A Meta-synthesis of the Systematic Application of International Best Practice Methods and Standards in Managing Risk in Event Management

Research report presented to the

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by

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ABSTRACT

All business involves assuming and managing risk and this is particularly true of businesses involved in the staging and management of events, which are inherently risky endeavours. This makes event management intrinsically concerned with managing various forms of risk and yet the level of adoption of formalised practices based on widely accepted standards is low. The research is significant especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which has had a significantly negative impact on the events industry in South Africa and abroad and has brought into sharp focus that those event organisers who are able to effectively and demonstrably manage risk will have a competitive advantage over those who cannot as the future of a great many well established events will hang on their demonstrable ability to manage the risks related COVID-19 as well as others.

This study aims to identify the factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management and ascertain what effect these factors have. Recommendations have been made as to what could be done to enhance the use of best practices of risk management during event management.

More than ever before a variety of stakeholders are expecting that event organisers actively engage in managing risks and do so to the extent of what can be considered reasonably practicable. Event organisers need to be able to satisfy a wide variety of stakeholders that risks are and will be managed appropriately simply in order for events to be funded and approved and thereafter must further manage the associated risks to ensure profitability and the limitation of liability.

Much of the formalised risk management activities that currently take place within the event management industry in South Africa is aimed at achieving compliance standards set by licensing authorities, however this research report shows that being merely being compliant with minimum standards set by such authorities does little towards effectively managing risk on behalf of the event organiser and related stakeholders.

The methodology used in this study was a qualitative study consisting of semi-structured open ended face to face interviews and (virtual) online interviews of
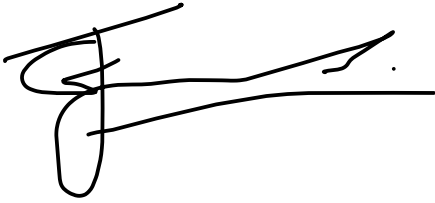
experienced industry professionals to ascertain their perspectives, opinions, and points of view about managing risk in events management and why best practice standards is often not employed.

This research report shows that event organisers should set their own standards internally and adopt those risk management methods and standards that are most applicable to the type of event staged rather than rely on complying with minimum standards set by external sources. Additionally, the study concluded that risk management must be an integral part of the event management process encompassing all phases of the event.

Keywords: risk, stakeholder, standards, compliance, liability

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own work with the exception of all those sources, references, acknowledgements, and citations included herein. This report is submitted in partial fulfilments for the degree of Master of Business Administration at UNISA and has not been previously submitted to any other institution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ACRONYMS

EMBOK   Event Management Body of Knowledge

ESSPC   Event Safety Security and Planning Committee

SAPS   South African Police Service

SANS   South African National Standard

SASSREA   Safety At Sporting and Recreational Events Act

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In the short-term major events, be they sporting, consumer, and professional or issue related have the potential to provide value across a wide chain. For example, the Two Oceans Marathon was estimated in 2016 to contribute R672 million to the economy of the Western Cape and Cape Town every year. Events, especially of a significant magnitude such as the Olympic Games or World Cup Tournaments can have a lasting legacy impact on the host venue (Robertson *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, events are inherently risky endeavours. Uncontrollable factors such as weather can have significant consequences for events and compromise event feasibility and profitability (Olya, 2019). As such event management by its very nature is linked intrinsically with managing risk, according to some of the world's leading event management subject matter experts, all facets of managing events should include considerations for managing risk (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021).

Although risk is central to the management of events, and thus managing risk is a critical component of event management, in South Africa there is no single commonly accepted set of standards and practices employed to holistically manage risk at events. Due to the impact that events can have on host economies, many major events attract public funding and this creates a scenario where there are a variety of stakeholders often with competing or non-aligned agendas and this makes decision making, which is at the heart of all risk management, cumbersome and difficult (Swart & Maralack, 2020).

For event organisers in South Africa, a more standardised approach to risk management should be adopted based on international best practices leading to greater capacity for managing event risks and better decision-making ability. This study seeks to identify those factors that impact and influence best practices for risk management and recommend how these can be applied in the context of event management.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major effect on the events industry globally (Kharouf *et al.*, 2020) and concern for public safety has all but stopped most approved or authorised mass gatherings in many parts of the world with South Africa being no exception. The ability to demonstrably manage risk, specifically in the context of large gatherings of people, will be the key determining factor in organisations involved in the field of event management to recover and thrive in the future.

Globally there is much work being done to create standardised systems for the management of events and the associated risks. Much of this is driven by regulatory authorities such as the Health and Safety Executive in the United Kingdom which provides guidance and advice in the form of standardised templates for planning and permit applications using the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, also known as the Green Guide which is considered the best practice guide for safety planning at events (Larsson et al., 2021) and the Purple Guide which defines similar criteria for music festivals and other similar events (Raineri, 2018). Additionally, there are internationally accredited organisations such as Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) which is effectively a set of standardised guidelines and benchmarks standards aimed specifically at the event management profession and industry which was collectively started by renowned event managers (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021a).

In the South African context the challenge is that whilst there are many very useful and beneficial standards and systems to be used, they can either all be used or none at all so rather than having a system of standards, we instead have a morass of confusing and conflicting information that does not result in the improved management of risk in real terms nor does improve working practices, nor the increase of accountability or the improvement of the standards of the industry. This means that whilst in other parts of the world event organisers might be forced to engage in standardised risk management practices as part of mandatory compliance processes, in South Africa being sufficiently compliant with regulations so as to obtain the necessary licences and permits to operate an event does not necessarily make an organiser actively and effectively involved in proactive risk management. In the age of COVID-19 especially, this may limit to the inability to attract and win over stakeholders other than licencing authorities such as sponsors and visitors who are vital to the successfully implementation of an event (Swart & Maralack, 2020).

Research Problem

Although events are important despite being inherently risky, the adoption and use levels of formalised risk management practices with regards to live events is low and a confusing web of authority often conflicts with well-established international best practice and risk management is often relegated to a simple compliance or box ticking exercise with little regard for proactive measures that could reduce risk in real terms and add value (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021). Standardised, formalised methodologies related to risk management are not generally observed or are observed only as an end towards satisfying minimum levels of compliance. As a result, the type of events that can be successfully staged in the country is limited and / or the likely successful execution levels of events within the country are lower than it might be.

The regulatory confusion and lack of standardised practices, combined with the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, make for an environment that is likely to deter participation by a variety of stakeholders unless it can be demonstrated that risk can be adequately managed. This limits the opportunities for events to be staged and thus limits the opportunities for event organisers generally. As such, research into event risk management methodology, is relevant and necessary at this current time. Therefore, the research problem for this study is to:

Identify the perceived factors that influence the International Best Practice Methods and Standards in managing risk in event management.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to identify the factors that influence best practices in the context of event management, and to provide recommendations as to how these might be adopted.

Research Questions

1   What are the factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management?

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2   What is the impact of the identified factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management?

3   What recommendations can be made to enhance best practices in managing risk during event management?

Research Objectives

1   To determine what are the factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management.

2   To determine what is the impact of the identified factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management.

3   To make recommendations to enhance best practices in managing risk during event management.

Abridged Literature Review

1.1.1 Inherent Risk and Duty of Care

In this study we will examine and analyse the most up to date literature covering risk management in the field of live events. Extensive analysis of Julia Silvers and William O'Toole, specifically from their 2021 publication; *Risk Management for Events* second edition (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b). Particular attention will be paid to the risks typically facing event organisers, the role of the risk manager within the context of live events and the need for standards at events. Julia Silvers in particular has done much to develop the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) and proposes, quite sensibly, its use as a framework for risk management at events (Silvers, 2005) and this too will be reviewed.

The concept of risk and its categorisation, looking beyond the realm of operational risk into other forms of risk relevant to the organisers of live events, will be examined using the classifications and definitions provided by (Naidoo, 2016) in her 2016 publication, *Corporate Governance: An Essential Guide for South African Companies*.

Additionally, we will be looking at the concept of duty of care using by reviewing Peter Wynn-Moylan's *Risk and Hazard Management for Festivals and Events* (Wynn-Moylan, 2017) to examine the responsibilities incumbent upon event organisers and the potential implications for event organisers who do not heed these.

1.1.2 The Need for Standards

A review of standards and practices for risk management at events will take place. This will include a review of standards, guidelines, and regulations in the South African context including the SANS 10366 ('SANS 10366', 2012), the national standard for safety at events and the Safety at Sporting and Recreational Events act of 2010 (SASSREA, 2010). Furthermore we will examine the publication which is considered the best practice guide for safety planning at events which take place in sporting grounds (Larsson *et al.*, 2021) namely the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, also known as the Green Guide (Department for Culture Media and sports, 2018) and the and the Purple Guide which defines similar criteria for music concerts and other similar events (Raineri, 2018). Furthermore the event safety standard used by Australia and New Zealand and recognised internationally as a best practice source will be reviewed (Standard, Australia and License, 2004).

1.1.3 Risk Management Process

Additionally there will be a review of literature around this topic including a review of journals, books, and previously conducted research on the topic of risk management in the context of events. These will include examinations of crowd management theories in the context of live events (O'Toole *et al.*, 2019) and the impact of crowd composition on egress performance (Larsson *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, case studies covering live events where serious incidents have occurred will be reviewed and examined with information drawn from the work of (Zhao *et al.*, 2020) covering the 2010 Love Parade Disaster, the work of (Turris & Lund, 2017) examining the prevalence of mortality at music festivals and the work of (Resodihardjo, 2020) where three case studies of major incidents, their established causes and the after effects thereof are examined.

1.1.4 Stakeholders

An examination of the various stakeholders involved in the process of managing risk in event management will occur looking particularly at the role of the risk manager (Ancliffe, 2017).

1.1.5 Event Phases

The phases of events will be examined through the review of the EMBOK model created by (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b) and through examination of the South African National Standard for safety at event, namely SANS 10366.

Abridged Research Methodology

The research component of this study will be qualitative only. The reason for selecting to make use of qualitative data is to gauge the opinions and lived experience of participants with regards to prevailing standards and practices with regards to event risk management in South Africa. As a result of this more intensive method of study, the sample size must be smaller and the analysis will be drawn primarily from thoughts and opinions rather than numerical data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). As the industry in South Africa is relatively small, and increasingly ever smaller in the wake of COVID-19 rendering most major events impossibility, a smaller sample size is appropriate. Commonalities will be sought, themes and sub themes will be identified and categorised and a thematic map will be created.

1.1.6 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is appropriate where reasons for a problem must be found, such as the why, so that a solution can be created, such as the how. As stated by Leedy and Ormond (2016) qualitative research is beneficial in understanding the reasoning behind behaviours and on understanding complex situations.

The purpose of this study is to identify the factors that influence best practices in the context of live event management, and to provide recommendations as to how these might be adopted. To understand this it is necessary to engage with people actively employed in the field and responsible for managing risk at events either as event

organisers themselves or as consultants / advisors to event organisers. To understand the *how* of the issue, it is necessary to obtain opinion and belief borne out of first-hand experience. A review of event management / risk management literature indicates clearly that international best practices reduce risk and that the failure to adhere to specific standards can result in disaster occurring and yet, often these practices and standards are ignored. To understand why this is the case, and to identify recommendations to event organisers to improve risk management practices, we must gather and interpret qualitative data directly from industry role-players.

1.1.7 Target Group / Sample

The target group for this study will be industry professionals, experienced in managing events or acting as safety or risk management consultants to event managers who have significant experience in managing events and / or the risk aspects thereof in South Africa. The sport tourism industry, according to the South African department of tourism is valued at R1973 trillion (Perold *et al.*, 2020).

1.1.8 Qualitative data collection method

These face to face and online semi-structured online ((virtual)) interviews will be based on pre-determined questions common to every interviewee and will be supplied to each participant in advance for review. The interviews will feature open-ended queries aimed at extracting opinions and perspectives from the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The interviews will be based on pre-determined questions common to every interviewee and will be supplied to each participant in advance for review. Face-to-face interviews will be conducted at a time convenient to the participants. In some cases, these interviews may take place via an electronic platform rather than in person. All interviews will be recorded to ensure the veracity of any statements made and captured. The interviews will be semi-structured face to face and online (virtual) interviews, whereby all interviewees will be asked the same questions and asked to expand upon their answers.

The rationale for selecting to make use of qualitative data is to gauge the opinions and lived experience of participants with regards to prevailing standards and practices with regards to event risk management in South Africa.

1.1.9 Qualitative Data analysis

An exploratory study was undertaken whereby a small sample was interviewed and the data recorded from each subject discussion was assembled and analysed with opinions and beliefs surmised.

1.1.10 Trustworthiness

1.1.10.1 Credibility

There will be no incentive of any kind for a participant to take part in the study nor will there be any inducement for providing any particular answer. The researcher will ask all respondents the exact same questions and present their answers as received without any variation or manipulation of the results.

1.1.10.2 Dependability

All interviews will be recorded and transcribed thereafter to ensure veracity. Transcripts of the interviews will be sent to the research subjects to confirm for authenticity.

1.1.10.3 Conformability

The data will be stored electronically for a minimum period of 5 years and will be password protected in a secure, cloud based storage platform.

1.1.10.4 Transferability

The findings will be applicable and relevant to the practice of risk management in the field of live events as it will provide insight into the reasons for the low levels of adoption of standardised processes and practices that could reduce risk for event organisers in real terms.

Limitations

The respondents may not answer with absolute facts and may be misleading about their knowledge of certain aspects of the matters being discussed for the purposes of seeming to be more knowledgeable than they may actually be. Similarly, the respondents may seek to impress and overstate their relative knowledge, awareness, and experience. The respondents will be limited to those working in South Africa.

Ethical considerations

- All source material will be properly recognised and cited.
- All participants will be assured of privacy, anonymity should it be requested and confidentiality and will be informed in advance of the intended purpose and background of the study and the relevance thereof.
- Personal data will be kept private and permission will be obtained in express written form before any personal information is shared.
- All relevant UNISA ethics policies will be strictly adhered to throughout the study.
- COVID-19 protocols will be followed during all interviews that take place in person.

Chapter expositions

Chapter 1: Introduction, Background, and Research Problem - The first chapter will include the research proposal and an overview of the study including the research problem, questions, and objectives.

Chapter 2: Literature Review - The second chapter presents the literature review which is an examination of the relevant and appropriate theories on the topic of risk management in event management as well as existing knowledge and research on the topic including case studies of past incidents.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology - This chapter covers the research methodology to be used for this study.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Discussion - This chapter presents the themes, sub-themes, and thematic analysis of the data analysis conducted.

Chapter 5: Recommendations - This chapter contains the conclusions of the study and the implications for event organisers for managing risk.

Conclusion

In this chapter is introduced the ever more relevant and important role that risk management should play in the staging of events in South Africa. It outlines how the research project will evaluate risk management practices within the industry and compare it against other examples. Furthermore the chapter makes mention of how effective risk management is likely to become a necessity for companies wishing to stage events in a world defined in many ways by a global health crisis that is likely to persist, to some degree, for some time. The next chapter discusses the literature and theories of the topic.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Opening Narrative

Managing risk is central to the process of managing events and indeed all aspects of event management decision making must relate back to various forms of risk. Indeed, many sporting and entertainment events specifically rely on risky endeavours as a central attraction for their audience such as motor racing and stunt performances (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b). The inherently risky nature of the event is what makes it appealing to the public. The acceptance of risk as a necessary factor for events is unavoidable and the art of delivering safe and successful events will always be a balancing act of managing competing risk agendas.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic all events, many of which cancelled or postponed due to the health risk posed by mass gatherings will have to be planned with the management of a specific risk, such as public health and the spread of COVID-19, at the very heart of all endeavours (Dahlström, 2020). The impact of these cancellations is significant for a variety of stakeholders. It has been estimated that the cancellation of just four major annual sporting events staged in South Africa, will see R1.2 billion lost and lead to an increase in unemployment and poverty in the country (Perold *et al.*, 2020). Restarting these major events is clearly critical to the sector and the country as a whole and thus effective means of managing risk, and specifically that posed by the pandemic must be identified. This was certainly the case in the instance of the Qindao International Beer Festival staged in China. Despite being in operation for 29 consecutive years and attracting an estimated 7 million visitors annually, the main consideration fundamental to the question of whether or not the event could be staged again, was how the risk of COVID-19 could be managed, and the organiser of the event had to devote a huge amount of time and effort into planning an event that may or may not take place due to factors far beyond its control (Liu, 2021).

In order to identify the factors that impact and influence best practices for managing risk at events, and so as to create recommendations for best practices at events, it is

necessary to identify the types of risk faced by events and the dimensions thereof, and to identify typical event stakeholders and how each type may be most or least affected by the various forms of risk. Thereafter we must look at the dimensions of these risks, the phases of events and the process of risk management as well as the role of the risk manager within events.

2.2 Conceptual Framework
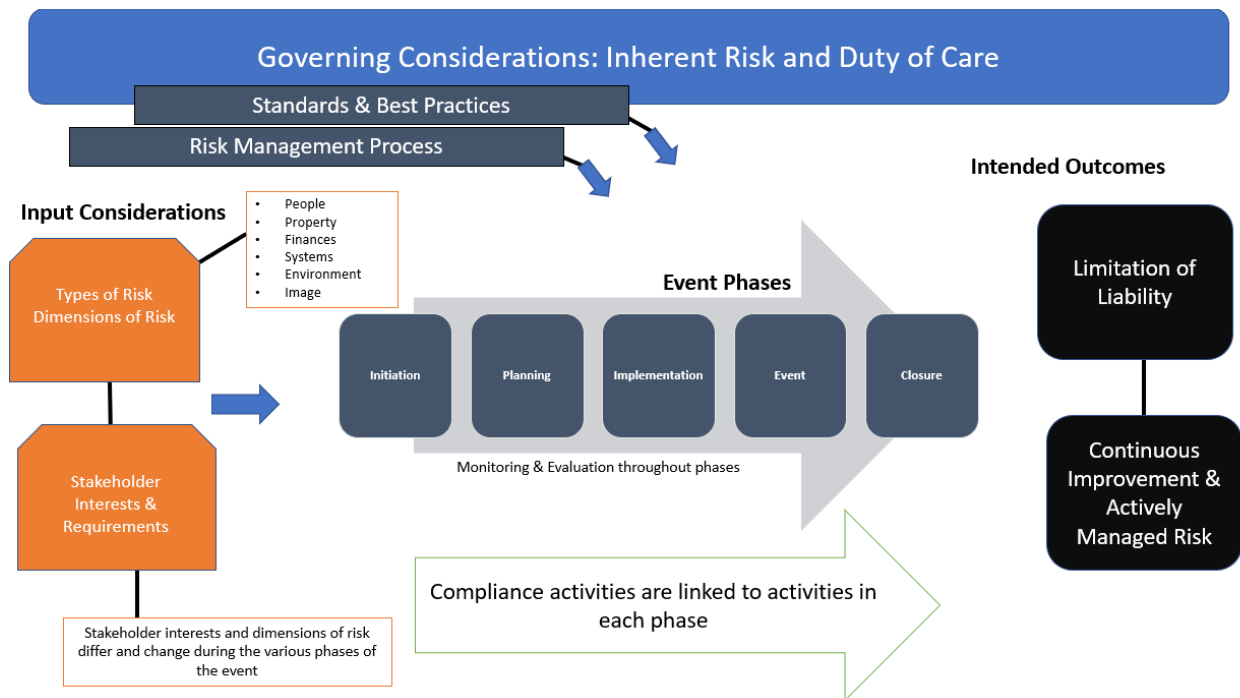
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted from EMBOK

Inherent Risk and Duty of Care

Risk is defined as *uncertain future occurrences which, left unchecked, could adversely influence the achievement of a company's business objectives* (Naidoo, 2016).

