

Network Relationships for Firm's Value-Added Strategies: A Case Study of Sarawak Convention Bureau (SCB)

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The fragmented nature of the convention industry requires a substantial degree of networking and collaboration among the multifaceted network relationships in destination marketing. Forming specific societal structures and processes within the delegates and convention-related businesses, the evolution and progression in convention industry are associated with social benefits through an exchange of ideas, fostering business contacts and facilitating knowledge transfer. These cooperation and collaboration lead to the quest for value-added strategies. Based upon a case study of Sarawak Convention Bureau, this paper proposes a more integrative theoretical framework in an attempt to describe and explain the nature of network relationships in convention industry, and the value-added strategies from the viewpoint of social capital. The case study involves face-to-face interviews, data coding, causal network modelling, and within-case analysis, throughout the interactive processes of qualitative inquiry.

Keywords: Destination marketing, social capital, network relationships, value-added strategies, convention industry

1. Introduction

Considering that the convention industry is dynamic and global, organization of large-scale events requires sound connectedness and interdependency, particularly between event planners-organisers-suppliers. For businesses in the convention industry, social capital offers integral, and collective entrepreneurial values that can reciprocally help associated businesses to remain competitive for the long-term. The present case study of the *Sarawak Convention Bureau (SCB)* explores social capital concepts and processes within the context of the convention industry, destination marketing, and network relationships including client and supply chain management. These concepts are examined from the perspective of strategizing valuable inputs and resources for long-term business viability. The combined understanding of the linkages between social capital, network relationships, and value-added strategies, represents an appropriate foundation for improvement of destination marketing particularly in the network-oriented practice of convention industry.

1.1 Sarawak Convention Bureau

SCB is a not-profit organisation, limited by guarantee. Appointed by the Sarawak State Government, SCB officially promotes and markets Sarawak, Malaysia, as a priority destination for groups and associations to hold meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions. The establishment and appointment of SCB represents a serious commitment by the Sarawak Government to promote and develop the State's tourism, cultural, and business resources for the convention industry. Since its launch in 2006, SCB provides professional assistance and advice to organizations worldwide in order to secure business events and conventions for Sarawak. In 2010, SCB's bid success ratio is 80% with 45 wins and 11 losses.

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SCB is a one-stop centre for event hosts and local suppliers through its ability to coordinate, facilitate and support businesses. When securing business events for Sarawak, *SCB* identifies and bids for opportunities to host meetings, incentive travel programs, conventions, and corporate events from around Malaysia and the world. *SCB* provides assistance and expertise in every aspect of integrated event hosting including planning and compiling bid documents, and supplying support packages to win business events. After winning a bid, *SCB* provides site inspection support and advices on locating suitable meeting venues based on clients' needs, within Sarawak or regional Borneo and to boost conference delegate numbers.

SCB's expertise embraces strategic planning, event management, lobbying, distinctive bidding, and presentation of concepts and delivery. The *SCB* expert team assist potential local hosts by identifying and addressing bid criteria, coordinating and preparing bid documents and presentations, and developing lobbying strategies. *SCB* also liaises between local government and industry bodies, and obtains letters of support from leaders of government and industry, and advises preliminary budgets with conference organisers, when and where appropriate. In this study, *SCB* is chosen to provide a unique wealth of information in destination marketing as well as to explore a fresh, non-urban context of convention industry in Southeast Asia.

2. Literature Review

Empirical investigation on network relationships is prevalent, leading to appropriate organization and utilization of business network ties and their potentials, and then determine how social capital takes place and develops resources and qualities within the relationships, in developing value-added strategies for sustainable business success. Inkpen and Tsang (2005, p. 150-151) defined social capital as *the aggregate of resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or organization*. Accordingly, the aim of the present case study is to provide insights into the elements and impacts of network relationships and social capital on value-added strategies in convention industry.

