration* • *Motivation- and stress levels* • *Restricted budgets* • *Unorganised clients* • *Delayed response from service providers* • *Ethical apprehensions* • *Regulating bodies and accreditations* **Sub-category 5: Procedures** • *Tailored procedures* • *Substitutable procedures* • *Experience-based procedures* • *Event-management models*

Category 2	Sub-category 1: Event planner roles & responsibilities
STRATEGIC EVENT MANAGEMENT	**Pre-event** • *Successful initial briefing & proposal* • *Provide guidance* • *Adequate research* • *Rate negotiation* • *Confirm booking and event details* • *Meet with suppliers* **During-event** • *Operational Management* • *On-site assistance* **Post-event** • *Financial reconciliation* • *Debriefing* • *Showing gratitude* **Sub-category 2: Event planner requirements** • *Personality traits* • *Skills* • *Formal education* • *Training and experience* **Sub-category 3: Stages of event management** • *Research* • *Design* • *Planning* • *Coordination* • *Evaluation*

Category 3 **EVENT-MANAGEMENT KSFs**	**Sub-category 1: During multiple phases** • *Human element* • *Quality management* • *Financial management* • *Risk management* • *Green management* • *Facilities and services management* **Sub-category 2: KSFs pre-event** • *Emotional management* • *Organisational skills* • *General management skills* • *Communication skills* • *Location & venue* • *Research* **Sub-category 3: KSFs during-event** • *On-site assistance* • *Operational management* • *Provided accommodation* • *Hygiene management* • *Entertainment and activities* • *Prizes/ give-aways* **Sub-category 4: KSFs post-event** • *Financial reconciliation* • *Debriefing*
Category 4 **EVENT MANAGEMENT IN GAUTENG**	**Sub-category 1: The destination** • *Supporting MICE destination attributes* • *Oversaturation & competitiveness concerns* • *Short-stay destination concerns* • *Supra-structure concerns* • *Socio-political concerns*

	Sub-category 2: Socio-cultural impacts • *Positive socio-cultural impacts* • *Negative socio-cultural impacts* **Sub-category 3: Environmental impacts** • *Embracing green practices* • *Disregarding green practices* **Sub-category 4: Economic impacts** • *Affordable destination* • *Economic growth deterrents*

Source: Researcher's compilation

During Chapter 3, the researcher thoroughly investigated previous **KSF studies for tourism operations in SA** (c.f. 3.8.2; Table 3.5). Here the most predominant KSFs identified were the following: general management; quality management; operational management; finance management; marketing management; risk management; green management; human resource management; security and safety management; facilities and services management; hygiene management; accessibility; accommodation; venue/ location; entertainment and activities; catering; gifts/ souvenirs/ freebies; innovation; planning; and post-event evaluation/ reporting. This study's results provided the researcher with **similar results**, with **marketing management** as the only discrepancy, seeing that the participants in this empirical study did not value marketing management as a KSF for effective corporate event management. According to the participants from this study, marketing management is not essential for successful corporate events, as delegates are mostly invited to these events as guests, and their attendance is either pre-paid or sponsored. Marketing is more relevant as a KSF for other types of tourism activities or events, where the product needs to be advertised and sold to the delegate/ visitor – then only is it a KSF. During KSF studies for tourism operations, Lade and Jackson's (2004) Australian study investigated the KSFs of regional festivals. Here, among multiple KSFs, they also identified the event planner's **passion** as a required KSF (c.f. Table 3.5). The afore-mentioned study is the only one (to the researcher's knowledge) post-1997 that also identified passion as a KSF for effective tourism operations.

Chapter 3 also lists a compilation of **KSFs for corporate event management worldwide** (c.f. 3.8.4; Figure 3.27), which includes: planning; client consultation and acceptance; location, destination and venue; layout and activities; experience; safety and security management; representation of event; knowledge; visitor experience; quality management; creativity; trained staff (human resource management); communication; contingency plans (crisis management); facilities management; marketing management; networking; and evaluation. Once again, **marketing management** is inconsistent with the results of this study. **Emotion management** or a **passionate** event planner *has not previously been identified* (as per the researcher's knowledge) *as a KSF for corporate event-management practices*; whereas this study highlights it as a highly recommendable KSF. This study also highlighted the **human element** as an essential KSF – this has not been established in prior corporate event-management KSF research.

Additionally, only two previous SA studies (as per the researcher's knowledge) are based on **KSFs of business tourism operations** (Haven-Tang *et al*., 2007; Burger & Saayman, 2009). With the Haven-Tang *et al.* (2007) work focusing on KSFs for business tourism destinations and the Burger and Saayman (2009) research highlighting KSFs for managing a conference centre in South Africa. Therefore, this study is **exceptional**, as it establishes **KSFs for corporate event management in Gauteng, SA,** and the knowledge **adds value to corporate event-management best practices globally**. Burger and Saayman (2009:26), Mitchell and Coles (2009:3), as well as Marais *et al.* (2017:3) recommended for more comprehensive research to be conducted in the business tourism sector. Moreover, Damm (2012:21) also expressed how **further knowledge of KSFs in event management** could be pioneering – this study aimed to achieve precisely that, while in the empirical study, KSFs for successful event management was acknowledged (c.f. 4.3.2.3). The study is also **unique**, as it **differentiates between KSFs of the different event management stages** (pre-, during- and post-event).

The only **prior corporate event KSFs study** identified by the researcher is the work of Ismail (2014); who determined the KSFs of event management for corporate events in Malaysia, Asia. Ismail's (2014) study goals were similar to those of this study; as it was compiled through semi-structured interviews and identified KSFs for effective corporate event management. Ismail's study pinpointed the following six KSFs: financial management, marketing management, venue location, code of conduct, detailed objectives and event sponsorship (Ismail, 2014:1-145). This current study's results only agree with 33% (2) of Ismail's (2014) proposed KSFs for corporate event management; stipulating financial management and venue/location. The reason for this can be:

- The lapse in time in the corporate events industry - there is a six-year gap between Ismail's original work and this study;
- The difference in study approach - Ismail made use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, as opposed to this qualitative study;
- The socio-cultural difference in study participants - Ismail's study was based on an Asian population;
- The lesser number of KSFs identified in the Ismail study – Ismail identified 6 KSFs, in contrast to this study's 20 KSFs;
- The difference in participant numbers - Ismail compiled the research results from the feedback of 15 corporate event planners; and
- Different research methods - Ismail's study adopted the Delphi technique with two rounds of data collection instead of this study's one round of data collection.

As identified by means of literature and empirical study comparison, some of the themes mentioned above shared comparisons with themes and KSFs found in other event management studies. However, dissimilarities were also evident. The following are unique to this current MICE study only – as per to the researcher's knowledge:

- Desired corporate event planner **traits and skills;** as well as detailed **emotion management**;
- Marketing management is not a KSF as per the results of this empirical study;
- The importance of **human element** during event management;
- Stipulating **KSFs** of corporate event management, throughout the various stages of an event (**pre-, during- and post-event**);
- Best practices in corporate event management in **South Africa**; and
- **Gauteng,** as a corporate event-management destination.

Ultimately the specific objective: To identify KSFs in strategic corporate event management, the demographic profile of event planners in Gauteng, challenges they experience in their professional occupation, challenges within the geographical location and the motives for building a career in corporate event management, by means of an empirical survey (c.f. Chapter 4) was achieved. In conclusion, new themes were identified in this study, and the results make new contributions to the literature of general corporate event management and event management in Gauteng, South Africa. The final chapter provides best-practices guidelines for corporate event management, the

conclusions from the study, and practical implications for event planners, the industry, and DMOs and tertiary institutions based on the findings.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It's more fun to arrive a conclusion than to justify it ~ Malcolm Forbes

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to provide a guideline for planners in the strategic management of corporate events, by critically assessing the KSFs from a supply-side perspective. To achieve this aim, four objectives were identified in Chapter 1 and were achieved in the respective chapters. This chapter concludes the findings, while research results from Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are used to make recommendations. This chapter is therefore linked to the study's final objective, which is to draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the supply results of an assessment of corporate event management; including a proposed best-practices guideline and highlighting KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events in the Gauteng province. The conclusions are related to the respective objectives, as indicated in Chapter 1. Moreover, this chapter explains how the researcher approached and achieved each one of the four study objectives. The first two objectives analysed corporate events and strategic event management by means of a literature study and the functions and significant components thereof. Whereas the third and fourth objectives observed the demographic profile of event planners; their professional occupational challenges; KSFs of strategic event management and proposed best-practices guidelines; as well as Gauteng as a corporate events destination. Based on the survey results, the researcher provides recommendations, deliberated in three main sections; defining a successful corporate event planner, strategic corporate event management during each phase of an event and Gauteng as a corporate events destination. In conclusion, the researcher also provides practical guidelines based on the study results and useful recommendations concerning future research endeavours.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS REGARDING THE LITERATURE REVIEWS

Conclusions are drawn in this section based on the two literature reviews of Chapters 2 and 3.