Furthmore, risk management is defined as *the purposeful recognition of and reaction to uncertainties with the explicit objective to minimise liabilities and maximise opportunities using a structured approach and common sense* (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b).

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According to the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) events are defined as projects staged to attract an audience of attendees and could be either public or private in nature and staged for business or leisure and the term 'event' includes conferences, exhibitions, festivals, special events, civic events, sports events and the like (Silvers and O'Toole, 2021)

Events are inherently risky (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021) especially those with large crowds (Zhao, 2016) and it often the risk factor itself that makes the event enticing. Accepting this as a starting point, the event organiser has a duty of care to ensure that risks are minimised to the lowest possible level without compromising the quality of the project. Tracking fatalities at events is challenging due to the manner in which these deaths are often reported, and the fact that there is no single source of consolidated information. However, a Canadian study shows that deaths at music festivals, a common type of event staged all over the world can be considered common (Turris & Lund, 2017). Indeed, the study showed that 82% of fatalities at music festivals were caused by trauma leading to the conclusion that pre-event planning should include risk assessment and management planning (Turris & Lund, 2017).

The issues related to managing large numbers of people for events are not new and yet preventable incidents with very serious consequences still occur at events regularly and more research and knowledge sharing of why these incidents occur and how they can be prevented must be done (Mair & Weber, 2019). Indeed the Roman colosseum could accommodate over 50,000 spectators and, thanks to a large number of well-planned events exist, could empty in around five to ten minutes, which is significantly faster than modern stadia (Ronchi, 2018). This clearly indicates that whilst event organisers and other role players are aware of the dangers presented by bringing together large crowds of people, and the best ways to mitigate these risks, (Larsson *et al.*, 2021), constraints such as cost and time will always be considerations for event organisers and this may result in less than optimal arrangements being made.

Outsized emphasis can be placed on event managers by the managers of their organisation to make trade-offs between safety concerns and financial considerations, leading to increased risk and thus create disasters caused by the organisation itself

(Vendelø, 2019), which could also be reasonably categorised as an event risk management own goal.

The best way for an event organiser to develop appropriate plans, and to be able to demonstrate that this has been done according to the most reasonable and appropriate standard, is through the application of a well-recognised and widely accepted best practice that takes into account the minimum and absolutely necessary requirements of an event without undue considerations for other factors (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021).

Planning for identifiable hazards and risk is, ever more, a requirement of a variety of stakeholders not limited to commercial partners, authorities, insurers, customers and clients and the various agencies, which represent these stakeholders, and failure to properly plan for managing risk is considered to be a breach of the duty of care expected of event organisers (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). For these reasons, as well as ethical and moral ones, event organisers must not only exercise duty of care through proper planning but must do so in line with international best practices lest they expose themselves to claims and prosecution for failing to heed their responsibilities. In the event of claim or incident, the event organiser must be able to show that the appropriate care was taken through the proper documentation of risk management practices and activities.

Duty of care is an important consideration for event organisers in the context of risk and is very well defined by Wynn-Moylan (2017:2):

> *"Duty of care is a legal principle that regards the event organiser as a responsible person who must take all reasonable care to avoid acts of omissions that could injure another. It means taking actions that will prevent any foreseeable hazard of injury to the people who are directly involved, or affected by the event: staff, volunteers, performers, audience, host community…."*

Duty of care in a more general sense is considered when one takes reasonable steps to avoid doing or not doing something which may have a negative impact on another person (Udemezue & Ojeih, 2021). Whilst the definition of what might be considered reasonable in certain circumstances is somewhat subjective, the organiser should at least be cognisant that they will be judged according to this definition by a variety of

stakeholders in the event of an incident. Thus, the question the organiser must closely consider when evaluating risk is; has every reasonable consideration been taken to manage each identified hazard or risk most appropriately? What is reasonably practicable for the event organiser to do given the unique specifics of the event in question?

A test of what is reasonably practicable would typically include the following four factors according to Wynn-Moylan (2017):

- Foreseeability
- Preventability
- Reasonableness (for example, cost, administration effort)
- Due diligence

Wynn-Moylan (2017) states that those charged with duty of care must implement processes and procedures that:

- Identify all possible hazards

- Assess the chances of each hazard actually occurring (risk)

- Create a plan to eliminate or reduce the risk as far as is possible.

The term used to describe this is ALARP an acronym representing: *as low as is reasonably practicable* (Wynn-Moylan, 2017) meaning that all efforts must be undertaken to reduce any hazard or risk to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable. Failure to honour one's duty of care results in liability judged in severity by the degree of negligence as depicted in the figure below:
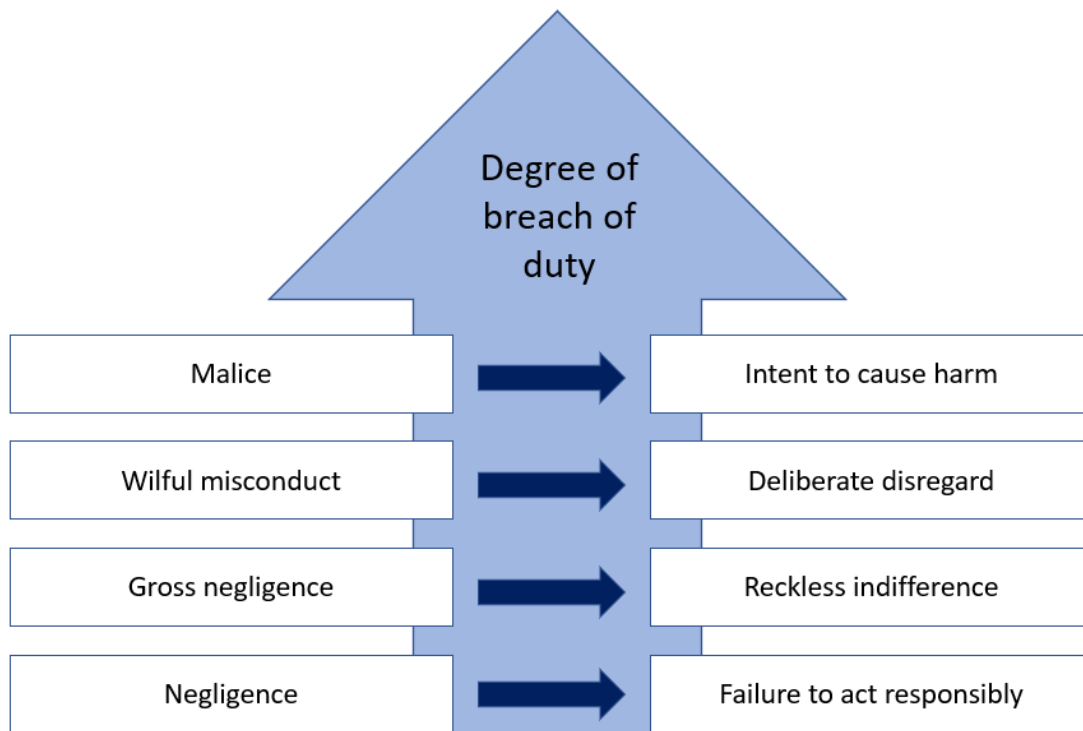
Figure 2.2: Degree of Breach of Duty of Care

Source: (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021)

Not upholding one's duty of care can have serious implications for event organisers leading to civil claims of liability and criminal penalties in certain cases. The Event Act (SASSREA, 2010) specifies that organisers may face criminal prosecution for failing to plan and run the event according to the requirements of the act with penalties of up to 20 years in prison specifically stated. This is a significant incentive for event organisers to be able to demonstrate that they have taken the utmost care to keep risks to the lowest reasonable level. Determining blame after an incident can be very difficult as evidenced by the great many long and involved court cases, both civil and criminal, that follow events. The best such example is the Hillsborough Stadium disaster in the UK in 1989 where 96 people lost their lives (Dickie & Reid, 2018), and where court cases, inquests and other proceedings have been ongoing ever since. For a private entity, the costs associated with the legal process could be ruinous even if no wrongdoing is found.

Assessing the expected level of duty of care as defined or anticipated by licensing authorities is critical for the event organiser. For example, the South African Safety at

Sporting and Recreational Events Act (SASSREA) of 2010 has an area of misunderstanding common to many such regulations and guidelines in that it is written specifically with permanent venues in mind. In South Africa, it is often common to stage so called *green field* events where much of the infrastructure used is temporary in nature.

The result is that there is often a conflict over what is considered reasonably practicable. Any event in South Africa which has been graded as medium risk or above falls under the authority of the South African Police Service or SAPS and an event safety, security and planning committee (ESSPC) is formed consisting of a number of relevant stakeholders (SASSREA 2010). The licensing authorities who form part of the ESSPC are free to assign any standard they wish, South African or otherwise, with which the organiser must comply and thus may, for example, expect all temporary infrastructure to be constructed according to the national standard for permanent buildings (SANS10400). The event organiser may, if they have not engaged timeously with the relevant authority be unaware of this requirement and, as the South African national standard for Health and Safety at Events 10366 specifically states that temporary grandstands should be built in accordance with the national standard for temporary infrastructure SANS1169 (SANS10366: 2012) have planned, procured, and budgeted for a different specification.

Proper planning to accommodate reasonably expected risks and the accurately determine requirements is a prerequisite for ensuring that all stakeholders are appropriately engaged and a necessary first step in ensuring that proper planning has taken place to ensure sufficient preparation for the event (Berner *et al.*, 2015).

So whilst as a principle duty of care is likely accepted by all reasonable stakeholders, exactly what is considered an appropriate duty of care can be different to different stakeholders in different circumstances leading to a compliance risk for the event organiser if the definition of what is reasonably practicable has not properly defined for all potential hazards (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). Ambiguity is the enemy of proper planning and must be reduced as much as is possible in advance, ideally through the adherence to a consistently applied standard.

The Need for Standards

2.3.1 Defining Standards

Standards are defined as *a document, established by consensus and approved by a recognised body that provides, for common and repeated use, rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree or order in a given context* (Koprić & Kovač, 2016: 57).

2.3.2 Inherent Risk

Gathering large groups of people together for any reason results in risk (Larsson *et al.*, 2021) and different types of groups of people, or crowds, will present different kinds of risks in different circumstances (O'Toole *et al.*, 2019). Whilst each event is unique unto itself, it cannot be ignored that following standards wherever possible and deviating from these standards for good, well thought out reasons rather than efficacy relating to time and money will always be a better approach. Following widely accepted standards and practices for events allows the event organiser to not only be compliant with local authorities such as permit and licensing bodies, but to also proactively manage risk (Wynn-Moylan, 2017).

2.3.3 Liability

Event organisers must also consider the possibility of an incident occurring for which they may face legal action, civil and criminal, and being able to demonstrate that one took all reasonable and necessary precautions to avoid incident will be of value to the organiser.

The standards set for many aspects of events have been proven effective and necessary (Mair & Weber, 2019), and variation has resulted in disaster, perhaps the best known of which is the Hillsborough Stadium disaster that occurred in the UK in 1989, where 96 people were killed when the viewing terraces collapsed, which have been shown to have been loaded well beyond their capacity as dictated by the UK's Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds, also known as the Green Guide (Dickie & Reid, 2018). Who is responsible for this variation from the guide has been the subject of numerous legal actions from 1989 to 2021 but it is plain that the standard was not met

and that this contributed significantly to the disaster (Dickie & Reid, 2018) and massive loss of life.

Even in small scale events the failure to impose adequate standards can be disastrous. Such was the case in the Netherlands in 2014 when an Automotor Sportief event was staged in the car park of a store. Part of the event was a monster truck display where the driver would drive over a number of wrecked vehicles. The driver failed to stop after his demonstration and the massive vehicle drove directly into the crowd of spectators killing 3 people including a 5 year old boy and injuring many others (Resodihardjo, 2020). In the wake of the incident, the driver of the vehicle and the event organisers were prosecuted criminally and convicted (Resodihardjo, 2020). It transpired that a permit had been issued by the local municipality, but with regards to safety measures the permit only stated that *sufficient measures need to be taken to ensure the safety of those attending the stunt show, in order to achieve this proper measures need to be taken (bike rack barricades). These bike rack barricades need to ensure that the audience remains at a distance of at least 10 metres* (Resodihardjo, 2020: 2134).

These are pretty vague specifications, seemingly written arbitrarily as they don't refer to any specific guidelines. Additionally, there was no stipulation as to where the 10 meter distance should be measured from (Resodihardjo, 2020). Additionally, the measures imposed, using bike rack barricades were the only form of barrier and that audience members were allowed to view the stunt directly in front of the driver's path. Had international best practice safety measures for motor racing been followed this would never have been allowed and the incident would likely not have resulted in so many deaths and injuries if any (Resodihardjo, 2020).

2.3.4 Unique but Similar

Large gatherings of people happen all the time and generally do so without incident, however a mix of insufficient or deficient facilities, combined with flawed crowd management practices may well lead to death or injury (Zhang, 2019). To reduce uncertainty and to create a standard set of operating procedures, processes should be formalised and appropriate to the territory and environment in which the event takes place (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). Whilst each event is unique unto itself, all events are

categorised broadly into clearly defined stages / phases and the more automatic programming and standardisation is conducted, the more good practices can be encouraged and risks identified.

2.3.5 Templates, Frameworks and Standardisation

In the Green Guide and the Purple Guide, there are a great many templates and frameworks, specific to events for elements such as risk assessments. Having templates for event specific fire risk assessments, food safety assessments, evacuation requirements assessments and so on allows for standardisation meaning that organisers and their personnel, as well as licensing authorities, can evaluate information presented in a standardised and consistent manner that is most appropriate to events (Filingeri *et al.*, 2017).

In South Africa, certain standards such as fire safety rationales which are used to calculate the maximum permitted capacity of a venue are standardised but reference is often made to other regulations or national standards such as building regulations or occupational health and safety regulations (SASSREA, 2010). Whilst the Events Act of 2010 calls for plans such as security plans and traffic management plans, there is no prescribed format for the presentation thereof, which makes all evaluation of these plans subjective and singular. Especially with areas being used only temporarily for a particular event but that is not purpose built to host events on an ongoing basis; it is critical that a proper standard be used to calculate not only space requirements, but also other factors such as exit widths and rates of passage in order to properly calculate the safe capacity of a venue (Larsson *et al.*, 2021). Using a well-established and internationally accepted document such as the Green Guide or the Purple Guide would allow for organisers to work in a consistent and systematic way, and to use templates, guidelines, and policies that are accepted throughout the world as the best way of presenting safety and risk management information in the context of live events (Filingeri *et al.*, 2017).

2.3.6 Accurate Predictions

Furthermore, using an established international standard allows for an organiser to reasonably predict such things as the maximum number of spectators, and thus the number of tickets that can be sold for an event, which is critical when conducting

feasibility analysis and initial planning (Berner *et al.*, 2015). If an organiser has to wait for the input of licensing authorities, the business risk of the event increases dramatically, as the capacity forecast versus actually allowed could be vastly different affecting yields and returns for tickets, which may already be on sale. Guides such as the Green and Purple Guides offer a significant body of guidance for event managers to make use of when planning events that will feature large crowds (Filingeri *et al.*, 2017).

2.3.7 Scenario Planning for Decision Making

An additional benefit, from a risk management point of view, of using standardised templates is that it can make the task of *what-if* analysis and scenario planning simpler and more effective. Whilst scenario planning cannot fully anticipate all possible scenarios (Hoffmann, 2017), it allows the organiser and other role players and stakeholders the opportunity to plan for a variety of scenarios, thereby automating certain decisions, which allows for greater levels of training and preparation of event personnel. This is especially useful in areas such as security where problems, often related to alcohol consumption, are common to a variety of events. Using scenario planning, appropriate responses can be formulated for likely scenarios, thereby reducing the time required to make decisions and take appropriate action (Turris & Lund, 2017).

2.3.8 Crowd Management Variables

Each event is unique unto it and comprised of a unique set of variables, which must be carefully considered (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). The operations of the event must be crafted to reflect and accommodate the variables, as they might be difficult to quantify and an assessment must be done, especially for each event based on its own unique mix of variables. For example, a crowd of angry political protesters at a rally should be treated and planned for differently than a crowd of bird watching aficionados at an exhibition, even if the crowd numbers and venue are similar. According to O'Toole *et al.* (2019), different crowds will behave differently even if all other circumstances, such as venue, time of event, duration, ticket price, and so on are the same.

2.3.9 Compliance vs Risk Management

A major concern is that organisers and other stakeholders confuse managing compliance with actually managing risk. If the standards and / or means of evaluation of submitted materials are poor then merely complying with the minimum standards set by licensing authorities is meaningless in terms of real risk management. Indeed an organiser may find themselves to be compliant on paper, at least sufficiently so to obtain the necessary paperwork to proceed with the event, but they could be negligent in real terms and face legal claims and / or the loss of insurance protection and coverage in the event of incident. Additionally, it can be difficult for licensing authorities and other stakeholders to be sure that what has been planned or promised on paper will actually be delivered. For example, a security service provider who plays a critical role in crowd management may not actually deliver the number of qualified personnel that they have been contracted to, or the personnel themselves may be inexperienced or unqualified (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b) and this can have disastrous consequences such as at the Love Parade disaster where 21 people died and hundreds were injured partly as a consequence of the quality and quantity of security personnel reflected in the approved plans not actually being delivered on the day of the event (Resodihardjo, 2020).

2.3.10 Setting Standards Internally

A lack of proper delivery by a service provider, especially of a highly technical or specialised nature, will have a major impact on the risk management of the event but may not be immediately determinable by the organiser or the authorities. It is in instances such as these where qualitative measures such as contractor reputation and track record must be considered along with other factors such as pricing and theoretical plans (*The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and other Events*, 2021).

If the standard of quality of evaluation is poor then the organiser may be tempted to engage in copy and paste exercises whereby generic information is provided rather than prepare plans tailored to the specific needs of the event. Similarly if plans are not properly evaluated based on the specific set of variables unique to the event in question and against a consistently applied standard based on best practice, then all

preparation may be compromised or ineffective. Ultimately, for risk management to be effective, a culture of compliance and proactive risk management must be fostered within the organising group, including the event organiser first and foremost but also other relevant stakeholders and planning for risk must take place from the outset of the project (Standard, Australia and License, 2004).

As such, the organiser's harshest critic, from a risk management point of view, should be itself and the standard for risk management should be set internally rather than on external standards which may or may not be sufficient to offer true protection from risk. Risk management in the context of events can sometimes be seen as an add-on to be undertaken after the event has already been conceptualised, designed and planned (Dahlström, 2020) but this is both unrealistic and impractical. For risk management to be truly effective it needs to form part of every phase of the event (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021).

2.4 The Risk Management Process

Risk management (definition with source... then you can proceed) cannot be conducted once-off, approved, and forgotten about which is what a compliance-based approach often yields, rather risk management must be seen as continuous and ongoing and applied deliberately, consistently and effectively throughout the various phases of the event in a dynamic fashion (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b).