In the context of entrepreneurship, the relationship itself establishes resources and privileged access to entrepreneurial opportunities (Ramos-Rodríguez et al. 2010). By analysing the patterns of network ties, network configuration, and the embedded resources, business relationships can be coordinated and cultivated accordingly to achieve business goals. In line with research in network relationships and social capital (Casson & Giusta 2007; Hoang & Antoncic 2003; Lee 2009; Stam & Elfring 2008), the present study offers an empirical tool for analyzing and improving network relationships, by developing a causal network model to analyze the proposed interrelationships between social capital, value-added strategies, and business sustainability.

The convention is known as a multifaceted segment of the tourism industry, involving many different players (Sangpikul & Kim 2009). Forming specific societal structures and processes within its own sector of delegates and convention-related businesses, the evolution and progression in convention industry are associated with social benefits through an exchange of ideas, fostering business contacts, and facilitating knowledge transfer. In this context, the coordination and cooperation within the

business sector of the convention industry can be regarded as fitting with the social capital concept.

Several studies explore the multifaceted network relationships through one-off events by presenting a structural design of relevant inter-organizational relationships (Malek Mohammadi & Mohamed, 2010; Mackellar 2007; Jago & Deery 2005). In explaining the multifaceted network relationships in the present case study, Mackellar's (2007) *sociogram* is adapted, to provide an understanding of the network structure between SCB and key fragmented convention players. Using nodes and links, the model explained the varying strength of relations and cooperation between pertinent players.