5.2.1 The first objective

The first objective of the study was to analyse corporate events by means of a literature review. This objective was achieved in Chapter 2; a comprehensive literature overview of corporate events. In this chapter, a detailed overview of events (c.f. 2.2), a comprehensive classification of the term *event* (c.f.2.2.1) and the different type of events (c.f. 2.2.3) were classified. The researcher compiled a summary (c.f. Table 2.1) of the different event scopes and examples thereof. Furthermore, the effective planning of events (c.f. 2.2.4) is discussed, highlighting the various benefits (c.f. 2.2.4.2). The sub-field of both tourism and event studies, known as event tourism (c.f. 2.3), are deliberated. The literature study walked the reader through the history of event tourism and the pioneering thereof (c.f. 2.3.1), which dates back as far as the middle ages. After a better understanding of events was established, the numerous impacts (c.f. 2.4) of events (i.e. economic- [c.f. 2.4.1]; social and cultural [c.f. 2.4.2]; and environmental impacts [2.4.3]), as well as event sustainability, followed.

The literature review, in addition, focuses on business tourism (c.f. 2.5), which refers to the formal sector of business tourists travelling for corporate purposes. The term is explained further (c.f. 2.5.1) from the demand- and supply-side. The evolution of business tourism (c.f. 2.5.2) stretches from the Persian, Greek and great Roman empires until today's technology-rich era. Moreover, business tourism challenges (c.f. 2.5.3) are laid out for the benefits (c.f. 2.5.4) of the organisation and attendees (c.f. 2.5.4.1), host community and destination (c.f. 2.5.4.2) to offset the negative consequences, for business tourism to be considered a success in the short and long term.

Domestic business tourism is under-researched, as the bulk of existing literature in SA is based on leisure tourism. The *big fiv*e business tourism destinations in SA (c.f. 2.5.5) are highlighted (i.e. Cape Town, Durban, Ekhurhuleni, Johannesburg, Pretoria). The literature study further indicates the percentage distribution of business tourists in SA from SADC (c.f. Table 2.4), with Zimbabwean and Mozambiquen business tourists in the lead. The overseas business travellers travel from various countries into SA, with most business travellers originating from the United Kingdom and the United States of America (c.f. Table 2.5). Business tourists from other" African countries visiting SA, excluding the previously mentioned SADC countries, are Kenyan and Nigerian business tourists being the majority (c.f. Table 2.6). Business tourism is flourishing in Gauteng (c.f. 2.5.6), due to its economic strength.

This brings the reader to corporate events (c.f. 2.6) where the classification and overview of corporate events (c.f. 2.6.1) are explained in greater detail. The multifaceted structure of the meetings industry (c.f. 2.6.2) with various buyers (c.f. 2.6.2.1) (corporate; association; government; and entrepreneurial buyers) and suppliers (c.f. 2.6.2.2) (venues; destination; and other suppliers) are clarified. Furthermore, the different type of corporate events (c.f. 2.6.3), which include meetings (c.f. 2.6.3.1); incentive travel (c.f. 2.6.3.2); convention/ congress/ conference;(c.f. 2.6.3.3); exhibition (c.f. 2.6.3.4); and others (c.f. 2.6.3.5) are verified. The opportunities and obstacles (c.f. 2.6.3) of corporate events in developing countries are realised and explained how it impacts the economy (c.f. 2.6.3.1) and the position of the events industry in SA and Gauteng (c.f. 2.6.3.2). If SA's current market priorities and key industries to plan corporate events around are realised (c.f. Figure 2.6), it will be beneficial for SA to focus on these key industries and plan more corporate events around it in order to up SA's MICE events statistics and success rate.

Event planners from the supply side need to be aware of the challenges that can threaten corporate events (c.f. 2.6.3.3) and integrate proactive approaches during event planning to triumph the mentioned challenges. The benefits (c.f. 2.6.3.4) of corporate events need to be considered and integrated into SA and Gauteng corporate event planning to further local corporate event success rates.

The study further investigates previous research (c.f. 2.7) on corporate events in SA (c.f. 2.7.1), identifying only nine studies within the past decade (c.f. Table 2.7). The overview of international corporate events research (c.f. 2.7.2 & Table 2.8) identified 82 prior studies, divided by 12 main research topics and trends (c.f. Figure 2.8) from the past ten years, which includes: site selection; technology; globalisation; management; economy; education; career paths; type of corporate events; behaviour and decision-making; sustainability; destination and other. The literature study adds value to the sparse research available on the subject matter.

5.2.2 The second objective

The second study objective was to assess strategic event management and the KSFs thereof by means of a critical overview of the existing literature. This objective was achieved in Chapter 3; a literature overview of strategic event management's key success factors. In this third chapter, it was found that strategic event management is advantageous for planners and all the event stakeholders (c.f. 3.2.1). Strategic event management's main management functions are outlined as administration; general; marketing; financial; human resource; operations; and legal aspects

management (c.f. 3.2.1). Also, the background to event management is dissected (c.f. 3.2.2), with the researcher investigating the influence of project management on event management (c.f. 3.2.2.1) and delving into the history of how event management evolved throughout the different periods in the past (c.f. 3.2.2.2); also summarising how event management in the past differs from today's practice (c.f. Table 3.1).

For this study, event management is divided into three stages: pre-event planning, the actual event and post-event evaluation (c.f. 3.2.3.1. c.f. 3.2.3.2 & 3.2.3.3). Each stage is accompanied by essential action steps for event planners to follow (c.f. Figure 3.2) meticulously. The pre-event-management stage (3.2.3.1) can involve up to 90% of the total event duration, encompassing establishment of the event: purpose, objectives and type; timing and location; human resource management; operational plan; budget and finances; sponsorship; marketing and promotion; and legal requirements/ approvals; as well as contingency plans. The event implementation stage (c.f. 3.2.3.2) only takes up about one percent of the total event time but utilises more than 95% of the staff numbers involved during the event; here event planners monitor the event progress, consider contingency plans and shut down the event. During post-event evaluation (c.f. 3.2.3.2) the event assessment criteria should be determined; various sets of event information need to be gathered; post-event tasks are completed; event impacts stipulated; and event evaluation from different stakeholders are sourced. The study further investigates previous research on managing events in SA (c.f. 3.2.4), identifying only ten studies from the year 2006 until the present. A variety of events have been previously researched, which entails music, sport, and special events. Whereas only two researchers lately studied corporate events – one from a demand perspective and the other focused on the supply-side. During a detailed search, the gaps in the current research were identified. No prior research to the researcher's knowledge has been performed to evaluate the KSFs for event management of corporate events in SA.

The chapter further assessed strategic management of corporate events, defining management approaches (c.f. 3.2.5.1) (i.e. situational, management science, behavioural, systems, and classical approach) and management functions in events management (c.f. 3.2.5.2), which entail planning, leading, organising and control. The literature review also demonstrates the different management levels and their respective tasks (c.f. Figure 3.11). Next, a more detailed explanation of strategic management during event planning follows (c.f. 3.2.7.3) and a comprehensive outline of the strategic management process (c.f. Figure 3.12). Furthermore, the researcher attempts to establish whether event management is a recognised profession (c.f. 3.2.6). To answer the question, event-management educational requirements are explored (c.f. 3.2.6.1), looking into formal education of

event planners, their practical training, skills and leadership aptitudes. The section also discusses possible career paths and professional opportunities (c.f. 3.2.6.2) for individuals in the event-management sector. With event planners, event managers, designers, producer, director, bidder and researcher as the most common, the research outcome proves that event management is not fully recognised as a qualified profession internationally but is well on its way to do so (c.f. 3.2.6.3).

A comprehensive summary is presented of the different internal (agencies, suppliers, associations, regulatory bodies, event planner, event owner) (c.f. 3.3.1.2) and external (sponsors, community, media, attendees, government, event owner) event-management stakeholders (c.f. 3.3.1.1). The literature study considers and summarises relevant pre-existing event-management models and guidelines (c.f. 3.4). These models (the event-management process by Gers-Couto – c.f. 3.4.1; Kestner's event-management guide – c.f. 3.4.2; seven stages of strategic planning by Mcgrath and Bates – c.f. 3.4.3; Getz's model of event planning – c.f. 3.4.5; Salem *et al.*'s event-planning model – c.f. 3.4.6; Tum, Norton & Wright's event operations management model – c.f. 3.4.7; Pondicherry University's event-management planning process – c.f. 3.4.8; Tassiopoulos' strategic management process for MICE – c.f. 3.4.8; EMBOK – c.f. 3.4.9.) provide the researcher with insight to develop an anticipated event-planning framework (c.f. Figure 3.26) for corporate events.