The benefits for following a defined and deliberate process and the negative consequences for not doing so are listed below:

Table 2.1: Risk planning benefits and hazards

Benefits	Hazards
Improved communications	Faulty assumptions
More efficient use of resources	Under-funding and over-spending
Less duplication of effort	Gaps in risk recognition and treatment
Quicker recognition of risks	Haphazard stakeholder participation
More thorough response to risks	Inconsistent and uncontrolled decision making
Fewer surprises and crises	Chaotic reaction and response

Satisfies stakeholder requirements	Increased risk
Complies with laws and regulations	

Source: (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021)

Risk planning is defined as *providing the structure for making decisions based on realistic assumptions and accepted methods* (Silvers and O'Toole, 2021b)*.* The objective of risk planning is to ensure that decisions affecting risk are made based on rational suppositions using commonly accepted methodologies and incorporating both lessons learned from previous projects and international best practices (Dahlström, 2020). Risk planning allows the event organiser to pre-suppose and prepare for certain scenarios which may have, in some guise or with some degree of similarity, happened in the past and apply those measures which are most suitable to counter the negative outcomes of the occurrence. Scenario planning allows for all role-players to be better briefed, trained, and prepared and will allow for faster and better decision making thereby reducing overall risk for the project. There will always be some elements which need to be handled for the first time, some occurrence that was both unforeseen and unexpected, but by limiting these as far as possible through risk planning, the event organiser can improve their capacity for addressing these issues by limiting the amount of crises that must be handled at one time.

The EMBOK system embraces the risk management process contained in AS/NZS 4360: 2004, the risk management standard for Australia and New Zealand (Silvers *et al.*, 2006) depicted below:
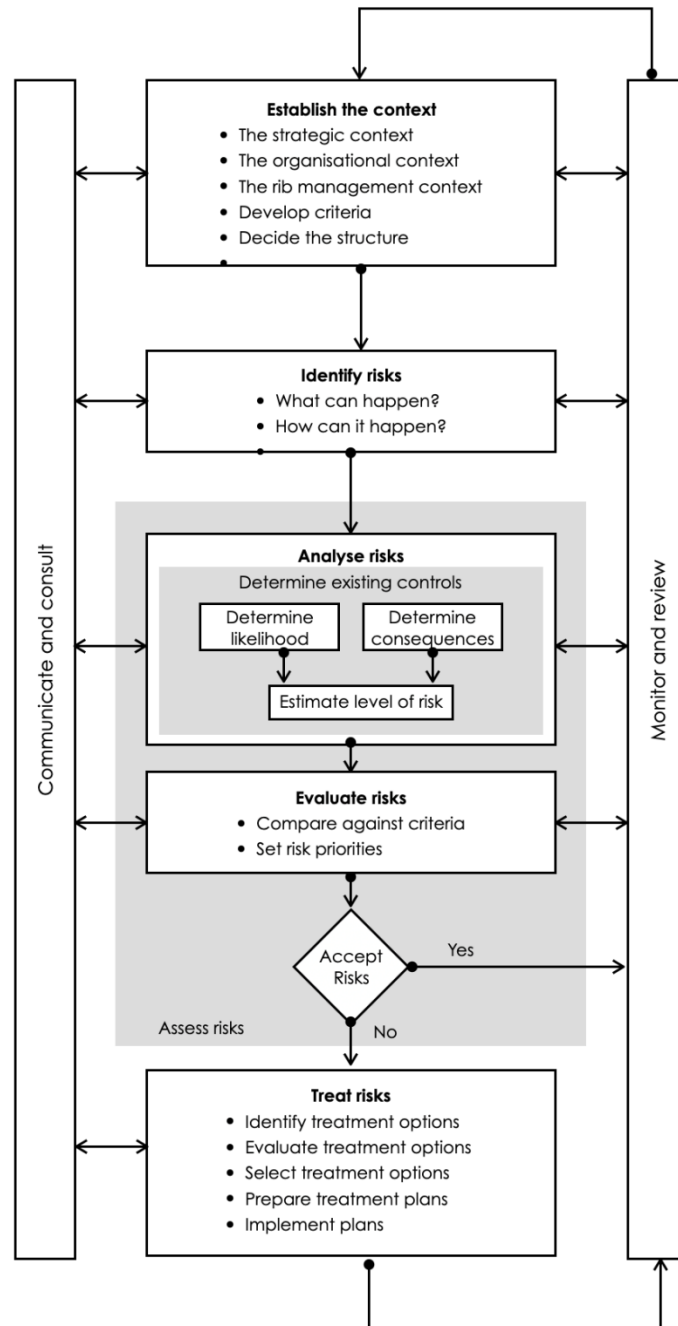
Figure 2.3: Risk Management Process

Source: (Standard, Australia and License, 2004)

Even if not required by law or the licensing authorities, a formal risk management plan should be prepared and maintained throughout the various phases of an event (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021), as this will facilitate continuous improvement as well as provide evidence of the exercise of duty of care, proper planning, and preparation in the event of an incident. For risk management to be effective, the risk management process

should start and end with the project, and be a consistent and integral part of all project plans throughout the duration of the event in its various phases.

Types of Risk

Silvers and O'Toole (2021) make the point that whilst risk management literature is generally focussed on loss avoidance or minimisation, for example, the reduction of liability, but it is important to consider the health and safety aspects of events as it relates to those working on and attending events. Prevention will always be better than cure when it comes to people and protecting people will ultimately prevent the financial position of the event.

The forms of risk applicable to live events can be summarised as follows, operational risk, business risk, reputational risk, ethical risk, compliance risk, and environmental risk. Definitions of these forms of risk and a description of how they relate to events follow:

2.1.1.1 Operational risk

Operational risk can be defined as: *exposure to losses due to inadequate processes and systems and to unexpected external events* (Naidoo, 2016:291).

Operational risk is perhaps the greatest area of risk for live events as it can have the most serious consequences and encompasses the vital health and safety components for events. Once the event site is operational, and once the event is open to the public the event organisers has a grave responsibility to ensure that every reasonably practicable is done to ensure the health and safety of all stakeholders (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). The loss of life is a real risk at events of mass concentration and disasters at events can have fatal consequences (Zhao *et al.*, 2020). From a moral or ethical point of view this has to be avoided at all costs and from a business point of view a major incident could be ruinous. For the people involved, failure to develop and implement proper operational plans, plans which anticipate the operational risks faced by the project and put forth plans to manage them, can face prosecution should disaster occur (SASSREA, 2010).

Operational risk also has serious bearing on customer satisfaction. Unlike a consumer product, which can be recalled in the event of an issue or when an alternative can be provided, the event has one opportunity to satisfy the customer and failure to properly anticipate and plan for all challenges that could be faced, could result in negative reviews and the loss of future revenue due to low consumer confidence.

In the age of COVID-19, operational risk will be foremost amongst the types of risk to be considered. In many instances, before any other considerations, event organisers will have to clearly demonstrate their ability to identify, evaluate, and manage the risk related to COVID-19 at events or the events will likely not take place. Those organisers that are able to do this effectively will enjoy a significant competitive advantage.

Operational risk management is a major factor of profitability, if risks are not properly anticipated and planned for then unplanned for, and thereby unbudgeted for, contingency measures may need to be adopted quickly due to the time constrained nature of events which could have major implications for the profit and loss of the venture. For many events, the bulk of revenue is earned from ticket sales made close to the date of the event thus there is a significant risk of negative financial performance from the start. Any unforeseen operational requirements could throw off already tenuous financial models.

2.1.1.2 Business risk

Business risk can be defined as: *changes in demand and supply, abnormal fluctuations in the company's revenue or from increased competition. Business risk can be further divided into sales risk and operating risk* (Naidoo, 2016:293).

Business risk, by its very definition, applies to all business enterprises. From the point of view of live consumer events which rely heavily on, often last minute, ticket sales, the business proposition is often a tenuous one. Additionally, break even points are often very high due to the expensive nature of temporary infrastructure and the high costs associated with adequately equipping and staffing a mass event.

2.1.1.3 Reputational risk

Reputational risk can be defined as the risk to assets and revenue that emerge as a result of negative associations or perceptions that are inconsistent with an organisations' stated values and brand image (Heidinger & Gatzert, 2018). This element of risk is of particular concern to sponsors and other commercial partners of an event (Todd, Leask &d Ensor, 2017). Even though, for the organiser, the event is ultimately a business venture from which they seek to generate revenue and, ideally, profit, sponsors and commercial partners participate in the event almost exclusively as a marketing exercise. Thus, any reputational risk threatens to negate and even reverse any of the intended gains.

Reputation comes over time and the loss or diminishing of reputation is a risk to all stakeholders in their various capacities and would be likely to result negatively on their business ventures in the future.

2.1.1.4 Ethical risk

Ethical risk can be defined as: *moral dilemmas implicit in the company's business or strategy* (Naidoo, 2016:293). Failure to properly plan for all possible and likely operational issues and risks may result in an organiser, through perceived necessity, taking shortcuts and failing to provide the correct number of operational resources with often disastrous consequences, such as was seen as the Love Parade in 2010, where there was significant loss of life and where the provision of safety resources was far lower than the approved planned deployment had been (Resodihardjo, 2020). Often too there is financial pressure to make unnecessary or unreasonable compromises with regards to safety planning and the provision of event related items (Vendelø, 2019). This could compromise event safety but could also take the form of providing commercial partners with less than they promised. Similarly, as with all businesses an event organiser may fail morally and choose such ethically compromised activities as to avoid paying tax or to avoid paying fair wages to contract personnel.

Additionally, like all companies, event organisers have an ethical obligation to their shareholders to behave in an ethical and decent fashion with regards to the business dealings of the organisation.

2.1.1.5 Compliance risk

Compliance risk can be defined as: *the risk that the company fails to meet obligations to comply with applicable laws and regulations and is exposed to fines or other legal penalties as a result* (Naidoo, 2016:293). Compliance risk in the context of live events is particularly acute. While another form of business may have their activities halted temporarily until such time as compliance has been reached, a delay for an event could be completely disastrous and ruinous, and thus non-compliance is of particular concern for live events. If an event cannot start on time or at least close to the anticipated time, it may mean that not only is the audience less likely to attend, but the loss of broadcasting opportunities could be disastrous from a commercial point of view, where sponsors have specifically bought into the event to receive the exposure benefits of the event being broadcast live.

This urgent need for full compliance to receive or retain permits to continue operating, and not be exposed to the financial risk of having to refund or otherwise compensate ticket purchasers, and commercial partners for an event not taking place, leaves the organiser at the risk of extortion from corrupt officials.

2.1.1.6 Currency risk

Currency risk can be defined as: *the risk of sudden appreciation or depreciation in the currency which affects the profitability of a company's business* (Naidoo, 2016:294). This is particularly true in the case of international events. In the case of a concert, artists are normally paid in US dollars and are paid long in advance to secure their commitment to perform. Similarly trade shows and exhibitions often attract hefty licencing fees paid in foreign currency.

Any fluctuation could have serious consequences for the profit and loss of the event, especially if ticket prices have already been announced, thereby removing the opportunity for the organiser to make adjustments to the price to accommodate increased costs brought about by currency fluctuations.

2.1.1.7 Environmental/Weather Risk

All major events, especially outdoor events, are at risk from adverse or inclement weather. It has been shown that delays at motor racing events, even if due to unforeseen circumstances such as poor weather, have an acute impact of the

perceived satisfaction level of an event attendee (Chung & Hwang, 2015). From an even more serious point of view, the use of temporary infrastructure such as staging, which is (virtual)ly ubiquitous with events, means that there is a risk of the collapse of temporary structures due to poor weather, which poses a real threat to event attendees and workers, such as the collapse of the main stage due to high winds at the Indiana State fair in 2011, which resulted in a number of fatalities (Jones, 2016). Also in 2011 a heavy thunderstorm, in fact the heaviest to ever be recorded in Belgium up until that time, hit the Pukkelpop Festival site and the resulting damage caused five deaths and scores of injuries (Vendelø, 2019). Thus it is vital for event organisers to not only be aware of the environmental risks facing their events, but also to be aware of the capacity of their temporary infrastructure to withstand it (Vendelø, 2019).

The environment should be carefully considered when considering potential event sites as environmental unsuitability may have serious negative consequences for events (Olya, 2019). Prevailing weather conditions at the venue in question at the time of year the event is to be staged is an important consideration and often overlooked as part of the selection process. For example, FIFA has now admitted that selecting Qatar as the venue for the 2022 World Cup was a mistake due to the excessive heat experienced in the country in summer (Olya, 2019).

Dimensions of Risk and Typical Event Specific Risks

Silvers and O'Toole (2021) refer to the dimensions of risk, in the context of events, as presented below in Table 2.1.

Table 2.2: The dimensions of risk

What is at Risk?	What are the Risks?
People	Injury and death
Property	Loss or damage
Finances	Financial loss or reduction in revenue

Systems	Reduced capacity or capability
Environment	Resource availability
Image	Decreased demand

Source: (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b)

The dimensions of risk show clearly that risk at events is not a simple matter of health and safety. Gathering large groups of people together for any reason results in risk (Larsson *et al*., 2021), and different types of groups of people, or crowds, will present different kinds of risks in different circumstances. Indeed deaths at music festivals in particular are not uncommon (Turris & Lund, 2017). All businesses carry assumed risks and whilst certain events may attract specific kinds of risk to people, such as the risk of injury or death, there are other factors such as risks with financial implications or risk to systems. Of particular interest to certain key stakeholders, namely commercial partners and sponsors is the idea of image or reputational risk (Johnston, 2015), as the purpose of sponsoring and partnering with events at all is generally to promote, rather than detract, from a particular brand. Negative incidents at events have shown to have negative implications for a variety of stakeholders (Resodihardjo, 2020).

Silvers and O'Toole (2021) also state quite clearly typical event risk factors described below:

Table 2.3: Typical event risk factors

	Hazardous activities & attractions
Activities	Food safety & alcohol
	Programme, performers and participants
	Demographics & history
Audience	Crowd size and density
	Crowd behaviour
Communications	Untried or insufficient communications
	Lack of command centre and control

	Insufficient equipment & signage
Compliance	Regulatory permits, licences and approvals
	Unauthorised, unsanctioned or illegal activity
	Inadequate cooperation from / with authorities
Emergency Planning	Inadequate crisis management plans
	Lack of emergency response coordination
	Deficient disaster contingency plans
Environment	Atmospheric conditions & weather dependency
	Terrain, flora, fauna
	Vicinity and proximity to hazards
Event Planning	Inexperienced, inadequate or incompetent management
	Oblivious to external conditions
	Lack of policies and procedures
Event Type & Purpose	First time, one time or controversial events
	Lack of admittance controls and credentials
	Misrepresentative promotion
Finances	Improper procurement practices
	Vulnerable cash handling procedures/ areas
	Change in international exchange rates
Human Resources	Insufficient staffing
	Untrained / inexperienced personnel
	Incorrect deployment of personnel
Infrastructure	Inadequate technology, power and utilities
	Improper sanitation and waste management
	Insufficient traffic and parking management
Operations	Occupational health and safety
	Installation, operation and close down logistics
	Equipment, décor, special effects
Organisation	Unclear structure of authority
	Unsanctioned leadership / decision making
	Insufficient / incorrect security personnel
Site	Untried or temporary venues
	Inappropriate layout, insufficient lighting
	Temporary structures and staging
Suppliers	Specialist, skilled, union requirements

	Lack of supplier contact and control
	Quality control, compliance and insurance
	Inadequate planning and decision time
	Event start and ending times, duration
Time External	Arrival and departure modes
	Susceptibility to terrorist attack
	Disease brought in by attendees

(Silvers and O'Toole, 2021)

These typical event risk factors are extensive and would form a solid basis for an event risk assessment. Each factor should be considered and evaluated and a plan made to avoid, mitigate, transfer, or accept each risk. For example, an organiser could avoid the risk of an untried venue by selecting an established one, mitigate the risk of insufficient staffing by carefully forecasting requirements and staffing appropriately, transfer the risk by having participants sign waivers and providing accurate warning information and accept the risk of terrorist attack, based on input from informed government sources that whilst it is always a threat or a hazard, there is no indication of a specific threat, and thus the general risk can be accepted. Event risks common to most music festivals are the collapse of temporary infrastructure, terror attacks and trampling (Turris & Lund, 2017) and thus these factors must be given particular consideration at events of that sort whereas a trade exhibition would likely present a very different risk profile.

Crowds of people behave differently even in very similar circumstances and can be unpredictable (O'Toole *et al.*, 2019). As a result, specific attention needs to be paid to the typical event risk factors, but they should be considered singularly considering the unique mix of circumstances, stakeholders and variables that make up each event (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). Failure to consider specifics such as crowd density and behaviour have resulted in disaster and tragedy, such as at the Love Parade disaster in Germany in 2010, which resulted in significant loss of life and injury and resulted in serious legal consequences for the organisers and other stakeholders (Resodihardjo, 2020).

By following the process of first analysing all possible risks and then conducting a what-if analysis for each one, the organiser can ensure that risks have been managed

as thoroughly as possible. All events are comprised differently compared to more predictable and routine business activities as each event staged has been customised to suit the specific type of activity, venue and the requirements of the particular stakeholders and is singular in nature (Samuel Saragih, Sukoyo & Sampetua Hariandja, 2016). Many large scale music festivals are, when operational, the size and have the population of small cities such as the Glastonbury Music Festival which has a capacity of over 175,000 people and takes place on over 360 hectares of land (Ancliffe, 2017). Additionally, many takes place at so called Greenfield sites, and sites that are not purpose built event venues, lack permanent facilities, and require a tremendous amount of temporary infrastructure. This makes the risk posed by the non-delivery of service providers far more acute than in a venue with established facilities.

Furthermore, many festivals feature multiple stages meaning that many events are effectively being staged at once in the same venue (Ancliffe, 2017). Thus, two events may seem similar on paper such as music concerts, but the specifics of each event will always warrant the creation of a bespoke plan that speaks to the actual event under consideration, rather than a generic plan for events of that particular sort.

The consumption of alcohol and drugs is another consideration at all entertainment events and particularly at music festivals, and the use of these substances often has a direct impact on the safety and security of the event attendees (Turris & Lund, 2017) and must inform crowd management plans.

Crowd composition is another key consideration, and the type of crowd and the nature of the event being attended, will mean that the crowd management approach that should be adopted will vary accordingly (Larsson *et al.*, 2021). In the case of the Sunset Grooves festival held in Rotterdam, Netherlands in 2009 a free to the public, open air concert was invaded by football hooligans resulting in chaos and violence including a fatality (Resodihardjo, 2020). An inquiry found that the football hooligan component should have warranted a specific and particular kind of planning and security provision, as the nature of the crowd differed from the originally anticipated audience (Resodihardjo, 2020).

Another key consideration for outdoor events is the susceptibility of temporary infrastructure to collapse especially when faced with adverse weather conditions. The

purple guide states: *The failure of any temporary demountable structure (TDS), no matter how small, could have devastating effects. The design, safe erection, use, and deconstruction are important parts of event planning.* (The Purple Guide to Health, Safety, and Welfare at Music and other Events, 2021). In 2011, a temporary stage structure erected at the Indiana State Fair was struck by sudden winds gusting at more than 100 kilometres per hour, and collapsed onto the crowd awaiting the imminent appearance of the main act, killing seven and injuring scores more (Vendelø, 2019). The organisers of the event were made aware of the inclement weather in advance, but did not predict the effect that it would have on the temporary structure (Vendelø, 2019), and an enquiry ultimately determined that the reason for the collapse was structural deficiency as the stage structure was incapable of handling winds of the speed encountered (Jones, 2016).