Figure 1: Multifaceted network relationships of conventions and SCB

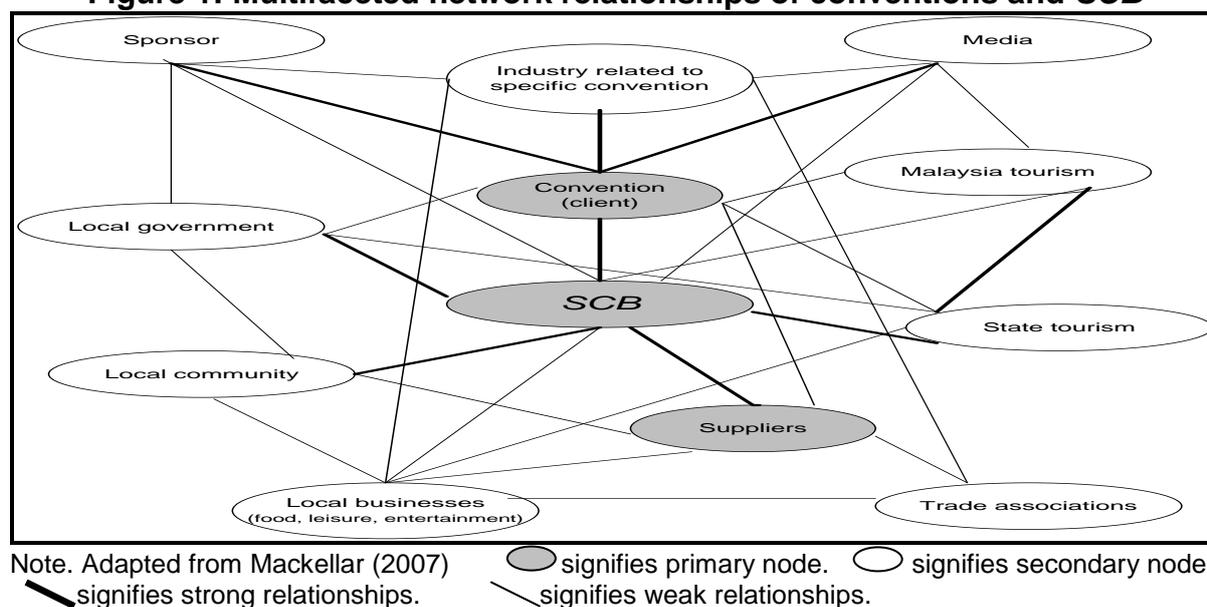


Figure 1 shows the structural design of multifaceted network relationships of SCB and key players. The identification of key participants involved in the development of social networks, supports conceptualization of a social structure. In the specific context of the present case study, conventions are represented by event planners, whilst suppliers are represented by major convention-related local providers including hotels, tour operators, business-event companies, advertising and media agencies, convention centre, and other business event and tourism-related contractors. Thus, SCB seeks and builds strong relationships with a range of industry partners including sponsors, local government and community, media, and suppliers. Primary nodes include SCB, convention clients, and suppliers are shaded in Figure 1, identified as major relationships between convention–SCB-suppliers.

The strength of relationships (bold lines in Figure 1), representing medium to high level of dependency between the players is based on past experiences and previous transactions between organizations (Mackellar 2007). As shown in Figure 1, the convention (event planner) has weaker connections with local government, given the limited past activity between these parties. Conversely, the SCB, has a strong relationship with local government, having coordinated a substantial number of functions and events for state and local communities.

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For the purpose of further discussion in the present case study, focus will be narrowed to the network relationships between convention-SCB-suppliers. The particular focus provides a detailed investigation on the quest for value-added strategies and long-term sustainability between specific inter-relationships of primary players.

3. Data and Methodology

The status of entrepreneurship as a practice-based discipline suggests that its knowledge is bounded by its contextual nature (Leitch, Hill & Harrison, 2010). On this ground, there have been calls for the adoption of qualitative approaches in entrepreneurship research (Blackburn & Kovalainen, 2009; Jack, 2010) owing to its widespread acceptance across the social sciences, and to closely portray the meaning, not the frequency, of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (Leitch, Hill & Harrison, 2010). Case studies provide researchers with opportunities to unveil specific, unique contextual conditions. Andrade (2009) noted that case studies are conducted in natural settings, and allow researchers to grasp a holistic understanding of a phenomenon under investigation. With capacities to acquire deep and rich insights, a case study approach helps researchers to explain how network relationships are established, and support the development of convention industry in Sarawak.

Probing for deeper insights of the antecedents and consequences of network relationship orientation in promoting Sarawak for convention destination, face-to-face interviews were conducted with SCB. Semi-structured questionnaire was used as the basis of interview. Subsidiary questions were posed where clarification of information provided. Information for the SCB case study is based on two in-depth interviews and email correspondence with Mr. Chew Chang Guan, the Business Development Manager and Ms. Elynnie Dominic Jau, the Personal Assistant to the CEO. Secondary information including company printed brochures, online newsletters, and the official website was also sourced.

The data analysis is taken as interactive and intuitive process throughout the process of qualitative inquiry to capture the complicated and dynamic nature of network relationships. Consistent with Leitch, Hill and Harrison (2010), the research analysis is an iterative and reflective practice as the primary aim is to generate understanding of the respondents' views of the issues under investigation. Analysis begins with data coding, building causal network model, and within-case analysis. The coding process involves recognizing important information that captures qualitative richness of phenomenon, and proceeded in three stages of *open coding*, *focused coding*, and *axial coding* (Leitch, Hill & Harrison, 2010, p. 78). These phases are described as creating descriptive preliminary categories, data scrutinization, and data comparison. Causal network model is developed, represents the data and analytical transformation within the qualitative process. The model contains both textual and diagrammatic representation that describe and highlight causation, links, influence, and outcomes that are involved in the case study (Nash, 2006). In qualitative analysis, *combining textual analysis (for instance, interview transcripts) with a detailed mapping of network structure would provide an explanation of both network ties and content, allowing structure and process to be accounted for* (Jack 2010, p.132). The within-case analysis offers greater potential for explanation of the linkages and relationships between the understudied variables.