The KSFs in event management (c.f. 3.5) are discussed by deliberating the various classifications and definitions of KSFs in event management (c.f. 3.5.1). Moreover, the researcher discusses previous research on the KSFs identified for tourism operations in SA (c.f. 3.5.2), from 1997 until the present, locating 21 studies, but only two previous SA studies based on KSFs of business tourism. Regarding international studies, only one study on the KSFs of event management was located and deemed resourceful. Due to the shortage of current research, it is evident that a more detailed examination of the KSFs in the business tourism sector should be completed. The researcher further explores various benefits and disadvantages of KSFs in event management (c.f. 3.5.3). The outcome proved to show much more benefits.

In the end, the main KSFs of corporate event management are identified and summarised as (c.f. 3.5.4): event location; the destination; venue selection; visitor experience; service quality; creativity; well-trained staff; strategic planning; facilities; safety and security; layout and activities; marketing; client consultation and acceptance; communication; networking; event experiences; contingency plans; the overall representation of the event; monitoring the event and providing feedback; and valuable event-management knowledge. With this chapter, the researcher managed to reach the

study's second objective, of evaluating strategic event management and the KSFs thereof in a critical overview by means of a literature review.

5.2.3 Conclusions regarding the empirical study results and recommendations

The following conclusions were drawn from the empirical objectives of Chapter 4.

The third and fourth objective

The third study objective was led through an empirical study to investigate event planners' demographic profile in Gauteng. Demographic-wise (c.f. Table 4.1 - Interviewed participants' demographic profile & event-planning background) found that event planners vary in age groups, the study group was in their mid-30s to 60s, due to the participant requirement of an average of ten years' experience in the industry. It is evident that females are the most represented *gender* in this study; they can mostly speak English (as it is deemed the national business language) and can typically speak two or more *languages*. Moreover, the event planners' *ethnicity* covers a broad spectrum of cultural backgrounds, as there are no limits to who will be better planners. All the participants had a formal and tertiary education level, which may add to their accomplishment as professional event planners. The *annual gross income* of event planners averaged between R200 000 and R600 000, dependent on their superiority within the field. It was also revealed that as superiority increases, so do the required *working hours*. Senior event planners work 40 hours weekly, team leaders and managers are required to work about ten hours more weekly than senior coordinators, whereas event directors and company founders weekly spend on average 60 to 80 hours working.

The study objective further investigated event planners' **professional occupational challenges** and motives for building a corporate event management career. Another objective was to identify detailed **KSFs** in strategic corporate event management. These objectives were achieved in Chapter 4's research methodology and results. As a unique set of KSFs (c.f. 4.3.2.3 & 5.2.2.2) and challenges (c.f. 4.3.2.1d) were identified within each phase of event management, pre-, during- and post-event; this filled a real gap in current corporate event-management literature. The results (c.f. Table 4.3 - the empirical study categories, sub-categories & themes) will be used to make future recommendations to event planners; conceivable students; tertiary institutions (private and public); Travel Management Companies (TMC), Professional Congress Organisations (PCO), Destination Management Companies (DMC), management and HR departments; as well as other talent acquisitions.

The fourth objective was for the researcher to make recommendations regarding an assessment of corporate event management in **Gauteng**; from a supply perspective. This was also done to include a **best-practices guideline** and highlighting KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The objectives were achieved. Based on the results the researcher is providing recommendations, discussed in three main sections; *defining a successful corporate event planner*, *KSFs* and *strategic corporate event management* during each phase of an event as well as *Gauteng as a corporate events destination.* Hence the results are integrated to provide the best recommendations.

5.2.3.1 Defining a successful corporate event planner

Figure 5.1 illustrates a summary of the findings and implications of the empirical study results.

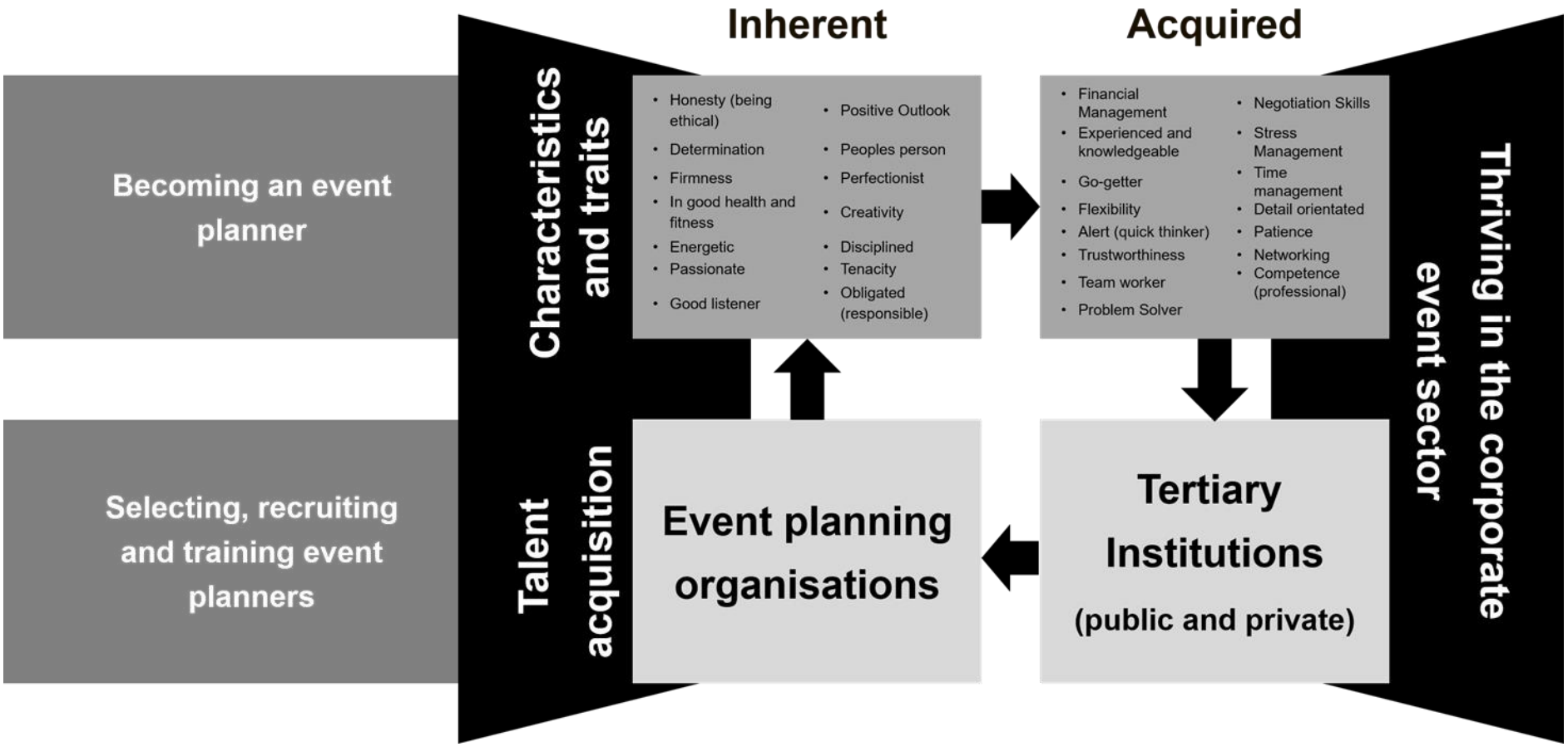

Figure 5-1: **Defining a successful event planner (skills & traits)**

Source: Researchers' compilation based on the results

According to the empirical study results; for a corporate event planner to be effective, explicit inherent and acquired personal characteristics and skills are required (c.f. Table 4.2). The **personal characteristics** of a successful corporate event planner include: *honesty; determination; firmness;* being *fit* and in *good health; passion; energy;* being a *good listener; a positive outlook; perfectionism; creativity; discipline; tenacity; responsibility;* and being a *people's person*. On the other hand, **acquired skills** encompass *financial management; stress management; time management; flexibility; experience* and *knowledge* in the industry*; alertness; trustworthiness; teamwork;* a *go-getter attitude; problem-solving; negotiation skills;* being *detail oriented; patience; networking skills;* and *professionalism.* The afore-mentioned traits and skills are fundamental to consider due to the high level of human involvement and the **human element** (c.f. 4.3.2.3a) during every phase of corporate event management. Thus, for potential event planners to be successful within the niche industry, they need to be aware of the favourable characteristics they should possess and skills they ought to obtain.