Temporary infrastructure is generally rated to withstand winds up to a certain speed, but if no one is measuring the wind speed at the festival site, the capabilities of the infrastructure could be exceeded and thus compromised without any warning. Special consideration needs to be made to all materials that may affect structural integrity, such as advertising scrims, which could affect wind loadings and make collapse more likely (The Purple Guide to Health, Safety, and Welfare at Music and other Events, 2021), and so the use of prescribed standards is very important to ensure the capabilities of temporary structures could withstand the impact of the environment is not compromised. In Cape Town in 2012, an advertising tower at a concert blew over, resulting in one fatality and number of injuries, and an inquest found the companies responsible for erecting the structure and producing and affixing the banners to it have been negligent, as they had not adequately considered the effect of wind on the stability of the structure (Cronje, 2017).

Non-delivery by service providers is a serious problem faced by event organisers. For example, if the staging company does not complete the stage on time there cannot be a show. Failure to deliver on time by a single service provider could be disastrous for an event. At the London Olympics in 2012 the organisers of the games contracted with what was then considered the largest security company in the world and did so long in advance. However GAS, the appointed supplier, was eventually unable to deliver the quantity of personnel required despite, a budget of over GBP 500 million, and the

games could only proceed once the British Armed Forces agreed to step in and take on certain security related responsibilities (Scott, 2015). The chairman of the Olympic committee for the London games called this failure to deliver by G4S the greatest challenge experienced during the whole project, and the most significant threat to a successful Olympic games being staged (Scott, 2015). As such, it is vital that event organisers specify the scope of work required as accurately as possible and allow for a sufficient amount of time for the work to be completed reducing the likelihood of failure by service providers. Milestones and specific means of evaluation or measurement should be prescribed in advance to ascertain whether or not the service providers are likely to deliver as hoped or anticipated (Abyad, 2018). Experience will also assist in determining the service providers' actual capacity to deliver, and the event organisers may have to appoint multiple service providers for a single area of provision, if there is no one provider with sufficient capacity to complete the job unaided. Ensuring that during the pre-event phases the proper service providers are selected, and are adequately empowered to perform and deliver as expected, is a vital part of preventing event risks from manifesting into disaster (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b).

2.6 Stakeholders

A stakeholder can be described as any person or entity that has some sort of stake or investment in an event, and the roles they assume are often multiple in nature or vary according to the phase of the event (Todd, Leask & Ensor, 2017). Some stakeholders are actively involved in the project, whilst others are able to impose control of influence over it.

Stakeholder Theory

The demands of stakeholders have a direct impact on the way companies operate and thus too affect their economic performance (Wagner, 2015). As such, consideration of the demands stakeholders will likely have, and the motivations for these demands is important for any company to consider. Stakeholders can be categorised as internal, external, regulatory, value chain and public (Wagner, 2015). From an event management perspective, a proactive approach to regulatory stakeholders is critical as without compliance with the requirements demanded by regulatory stakeholders,

event organisers will run the risk of not being able to meet the criteria required in order to obtain event licences and similar permissions leading to event cancellations and financial losses. Regulatory stakeholders have the authority and legal standing to negatively affect the operations of the event organiser not only through non issuance of permits, but also through penalties and other restrictions (Wagner, 2015) thus event organisers must consider the requirements of these stakeholders very carefully. An important benefit of a proactive approach to dealing with regulatory stakeholders is that the cost of compliance will likely be reduced (Wagner, 2015). Similarly, public stakeholders have a high potential for the disturbance of the activities of a company (Wagner, 2015) and thus event organisers must consider carefully the expectations and demands of public stakeholders and how these will be managed if they want to succeed in the long terms and effectively manage event related risks. It has been suggested that the public at large has an expectation that companies should and will generally make improvements to quality of life (Wagner, 2015) and companies involved in staging events are no exception. This is particularly acute when the events are making use of public resources or are staged specifically to promote tourism and economic activity in the area (Todd, Leask and Ensor, 2017). At the heart of it, stakeholder theory suggests that in order for an organisation to thrive, it must have a relationship with all stakeholders (Van Niekerk, 2016), and this is certainly the case with large scale events.

Some stakeholders have no direct interest in an event but are nevertheless affected by it, and this is especially apt in the case of what are termed "hallmark status events". A hallmark status event is considered to be one of particular scale and importance that is successfully held regularly over a long period and has subsequently developed a high level of status and reputation (Todd, Leask & Ensor, 2017). Examples would include such well known events as the Monaco Grand Prix, the Wimbledon Tennis Tournament and, in the South African context, the Vodacom Durban July. These sorts of events will often form part of the tourism drive of a city, country or territory (Todd, Leask & Ensor, 2017) and may well attract public funding. The scale of the events, and the impact that they have on local economies, mean that the type of stakeholder and the level of interest can vary dramatically from more typical events. It is key for event organisers to understand the complex myriad of interests and the complexities

involved in the intersections of these interests to stage the events successfully in the long term (Todd, Leask & Ensor, 2017).

From a risk point of view each of the stakeholders has different considerations. For example, an event organiser is concerned with business risk where a commercial partner is more concerned with reputational risk. As such different considerations must be made to make assurances and manage expectations.

Table 2.4: Typical stakeholders and stakeholder groups

Activist groups	Neighbourhoods
Attendees / consumers	Participants
Board members	Philanthropic beneficiaries
Civic groups	Public officials
Client / host	Regulatory agencies
Committees	Sanctioning bodies
Community leaders	Shareholders
Employees	Sponsors
Investors	Suppliers
Media	Volunteers

Source: (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021)

The event organiser must take responsibility for actively and systematically managing the interactions and relationships with each of these stakeholder groups and seek to create, as far as possible, the most possible positive outcome for each party (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021). Organisers must also be conscious that parties with no direct involvement may become very interested in an event, and seek to limit its extent, or have it cancelled altogether should it have a negative impacts on them. Parking and noise complaints are common for residents living in proximity to sites where large scale events are staged (Zhong, Bao & Jago, 2021), and failure to adequately consider the impact and effect on these stakeholders, which may seem trivial in the overall context of the event, could have serious implications for future permissions and funding, especially from public sources. Therefor planning elements such as internal and external traffic management plans, must be properly prepared and executed to

ensure event longevity (*The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and other Events*, 2021).

Situations such as this highlight that mere compliance is insufficient, as an event organiser may receive a permit for an annual event in year one of the event based on submissions, but if sufficient interested and affected parties complain about the impact the event has on them, the permit may not be issued in year two. Active engagement and outcomes optimisation, as far as is reasonably possible, should be sought for all stakeholders (Niekerk & Getz, 2016).

The event organiser must not be reactive to issues, thus not simply respond to issues and complaints, but should rather plan for communication with various entities based on the level of commitment and involvement they have. Event organisers must plan their communications in advance and build into marketing messaging public information. Certain interest groups may require more direct communication than others and organisers must carefully plan and select the means of communication most appropriate to each stakeholder group (Niekerk & Getz, 2016).
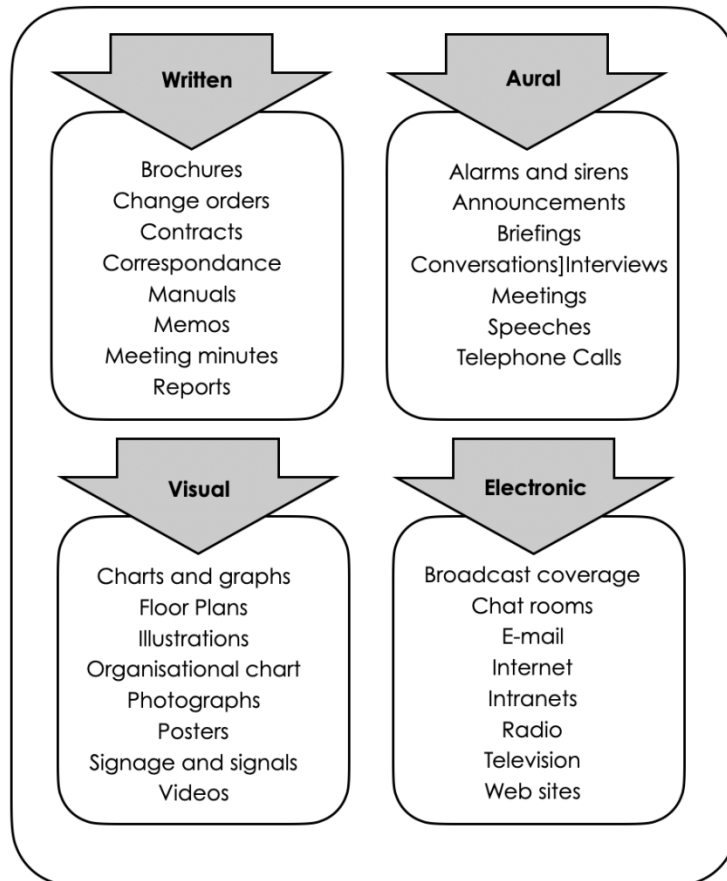
Figure 2.4: Communication tools for event organisers

Source: (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b)

Different tools will be appropriate during different phases of the event even for the same stakeholder groups. For example, in the load in or implementation phase it may be most appropriate to communicate with stakeholders such as ticket purchasers/event attendees via written and electronic means, whereas during the event itself communication will be aural and visual made via signage and announcements (Berner *et al.*, 2015). Especially in the case of international events consideration must be made for different language groups and or disability groups such as the hearing or visually impaired. Most countries have some form of legislation or regulation regarding events being barrier-free for people with disabilities and for this reason, as well as ethical ones, event organisers must ensure that all stakeholder groups are considered individually and that a one size fits all policy is not applied (Jurewicz & Jurewicz, 2016) More than ever, especially in the context of COVID-19 restricting in-person communication and attendance events have had to increase their

digital footprint and consider (virtual) options for creating experiences and communicating information (Dahlström, 2020).

2.6.1 The Role of the Risk Manager

Organisational risks due to an unclear structure of authority or unsanctioned decision making are very real threats for events (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021). It is not uncommon for stakeholders of events to confuse their interest with them having authority and attempts to interfere with minor event operations are common, such as trying to gain access to a restricted area. For stakeholders unaware of the proper plans, procedures, risk and mitigation measures, this can be very problematic. Take for example a commercial partner trying to gain access to the pits at a motor racing event. The person may feel entitled to this sort of access as he or she has contributed financially to the event but may not understand that in accessing this restricted area they have compromised all the safety plans put in place and this may necessitate the event being temporarily halted, not to mention potentially posing a physical risk to themselves and others.

This sort of hypothetical incident demonstrates why all parties working at or on an event should be very clear on who is responsible for what and who is empowered to make decisions, deny access, and relay instructions. A stakeholder may be very valuable to an event, but that does not necessarily give them the right to make decisions about the operation of the event. From a business risk perspective, it is very worrying for an organiser to think that they may receive bills for services rendered at an event, which have been ordered by unauthorised parties who may be unaware or uncaring of the implications of their unauthorised instructions.

To avoid organisational risks such as this, it is imperative that organisers spell out clearly, in the form of written plans and organisational charts, which is responsible for what and ensure that all personnel are briefed accordingly. For example, security personnel who are critical to the safe and smooth running of an event should take instructions only from their superiors and designated personnel such as the event organiser. All contractors should understand the process required for procurement variation orders and the level of authority who can issue them. By establishing clearly

who is responsible for what area of the project, risk can be managed through the allocation of authority and responsibility. (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b).

Overall, a risk manager should be appointed for the event. This person could be the overall event organiser or it could be a separate individual but, if this is the case, the relative levels of responsibility and authority of each must be specified upfront (Dahlström, 2020). The event organiser will always have financial considerations and having a person whose sole focus is risk management included in the organisation can provide a strong counterbalance. However, if the risk manager is separate from the event organiser, they must be sufficiently empowered, with authority and budget, to compensate for and finance risk management activities (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021).

It is important that the person entrusted with the responsibility of managing risk in any capacity at an event be sufficiently experienced. Much of effective event management relies on in-depth experiential knowledge developed as a result of extended periods of working on events wherein an individual holds high levels of individual responsibility (Mallen & Adams, 2017). This sort of exposure over time results in tacit knowledge, which allows for more rapid decision making, which is a critical attribute in the world of live events where decisions often have to be made quickly and with imperfect knowledge (Mallen & Adams, 2017). Event managers and staff will generally exchange explicit understanding during the pre-event phases, but whilst the event itself is in the event phase much of what is shared is tacit, which is hard to convert to explicit knowledge once the project is complete (Muskat & Deery, 2017).

In South Africa, the Events Act of 2010 specifically states that an event organiser must be at least 21 years old and, in the case of events classified by the SAPS as medium to high risk, the person should be suitably capable and experienced and have the necessary resources to adequately manage the event. Additionally, the organiser must appoint a safety officer who is *suitably qualified* and who will represent the organiser at Event Safety, Security and Planning Committee (ESSPC) meetings where the safety plans for the event are presented, evaluated and approved or rejected. Definitions of what constitutes suitable qualifications are not included.

Without exact definitions of these points about qualifications there is room for subjectivity. In South Africa, it is customary that a safety officer has a SAMTRAC

qualification or an A Grade security rating. However, these qualifications have little or nothing to do with crowd management or specifically to do with events at all. As a result, the person attending the ESSPC meetings with other relevant role players and thus presenting the safety plans could very reasonably have no experience with events whatsoever. This is another instance where it is clear that the responsibility and standards for risk management should be set internally, rather than be based on the compliance standards of outside entities. For risk management at events to be effective it must be prioritised within the organising entity, and integrated throughout the organisation with clearly defined roles and levels of responsibility and the process of risk management, and the person assigned to managing it, should be appointed as early in the planning process as possible (Dahlström, 2020), and be sufficiently experienced to perform the role effectively (Mallen & Adams, 2017). It is not uncommon in event management for a single person to fulfil multiple roles as they may look after particular sections of an event, even if they are not in complete control of the event, and understanding who is responsible for what is critical to event success, which includes effectively managing risk (Mallen & Adams, 2017).

The risk manager appointed must be sufficiently empowered and resourced to make decisions, including those with financial implications, regarding safety at events (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b). Decisions may need to be made quickly, under pressurised conditions and with potentially serious consequences for various stakeholder groups and having an underqualified person who ticks the box in terms of minimum levels of compliance, but has no reasonable qualifications, experience or authority does little to manage risk on behalf of the organiser.

Event Phases

Events are typically open to the public or visitors / participants for limited periods. Even an event which takes place over a relatively prolonged period is likely shut for reset at some point and will be under operation during the build-up and breakdown phases where visitors are not permitted. This means that the risk profile for events changes significantly depending on the phase it is in. Understanding these phases and planning appropriately for the activities risk considerations in each phase is critical for event organisers.

According to the national standard for Health and Safety at Events, SANS 10366, the phases of an event are as follows:

- **The build-up**, including site design, contractor selection, service procurement, planning for temporary infrastructure and so on.

- **The load in**, the delivery and setting up of the various infrastructure and equipment.

- **The show**, the event itself primarily concerned with crowd management, emergency planning and health and safety.

- **The load out**, the appropriate removal of equipment and services.

- **The breakdown**, the removal, and proper disposal, of waste materials such as grey water, chemical toilet waste, and rubbish.

Silvers and O'Toole (2021) describe the event phases as follows:

- **Initiation** – *This is when a commitment to risk management must be instituted* (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021a). Initial conceptualisation and research is conducted and the project scope established. Resources are identified, evaluated, and selected and objectives are set.

- **Planning** - Specifications of requirements for elements such as procurement of services are created, plans for the deployment of resources, activities planned and programmed and risk planning and the decision-making considerations specific to the event takes place.

- **Implementation** - Service providers are appointed and the coordination of all logistical and operational elements takes place. *Risk management techniques are required during this phase to ensure the proper verification and control activities are employed"* (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021a).

- **The event** – this is when the actual event begins, as opposed to the implementation where the event site is being made ready. In this phase the dynamic process of meeting the health and safety requirements for workers and visitors is conducted at the same time as the production. Once this period begins risk management becomes critical as the option to prevent the arrival of

potentially large numbers of people is off the table. Decisions become time sensitive and this is the phase when unanticipated risks are the most likely to occur and need immediate attention. Command and control factors are most critical here as complexity is at its highest point in the entire process.

- **Closure** – this involves the shutting down of the event site and the physical dismantling and removal of all event related goods, equipment, and services. As with the implementation phase this phase is often time sensitive as certain milestones must be reached to allow for go/no-go decisions to be made and thus the health and safety risk to workers is elevated. Also key to this phase is the collection of feedback, the measurement of impacts (environmental impact, economic contribution, etc.) and a lessons learned exercise, especially from a risk management point of view should be conducted.

The risk factors presented at these different phases require different considerations. For example, in most territories, including South Africa, event sites under preparation are considered construction sites and the occupational health and safety laws and regulations governing construction sites apply ('SANS 10366', 2012) and the organiser is expected to conform to these norms as far as is reasonably practicable. The challenge with this is often one of which resources can be considered reasonably practicable. If the event is taking place within an established, permanent venue then it is reasonably practicable for the organiser to ensure that there are facilities suitable and appropriate for a construction site such as sufficient ablution facilities or electrical points. However, for an event that takes place in a green field site without existing infrastructure, it is often financially impossible to set up a site that may only be in operation for a few days to the standard that would be expected for a construction site that may be in operation for months or years, or to a purpose-built permanent facility such as a stadium.

It is critical in instances such as this to prioritise based on risk and to select those resources that are most necessary to prevent loss, injury and other negative consequences. Proper specification and planning is critical due to the time sensitive nature of events and sites such as these as resources and infrastructure that are found to be required but were not originally specified may be too far away physically or in terms of time and money to make them available.

Figure 2.5: the phases of the EMBOK model
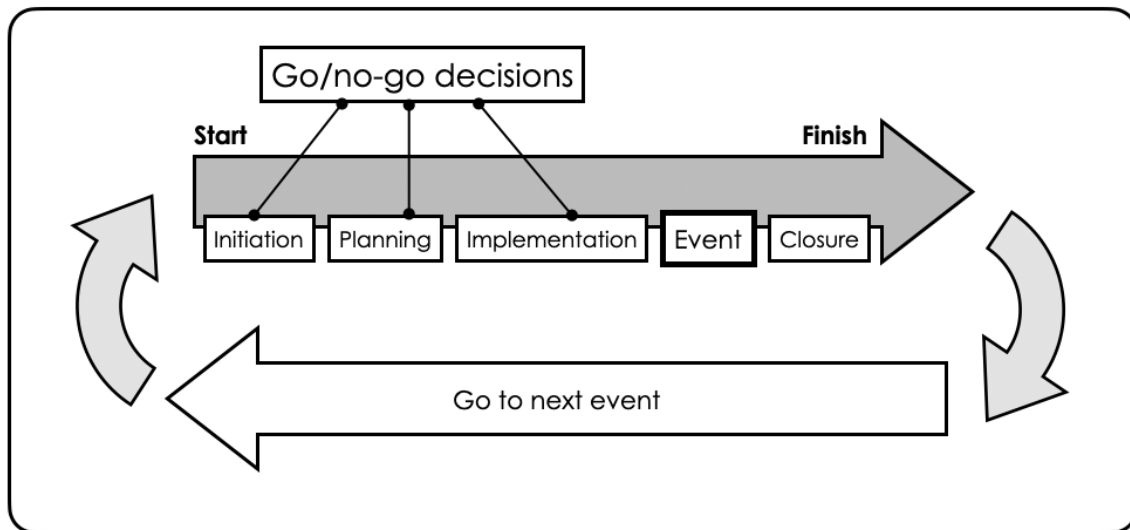
Source: (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021a)

The phases of the EMBOK model as depicted above show that in the phases preceding the actual event there are a number of go or no-go decisions that may have to be made. At any stage, if the risks involved are deemed to be too high, the project may have to be called off and a no-go decision should be made. Decisions should be considered against prescribed or previously defined criteria to be evaluated at particular pre-determined milestones. This demonstrates how risk management must be ongoing and continuous throughout the various phases of a project and cannot simply consist of a plan prepared in advance and forgotten about once approved.