4. Findings

As a non-government organization (NGO), SCB is not profit driven, but rather to foster and to develop networks linking convention-related businesses in order to inspire and to stimulate a vigorous business environment, which ultimately leads to the long-term viability of Sarawak's convention industry. In the face of these sound business relationships are connections and cooperation, the networks of which subtly create value for related parties, via business dealings, transactions, and exchanges.

4.1 Social Capital (A)

Multifaceted network relationships can develop dynamically for convention businesses that are actively involved with meetings, events, and conventions. The foundation for these network relationships are based on the structure of interactions between individuals, who are visible and distinguishable (Figure 1). Based on the established and structured foundation of these business relationships, social capital presents as a collective expression for these sound network interactions that form part of advantageous elements of business.

It is perhaps noteworthy that business relationships and social capital elements of the convention industry can be viewed in the unique, specific context of networking. According to the personal assistant of the CEO, Elynnie Dominic Jau, *the convention industry is actually based on networking and relationships*. In line with this view, the Business Development Manager Chew Chang Guan stated that *the conference itself is the place or occasion where new relationships are built, whilst existing relationships are strengthened*; adding that *the relationship itself brings us to a new cluster of networks and fresh relationships, which can identify fresh business opportunities... Networking is also used to attract more conferences to be conducted in Sarawak*. When elaborating on the importance of social capital, Chew Chang Guan indicated that *strong and extensive networks might result in more opportunities and prospects, which can be either as short-term or long-term*. It is taken as given by Chew Chang Guan that social capital generally results in *immediate, positive consequences, and continuing benefits to business*, which happens through networking.

i) Internal Network (Ai)

In the context of SCB, internal networks (Ai) consist of staff and other stakeholders (interested parties) that internally have the same intention of stimulating the Sarawak convention industry. All staff within the firm, including the CEO, continuing staff, and temporary workers are considered as part of the internal network. Staff members contribute to most of the critical functions to achieve business targets. Key areas concern promotional and bidding strategies and comprehensive assistance. Chew Chang Guan says, *we lead, we abide, we educate, we facilitate. At the moment, we are still guiding them (the local businesses), but we hope to see the local market being more independent in the future*.

Constituting the other part of the internal network system are the key stakeholders, the Sarawak State Government, SCB ambassadors, and individual parties who have an interest in promoting Sarawak to host events and conventions from all over the world. SCB is fully funded by the Sarawak State Government, who *is a main*

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stakeholder. The Government provides various support including funding grants, facilities, and official arrangement with other government bodies in order to fulfil the economic and noneconomic aims of the State. The SCB Ambassadors comprise another part of internal network. These ambassadors are not considered as SCB staff. *These individuals are promoting Sarawak voluntarily, based on their capacities and position within the industry or association that they are representing*, Chew Chang Guan explains.

ii) External Network (Aii)

External networks **(Aii)** involve the outer set of connections, apart from the internal circle of network. This component of network is *still related with creating an event or convention in Sarawak, although with different intentions from promoting Sarawak as a host destination*. External networks include clients **(Aia)**, suppliers **(Aib)**, the media, sponsors, local authorities, the local community, and other sectors which are related to events or conventions to be held. As external networks involve various related parties (Figure 1), this component is an extensive, growing interrelated network.

Clients refer to event planners or associations, who organize a particular event or convention. In the context of SCB, these clients *are not only the people who are dealing with previous or current events, but include individuals who have potentials to create events or convention in the future*. In some circumstances, clients are individuals who have no capacity to plan or organize event, but have *business or social connections with other persons liable to events or conventions*, by recommending Sarawak as a host destination. Chew Chang Guan says, *with the aim to market Sarawak as one of the world's best convention destination, SCB targets business clients from both the national and international market range. For this reason, SCB maintains a strong foundation in interacting with various people*.

Suppliers consist of local businesses related to the convention industry, including convention centre, hotels, tour agencies, transportation companies, restaurants and cafés, and event management agencies. Suppliers *play a big role in supporting business dealings made by SCB with its clients* (convention planners). Services and products provided by these local suppliers are monitored based on clients' feedback or observation by SCB *to ensure that the quality standards satisfy the particular events or conventions*.