Further illustrated in Figure 5.1, the empirical study results are also helpful for human resource management and **talent acquisition** purposes. It affords recruiting agencies and talent managers/ seekers valuable insight into what to look out for (i.e. traits and skills) in the process of sourcing successful corporate event planners. Recruiters and talent managers can go one step further by drawing up questions and a SWOT-analysis pertaining to an individual's traits and skills before employing event planners. The internal *human resource teams* responsible for *training* and further *upskilling* corporate event planners can refer to the acquired skills in Figure 5.1, as this promises successful corporate event planners. Moreover, acquired skills are in line with formal education. It, therefore, has various implications for **tertiary institutions** in terms of the development of event-management *curriculums*. This pertains to planned study material, the composition of a successful educational course, proposed programmes and practical experience opportunities within the field. Providing tertiary institutions with this list of 15 highly recommended acquired skills for a successful corporate event planner, will add value to the formal education industry.

5.2.3.2 KSF's and strategic corporate event management

This is regarded as the most important study outcome that directly speaks to the study title and aim. The researcher thought it well to provide a visual depiction of the event-management stages, illustrating which KSFs are essential for strategic corporate event-management purposes (refer to

Figure 5.2). The Figure also provides event planners with a best-practices guideline within every phase of event management.

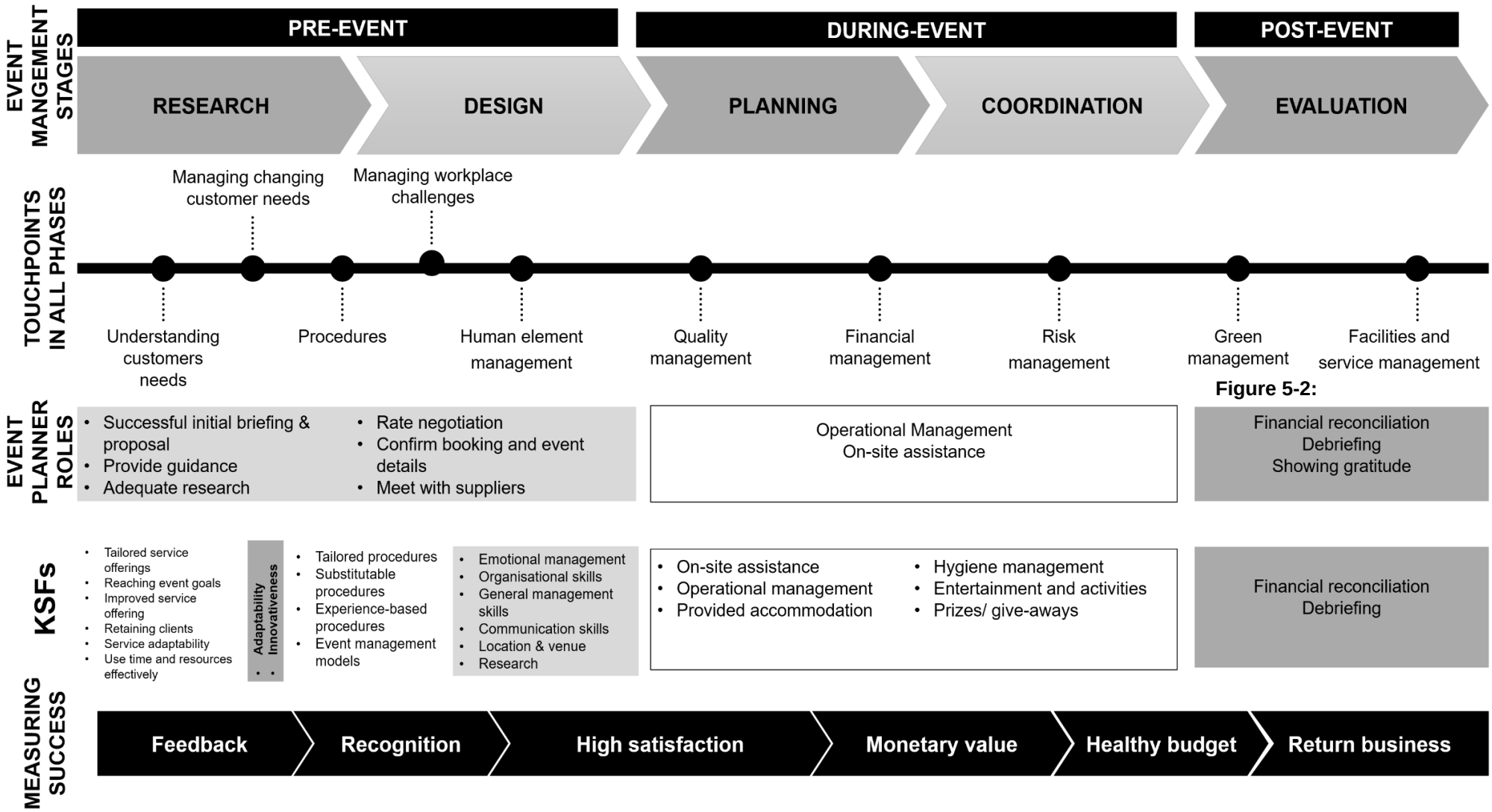

Figure 5-2: KSF's and strategic best-practices guidelines for event planners, designed by the researcher

Firstly, event planners' strategic best-practices guidelines should be used as tactical suggestions for corporate-event planners and then also for any other event employees/event companies. The aim is for the guidelines to be realistic, practical and user-friendly. Furthermore, the proposed strategic best-s guidelines can also guide tertiary institutions (both private and public) to incorporate into their study material, educational courses, proposed event-management programmes and practical experience opportunities. The discussion that follows is ordered according to the different phases illustrated in Figure 5.2, starting from the top downwards.

- Event-management stages

According to the literature study, event management is divided into three main phases, **pre-, during- and post-event** (c.f. 3.4). It is evident from Figure 5.2 that most of the best-practices guidelines for corporate event management take place during the pre-event phase. It then flows to the rest of the phases of event management, during- and post-event. These phases are then further subdivided into the five main stages of **research, design, planning, coordination and evaluation** of the event (c.f. Figure 3.8 & 4.3.2.2c). The reader is presented with a break-down of the event-management phases and stages discovered throughout the literature study (c.f. 3.4 & Figure 3.8) to be brought in line with the literature and theoretical foundations of event management and planning.

- Touchpoints in all phases

The Figure refers to touchpoints in all phases of event management intending to inform event planners of possible **challenges in the workplace** (c.f. 4.3.2.1d) and how to manage it and guide them in the process of **managing customer needs**. Event planners can successfully manage the ever-changing customer requirements by adhering to *changing market trends* (c.f. 4.3.2.1c), by adapting and being innovative. It will benefit event planners if they study and truly understand their *target market needs* (c.f. 4.3.2.1b) – this way planners can use their resources and time effectively; adapt to service offerings, improve it and provide tailored services; reach event goals, and in due course retain their clients. *Procedures* also play a role throughout all stages of event management (c.f. 4.3.2.1e); event planners are advised to pay attention to the tailored, substitutable, and experience-based procedures of event management; and make use of the many proposed event-management models and guidelines (c.f. 3.7) to their disposal.

As afore-mentioned, the objective is for the best-practices guideline to be implemented by any type of events company – not only corporate event-management corporations. Therefore **challenges experienced in the workplace** are also incorporated into the Figure for event planners and employers to be pro-active in their approach and informed of the possible snares

and how to manage these trials. According to participant feedback during the empirical study (c.f. Figure 4.6 – challenges in the event planner workplace), event planners need to be alerted to the following challenges: *technology; administration; lack of motivation and high stress levels; restricted event budgets; unorganised, impatient and indecisive clients/ travel bookers; unfavourable response time from service providers; high-pressure work environment; ethical apprehensions; and the absence of sufficient event-regulating bodies and accreditations.* Therefore, this implies that event companies need to identify the set of workplace challenges distinct to their work environment to manage them pro-actively. Moreover, some **KSFs are critical throughout all stages** of event management (c.f. 4.3.2.3a); thus event planners need to pay special attention to the strategic management of their event's *quality, the human element, finances, risk, eco-friendliness* as well as *facilities and services*.