A great example of an event that proceeded when a no-go decision should have been made was the still born Fyre Festival of 2017. This event was created and marketed by a fraudulent entrepreneur with no experience whatsoever in staging festivals and, despite an amazing marketing effort, featuring multiple celebrities and promising an amazing event, the festival itself was a complete operational failure, as it delivered (virtual)ly nothing of what the glossy advertising promised, resulting in thousands of disappointed fans left stranded without proper facilities, significant financial losses, reputational damage for a variety of stakeholders, and imprisonment for the mendacious event organiser (Stanwick & Stanwick, 2019). Every suggestion that what was being promised was, in fact, impossible to deliver especially within the time frame

available and numerous red flags were missed by stakeholders who might have known better with expert input (Childers, Boatwright & Gilbert, 2020).

Formal appointments and delegations of authority must be made to ensure that people are properly appointed and empowered to make decisions related to managing event risk. All personnel involved in the management of the event must be properly briefed as to who is responsible for what and proper documentation must be prepared, shared and referred to especially with regards to go/no-go decisions and show-stop procedures whereby pre-established criteria is used to make decisions about project cancellation to prevent so called *go-fever*, a term used in flight operations to describe the propensity to continue with a mission due to eagerness despite known risks that, if properly considered, would result in cancellation (Greig *et al.*, 2017).

As many events are staged at venues that are expensive to hire and in high demand there is often a very limited amount of time available with which to complete load in. This makes it difficult to measure contractor performance and ascertains the reasonable likelihood that they will deliver on time and invariably work carries on until very close to the opening of the event. This makes it even more important to manage those elements that can be handled in the build-up period and measure progress against specific milestones which should be designed and accepted during the planning phase of the project (Kuster *et al.*, 2015). By doing so, the event organiser can make objective decisions about the likelihood of project success for either the event as a whole or part thereof. For example, if an event organiser is having a contractor build temporary grandstand seating, they will likely be able to tell from the time taken to construct the seating already put in place by the contractor how much more seating the contractor can realistically complete in the time available. If the amount of seating is likely to be less than anticipated, the event organiser would have the opportunity to either sell fewer tickets to accommodate the shortfall or otherwise cancel and refund tickets already issued. Neither scenario is ideal for the organisers, but both situations would be preferable to having sold seats that don't actually exist and having to deal with a great many unhappy customers on the day of the event. By using milestones and pre-established means of measurement, the event organiser can minimise the risk of non-delivery by an important contractor.

During the actual event phase part of the toolkit used by event organisers to ensure crowd safety, especially at music festivals, should include show-stop procedures (Ancliffe, 2017). The Purple Guide which defines safety criteria for music and other entertainment events (Revathy, 2020), is a UK guide document prepared by the Events Industry Forum and endorsed by the UK's Health and Safety Executive, and it is designed to assist event organisers who have a duty of care to manage health and safety, particularly at large-scale music and similar events (The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and other Events, 2021) and the guide includes when and how show-stop procedures should be considered.

In November of 2021, a music festival titled Astroworld was staged in Houston, Texas. The Guardian newspaper reports that during the festival, crowd surges resulted in a crush of people, leaving ten concert attendees dead and scores injured, and in the aftermath of the tragedy there are a multitude of lawsuits, criminal investigations, and other inquiries taking place, which are aimed to determine the responsibility or liability of the event organisers, the main event music artist, the event management company, and others (Pilkington, Villarreal & Ambrose, 2021). The Guardian further reports that the main artist, Travis Scott, who is also listed as the co-event organiser as well as the supporting artist, Drake, are both facing serious reputational issues in addition to legal liability and that a key aspect to these various inquiries will be why the festival was not halted until around 40 minutes after reports of concert attendees experiencing trouble were first made (Pilkington, Villarreal & Ambrose, 2021).

The Purple Guide states specifically that the plan for stopping a show should be prepared by the event organiser, be appropriately formalised and distributed to all essential personnel and that it should form part of the event safety briefing held with the performing artist and that the person responsible for making the call to stop the show should be clearly identified in advance and properly empowered to make such an important decision (The Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and other Events, 2021). A key determinant in whether or not the event organiser and other stakeholders bear criminal and civil liability for the Astroworld incident may well lie in whether or not they applied the principles stated in the Purple Guide or some similar standard, and if not the reasoning for ignoring or failing to plan for proper show-stop procedures.

Using the iron triangle or triple constraint concept of project management consisting of time, cost and quality (Gomes & Romão, 2016), time is always constrained in events, and so any unforeseen requirements that become apparent in the load in or implementation phase that were not properly specified in the preceding phase, could be costly or result in certain aspects of the event, or even the event itself become unviable. Thus, the success or failure of the event itself, and certainly the risk management thereof is as dependent on the activities that take place in the phases preceding the actual event. In order for risk to be properly managed there must be a commitment to do so from the outset of the project (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021).

Conclusion

From reviewing the literature and the case studies it is clear that risk management for events needs to be about far more than achieving the minimum levels of compliance required to obtain a permit. Managing risk must feature from the very outset of the event and the risk profile associated with the event, based on the application of best practices and established standards should be part of the initial feasibility study. The process of managing risk must consider all stakeholders in their appropriate fashion, and take into account the various requirements of the project as it moves through the various event phases. There is evidence to suggest that the very activities involved in an event organiser demonstrating proper duty of care according to best practices not only protects the organiser from liability, but also likely promotes proactively risk management practices which reduces risk. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology selected in order to address the research questions of this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The Research Onion

In terms of the research onion, Figure 3.18 starting with the outside layer and working inwards, this research project will take the following approach:
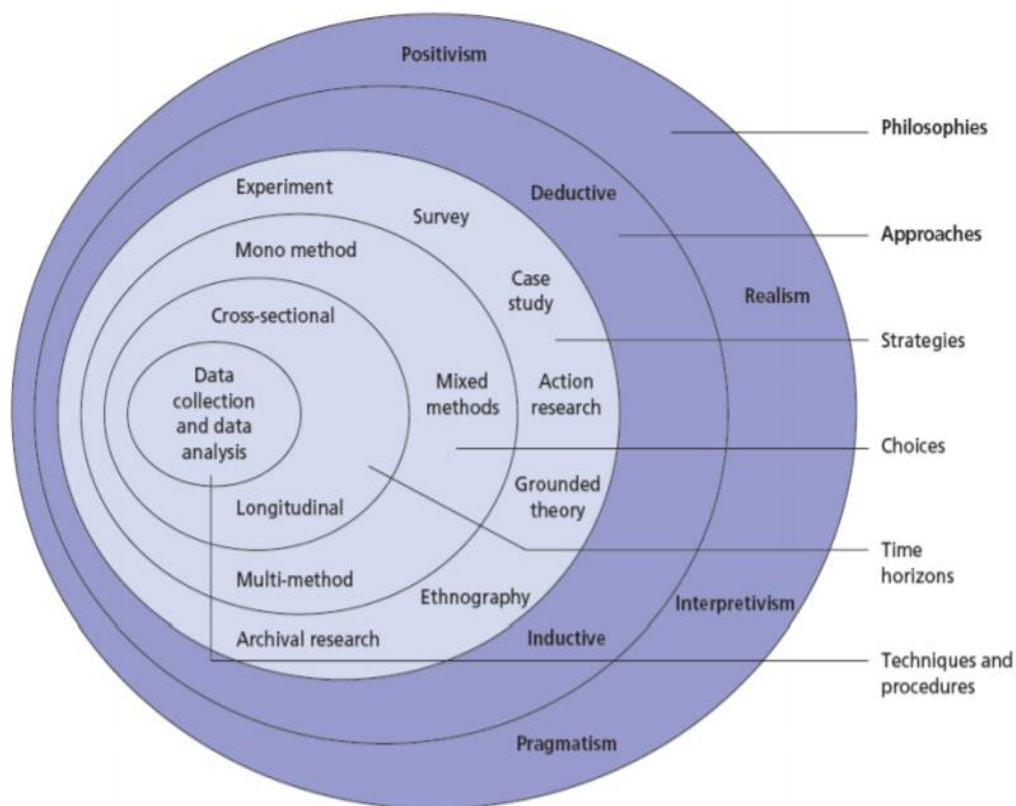
Figure 3.1: The research onion

Source: (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015).

- Philosophy: the philosophy to be followed is that of interpretivism, defined as: *Interpretivism advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors. This emphasises the difference between conducting research among people rather than objects such as trucks and computers.* (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015). In the context of

this study, we are examining the feelings, beliefs, and opinions of our interview subjects. The issue itself is known for example that the use of standardised approaches and best practice methods in the field of risk management as it relates to events is low. We are seeking to discover why this is and how it might be improved. By interviewing a variety of actors, all with unique perspectives and experiences as well as levels of education, training, and experience, we are able to seek the common threads to find out our *why*. Using an interpretivist approach necessitates having an empathetic stance (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015) and this is the case in a study which seeks to understand the reasons behind certain actions or lack thereof from the perspective of an event organiser.

- The approach of this survey will be inductive rather than deductive as, rather than testing a specific hypothesis, the purpose of this study is to understand reasoning and context rather than to prove an existing theory. As such, a small sample has been selected rather than a large sample as might well be the case with a deductive approach.

- The strategy to be employed is that of action research, to be derived from findings gathered through the participation of appropriate subjects around an issue with which they are directly acquainted and by which they are directly affected (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2015). By interviewing people in various positions who are directly involved with managing risk in the context of live events, the study shall seek to understand why the adoption of best practices is not widely prevalent.

- The choice, in the case of this study will be mono method, specifically in-depth exploratory interviews with selected subjects.

- The time horizon will be cross-sectional due to the constraints of the research project. The interviews will be conducted looking at the risk management practices of industry professionals at the point of time of the interview.

- The techniques and procedures used in terms of data collection and analysis will be semi-structured face to face and online ((virtual)) in that all interviewees will be asked the same set of questions but these questions are open ended

and designed to invite opinion that requires analysis rather than specific, easily quantifiable binary or set-scale answers.

3.2 Research Methodology

3.2.1 Quantitative Design

Quantitative research design is focussed on explaining more generalised affirmations of relationships between variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). Quantitative studies will look, in general terms, at amounts or units and seek to measure these in a numerical way, these items being measured may be physical items or psychological items (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021).

3.2.2 Qualitative Design

Qualitative research looks at qualities or characteristics that cannot be measured in the same numerical way as quantitative units or variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). Qualitative research is appropriate where reasons for a problem were found, the why, so that a solution can be created, which is the how. As stated by Leedy and Ormond (2016) qualitative research is beneficial in understanding the reasoning behind behaviours and on understanding complex situations. Indeed, as previously discussed, events are generally highly complex projects conducted under serious time constraints with a large variety of complex elements, therefore a research method that is most applicable to understanding the minutiae of the rationale by certain actions or lack thereof is needed in order to tackle the research problem of how best to increase the adoption of standardised risk management practices in live events.

Figure 3.3 Research Roadmap
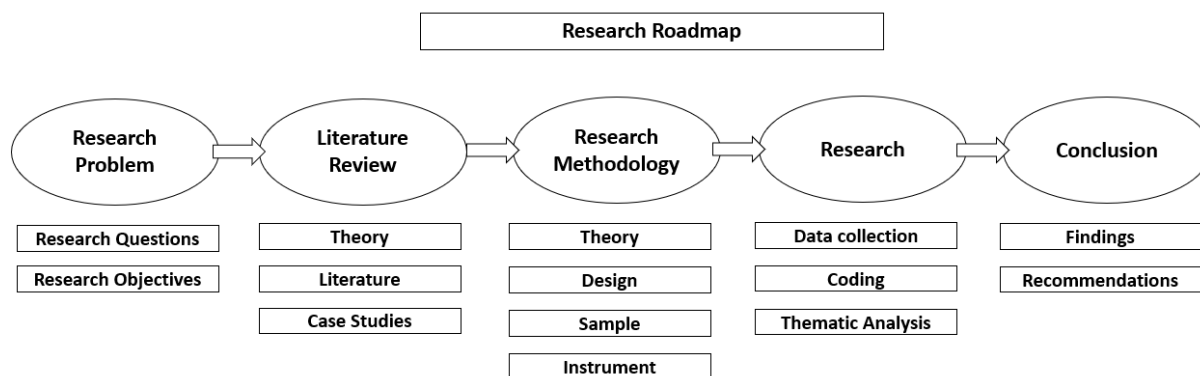
Source: Author's Own

3.3 Research Design

The research component of this study is qualitative only, the reason being is that the literature review and the theories and models examined demonstrate clearly that a need for standardised risk management practices in the context of live events exists, and yet a great many event organisers and related professionals, do not engage in them. Rather than trying to confirm an existing assumption, the purpose of the study will be to ascertain the reasons why risk management practices standardised are not followed or sought out. Commonalities will be sought and this will lead to the answer of how best to increase the use of risk management strategies in the field of live events.

The face to face and online ((virtual)) interviews will be generally amorphous and open ended so as to obtain opinions and perspectives from the research subjects (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). The interviews will be based on pre-determined questions common to every interviewee. Face to face semi-structured online (virtual) interviews will be conducted at a time convenient to the participants. In some cases these interviews may take place via an electronic platform rather than in person. All interviews will be recorded to ensure the veracity of any statements made and captured.

The reason for selecting to make use of qualitative data is to gauge the opinions and lived experience of participants with regards to prevailing standards and practices with regards to event risk management in South Africa. As a result of this more intensive method of study, the sample size must be smaller and the analysis will be drawn primarily from thoughts and opinions rather than numerical data (Leedy & Ormrod,

2016). As the industry in South Africa is relatively small, and increasingly ever smaller in the wake of COVID-19 rendering most major events impossibility, a smaller sample size is appropriate.

As a topic there are numerous case studies on what has gone wrong at live events, particularly where these have ended in tragedy, and there is information of what might have been done to prevent it. However, there is little information as to why standardise risk management practices are not followed when all the available evidence suggests that to adopt them would be beneficial. In conducting this qualitative research it is hoped that the reasoning behind the decision making can be better understood allowing us to build on the topic. Qualitative research is most beneficial in this regard, i.e. in where there is scant information available on a particular subject and where there is room to build (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).
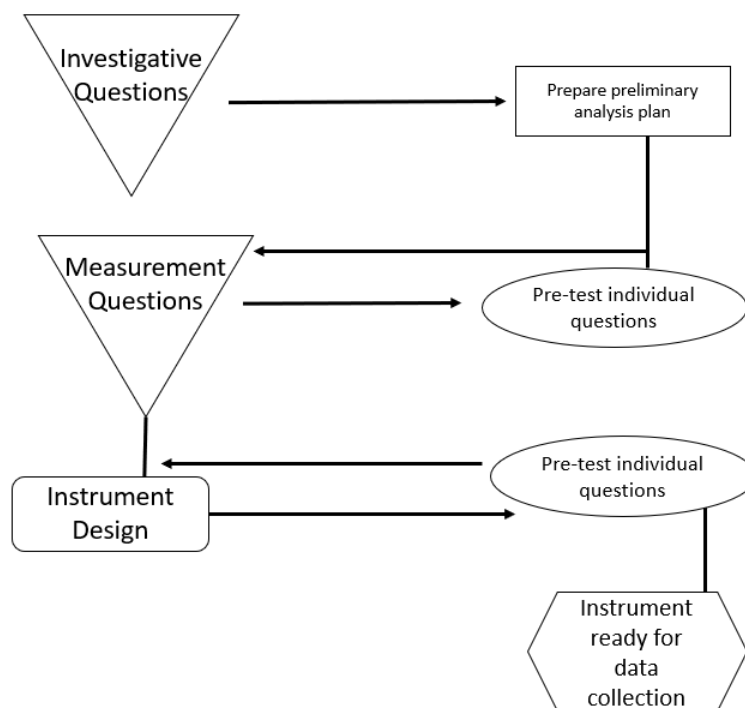
Figure 3.3: Flowchart for Instrument Design

Source: (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014)

According to Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2014) the process to arrive at a successful research instrument the following four questions must be addressed:

- Dilemma question: the dilemma that the researcher wants to solve (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

- Research question: the fact-based translation of the question the researcher must answer to contribute to the solution of the management question (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

- Investigative questions: specific questions the researcher must answer to contribute to the solution of the question (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

- Measurement questions: questions participants must answer if the researcher is to gather the required information and resolve the question (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

The interview structure will contain, as per (Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014), three types of measurement questions:

- Administrative questions: used to identify participants.
- Classification questions: demographic variables that allow for the grouping of participants answers.
- Target questions (structured and unstructured): to address the investigative questions of the study.

The target questions will be both structured and unstructured to allow for a meaningful comparison of similar or dissimilar answers as well as to elicit the opinions, thoughts, and rationales of the respondents. Please see annexure 1 for an example of the interview schedule. Where necessary, the researcher made use of *probes* as defined by (Creswell & Creswell, 2020) to elicit additional information such as *tell me more, can you provide more detail, could you explain your response more* (Creswell & Creswell, 2020).

3.3.1 Communication Approach

The communication approach selected for the study will be an email followed up, where necessary, with a telephone call. The small sample size of the study makes this entirely achievable.

Using asynchronous communication such as email, allows for respondents to review the information in their own time and where they are most receptive to the proposal. Thereafter, interviews will either be conducted in person or digitally, via Microsoft Teams or similar platforms depending on the preferences of the respondent.

There is no need to disguise either the objectives of the study nor the sponsors thereof as the objectives are plainly stated and the study has no sponsor. Please see Annexure 2 for an example of the approach email.

3.3.2 Population

The population for this study consists of individuals working in various capacities in the realm of event management in South Africa. It includes freelancers and employed persons with extensive experience in the area of event management and the management of the risks therein. Extensive experience is quantified as follows: to have acted in a role the portfolio of which includes complete project management, event operations management and/or safety and security management on 3 or more event projects each with a budget exceeding R2 million.

3.3.3 Sample

The target group for this study will be ten industry professionals who have significant experience in managing events and/or the risk aspects thereof in South Africa. They will be based in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town. The sample population will consist of ten event organisers and managers, event safety officers and event risk control consultants who will be conveniently sampled.

3.3.4 Limitations

The respondents may not answer with absolute facts and may be misleading about their knowledge of certain aspects of the matters being discussed for the purposes of seeming to be more knowledgeable than they may actually be. Similarly, the respondents may seek to impress and overstate their relative knowledge, awareness, and experience.

The respondents will be limited to those working in South Africa.

3.4 Data Analysis

An exploratory study was undertaken whereby a small sample was interviewed and the data recorded from each subject discussion was assembled and analysed with opinions and beliefs surmised.