Other related components are the groups that play limited business roles but have considerable relationship effects on specific events or conventions. The media, event sponsors, state tourism, trade associations, local authorities, and local community are examples of these groups. *There is no doubt that the contributions by these parties* (others than suppliers and clients) *are limited, but without them, the aim of staging the event or convention in Sarawak may not have been achievable* (Chew Chang Guan).

4.2 Value Based Strategies (B)

The success of cooperation and dealings within network relationships in the convention industry is complex. The complexity is attributable to the involvement of multifaceted parties. Moreover, success is associated with unspoken, intangible value inherent within these business dealings. For these reasons, it is important for a

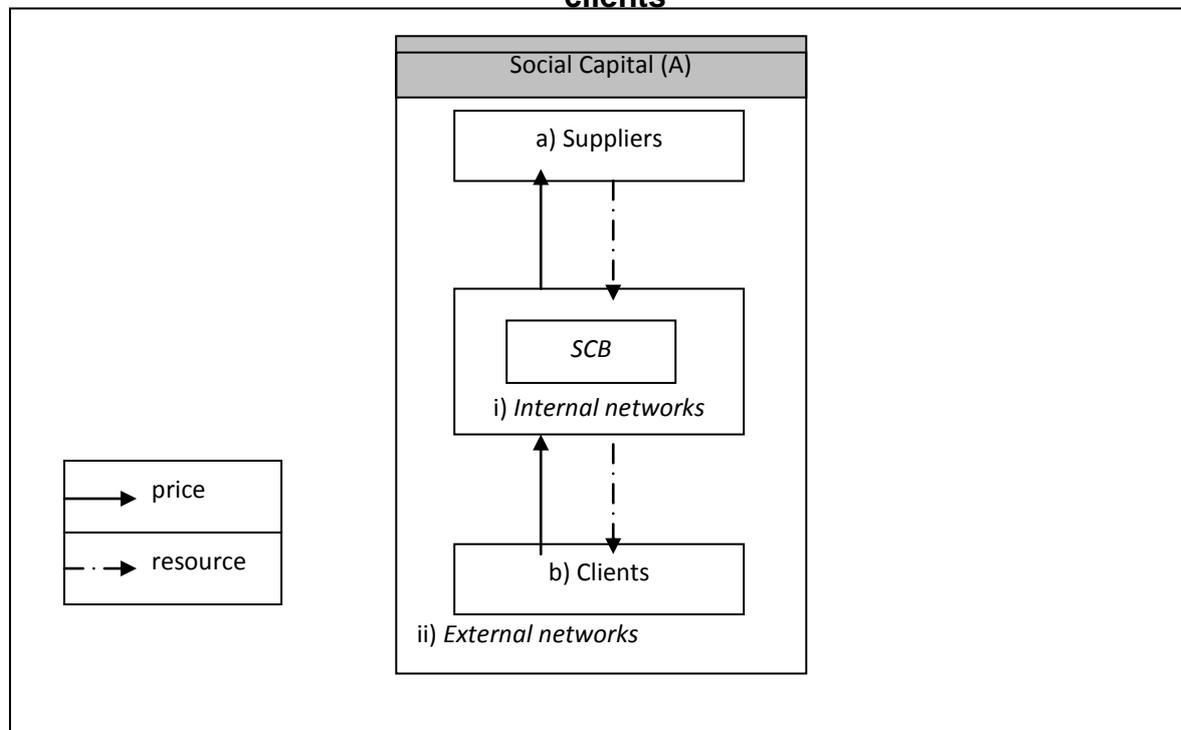
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convention bureau like *SCB* to establish continuing long-term value-based business strategies.