- Event planner roles (c.f. 4.3.2.2a)

The bulk of an event planner's workload takes place **pre-event**, as this is when a planner is required to successfully understand the *initial event briefing* and provide the client with a thorough *proposal*. *Guidance* should be given by the planner, who needs to conduct *ample research* about the proposed event, *negotiate rates* with suppliers on the client's behalf, *confirm* the event details and booking, and *meet with the suppliers* and venue. Thereafter, the planner is required to perform sterling *operational management* and physically be *on-site* **during the event**. The event planner should follow through to provide successful end-to-end service delivery; therefore, post-event a detailed financial reconciliation is compulsory and a *debriefing* of the event's successes and shortcomings. Also, by showing *gratitude*, the event planner may secure future endeavours with the client.

- KSFs of event management

As afore-mentioned, the pre-event phase is acknowledged as the most critical and intricate phase of event management. Clients are renowned for amending event briefs and budgets continually. It is therefore important to understand clients and their requirements. An important aspect for event planners to bear in mind is that clients are inclined to change the event goalposts regularly. Therefore the event planner’s service offering should also be flexible and *improved*; successful planners need to be **adaptable** and **innovative** to *retain their clients*. Furthermore, successful and experienced event planners are pro-active in their approach, use their *time and resources effectively* and think on their feet to *reach event goals*. Proposed **procedures** and *event-management models* can also assist with this, but the type of organisation and event-management corporation will determine the favourable actions to be followed. An outcome from this study is that, for corporate event planners, *experience-based procedures* are applied most. This also connects to event planners’ traits. As an event planner,

one is required to provide a *tailored service offering*, adapt, and "trust your gut", based on experience in the field, to apply successful alterations. In addition to those mentioned above, KSFs also appear in this phase to assist event planners immensely.

Event planners need to take note of the valued KSFs **pre-event** (c.f. 4.3.2.3b), as it will be advantageous for them to perform sufficient *research* before the event; to gain and demonstrate *emotional management* during the research and design of an event, *organisational and communication skills* are also vital, as well as performing *general management skills*. Notably, the event *destination, location and venue* can make or break an event. **During-event** (c.f. 4.3.2.3c) planners are counselled to be *on-site* and actively manage the event's *sanitation, operations, entertainment and activities*. Delegates value event *accommodation* and the *prizes and giveaways*, and special attention from the planner is required in this regard. A detailed *debriefing session* and *financial reconciliation* are vital components of the **post-event** KSFs (c.f. 4.3.2.3d). The abovementioned KSFs can be regarded as a *checklist* within each phase of event management; it also offers good *guidelines to current event planners*. However, event-management companies and planners need to realise that there is no universal set of KSFs; it is important to conduct continuous research.

The reader must note that some of the roles and responsibility labels are comparable with identified KSFs, i.e. debriefing, adequate research, operational management, on-site assistance and financial reconciliation. This highlighted the integrated role and relationship between the successful event planner and proposed KSFs.

- Measuring success

Once the event planner has implemented the essential KSFs for a successful event and adhered to the proposed roles and responsibilities, the event should run seamlessly. But this is only true if the success of the event is measured appropriately. Hence the importance for planners to continually measure event effectiveness (c.f.4.3.2.1a) by staying within the *proposed budgets*; striving to obtain positive *feedback*, receiving *recognition* and *high satisfaction rates* from clients; for the event to be *monetary successful*; and ultimately to gain *return business*. Lastly, the different phases and aspects illustrated in Figure 5.2 can be regarded as an acceptable best-practices guideline for strategic event management.

5.2.3.3 Gauteng as a corporate event destination

The findings and recommendations are aimed at event planning within destinations, based on Gauteng's results (c.f. 4.3.2.4). The results are demonstrated in the form of a SWOT analysis, (refer to Figure 5.3). Strengths and weaknesses are regarded as *internal*, by way of it referring to aspects that event destinations have control over and can manage accordingly. While on the other hand, opportunities and threats are deemed *external*; as one *seldom has control* over these aspects. But destinations must be aware of these aspects, in order to try their utmost to turn negative facets into something that can be considered more positive. Readers need to be mindful not to generalise results outside the study scope. Note that although the results apply to Gauteng, it is presented so that any corporate event destination can follow the proposed recommendations. The recommendations are intended for event planners, DMCs, and the government (to provide the supporting infrastructure, legislation and action plans).

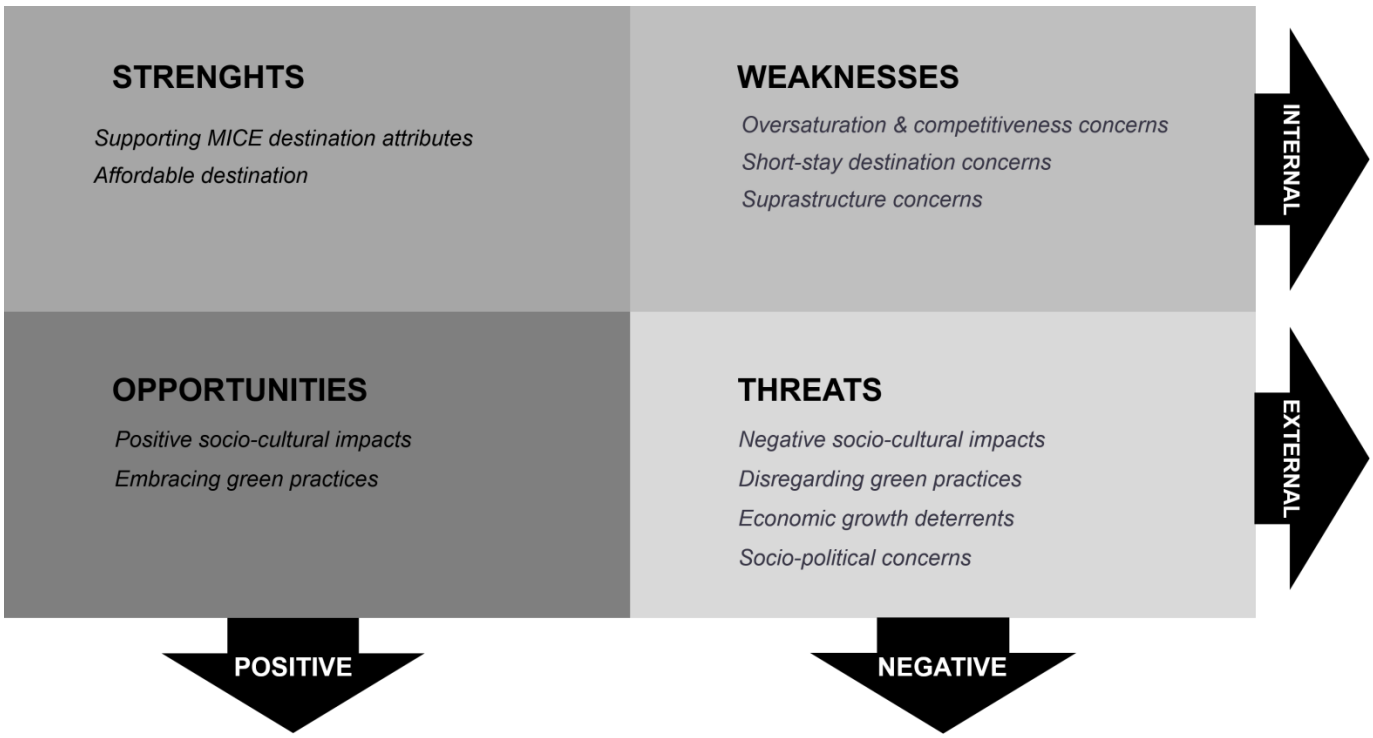

Figure 5-3: Managing corporate event destinations
Source: Researcher's' compilation based on the results

- Strengths

As depicted in the SWOT analysis, **supporting MICE destination attributes** (c.f. 4.3.2.4a) is a major strength for a destination. This can be accomplished by maintaining high levels of *professionalism* in the industry, while providing a *speedy and excellent service delivery* with various *venues and suppliers*. The infrastructure and supra-structure also need to support an

exceedingly *accessible* destination for corporate events. It is dubbed advantageous for a destination to be known as an **affordable** corporate events destination (c.f. 4.3.2.4d), which can be accomplished by being more open to *negotiating service costs*. In countries such as South Africa, where the *Rand value is lower* than other prominent global currencies such as the US Dollar, Euro and British Pound, destinations should make use of the upper hand to lure more inbound MICE clientele. Event-planner companies and DMCs will equally benefit from this, as they will most likely be remunerated in foreign currency. However, more so are destinations; they will profit by using these attributes to brand themselves as an ideal MICE destination.