3.4.1 Thematic Analysis

Clarke and Braun (2013) state that the purpose of thematic analysis is to identify and describe hidden meaning within the data:

There are six steps to thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013):

- One is to develop an understanding of the data by becoming engrossed with the material and continually connecting with the material through reading or listening to the interviews repeatedly. The researcher should record their preliminary impressions and it is necessary that the researcher develop a through comprehension of the content as a firm foundation for later synthesis of the data.
- Two is for the researcher to, now au fait with the material, produce initial codes from compelling features in the data that would form the foundation of the analysis. The codes produces will be larger in number than then the themes but will provide frame of reference.
- Three involves seeking sequences and patterns of implications thereby arranging the codes to identify themes that are more expansive and where the process of interpretation begins. The researcher must explore the intersection of codes, sub-themes, and themes.
- Four is the process of examining the themes, and arranging similar meaning groups into themes. A more intensive analysis of identified themes will proceed where the researchers will consider which themes to combine or remove, or discard. A thematic map is generated from this step.
- Five is to specify and label the various themes by coupling meanings to themes and creating a thematic map.
- Six is the development of the report on the outcomes of the research, which will provide solutions to the research, questions originally posed. The report must

be sufficiently compelling to convince those reviewing it that the analysis performed was thorough and applicable to the subject matter and serves its intended purpose. Analysis rather than mere description of the themes found within the research must be provided.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

- All participants will be assured of privacy, anonymity should it be requested and confidentiality and will be informed in advance of the intended purpose and background of the study and the relevance thereof.
- Personal data will be kept private and permission will be obtained in express written form before any personal information is shared.
- All relevant UNISA ethics policies will be strictly adhered to throughout the study.
- COVID protocols will be followed during all interviews that take place in person.

3.5.1 Informed Consent

An introductory cover letter, together with the survey, was sent to each potential participant within the selected organisation, and each participant was briefed and informed consent obtained prior to the interview process. A letter of introduction was sent, electronically, to each potential participant explaining the reason for the study and asking for his or her voluntary participation free of inducement. The letter stated that anonymity would be respected if desired. In addition, the process of the interview was outlined and the sample questions provided for pre-review.

3.1.1 Protection from harm

No participants were, in any way, harmed or otherwise subjected to difficulty, unpleasantness, or stress of any kind during their participation in the study. All respondents participated in a place, time and manner of their choosing and entirely of their own free will, in their personal capacities and with full confidentiality where requested.

3.1.2 Right to privacy

The respondents' right to privacy was observed. All questionnaires were confidential and anonymous. The instrument was structured in a manner that did not allow for the easy identification of respondents within the organisation. Personal details related to South African National Identification Numbers, physical addresses and all respondent's had the right to participate in interviews without having their identities recorded. None of the respondents' interview data will be shared with other participants or with employers, clients, or other related parties.

3.1.3 Trustworthiness

In a world where so called *hard* evidence is demanded more and more frequently for qualitative research to be considered as credible and worthy of recognition it is vital to address and ensure trustworthiness in any qualitative study (Birt *et al.*, 2016). Trustworthiness concerns the credence which can be had in the material and its means of evaluation to ensure the standard of the study (Connelly, 2016). In each research study, it is incumbent on the researcher to ensure that the information gathered and provided to the reader is worthy of their trust. To ensure that this is the case, it is necessary to define what constitutes trustworthiness. The evaluative criteria put forward by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is generally accepted by many qualitative researchers. These criteria are as follows: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

3.1.3 Credibility

In a research project, credibility is confirmed where the researcher has conviction in the methods used in the gathering of the research data and the analysis thereof (Connelly, 2016). In this particular project, qualitative data from direct sources was gathered from willing participants with no reason or incentive to be anything but truthful therefore, credibility is apparent. Similarly, the research instrument is composed in such a way as to allow for personal opinion and expression by respondents to collect authentic and credible data.

Personal opinion, bias, and pre-supposition were considered and actively discarded by the researcher with no effort made to influence the answers provided to the questions posed. To ensure that this occurred member checking/respondent validation will be employed. Respondent validation is where the participants or interview subjects are asked to consider the results of the research and confirm that the information represented in the study meets with their intended responses and it is proven to improve the credibility of qualitative data (Birt *et al.*, 2016).

3.1.4 Dependability

Dependability refers to how consistent the data remains throughout the time period of the study itself (Connelly, 2016). In this instance, all data collected from original sources will be stored electronically in a cloud based, password protected digital storage folder and the recordings of all interviews will be similarly saved. Thus, the transcripts used to prepare the research can be easily compared against the original material for a period of 5 years from the end of the research project thereby ensuring the dependability of the qualitative data.

3.1.5 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the objectiveness of the data, i.e. how neutral and consistent the data is (Connelly, 2016). As the data is being collected through interviews with willing participants with nothing to lose or gain from sharing their points of view, the data is confirmable as objective within the realm of the field of study.

3.1.6 Transferability

This refers to the value of the data generally, or to contexts other than those in the specific field of study (Connelly, 2016). While the study and thus the data collected is concerned specifically with the role of risk management in live events, it could apply equally to risk management in any project management setting.

No participant involved in the study has any incentive to provide anything other than his or her own opinion. The study is not sponsored and no party has any reason to display bias as it will not benefit them nor damage others.

Elimination of Bias

The trustworthiness of research outcomes is the foundation of all research of merit (Birt *et al.*, 2016). In a study such as this, where the researcher is both the collector and the analyst of the data, there is always the risk that personal beliefs, opinions, and interpretations will creep in and influence the respondents either during the data collection stage, the interview, or during the analysis. The respondent analysis that will be conducted will ensure that bias is excluded from the collection and analysis of the data. Respondent analysis is recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to assist in ensuring that rigor is enhanced maximally (Birt *et al.*, 2016).

As previously discussed, there is no incentive for any participant to curry favour with the researcher, nor do they stand to gain anything from participation. Additionally, in order for the study to be credible it is necessary that it is the views, opinions and beliefs of the respondents that is captured, and not that of the researcher, it is necessary that the researcher record and analyse the data provided by the respondents free from agenda or supposition (Birt *et al.*, 2016). To ensure that the researcher has succeeded in maintaining a neutral and non-dominant approach in the collection and analysis of the data from the interview subjects all participants will be afforded the opportunity to review the transcripts of their interviews and to see the analysis conducted and to confirm their agreement with its veracity. As an additional guard against bias, all interviews will be recorded and the recording too will be made available to respondents for review should they so wish. This will ensure that the information provided for analysis, and the analysis itself, is free from bias on behalf of the researcher.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the research design to be utilised and how the analysis would seek to answer the research questions posed in the initial chapter of the study. Attention was made to consider issues related to privacy, confidentiality, and protection from harm for the research participants. The following chapter will present the results of the research undertaken and the analysis thereof.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous Chapter 3 the research design, as well the research instrument used in the study was presented. In this Chapter 4, the demographical data of the participants is reported. Secondly, the findings of the thematic analysis conducted on the qualitative data collected with the research instrument are presented in the form of main and sub-themes.

4.2 Participant's participation rate

The target group for this study was ten industry professionals who have significant experience in managing events and/or the risk aspects thereof in South Africa. The 10 participants were interviewed that held positions of event managers, event safety officers, and event risk control consultants that are based in Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town.

4.3 Demographic information

Demographical information of the 10 individuals who participated in semi-structured interviews is presented in Table 4 .1 below:

Table 4.1: Demographical data of participants

Participant	Age	Race	Gender	Occupation	Years of Relevant Experience
1	45	White	Female	Event Manager	17
2	45	Indian	Male	Event Manager	15
3	38	African	Female	Event Manager	16
4	56	White	Male	Event Venue Manager	30
5	47	White	Male	Safety Officer	7
6	52	White	Male	Safety Officer	18
7	34	African	Female	Event Manager	10
8	50	White	Male	Event Organiser	22
9	54	White	Male	Safety Officer	15
10	51	White	Male	Event Organiser	20

The age range of the 7 male and 3 female participants is between 34 and 56 years of age. The majority are White with 2 African and 1 Indian participant that held Job titles Event Manager (4), Event Venue Manager (1), Event Organiser (2) Safety Officer (3). The years of the relevant experience of the participants are between 7 and 30 years.

In response to the question: *Can you please tell me about your familiarity with formalised event risk management, event safety guidelines, and codes of practice*? The following information was provided by the participants as presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Participant's familiarity with formalised event risk management, event safety guidelines, and codes of practice

Participant	Reported knowledge and skills level
1	I'm familiar with compliance requirements that you learn over time as guided by safety officers.
2	I'm familiar with the Events Act brought in in 2010 for the World Cup.
3	I'm pretty familiar with the various guidelines because of my exposure to international event companies and brands in event operations and marketing.
4	I'm familiar. I've got over 30 years' experience in events at the highest level and I bump heads with the regulations daily.
5	In South Africa I'm very familiar with requirements. I'm also experienced with the guidelines and requirements of international organisations like MICE and ACSO and other best practice guidelines.
6	I'm pretty familiar with the different guidelines used in South Africa and the international guidelines and the rules of different organisations.
7	Not really. I worry about the running the events and the safety officer are normally responsible for all the regulations and things.
8	I'm not an expert on all the regulations and guidelines and everything but I know what I need to know to get approvals.
9	I'm pretty familiar with the Events Act and the different regulations and laws around licensing.
10	To be honest I'm not that familiar. With some things like motor racing regulations I'm very familiar because that's my area but I don't know about all the other stuff. It's a specialist thing and I rely on the specialists.

Based on the information provided by the participants regarding there familiarity with formalised event risk management, event safety guidelines and codes of practice it is clear that the majority of the participants are familiar with the guidelines and requirements of events in the South African context. Based on this information it can be accepted that the all the participants were sufficiently knowledgeable to make valuable contribution towards achieving the objectives of this study.

4.3.1 Qualitative findings

To answer the research objectives the participants was ask a set of questions with the aim to identified that influence best practices in managing risk during event management and determine the impact of these factors. The qualitative data collected with the semi-structured interviews was subjected to a 6 step thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). The thematic analysis was used to determine patterns or relationships within the data with the aim to achieve the research objectives as defined in Chapter 1 of this study. The 6 step thematic analysis was applied as follows:

- *Step 1 Familiarise yourself with your data:* The researcher conducted interviews with the participants that was were recorded with permission from the participants and later transcribed into MSWord documents.

- *Step 2: Generating initial code:* The researcher used the QDA Miner Lite program to analyse the data line-by-line and word by word with the aim to recognise concepts and categories deriving from the data. The identified concepts and categories were flagged using the programs coding function.

- *Step 3: Searching for themes:* The programs coding function was used to move the codes around and where needed rename the codes to obtain a better fit.

- *Step 4: Reviewing themes:* The codes were reviewed by the researcher and sorted into main and sub-themes.

- *Step 5: Defining and naming themes*: The code data was downloaded into an MS Excel document and the themes and sub themes was further refine using the programs filter and sorting function.

- *Step 6: Producing a report:* The findings of the thematic analysis were presented in the next section.

To give the readers a better understanding of the findings of the thematic analysis a thematic mind map was created (see Figure 4.1 below) which will serve as the structure for the presentation of the findings.
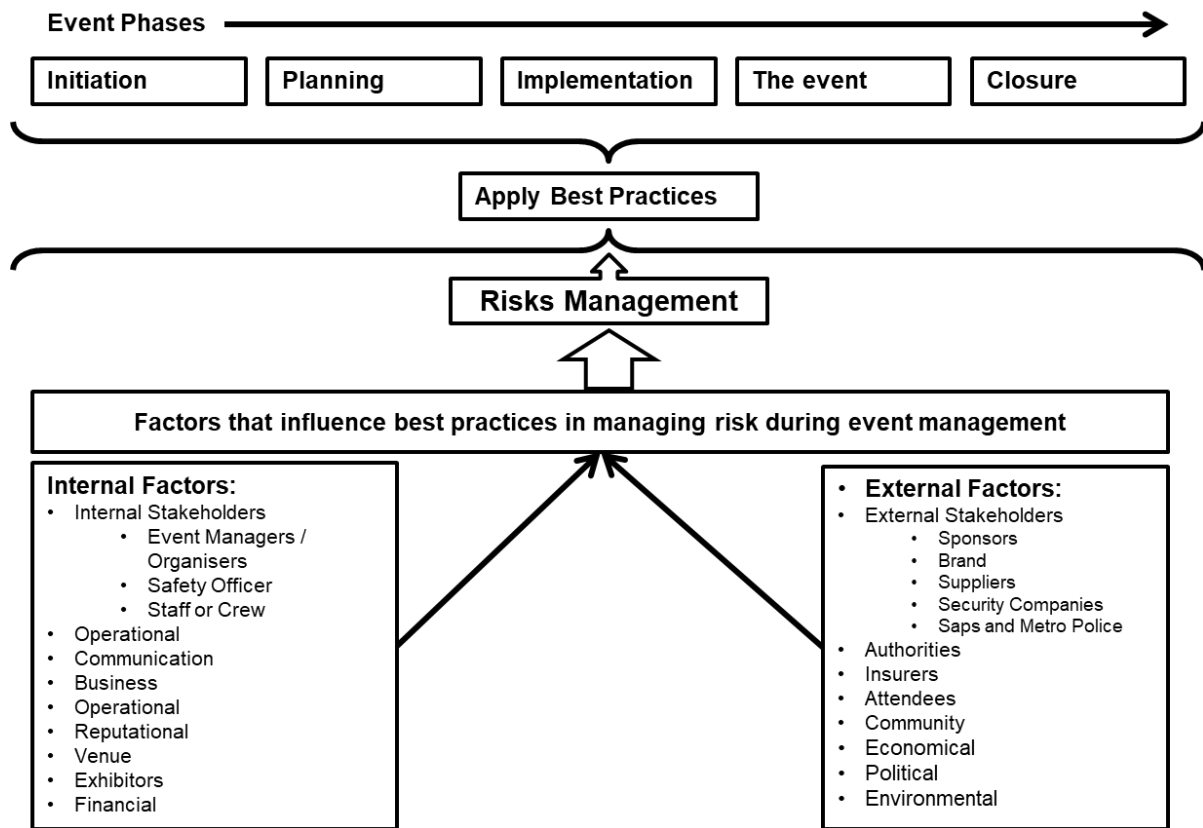
Figure 4.1: Findings of Thematic Analysis of the factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management

Main Theme 1: Understanding the concepts in event management

The research objectives of the study were to determine the factors and their impact that influence best practices in managing risk during event management. Table 4.2 below is a representation of development of the emerging main theme 1: Understanding the concepts in event management.

Table 4.3: A representation of the development of the emerging main theme 1: Understanding the concepts in event management

Sub-themes	Emerging Theme
1.1: Event Phases	
1.2: Risks Management	1: Understanding the concepts in event management
1.3: Best Practices	
1.4: Compliance	

1. Sub theme 1.1: Event Phases

For the purpose of this study events means any sporting, entertainment, or business event that is host at a venue, that is planned, have an accountable owner or event manager, has the approval of local authority in the form of licences or permits that stipulates certain conditions that needs to be complied with, has a clear program, where admission tickets and / or other commercial offering are available for sale with the view to generate a financial outcome. Staging events is a very risky business as supported by the following statement "*Promoters take pretty big financial risks and can easily lose out*" (Participant 9). This is supported in the literature where Silvers and O'Toole (2021b) and Zhao (2016) stated events are inherently risky especially those with large crowds and it often the risk factor itself that makes the event enticing.

According to Silvers and O'Toole (2021) the initiation phase is where the event is conceptualised, project scope established, resources are identified, evaluated, and selected and objectives are set. Setting up an event can be very challenging: *One of the big problems is how to pull a crowd to show value or make money and how to do that now is very complex* (Participant 5). This is followed by a planning phase that may include planning of activities, deployment of resources, risk planning and procurement of services. The phase is very important as highlighted with the following statement *Planning takes a lot more effort but it's necessary to do things properly* (Participant 5). The implementation followed where service providers are appointed and the coordination of all logistical, operational elements takes place and the event site is prepared. The execution of the event itself where factors like health and safety requirements for workers and visitors is conducted at the same time as the production. Health and safety requirements: *It is very important. The last thing you want at any event is for someone to be hurt or killed. It is also important to give people what they have paid for so that they will keep coming back and refer you to others* (Participant 8). The closure phase involves the shutting down of the event site and the physical dismantling and removal of all event related goods, equipment, and services.

2. Sub theme 1.2: Risks Management

According to the literature, risk is defined, as *risk is a condition in which there exists a quantifiable dispersion in the possible outcomes from any activity. It can be classified*

in a number of ways (CIMA Official Terminology, 2005:3). Silvers and O'Toole, (2021b) defines risk management for events as a defined and deliberate process, one that must be planned and consistently applied for it to be effective. Risk management must be seen as continuous and on-going and applied deliberately, consistently and effectively throughout the various phases of the event in a dynamic fashion (Silvers *et al.*, 2006). There is a relationship between the size of the event and the risk involved as supported with the following statement: *The bigger the event the more concern there is. I doubt wedding planners have the same concerns as people organising air shows when it comes to risk. So size matters here* (Participant 10).

Setting up events is a very risky business as there are internal or external factors that may have a risk impact on each event phase: *The risks are big, especially depending on the nature of the even"* (Participant 9). Risk is a given phenomenon as there is nothing that there is not some risk attached to it. *In the end you have to take risks in events but need to use good judgement* (Participant 6). The risk event managers facing are huge especially in the current climate it is hard to properly or adequately manage the financial risks associated with putting on an event as supported by the following statements: *You don't know what will be approved or if anyone will even buy tickets or come so you're taking a big risk* (Participant 6) and *Financial risk is huge especially with the current market conditions. The fear of not getting paid for work done at events or losing money by staging an event that doesn't attract a crowd or costs more than expected in worse than ever. Money upfront is now demanded due to uncertainty and this isn't always possible* (Participant 1).

To manage these risks, event managers need to adopt a risk management strategy defined as *a process of understanding and managing the risks that the entity is inevitably subject to in attempting to achieve its corporate objectives. For management purposes, risks are usually divided into categories such as operational, financial, legal compliance, information and personnel* (CIMA Official Terminology, 2005:3). According to Silvers and O'Toole, (2021b) for risk management to be truly effective it needs to form part of every phase of the event.

According to the participants the most important risk to consider is the safety of people and security at events. *As long as the people are on-site you have to make sure they're ok even if they're being a danger to themselves* (Participant 9). Security is very

important as it can make or break the event: *Oppikoppi was killed because the security was so poor and everyone got robbed no one wanted to go back. If your exhibitors are getting all their stock stolen overnight they're not coming back to you next year* (Participant 9).

3. Sub theme 1.3: Best Practices

To effectively manage risk a technique or methodology referred to as best practices is adopted by event management that resulted in a greater risk management capacity and better decision-making ability. The World Health Organisation (2008:2) defined a Best Practice *as a technique or methodology that, through experience and research, has proven reliable to lead to a desired result.* Whilst each event is unique unto itself, it cannot be ignored that following standards wherever possible and deviating from these standards for good, well thought out reasons rather than efficacy relating to time and money will always be a better approach.

Following widely accepted standards and practices for events allows the event organiser to not only be compliant with local authorities such as permit and licensing bodies, but to also proactively manage risk (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). Event organisers must also consider the possibility of an incident occurring for which they may face legal action, civil and criminal, and being able to demonstrate that one took all reasonable and necessary precautions to avoid such an incident will be of value to the organiser. Many of the participants have experience in best practice methodology as supported with the following statement: *I'm experienced with the guidelines and requirements of international organisations like MICE and ACSO and other best practice guidelines* (Participant 5).

Risk planning allows the event organiser to pre-suppose and prepare for certain scenarios which may have, in some guise or with some degree of similarity, happened in the past and apply those measures which are most suitable to counter the negative outcomes of the occurrence. The objective of risk planning is to ensure that decisions affecting risk are made based on rational suppositions using commonly accepted methodologies and incorporating both lessons learned from previous projects and international best practices (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b). Some of the participant pointed out that in some instances risk management is a challenges as supported with the

following statement: *For example promoters of bigger concerts will be much stricter and stringent about safety procedures but smaller companies have less effective personnel and planning and are really only worried about not upsetting the venue and meeting those requirements* (Participant 2).

The best way for an event organiser to develop appropriate plans, and to be able to demonstrate that this has been done according to the most reasonable and appropriate standard, is through the application of a well-recognised and widely accepted best practice (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021).

4. Sub theme 1.4: Compliance

Compliance risk can be defined as: the risk that the company fails to meet obligations to comply with applicable laws and regulations and is exposed to fines or other legal penalties as a result (Naidoo, 2016). The relationship between achieving compliance and managing risk in the context of events is very important. If there is compliance, there is some level of protection or else there is nothing as highlighted with the following statement: *Like your insurer is going to have requirements for you and if you meet them then you can fight them if you need a pay-out but if you don't meet the requirements you're getting nothing* (Participant 10).

One of the participant's points out that realistically, there is some relationship that should be a strong relationship but with his experience, it is not really the case. For government legislation, the relationship between compliance and risk management is weak but stronger if there are commercial or revenue linked requirements. These statements are supported with the following contribution: *Compliance, like compliance with municipal departments and so on is just about getting permission or licenses and it should be that the stuff you submit to get approvals means that you have assessed and considered risk but it's really just box ticking. If you wanted you could write almost anything and it's never really considered or checked* (Participant 6). This is supported in the literature as Silvers *et al.* (2006) stated that risk management is often relegated to a simple compliance or box ticking exercise with little regard for proactive measures that could reduce risk in real terms and add value.

For commercial or revenue linked requirements the relationship is stronger: *Where I see compliance being effective is where organisers are worried about the terms and conditions of their insurance or a specific set of rules or regulations like from a sporting federation* (Participant 6). However, it seems that compliance and risk management is not a concern for many managers: *The majority of event managers are only interested in getting approvals and that is where any sort of formal or organised risk management stops beyond the basics of common sense* (Participant 6).

Summary of main theme 1

Events are inherently risky and have to be managed. Although there are requirements from licensing authorities and similar bodies to present risk management documents, submissions and plans, these are often merely perfunctory exercises and seldom checked for veracity or accuracy. As such whilst there should be a link between compliance and risk management, it is, in real terms rather tenuous. Many organisers or service providers will indeed follow best practices if they are required to by some other stakeholder such as an insurer or an endorsing federation but may otherwise not make the effort. Events take place over specific phases and the nature of the risk, and thus the approach that needs to be taken to manage it, changes over these phases.

Main Theme 2: Internal factors that influence best practices in managing risk

The research objectives of the study were to determine the factors and their impact that influence best practices in managing risk during event management. Table 4.2 below is a representation of development of the emerging main theme 2: Internal factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management.

Table 4.4: A representation of the development of the emerging main theme 2: Internal factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management

Sub-themes	Emerging Theme
2.1: Internal Stakeholders	2: Internal factors that influence best practices in managing risk
2.2: Operational Factors	
2.3: Communication Factors	
2.4: Business Factors	

2.5: Reputational Factors	
2.6: Venue Factors	
2.7: Exhibitors Factors	
2.8: Financial Factors	

5. Sub theme 2.1: Internal Stakeholders

According to Silvers and O'Toole, (2021b) *a stakeholder is an individual or organisation that is financially, politically, emotionally, contractually, or personally invested in an event*. Some stakeholders are actively involved in the project whilst others are able to impose control of influence over it. Some stakeholders have no direct interest in an event but are affected by it that may lead to conflict: *If I have permission to do it but we consistently make too much noise and it affects our neighbours we may eventually have to deal with so much push back that leads to the cessation of certain events* (Participant 4). The following internal stakeholders were identified by the participants:

Event managers or event organisers: In South Africa the Events Act of 2010 specifically states that an event organiser must be at least 21 years old and, in the case of events classified by the SAPS as medium to high risk, the person should be suitably capable and experienced and have the necessary resources to adequately manage the event. Event organisers are responsible for the planning, organisation and smooth running of the entire event. As one participant points out, *it is a risky business. If you cannot handle risk, you cannot handle events* (Participant 8). Some people are however prepared to take on a risk if there are some rewards attached to it: *For organisers and promoters I think they are much more likely to take on risk if there is a reward component for them* (Participant 9).

For an event manager the biggest one is losing money of many risks. *Event managers are concerned with all manner of risk because everything ultimately comes back on them* (Participant 1). For some event manager's risk seems not to be a problem as pointed out with the following statement: *The majority of event managers are only interested in getting approvals and that is where any sort of formal or organised risk management stops beyond the basics of common sense* (Participant 6). It was found

there are some events managers that just do it for some financial gain: *There are a lot of organisers that are flying by the seat of your pants guys who are only concerned with a viable commercial event and ignore or don't even consider risk* (Participant 4).

Safety Officer: In South Africa the Events Act of 2010 specifically states that an event organiser must appoint a safety officer who is *suitably qualified* and who will represent the organiser at Event Safety, Security and Planning Committee (ESSPC) meetings where the safety plans for the event are presented, evaluated and approved or rejected. The safety officer is part of the event operations team and is generally entrusted with the implementation of risk management at events. It seems in some cases the position has a safety as well as a risk responsibility. The ultimate authority for managing risk at events often sits with the event organiser who may well rely on the safety officer for input and advice: *The event management company or organisers with the guidance of the safety officer for decisions that affect safety* (Participant 1). If the risks are too high the event can be cancelled as highlighted with the following statement: *As a safety manager I've seen instances of events that were cancelled because the organisers couldn't manage all the risks involved or weren't prepared to accept them* (Participant 5).

The safety officer must have the ability to assess a risk and can take corrective action as supported by the following statements: *Your experience is really important and guidelines can't be applied too rigidly to each and every situation* (Participant 10) and *There are often times where you have to think on your feet and improvise and mitigate the risks as they are presented without endangering the event* (Participant 3).

Staff or crew: Human resource in event management is very important, as without its contribution the event will not be possible. According to Silvers and O'Toole (2021) typical event risk factors that can be linked to human resources are insufficient staffing, untrained and inexperienced personnel, and incorrect deployment of personnel. They should however be closely managed as they can display in some situations very risky behaviours. *Health and safety requirements often put a great onus on event organisers but the labour force and suppliers in the environment simply don't have willingness or capacity to comply with requirements or regulations* (Participant 1). One of the participants mentioned an event where one of the riggers did not comply too safety standards that resulted in his demise: *At the Global Citizen concert a rigger lost his life*

because he fell from the stage when he wasn't wearing rigging even though he should have been (Participant 2).

Duty of care: Stakeholders are very important and must keep safe at all times as highlighted by the following statement: *From a liability point of view it's really important to show that you've considered everyone and taken the proper steps to make sure that they're all treated as they should be and are looked after* (Participant 6). Duty of care, a legal principle, is an important consideration for event organisers in the context of risk that means the following: *Taking actions that will prevent any foreseeable hazard of injury to the people who are directly involved, or affected by the event: staff, volunteers, performers, audience, host community et al.* (Wynn-Moylan, 2017).

The most important stakeholder: Although every stakeholder is important, his or her level of treatment or importance is not equal. *Even then if you buy a more expensive ticket you're going to get different treatment to someone with a cheaper ticket* (Participant 6). There is however, one stakeholder that is very important, and that is, *the end user or event attendee is the most important* (Participant 3). Ultimately, those people who have made a choice to attend the event voluntarily are going to be considered the first priority and will be assumed to expect fewer risks than someone, say, working at the event who will have the risk profile associated with their job as a minimum level of consideration.

6. Sub theme 2.2: Operational Factors

Naidoo, (2016) define operational risk as: *exposure to losses due to inadequate processes and systems and to unexpected external events.* Operational risk is perhaps the greatest area of risk for live events as it can have the most serious consequences like participant stated *Why does the sh*t always land on event operations?* (Participant 3) The loss of a life during an event is of great concern and it generates very negative social media coverage that is very bad for the image of the event. *Loss of life must be avoided. Also at the Global Citizen concert where a rigger lost his life because he fell from the stage when he wasn't wearing rigging even though he should have been.* (Participant 3) Deaths and serious injuries at events, especially

at events such as music festivals, are not uncommon (Turris & Lund, 2017) and thus operational planning must ensure every reasonable precaution is taken to minimise this to the lowest possible level of risk. Operational risk management is a major factor of profitability, if risks are not properly anticipated and planned for then unplanned for, and thereby unbudgeted for, contingency measures may need to be adopted quickly due to the time constrained nature of events which could have major implications for the profit and loss of the venture.

7. *Sub theme 2.3: Communication Factors*

For an event to be successful effective communication between all stakeholders is of outmost importance. *It is really important to have good communication and understanding between all parties and to explain to stakeholders the expected outcomes so that everyone understands and trusts one another.* (Participant 4) This is supported by Silvers *et al.* (2006) that stated that event organisers must plan their communications in advance and build into marketing messaging information that will affect the general public. Certain interest groups may require more direct communication than others may and organisers must carefully plan and select the means of communication most appropriate to each stakeholder group. For example, if a road is being closed to traffic in order to accommodate an event, those residents of the road will require a different and more direct level of communication than will a regular citizen who is not directly affected but who may experience minor traffic delays.

8. *Sub theme 2.4: Business Factors*

Business risk can be defined as: *changes in demand and supply, abnormal fluctuations in the company's revenue or from increased competition. Business risk can be further divided into sales risk and operating risk* (Naidoo, 2016). A great example is the COVID-19 that has prevented most major events from happening in South Africa. *No one really knows what's allowed and no one wants to take responsibility for approving things so it's made the environment much tougher* (Participant 6). Based on the information provided by the participants it seems that some of them were prepared for some future business risk as supported by the statement: *It has been really hard on everyone. Some of us are lucky and have other businesses or sources of income but it hit a lot of people very hard*. (Participant 9)

9. Sub theme 2.5: Reputational Factors

Reputational risk can be defined as: *when an unanticipated event threatens to damage a company's reputation and cause it to lose public goodwill* (Naidoo, 2016). This element of risk is of particular concern to sponsors and other commercial partners of an event. Whilst for the organiser the event is ultimately a business venture from which they seek to generate revenue and, ideally, profit, sponsors and commercial partners participate the event almost exclusively as a marketing exercise. *If you put on a show and it's a disaster then people aren't going to come back* (Participant 8). Thus, any reputational risk threatens to negate and even reverse any of the intended gains.

10. Sub theme 2.6: Venue Factors

The venue can be defined as a place where something happens for example a sporting or concert event. If the event is taking place within an established, permanent venue then it is reasonably practicable for the organiser to ensure that there are facilities suitable and appropriate for a construction site such as sufficient electrical installations. However, for an event that takes place in a green field site without existing infrastructure, it is often financially impossible to set up a site that may only be in operation for a few days to the standard that would be expected for a construction site or to a purpose-built permanent facility such as a stadium. The definition of what can be reasonably expected from the event organisers is thus subjective and approval or the granting of a licence may hinge on the provision of a quantity of equipment or material that is in excess of what the event organiser can reasonably provide based on their understanding of what is reasonably practicable.

Venues pose a major risk and it is critical in instances such as this to prioritise based on risk and to select those resources that are most necessary to prevent loss, injury and other negative consequences as highlighted in the following statement: *Even if I have permission to do it but we consistently make too much noise and it affects our neighbours we may eventually have to deal with so much push back that leads to the termination of certain events*. (Participant 4) Event venues have certain specific obligations in terms of South African legislation, specifically the Events Act of 2010 (SASSREA, 2010) and it is thus incumbent upon them to ensure that event organisers are sufficiently prepared to manage risk at events hosted at their venues. With the

COVID-19 pandemic the choice of a venue had become a major challenge as the capacity for an event is capped at 2000 people for a venue regardless of the size of the venue. To get sign-off becomes a challenge as highlighted in the following statement: *A stadium could have to space to hold multiple 2,000 person events in different areas but no one can say if this will be permitted so you can't plan anything or take a risk in case it can't come off. Effectively, no one can sign anything off or is prepared to in case the requirements change*. (Participant 5)

11. Sub theme 2.7: Exhibitors Factors

Staging conferences, trade shows, or exhibitions have less risk link to it than other for example entertainment event *Exhibitors will want things to go well so they can make sales, etc. but aren't really going to be concerned with all the rest of it*. (Participant 8) The risk associated with exhibitions it's often that those involved don't understand health and safety basics or requirements and aren't properly briefed: *Like I've had exhibitors selling dangerous weapons on an exhibition stand, knives and things, that aren't allowed in the venue. So you can't bring one in but you can buy one inside which makes no sense and compromises event safety for everyone*. (Participant 3) Exhibitors or vendors can be critical stakeholders in that the revenue generated from the purchase of exhibition space is vital for profitability and the event organisers has a responsibility to them but also to the event attendee to ensure that the exhibitors act appropriately and safely on-site.

12. Sub theme 2.8: Financial Factors

Currency risk can be defined as: *the risk of sudden appreciation or depreciation in the currency which affects the profitability of a company's business* (Naidoo, 2016). In the case of a concert, artists are normally paid in US dollars and are paid long in advance to secure their commitment to perform. *Especially in the current climate, it's hard to properly or adequately manage the financial risks associated with putting on a show*. (Participant 6) Any fluctuation could have serious consequences for the profit and loss of the event: *Promoters take pretty big financial risks and can easily lose out.* (Participant 9) For many events, the bulk of revenue is earned from ticket sales made close to the date of the event thus there is a significant risk of negative financial

performance from the start: *Financial risks like having to pay out event costs without a guarantee of return is a big concern.* (Participant 3)

Summary of main theme 2

The event organiser must do everything within its power to minimise those risks over which it has control, evaluate internal risk, and ensure the best interests of all parties are considered. By following best practices, the event organiser can minimise the potential effects of negative incidents that affect reputation, safety, or profitability. The event organiser has a responsibility to look after the interests and the safety of all stakeholders, but must ultimately prioritise event attendees. Managing expectations through communication and the clarification of requirements is essential in managing the financial risks associated with staging events. Reputation protection and enhancement is a critical aspect of many stakeholders' reasons for involvement in an event, and failure to properly manage risk may well result in reputational damage that will have negative effects on various stakeholders and on the long-term business viability of the event itself and / or the event organiser or manager.

Main Theme 2: External factors that influence best practices in managing risk

The research objectives of the study were to determine the factors and their impact that influence best practices in managing risk during event management. Table 4.3 below is a representation of development of the emerging main theme 3: External factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management.

Table 4.5: A representation of the development of the emerging main theme 3: External factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management

Sub-themes	Emerging Theme
3.1: External Stakeholders	3: External factors that influence best practices in managing risk
3.2: Authorities Factors	
3.3: Insurers Factors	

3.4: Attendees Factors	
3.5: Community Factors	
3.6: Economical Factors	
3.7: Political Factors	
3.8: Environmental Factors	

13. Sub theme 3.1: External Stakeholders

Silvers and O'Toole, (2021b) defined a stakeholder *as an individual or organisation that is financially, politically, emotionally, contractually, or personally invested in an event*. There are many external stakeholders involved in events that have different levels of involvement, participation, interests, and requirements. The treatment of stakeholders is very important at every event but it will differs as highlighted with the following statement: *You've got to be reasonable and someone who is spending millions with me on a massive stand is not going to be treated the same as someone who pays fifty bucks to walk in the door*. (Participant 1) One participant highlighted the following important point: *All parties need to be looked after in their area and everyone must be treated fairly but the end user or event attendee is the most important*. (Participant 3) The rationale for this statement is that the paying event attendees are primarily responsible that the financial objectives are met.

Sponsors: This element of risk is of particular concern to sponsors and other commercial partners of an event. Whilst for the organiser the event is ultimately a business venture from which they seek to generate revenue, and ideally, profit, sponsors and commercial partners participate the event almost exclusively as a marketing exercise. *Sponsors must get their investment translated into brand value*. (Participant 1) Thus, any reputational risk threatens to negate and even reverse any of the intended gains. Reputational risk can be defined as: *when an unanticipated event threatens to damage a company's reputation and cause it to lose public goodwill* (Naidoo, 2016). Reputational risk is very important for sponsors as supported by the following statement: *Sponsors are most concerned with reputational risk*. (Participant 1)

Brand: Of particular interest to certain key stakeholders, namely commercial partners and sponsors is the idea of image risk (Johnston, 2015) as the purpose of sponsoring and partnering with events at all is generally to promote, rather than detract, from a particular brand. Negative incidents at events have shown to have negative implications for a variety of stakeholders (Resodihardjo, 2020). The importance of considering band risk is highlighted with the following statement: *We're part of a big brand, the Sharks brand, and everything we do as Sharks Events has to contribute to protecting that brand image. Brand reputation is critical to us and you can extrapolate this across the whole industry.* (Participant 4)

Suppliers: these are companies and individuals which supply specific services or goods to an event for example food and drinks, technical support, toilet facilities and security services to name a few. In the case of suppliers the risk can range from supply interruptions, safety, and poor quality of services or goods delivered. *A lack of delivery by suppliers is a real concern.* (Participant 3) S*ome suppliers just aren't properly equipped and organised.* (Participant 4) This risk can have a devastating effect on the reputation of the event. The risk can be reduced by doing reputation checks on the supplier, determine financial stability and effective contract management. The challenge is the number of available suppliers as highlighted with the following statement: *There's also a limited amount of good suppliers out there and that can make or break things.* (Participant 9)

Security companies: The primary purpose of security personnel is to protect the events venue, the personnel, and attendees against terrorism, theft and other illegal activities. If a security company is not up to the job as supported by the statement o*ften security companies aren't up to the job*. (Participant 3) This will have a reputational risk for the event: *Oppikoppi was killed because the security was so poor and everyone got robbed no one wanted to go back.* (Participant 9) To reduce the risk security companies should be well screened and when contracted properly briefed: The ultimate authority for managing risk at events sits with the event organiser because the event is ultimately their brainchild and vision and they have the big picture of everything: *For example safety companies only have one perspective and don't always understand other considerations that the organiser will make. So the organiser has to make the ultimate calls based on determined acceptable risk.* (Participant 5)

SAPS and Metro Police: Larger scale events like the Africa Investment Forum will attract heads of state and then the generals and so on from the SAPS are involved and make decisions but with smaller events, there is a lot less attention. For big events there are generally a joint operational command (JOC) onsite then the SAPS is responsible for making the ultimate calls so everyone knows what they are responsible for. *I've never had an experience where the SAPS or Metro Police has been involved without being invited.* (Participant 4)

14. Sub theme 3.2: Authorities Factors

Wynn-Moylan (2017) states that; hazard and risk management planning is increasingly being demanded by event stakeholders such as the government and their agencies, insurance companies, sponsors, law enforcement agencies and the courts. Failure to do so is considered a breach of duty of care. *With the local authorities it's all paperwork with no real consideration of what actually happens so the liability for anything that goes wrong is always on the event organiser.* (Participant 3)

Legislation compliance requirements: In South Africa to hold an event, permission needs to be obtained from licencing authorities in the form of licences or permits that stipulating certain compliance conditions. *There is much stricter enforcement with licences like for fireworks and liquor because there have been bad practices so there's a greater level of scrutiny for bigger events.* (Participant 2) As pointed out by the participants. *The authorities are concerned from a compliance point of view.* (Participant 1) If the permit holder fails to comply with the stipulations of the permit or licence an offence is committed that hold some financial or even an imprisonment penalty. According to Swart and Maralack (2020), obtaining the necessary licences and permits to operate an event does not necessarily make an organiser actively and effectively involved in proactive risk management. This is supported by the following statement: *The majority of event managers are only interested in getting approvals and that's where any sort of formal or organised risk management stops beyond the basics of common sense.* (Participant 6)

The permit office staff: Another challenge for event managers is the quality of the people responsible for issuing licencing or permits that poses a risk to event managers. Every municipality had its own unique by-laws that needed be complied

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with. In many cases the ability to obtain a licencing or permit depends on who is serving the requestor as highlighted with the following statement: *I think it's annoying most of the time. Sometimes you have to do this and other times that depending on who you're dealing with. You just need to get a list and pass it onto your suppliers but it's always changing.* (Participant 7) The requirements differ greatly from region to region and there is a lot of subjective power given to individuals who may have no experience whatsoever with events management.