- Weaknesses

Oversaturation and competitive concern (c.f. 4.3.2.4a) are leading downfalls for corporate event destinations, leading to *scarcity of venue and supplier availability*. Also, destinations referred to as concrete jungles and are too built-up, lack the availability of large open event spaces and *limited scenic beauty*. Misconducting in the form of undercutting event planners and not paying commissions can develop in a huge problem and is understood as a major weakness of event destinations. Event destinations that are *not adequately marketed* are also seen as a significant weakness; it, therefore, is imperative for a destination to be well-marketed as an event and corporate event destination. This can be accomplished when the government, national tourism boards and event associations work together in launching MICE roadshows, exhibiting at international MICE tradeshows, exhibitions and fairs (i.e. Meetings Africa, IMEX, ITB, IBTM World); as well as publishing positive MICE information and opportunities in industry-related guidebooks, websites (i.e. travelguru.com, mice.com), news articles and magazines (i.e. MICE Affairs, MICE Mirror). MICE is a fast-moving industry, and it will have negative implications for a destination not to be equipped with the *required technology and correct equipment*. Destinations must be pro-active in their approach, with back-up power supply, internet connectivity and other essential audio-visual equipment. *Understaffing* is also a significant event destination challenge. For an event to run smoothly, adequately trained staff and plentiful staffing are needed. It is deemed a weakness when the destination is **not perceived as a long-haul corporate events destination** (c.f. 4.3.2.4a), as delegates will only travel for the minimum required stay at the destination, for business hubs that equal to two to three nights only. A possible solution to this predicament is additional opportunities to be created by means of collaboration in the tourism industry, i.e. partnerships between tourism attractions, accommodation facilities and different modes of transport, to create distinct pre- and post-MICE packages that make it more attractive for delegates to extend their stays.

Furthermore, **supra-structure concerns** (c.f. 4.3.2.4a) is a weakness. As reputable corporations and sound MICE planners are uncomfortable to send delegates to destinations

that are considered unsafe due to *reckless driving*, copious *road accidents*, *unmaintained roads* and *ineffective public transport* systems. This can be overcome by the government investing more money, resources and time into the country's road maintenance and deploying human resources for ample road safety, especially after dark. Also, other means of public transport can be implemented, i.e. eco-friendly tuk-tuks and more accredited metered taxis.

- Opportunities

Positive socio-cultural impacts (c.f. 4.3.2.4b) need to be seen as an opportunity to attract more delegates to a MICE-destination. It is beneficial for a destination to have a rich *culture, history* and *unique offering.* This also goes together with *flexible services*, as delegates are more inclined to travel to friendly destinations with a lithe and broad service offering. Every destination has a story to tell, with its own attractions and benefits, that needs to be relayed to potential MICE businesses via the correct platforms. By **embracing green practices** (c.f. 4.3.2.4c) destinations can reduce the negative environmental footprint caused by MICE events. This can be achieved by following the latest recycling and event sustainability *trends* and following meticulous clean-*up* procedures post-event. These services can also be outsourced to specialists. Moreover, opportunities to use eco-friendly hotels, room drops, event stationery, catering material, and garbage disposal will benefit the environment and a destination's green reputation. It is also advisable to incentivise event delegates to be eco-friendlier and more cautious of green practices when attending an event.

- Threats

Copious threats impend event destinations, with **negative socio-cultural impacts** (c.f. 4.3.2.4b) being a leading peril. It is deemed an unfavourable events destination when *crime* and a *lack of safety* plagues the destination; this also includes violent strikes, racial tension and other forms of *unrest*. A possibility to minimise negative socio-cultural impacts is by educating and training the local community and creating more work opportunities for them within MICE; the more locals can benefit, the more supportive they will be to the cause. Delegates and event planners will choose the destination presented with the least number of socio-cultural threats to host their corporate event. This can further be avoided by informing delegates of the possible threats in advance to boost awareness – also by providing delegates with the right technology and tools during their visit (i.e. International SOS safety application on their phone, mace, and a printout of emergency services contact numbers), to guide delegates where to walk, dine, visit and overnight safely. It is advisable to provide delegates, entertainers, guest speakers with private and safe transfers, opt for secure, guided walks on excursions; and avoid notorious locations, activities, and venues. For high-profile groups, armoured vehicles/ transfers should be proposed, as well as additional security and express VIP security clearance at airports. Large

corporate events bring masses to a destination**; not adhering to proposed green practices** (c.f. 4.3.2.4c) is a threat to event destinations, as *pollution* and the *negative environmental footprint* will only degenerate the destination for future practice. This can be overcome by taking small steps in the right direction, minimising bottled water and straws at events, and outsourcing event clean-up to an accredited recycling company.

Furthermore, **economic growth deterrents (**c.f.4.3.2.4d) presents itself in unmaintained roads and lengthy roadworks, which causes intolerable *traffic congestion* for event planners, suppliers and the delegates. This is aggravated by the instability of a destination's mismanagement of necessary resources, i.e. water, electricity, and currency; delegates will instead attend a MICE event at a destination with less unforeseen power cuts no shortage of *water supply*. Once a destination's *currency is volatile*, event planners and DMCs may lose out financially by not adequately buffering their proposed costings. On the other hand, if they add a more significant financial contingency to quotations, they might fail in tender processes due to over-quoting and being too expensive from the get-go. Lastly, **socio-political concerns** (4.3.2.4a) can be disadvantageous to an events destination. This includes *violence and crimes*; *epidemics,* i.e. Ebola virus, COVID-19; and *air crashes* due to unsafe national airlines. The safety of event delegates, the organisers and staffing should always be the top priority. Therefore, the government needs to manage socio-political concerns properly to not lose out on substantial hosting opportunities, as MICE business provides profuse financial profits for a destination. It can also be managed better by being stricter with the press and how the destination and socio-political issues are portrayed in news coverage to outsiders.

Bosch (2019:357) recommended for a future study to be conducted with event planners. That includes pre-, during- and post-event-management questions to pinpoint the actions during each planning phase. He further explained that by identifying the activities during each event-management stage, a best-practices guideline could be developed that future event planners can use to plan events successfully. This research therefore fills this proposed gap in current research. Furthermore, the study results provide more insight into the demographic profile of event planners in Gauteng and add value to the corporate events industry, sice various role-players (i.e. planners, TMCs, DMCs, destinations, tertiary institutions, HR departments, talent acquisitions and governments) will benefit from the identified occupational challenges and favourable personal attributes of planners, as well as KSFs and proposed guidelines for best strategic event-management practices. The study also highlights the importance of the human element during strategic event management, which adds value not only to the literature on event management but also from a practical perspective. Furthermore, it is a KSF that has not

been identified within this research field before, making it a distinct KSF for strategic corporate event management.

5.3 OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study contributes to research in the corporate events tourism field. From a literature perspective, the study provides readers with a comprehensive summary of events and corporate events globally, within South Africa, and the province of Gauteng, strategic event management and the KSFs thereof, which is conversed in immense detail. From a practical perspective, the researcher conducted a detailed survey to obtain valuable feedback from specialist event planners; providing treasured input regarding event planner challenges in the industry, event planner demographical information, and KSFs. The researcher compiled a practical guideline of skills and traits required from event planners to benefit from this newly found information. Also, practical strategies are presented in the form of a guideline for best strategic event-management practices within every phase (pre, during and post) of event management. The empirical study further investigated event management in Gauteng, providing a proposed SWOT analysis that applies to any event-management destination. The researcher provides endorsements for future research, as indicated in the following section.

5.3.1 Conclusions regarding the methodology

The following conclusions are drawn concerning the supply-side survey (c.f. Annexure A). The recommendations serve as important considerations for future researchers performing event-management research:

- For this study, **qualitative research** was the ideal study approach, as the method is crucial to researchers in the management discipline (Creswell, 2014). Also, it provided significant insights associated with individual experiences and knowledge of senior event planners within the niche market of corporate event management.
- Interviewing **13 participants** sufficed, as the value of qualitative research naturally does not lie in the number of interviewees, but rather in the knowledge shared by them (Venske, 2017:36). Most importantly, the empirical study data were saturated at 13 interviews/ surveys (c.f. Table 4.1).
- The success of this type of qualitative research relies on collaboration with successful and well-established corporate event planners. Some of the study participants are

affiliated with professional associations and award-winning event planners in the industry. It is imperative to be to the point and clear on the study's aims and the projected conclusions when suggesting research of this nature.

- Although event management is not yet considered a recognised profession (c.f. 3.2.3.2), researchers should bear in mind that this career path is deemed the fifth most stressful career in the world (c.f. Table 1.1 - general problems events planners face). Successful planners work extended hours (c.f. Table 4.1) with little leading time. Hence they are stressed-out and extremely busy. Securing **a lengthy interview with such participants** is problematic. Future researchers should bear that in mind, providing themselves with more leading time for interviews and being more flexible to jump at the opportunity when event planners might have a free moment to be interviewed.
- Be **pro-active and have a back-up.** Always make notes and use two recording devices, for if one of the devices fails – which happened to the researcher during one of the prominent interviews.
- Furthermore, allow senior coordinators and your educational advisors to **review** and provide feedback on the interview questionnaire before interviews commence.
- It is essential to **ask permission** to research this kind well in advance, to increase the probability of event planner contribution; for setting aside enough time and budgeting accordingly.
- **Budget accordingly** for this type of empirical study as it is costly to transcribe interviews. The current average rate is R14 per minute, which will add up exponentially with in-depth and lengthy interviews. Also bear other expenses in mind, i.e. transport and language editing
- **Test the survey.** Before conducting the formal interviews, it is advisable first to do a couple of practice runs as some of the open-ended questions become more formulated as the interviewer becomes more comfortable and asks more questions. This is evident in the survey interviews, as the last couple of interviews were much longer and more detailed than the first ones – even though the interviewer had one practice run before starting the formal interviews.
- It is recommended to **include a question/s** aimed at favourable personality attributes and personal experiences of planners; this provided insight into event planner emotion management and the importance of human element within the industry, which has not been researched before researcher's knowledge.
- The researcher needs to **remain impartial** during the surveys and not to manipulate interview questions in such a manner to receive favourable answers, particularly when

they are specialists in the researched sector and already have perceived ideas of the proposed study outcomes and industry workings.

5.3.2 Recommendations for future research

The following deliberations are made for future research concerning this study:

- Bosch (2018) and Manners (2014) previously explored event management from both a demand and supply viewpoint. While most of the previous South African studies on the KSFs of events (see Manners *et al.,* 2015a; Burger & Saayman, 2009; de Witt, 2006; Kruger, 2006; Mccallagan, 2015; Lade & Jackson, 2004; Getz & Brown, 2006) were directed from a supply perspective. Except for research by Erasmus (2012) and Marais (2009) that explored from a demand perspective. To expand this research study, it will be beneficial to obtain feedback from a **demand perspective**. Evaluating the KSFs for the strategic management of corporate events and providing a best-practices guideline to follow, possible gaps can be identified between the supply- and demand-side if the demand (delegates and clients) also provide feedback on what they perceive a successful event encompasses (proposed KSFs).
- From the interviews, it is evident that event planners feel disrespected and longing for a more formal type of accreditation (c.f. 4.3.2.1d) and less misconduct (c.f. 4.3.2.4a) from suppliers and undercutting amongst peers. It will therefore be beneficial for the MICE industry to provide event planners with a form of **accreditation**. Although some work has been done for the CEPA certifications, it is recommended that more research follow, and that future research compiles the accreditation requirements and strategies so that it can be implemented accordingly. Future research will also be advantageous to investigate education and formal training necessities **for certifications to qualify as an entry standard into the profession**.
- Moreover, from the global break-out of the infamous COVID-19 epidemic in 2020, plentiful MICE suppliers, airlines, venues, hotels, event planners, TMCs and DMCs lingered on insolvency and many jobs were lost. The researcher proposes for further research towards **risk management** in tourism, event management and MICE. The research will provide the industry stakeholders with more information to make calculated decisions during unforeseen circumstances such as epidemics. Also, possible strategies for better risk mitigation can be proposed through the research and ways to implement it affordably and effectively. The industry will benefit from such research, as fewer jobs

might be lost and companies will survive the turmoil of such disasters, due to effective contingency plans.

- MICE is an extremely diverse field, incorporating all types of meetings, incentives, conferences, congresses and events. Future researchers should conduct similar research, identifying KSFs and best practices for corporate event management. However, future research needs to focus on the specific type of corporate events; as they are all so diverse and attract different delegates. As the researcher conducted the literature study, very little prior research was available to focus **on niche MICE events**.

This study is distinct because the researcher is permanently employed within the niche industry of corporate event management; it is therefore thought well to share the researcher's understanding and observation of the study results, as per below.

5.3.3 The researcher's understanding and observation

Herewith the researcher's personal experience regarding the survey and research results:

- The researcher was stunned by how little senior coordinators make use of **basic guidelines/ step-by-step** controllers to manage corporate events successfully (c.f. 4.3.2.1e). Ahead of that, every event-management company also operates differently (4.3.2.1d). Participants commented on how they follow guidelines and event-management models from memory only (c.f. 4.3.2.1e), which means that there is no record of what has been done, what steps or tasks to follow during operations – event planners improvise as they go without proper groundwork. Even after doing so, the respective event-management companies are prominent in the industry, highly successful and extremely profitable under normal circumstances. However, imagine how much better they can perform if all event planners received formal event-management qualification, are well-experienced and accredited before they can practice as seniors, and use strategic best-practices guidelines as proposed by the researcher (c.f. Figure 5.2). Not only will corporate event planning then be a preferred commodity among students in tertiary institutions and will planners receive the respect and monetary remuneration they are longing for; it will also bring a particular set of pride to the industry, as it will be recognised as a professional field.
- Another observation is how **patriotic** the Gauteng corporate event planners are (c.f. 4.3.2.4), as they mostly praised Gauteng and the hubs such as Johannesburg, regardless of the copious weaknesses and threats (c.f. 5.2.2.3).

- By identifying what exactly defines a successful event planner (i.e. skills and traits) (c.f. Figure 5.1); by classifying the best-practices guidelines (Figure 5.2); and pinpointing the necessary KSFs during each phase (pre, during and post) of event management (c.f. 4.3.2.3) will assist the researcher in the future in being a better corporate event-management business unit manager by providing information on what to look out for when recruiting and interviewing corporate event planner candidates, how to manage the team of corporate event planners; and what best-practices guidelines to **implement in operational management**.
- During the interviews, the researcher noticed that the participants (senior and experienced event planners) are all in dire **need of a sounding board**; a forum, group or individual whose feedback to recommended notions are used as a test of their rationality or probable success before they are made public. This highlights the significant role of emotion management and the human element in corporate event management. As Steve Jobs said: "The only way to do great work is to love what you do". Therefore, these research results ultimately bring the researcher much joy and excitement, as it stipulates the importance of passion, emotion management, **and the human element** for successful event-management operations. Previously, no formal research existed to support the notion.

This research assessed the KSFs for strategic corporate event management from a supply-side perspective, thereby proposing practical guidelines to practitioners, researchers, and tertiary institutions to organise and execute corporate events effectively.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

SUPPLY-SIDE INTERVIEW GUIDE
CORPORATE EVENT MANAGEMENT IN GAUTENG

Section A: Demographic profile

1. **Age** (date of birth):

_____

1 **Gender** (Male, Female or Other):

_____

2 **Home language** (What other languages do you speak?):

_____

3 **Ethnicity** (Black, Coloured, Indian, White or other):

_____

4 **Marital status** (single, married, divorced, other):

_____

5 The highest level of **education**:

_____

6 **Job title**/description:

_____

7 **Career ladder**: (When and where did you start? How long have you been doing this?):

_____

_____

8 What is your **annual income** bracket? (R100 000 – R200 000 / R200 000 – R400 000/ R400 000 – R600 000/ R600 000 or more):

_____

9 How many **hours** do you spend on average, **working** weekly? (Overtime, are you reimbursed, are you content with working hours?):

_____

_____

Section B: In-depth strategic event management

10 In terms of **which aspects do you measure the success** or effectiveness of an event? (monetary value, positive client/ delegate feedback, savings, return business opportunity, other end results and event post-mortem reviews)

_____

_____

11 Why is it important to understand **target market** needs, behaviours and trends?

_____

_____

12 How do you deal with changing **market trends**? (adaption strategy and respond to feedback)

_____

_____

13 What **challenges** do you face within the work environment, daily? (And how do you overcome these challenges?)

_____

_____

_____

14 Do you currently have mandatory procedures, strategies or blanket service level agreements in place for strategic corporate event-management purposes? (The participants should elaborate on the procedures, strategies etc. as well as comment on their effectiveness)

_____

_____

15 What is your main **roles and responsibilities** during the process of managing corporate events? (pre-, during and post-event):

_____

_____

16 Let's discuss the characteristics, skills, educational requirements and industry experience of a successful event planner.
In your opinion, what **personality attributes and skills** are required to be a successful event planner (i.e. energetic, flexibility, passionate, eye for detail, problem-solving, time-management, self-reliance)?