The regulations self: It was found that the regulations in place do not really speak to the events industry. The regulations are unspecific and it is hard to predict what will gain approval. A lot of experience comes from court cases, litigation, and learning what mistakes to avoid making. *For example, there is little consideration for the standards applicable to temporary structures and the regulations or requirements imposed often change or different definitions or interpretations are used. Then experts have to be used to interpret these and sign things off.* (Participant 5) This lack of clarity can make it difficult for event organisers to adequately plan and forecast requirements and costs thereby increasing the business risk of the endeavour as unforeseen requirements demanded by authorities imposing uncertain and inconsistent standards can eat into profitability and increase the break-even point beyond a reasonable threshold.

15. Sub theme 3.3: Insurers Factors

To protect an investment in a specific event, event owners take out event insurance with the aim to recover cost for example if there is damage to the venue or found liable for an injury of an attendee. This is a very good risk management motivation for event owners: *Where I see compliance being effective is where organisers are worried about the terms and conditions of their insurance or a specific set of rules or regulations like from a sporting federation.* (Participant 6)

To be held liable for example for an injury of an attendee is a risk that needs to be considered. For this reason, proper risk management and compliance to stipulated rules and regulations are of utmost importance. *From a liability point of view it's really important to show that you've considered everyone and taken the proper steps to make sure that they're all treated as they should be and are looked after.* (Participant 6) There is some protection if you follow the exact letter of the law you can reduce

liability but in reality: *There's no protection from liability – bottom line. Risk exists compliant or not*".(Participant 4) According to the participants the person who are liable are: *It's the person running the JOC, but I think it's also probably the venue and always the owner of the event or the person appointed to manage it.* (Participant 10) Ultimately, in the event of a serious incident that involves an insurance claim, the event organiser will be best protected by being able to demonstrate that they actively planned for risk according to the highest possible standard and took every reasonable precaution as demanded by their insurers.

16. Sub theme 3.4: Attendees Factors

Attendees come to an event to enjoy a specific experience: *Visitors want memories to take with them and will refer others.* (Participant 3) They expect value for their money: *It's important to give people what they've paid for so that they'll keep coming back and refer you to others.* (Participant 8) Crowds of people behave differently even in very similar circumstances and can be unpredictable (O'Toole *et al.*, 2019). As a result, specific attention needs to be paid to the typical event risk factors, but they should be considered singularly considering the unique mix of circumstances, stakeholders and variables that make up each event (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). *I once had to call on a crowd to load into Moses Madhiba Stadium before the gates were to open and the venue was ready because the weather was so foul that to leave the visitors outside would have been worse.* (Participant 5) The issues related to managing large numbers of people for events are not new and yet preventable incidents with very serious consequences still occur at events regularly and more research and knowledge sharing of why these incidents occur and how they can be prevented must be done (Mair & Weber, 2019).

17. Sub theme 3.5: Community Factors

Events are held within or near communities that are a major source of attendees. Community leaders are stakeholders and they should be involved in the event planning (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021b). If the community is however not respected it can pose a major risk for the event as highlighted with the following statement: *Even if I have permission to do it but we consistently make too much noise and it affects our neighbours we may eventually have to deal with so much push back that leads to the*

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cessation of certain events. Traffic consideration is another. It's not enough to just think about yourself but everyone involved must be considered. (Participant 4)

18. Sub theme 3.6: Economical Factors

Economic factors that can pose a risk for the event are the current state of the economy, employment levels, petrol price, interest rates, and the spending ability of the community. From 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic destroyed most of the events in South Africa as supported by the following statement: *It's been a disaster. Obviously, it destroyed most events. No one really knows what's allowed and no one wants to take responsibility for approving things so it's made the environment much tougher*. (Participant 9) It killed the event industry and currently it's still dead. The events industry was effectively halted, certainly in the case of large-scale events and it is yet to recover as the Disaster Management Act remains in place and gatherings of any large numbers of people are prohibited. The problem now is that nobody is sure what one is actually allowed to do and whether or not the rules will change. It s easier with smaller events like weddings and private functions but for big events, it poses a major challenge: *Concerts and road shows and things are still not happening because it's too risky to plan something that might not happen at all*. (Participant 7)

19. Sub theme 3.7: Political Factors

A political risk refers to the type of risks event owners face due to various political decisions that have an impact on the profitability of the event. A good example is the restrictions impose by government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: *The COVID-19 regulations change all the time and have knock on effects like space required and maximum capacities*. (Participant 1) The man in the street is effected by this regulations but: *There's a divide in the industry where some gatherings happen, like for political parties and nothing is done to stop it but the man in the street can't do the same thing so there's a disparity that's confusing. Often there's no fear of the government or SAPS for non-compliance.* (Participant 2) A lack of consistency in the application of the laws increases uncertainty and risk in the industry.

20. Sub theme 3.8: Environmental Factors

Uncontrollable factors such as weather can have significant consequences for events and compromise event feasibility and profitability (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021a). An environmental risk assessment (ERA) is a process for evaluating how likely it is that the environment may be impacted because of exposure to a natural phenomenon for example a cyclone that may have a devastating effect on the environment. *It's good when everyone known who must be responsible for making what calls. Like if a show has to be postponed because of weather.* (Participant 2) Weather events can be disastrous for events that rely on temporary infrastructure such as stages which are not built to the same standard as permanent buildings and thus more prone to collapse in the face of poor weather often with disastrous consequences and the loss of life (Jones, 2016).

Summary of main theme 3 findings

External sources and stakeholders can have a major impact on events and can increase various forms of risk significantly. Establishing requirements from entities like licensing authorities is critical when standards cannot be immediately ascertained. Major events can have a significant impact on communities and for long terms success it is important that these and other interested and affected parties are considered and properly managed. Environmental factors pose a significant safety risk to events and thus adequate precautions must be taken to prevent disaster. Events, where often expenses are incurred upfront against uncertain incomes, are made event tougher during periods of economic uncertainty and organisers face a unique challenge to properly plan and forecast both income and expenses in the age of COVID-19 where regulation are subject to rapid change and there is no certainty with regards to critical elements like the calculation of safe capacity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings of the qualitative research instrument have been presented. The adoption of the qualitative approach has furnished us with illustrative and explanatory perspectives from experienced managers and operational personnel from the industry. The study has drawn on the sentiments and opinions of these industry insiders and provided enlightenment about those factors that must be

considered when forecasting business models and budgets as well as areas, which require attention in order to achieve sustainable profitability for events whilst still providing value and minimising negative impact for a variety of stakeholders. The interview questions enabled responses, which sought to address the research questions posed by this study through a thorough perspective of the internal and external factors that the event organiser must consider during the various phases of an event.

In the next chapter, the recommendations for future research are presented and a conclusion to the study is provided.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter outlines and encapsulates the recommendations and conclusions of the study. Practical considerations, limitations, and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Research objectives for the study

The research objectives define for the study in Chapter 1 are as follows:

Research Objective 1: To determine what are the factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management.

Research Objective 2: To determine what is the impact of the identified factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management.

Research Objective 3: To make recommendations to enhance best practices in managing risk during event management

Findings from the study

In this section, the findings of the literature review and the primary research will be presented.

5.1.1 Research findings from the literature review

The literature review revealed that events are inherently risky and thus the event organiser has a duty of care to ensure that all stakeholders are appropriately considered. It was further revealed that there are various types of risk, all of which have unique considerations and must be carefully evaluated and managed before or during the event phases in which the risks are most likely to be encountered. Further findings include that the event organiser should focus the setting on internal standards based on established best practices which is preferable to relying on standards

imposed by external sources when seeking to minimise risk and that the role of the risk manager is critical to effectively managing risk.

5.1.2 Findings from the primary research

The findings of the primary research will be presented by research objective.

Research objective 1

To determine what are the factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management.

The literature review of this study ascertained that risk management should form part of the overall project plan for any event (Silvers & O'Toole, 2021) and that following best practices is more likely to result in the successful implementation of risk management in event management (Wynn-Moylan, 2017). It was found that both internal and external factors influence best practices in managing risk during event management. The event organiser has greater control over the internal factors, but must consider all factors and stakeholders if effective risk management practices are to be adopted. Different stakeholders have varied priorities, interests and responsibilities and it is incumbent upon the event organiser to shape the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all key stakeholders to ensure that each party is appropriately empowered and incentivised to adopt those practices that will best result in the effective management of the risks most applicable to them. The findings show that planning and organisation play a critical role in risk management and that the factor of the inclusion of risk management planning into the overall planning and management of an event is very influential.

Communication is a critical factor with all internal and external stakeholders to influence the adoption of best practices. Compliance is a key factor in event management as compliance with the conditions of licensing authorities is often necessary for an event to be staged at all. The findings however show that whilst there is a theoretical link between compliance and effective risk management, the link I actually rather weak. Thus whilst achieving compliance is a necessary and important step for event organisers, it is not a factor which influences to any great degree the adoption of best practices. A particular factor is attention to the experience, wellbeing,

and perception of the individual event attendee as they are the ultimate gauge of event success in the eyes of many stakeholders.

Research objective 2

To determine what is the impact of the identified factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management.

It was found that the impact of the identified factors that influence best practices is significant. The findings show that internal factors such as effective planning, communication and role identification have a significant impact on influencing best practices as the adoption of best practices reduces the exposure of the event organiser to legal liability, financial loss, and reputational damage. It was shown in this study that failure to adhere to best practices can have negative outcomes for a variety of stakeholders, particularly for the event organiser and can lead to fatalities, injuries, financial loss as well as legal and criminal penalties (Resodihardjo, 2020).

External factors such as political and environmental factors can be negatively influential on events and thus the adoption of means of mitigation of these risks related to these external factors is critical. Thus, it is necessary for the event organiser to consider the factors that have both a positive and a negative influence on best practices in managing risk during event management.

5.1.3 Research conclusions

The research conclusions will be given by research question based on the findings as define in the research objectives.

Research Questions: Answers and Objectives Met

Question 1: What are the factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management?

The question has been answered in that the factors identified as enhancing best practices are as follows:

- Incorporating managing risk into every aspect and phase of managing events;

- Clearly identifying the risk considerations, responsibilities, appetites, and attitudes of a variety of stakeholders.
- Clearly defining the role of the risk manager or the various roles of risk management related to different event management roles within the project.

Question 2: What is the impact of the identified factors that influence best practices in managing risk during event management?

The impacts of the identified factors are as follows:

- The reduction of exposure of the event organiser to claims of liability as self-imposed adherence to best practices, in addition to compliance with external standards, shows that all that is reasonably practicable has been done to ensure that all possible risks have been made as low as reasonably possible.
- Understanding the risk related implications and expectations of different stakeholders allows the event organiser to tailor risk planning towards those areas that are deemed most critical and thus will have the greatest positive impact on the project.
- Clearly defining risk management roles, including that of the overall risk manager, empowers the person tasked with this responsibility to make the decisions necessary with as much knowledge and comprehension of the issues in question as possible. By defining a role and bestowing specific responsibility, the impact created is that a risk manager is able to make objective decisions without undue influence such as commercial pressures.

Question 3: What recommendations can be made to enhance best practices in managing risk during event management?

The recommendations that can be made are as follows:

- For the event organiser to set standards internally, based on widely accepted international best practice and best suited to the type of event in question, rather than relying on the attainment of a satisfactory standard set by external parties.
- Documenting and distributing information and procedures related to managing risk during events to all relevant stakeholders as is appropriate to their level of involvement in the event.

- Allow for ample time and budget to properly address managing risk as part of the project planning process.

- Incorporate automated decisions into the planning process such as go/no-go decisions to be made at pre-determined project milestones based on pre-determined criteria rather than based on personal opinion or arbitrary criteria.

- Ensure that all personnel appointed to risk management roles are aware of the scope of their role, the extent of their decision-making powers and the attendant responsibility that comes with them.

Conceptual Implications

A conceptual implication is that managing risk in event management is a topic with substantial breadth and scope. Events can vary greatly in scale, budget, duration, impact, and specialisation and so on and whilst there is certain vague commonalities the difference between, for example, a Formula One event and a wedding are obvious and extreme. Whilst there are certain very general similarities, much if not most, of what might be applicable to the former will have no bearing whatsoever on the latter. Considering this, it may be sensible to consider events in different categories whereby projects of similar scope and scale are considered differently to others.

Practical Implications

- For event organisers there is a very loose and tenuous link between achieving compliance with standards set externally and truly limiting liability in its various forms.

- That event organisers can reduce the liability they face be it civil, criminal, or financial, by setting internal standards based on best practices that thereby signify that they have made all reasonably practicable efforts to effectively manage risk to levels that are as low as is reasonably possible.

- The needs and risk profiles and priorities of all stakeholders must be considered and addressed in order for event organisers to effectively manage risk in their projects.

- Proper risk management planning will allow for the automation of key decisions based on pre-determined criteria. This will allow event organisers to have more

time and capacity for making decisions around issues that could not be foreseen in advance. By addressing known issues as well as potential known unknowns, event organisers can scenario plan and make objective decisions in advance rather than relying on pressurised judgement calls made in the implementation or operational phases of events where time is of the essence. A prime example could be a minimum required number of advanced ticket sales being required 15 days before the show day. If the target is not achieved then the event is automatically cancelled to reduce business risk faced by the organisers should an insufficient number of tickets be sold to recoup costs.

Limitations

This study was limited due to time constraints in that it was primarily concerned with the perspective of the event organiser. Research participants were limited to those with experience working as event organisers or managers or to those in consultation roles, such as event safety managers, to event organisers and managers. Additional perspectives from other key stakeholders concerned with managing risk in event management such as licensing authorities, sponsors and service providers would provide additional insights.

Managerial Implications

From a managerial point of view, effective risk management in the realm of event management can only take place if standards are set internally and based on the best practice most suited to the type of event being staged. Risk management activities must be incorporated into all aspects of project planning with certain key decisions pre-determined at certain key milestones based on criteria and means of measurement established well in advance.

Recommendations for future research

- To examine the current applicable legislation and regulations surrounding event management in South Africa so as to create a consolidated body of knowledge accessible to all stakeholders or interested and affected parties. This will make the relevant information more easily accessible and readily available than it

currently is as regulations and legislation refers to other laws such as health and safety regulations and building regulations and is not specific to events.

- Examining the rules, procedures, and processes that take parts of the world with highly developed events sectors to see how best practices might be incorporated into the South African context. By better aligning risk management practices in event management with the compliance related activities demanded by authorities, risk management in events could be improved in the country.

- To research and create standardised templates, based on best practice examples and the South African specific requirements, for the preparation and the most commonly applicable event risk management planning documents so as to create uniformity in an industry currently without standardised practices.

- To examine how to manage the risk of COVID-19 in events in South Africa in an effective, sustainable and practical fashion.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that all the research objectives were achieved and the research questions were answered by the data obtained from this study. Events are an important contributor to many economies, including South Africa's, and they provide the opportunity to create a positive impact for a variety of stakeholders. To remain competitive as a host country for major events, an industry, and as individual event organisers it will be critical to be able to effectively manage risk, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. An inability to demonstrably manage risk will likely have a negative impact on the business activities of event organisers who will not be able to pass the first hurdles in the process from taking an event from conceptualisation to completion as the foundations of all events, namely funding and permissions to stage events, may well be denied to those without proper plans. Never before has the ability to manage risk, and demonstrate that it has been done effectively, been more important or relevant to event organisers. The inherently risky nature of events, especially in the current climate, means that the knowledge and ability to effectively managing risk is a necessity for all organisations with long-term aspirations in the sector.

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Annexure A: Interview Schedule

Name:

Age:

Current Occupation:

Years of experience in live events:

Qualifications / Certifications:

1. Can you please tell me about your familiarity with formalised event risk management / event safety guidelines and codes of practice?
2. What is your opinion regarding the practical implementation of event risk management frameworks and event safety guidelines and codes of practice?
3. What is your opinion of the extent of the duty of care which event organisers must extend to event stakeholders?
4. Should all stakeholders of an event be treated equally?
5. What is your opinion on the nature of risk facing event organisers, with the definition of risk extending beyond physical risks to others such as reputational risk, business risk, etc?
6. What do you think about the relationship between achieving compliance and managing risk in the context of events?
7. What is your opinion about the way risk generally and risk management practices specifically are perceived by different event organisers and other stakeholders?
8. How would you describe the approach that licensing authorities and other stakeholders involved in ESSPC committees take with regards to the application of relevant standards such as the National Building Regulations?
9. What risks do you consider are most important or require the most urgent attention with regards to events?
10. Have you ever engaged in practices whilst working on an event that you knew to be risky but that you deemed necessary as a result of expediency or due to budget constraints?

11. To what extent does being compliant with the requirements of authorities give event organisers protection from liability?

12. Which stakeholders or stakeholder groups are, in your opinion, most concerned with risk management?

13. With whom should the ultimate authority for managing risk at events sit?

14. In light of the previous question, in your experience with whom is the implementation of risk management generally entrusted to at events?

15. How effective do you think the application of a proven and standardised risk management process would be in managing event risks from the event organisers perspective?

16. What do you feel is the biggest impediment to effective risk management practices being implemented in the context of live events?

17. What effect has COVID19 had on events generally and the management of event risk specifically?

Annexure B: Editing Letter

Marieta Grundling (MBA)

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10 December 2021

</div>

To Whom It May Concern

This serves to confirm that the dissertation: *The Systematic Application of International Best Practice Methods and Standards in Managing Risk in Event Management* by **Gregory Simon Jones** was edited. The language, presentation, referencing system (both in-text and against the Reference List), were checked and corrected.

M Grundling

10 December 2021

Annexure C: Similarity Index

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Annexure D: Ethical Clearance

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS LEADERSHIP

RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (GSBL CRERC)

14 October 2021

Ref #: 2021_SBL_MBA_012_FA	
Name of applicant: Mr GS Jones	
Student #: 65101790	

Dear Mr Jones

Decision: Ethics Approval

Student: Mr GS Jones, (65101790@mylife.unisa.ac.za , 082 291 0045)

Supervisor: Dr S Naidoo, (naidoosu@unisa.ac.za , 012 429 3304)

Project Title: The systematic application of international best practice methods and standards in managing risk in events management.

Qualification: Master in Business Administration (MBA)

Expiry Date: December 2022

Thank you for applying for research ethics clearance, SBL Research Ethics Review Committee reviewed your application in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics.

Outcome of the SBL Research Committee: Approval is granted for the duration of the Project

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the SBL Research Ethics Review Committee on the 12/10/2021.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

1) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out 'in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached

2) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the SBL Research Ethics Review Committee.

4) An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.

5) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.