_____

_____

Is a formal **education** desirable to be a successful event planner? Please elaborate on what students need to master in order to be successful event planners in the meetings industry? Where does the gap lie between education and practice?

_____

_____

Is **training and experience** in the events industry important, in order to be a successful planner? Does it add value?

_____

_____

17 Do you make use of a specific **event-management model**/ framework/ step-by-step guide during event planning? Please share the framework with me?

_____

18 Let us discuss the proposed **stages of the event-management** process and factors to take in consideration during each stage for executing a successful corporate event. Guideline:

- **Research** (event type, previous events, what client want, target market, new ideas, size and scope)
- **Design** (theme, décor, wow-factor)
- **Planning** (date, time, destination, venue, competitor)
- **Coordination** (communication plan, logistics, budget, facility plan, event staffing, catering, risk assessment, registration, on-site assistance)
- **Evaluation** (recognition, reconcile finances, event postmortem/ constructive feedback)

_____

_____

_____

19 KSFs (key success factors) in corporate event management

The following KSFs are frequently identified KSFs from previous tourism studies in South Africa. Please advise if you experience this to be a KSF in corporate event management and why? Also indicate **during what phase** (pre, during and post-event planning) this KSF is valid?

General/ hospitality management

Operational aspects

Finance management

Marketing management

Risk management

Green management (Eco-friendly)

Human resources

Security & safety

Accessibility

Hygiene

Accommodation

Venue/ location

Facilities & services

Entertainment & activities

Catering

_____

_____

Innovation

_____

_____

Quality

_____

_____

Post-event evaluation/ reporting

_____

_____

Adequate planning / objectives

_____

_____

20 What do you consider to be the **KSFs during phase one (pre-event) planning**? That is not listed above? Please explain. (For example: code of conduct, technology, event sponsorship, layout, event perception, analyse cost for visitor, long-term perspective, community involvement, organiser passion, legislation, transport, competition, meeting attendee needs, good leadership etc.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

21 What do you consider to be the **KSFs in phase two (during) event planning**? That is not listed above? Please explain. (For example: registration, catering, speeches/ communication, technology, WIFI, parking, freebies, prizes, entertainment, activities, luxuries, layout, event perception, analyse cost for visitor, long-term perspective, crisis management, trustworthy suppliers, meeting attendee needs, good leadership, crowd management etc.)

_____

_____

_____

22 What do you consider to be the **KSFs in phase three (post) event planning**? That is not listed above? Please explain. (For example: recon, profitability, event perception, savings, long-term perspective, feedback/ surveys etc.)

_____

_____

Section C: Corporate event management in Gauteng

23 Do you **prefer Gauteng** as a corporate event management destination?

_____

24 What are the **positives** of hosting corporate events in Gauteng?

_____

_____

25 What are the **major challenges** for you as a corporate event planner in Gauteng?

_____

_____

26 Explain how **underdevelopment** of for example infrastructure, transport, training and event-management resources in Gauteng influences corporate event planning?

_____

_____

27 Have you experienced difficulties due to **travel restrictions**/ advisories in Gauteng? (Warning event delegates of safety and security issues in Gauteng).

_____

_____

28 In your experience, is Gauteng a favourable long-haul events destination? Motivate your answer.

_____

_____

_____

29 Indicate positive and negative **socio-cultural impacts** in Gauteng, as per your knowledge in this industry. (Increased awareness of cultures and traditions, crime, vandalism, overcrowding, property damage, noise, racial tension/ xenophobia).

_____

_____

_____

30 Let's discuss the **environmental impacts** of corporate events (littering, contamination, destroyed plant life, "eco" and "green" events, proposed solutions to reducing carbon footprint within current event-management process).

_____

_____

_____

31 What **economic impacts** in Gauteng affects your occupation? (unmaintained roads, insufficient public transportation systems, better circulation with new highway onramps and widening of existing lanes, sustainable planning tools, guidelines focussing on the economic impacts of events, if planners are currently integrating sustainable planning tools and guidelines).

_____

_____

_____

ANNEXURE B: INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa, 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

To: Potential Interview Participant
From: Vanessa Govender

Subject: **Informed Consent to Participate in the Study**
Date: _____
Dear: _____

My name is Vanessa Govender, and I am a master's student at North-West University (NWU). I am researching key success factors for corporate event management from a supply-side in the Gauteng province. I am particularly interested in these main areas:

1. The ways you apply strategic event management when organising corporate events;
2. Key success factors pre-, during and post events that impact your event management;
3. Your role as a seasoned corporate event planner/ manager; and
4. Corporate event management in Gauteng, the positives and challenges.

This research will add to the body of knowledge about successful outlines for the strategic management of events. The findings will be used to propose a guideline for the strategic management of corporate events. This research, therefore, assists with a greater understanding of successful corporate event management in Gauteng and the rest of South Africa.
Please note:

- Your participation is voluntary;
- You do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable with;
- If at any time you do not want to continue with the interview, you may withdraw.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the interview. Your time and involvement are profoundly appreciated. The entire interview will take approximately 60 – 90 minutes. To maintain the essence of your words for the research, I will record the information and take notes; this is done for data analysis. At any given time, you may request to see or hear the

information I collect. The interviewer will transcribe the recording and kept confidential in a password-protected computer. All individual identification will be removed from the hard copy of the transcript. Participant identity and confidentiality will be concealed using coding procedures. For legal purposes, data will be transcribed on to a compact disc and transmitted to an NWU faculty member for secure and ultimate disposal after three years. My supervisor, Prof. Dr M. Kruger is the NWU faculty member who will secure and ultimately dispose of the information. Her information is at the end of this form. The researcher will also maintain a copy of the data on a password-protected computer. Extracts from the interview may be included in the final dissertation report or other later publications. However, under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics appear in these writings. If at a subsequent date, biographical data were relevant to a publication, a separate release form would be sent to you.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form on the line provided below to show that you have read and agree with the contents.
Please return it by email to me at vanessagovender84@gmail.com. An electronic signature is acceptable.

_____

Your signature above

This study is being conducted in part to fulfil requirements for my Master of Arts in Tourism Management (Assessing key success factors to provide a guideline for corporate event management) at the NWU, Potchefstroom Campus.

The recognised scientific committee of NWU has approved the study (once obtained the ethical clearance number will be included here). The supervisor of this dissertation is Prof. Dr M. Kruger. She can be reached at (018) 299 1980 for further questions or concerns about the research.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Govender
NWU, Potchefstroom Campus

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR STUDY

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Web: http://www.nwu.ac.za

Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)
Tel: 018 299-1427
Email: Bennie.Linde@nwu.ac.za

30 August 2019

Dear Prof M Kruger,

EMS-REC FEEDBACK: 30082019

V Govender (12795828)(NWU-01316-19-A4)

MCom in Tourism Management – Prof M Kruger

Your ethics application on, Assessing the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events: A supply-side perspective, that served on the EMS-REC meeting of 30 August 2019, refers.

Outcome:

Approved as a minimal risk study. A number **NWU-01316-19-A4** is given for three years of ethics clearance.

Kind regards,

Prof Bennie Linde
Chairperson: Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)
Potchefstroom Campus

ANNEXURE D: LETTER FROM ACCREDITED TRANSCRIBER

cyber transcription
Virtual Speech to Text & Copy Typing
Tax No.: 1672677158

C: 083 227 5966
F: 086 647 6813
P: PO Box 7827, Centurion, 0046
E: juliamb1@mweb.co.za

16 April 2020

To Whom it May Concern,

LETTER OF DECLARATION VANESSA GOVENDER

Study Title: Assessing the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events: a supply-side perspective

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree Master of Arts in Tourism Management at the North-West University

I confirm that professional audio transcribing services were recently provided to my client, Vanessa Govender for her research studies though North West University, by Cyber Transcription Services.

I assure confidentiality of the information received in transcribing the audio recordings.

Sincerely,

Julia M. Martinelli

Cyber Transcription Services

Transcriber

C: 083 227 5966

E: juliamb1@mweb.co.za

W: www.cybertranscriptions.com

ANNEXURE E: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

15 June 2020

I, **Ms Cecilia van der Walt,** hereby declare that I took care of the **editing** of the **dissertation** of **Ms Vanessa Govender** titled ***Assessing the key success factors for the strategic management of corporate events: a supply-side perspective.***

MS CECILIA VAN DER WALT

BA (*Cum Laude*)
THED (*Cum Laude*),
Plus Language editing and translation at Honours level (*Cum Laude*),
Plus Accreditation with SATI for Afrikaans and translation
Registration number with SATI: 1000228

Email address: ceciliavdw@lantic.net
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