In the present study, focus is centred on *SCB* as an entity. *SCB* serves as an intermediary firm, mediating between of the chain of suppliers and clients. *SCB* acquires resources, such as labour, expertise, and equipments for specific events or conventions, from its suppliers. In this context, *SCB* provides guidelines and suggestions, monitoring resources (suppliers' products, equipments or services), to reach the standards, including costs and processes agreed with clients. At the same time, *SCB* acquires businesses from its clients, to enable staging of events and conventions in Sarawak.

Therefore, the process of value establishment depends to a certain extent on connections, interactions, cooperation, and business dealings between the three main players in the chain: suppliers, firms and clients (Brandenburger & Stuart Jr., 1996). Other parties, such as media and local government, are not directly related to the formation of these value-added strategies. Figure 2 shows the connections and interrelationships between the main players within this value chain, that principally constituting social capital. Structurally, as noted earlier, the chain establishes *SCB*, as the linchpin, with one main activity involving bargaining with suppliers and clients. Figure 2 illustrates the directional exchange of resources (--->) and prices (→). As shown in Figure 2, external suppliers provide resources (--->) sourced by *SCB*, which in turn are provided to convention clients. Revenues generated by clients paying (→) for this exchange within business relationships for value.

Figure 2: Sub-model of the interrelationships between suppliers, *SCB* and clients



Value based strategies are important *to show and materialize business potential*. Value is reflected in the business potentials *based on the products or services*

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offered in the convention industry. When creating value-based strategies, business value is established based on (i) the current potential possessed by the firm (SCB) and (ii) potential communicated to clients or targeted individuals in the market. These two value-based strategies (i.e., value creation, value positioning) help to explain procedures used by SCB when delivering value-added activities for achieving their business targets.

i) Value Creation (Bi)

Value creation is a process involving specific products, services, equipment, or expertise in the context of valuable resources, to fulfil an agreed exchange for a price. Value is based on existing potential (ideas, expertise, services or goods) possessed by SCB. Three approaches to value creation are associated with existing products, services, equipment, or resources, but enhance their appeal. Thus, value creation is based on resource capacity, rather than comparison with rivals or competitors. In the context of the convention industry, SCB and clients work towards reaching an agreement to this value over resources, as described below.

a) Adding Creativity

Adding creativity is normally used by improving or beautifying the presentation of available resources when dealing or bidding to host a conference or event. Chew Chang Guan stated that *normally this approach is made by crafting a special touch, which would influence the clients' view or judgement on specific packages.* Creativity can also form part of *promotional materials or combination of convention packages* offered to clients. Chew Chang Guan added that *network relationships within organization (internal network) are very important when executing this strategy. Most ideas assembled from all staff to add creative elements presented to clients. Additional ideas may be added from suggestions of local suppliers based on available resources (Ai → Bia).*

b) Speed of Services

Another approach used *in creating higher values for available resources is through speed of services to market,* says Chew Chang Guan. The speed can be added *during offering and handling of dealings, during developing products, services or packages, and during organizing the convention.* For example, speed in preparing bid documents or arranging local hotels and tour programs according to tentative date and budgets, and when rectifying unexpected problems with feasible alternatives during a convention. Chew Chang Guan added that *speed of services is also involved with prompt decision making and integrating the right, available resource. Therefore, our interrelationships with networks are fostered to expedite most of these activities. Most communication platforms like online technologies are utilized to avoid cost and beating the time constraint. (Aia, Aiib → Bib).*

c) Personalized Services

According to Chew Chang Guan, *tailoring services that specifically satisfy our clients is a very effective approach when creating valuable dealings.* SCB offers a range of tailor-made services, ranging from bid documents, incentives, and packages for clients, personalized to event organizers, convention planners, and delegates. *Intense two-way communications between SCB-clients and SCB-suppliers are adopted to produce excellent tailor-made services (Ai → Aia → Bic, Ai → Aia → Bic).* When executing this strategy, SCB targets *specific characteristics of clients*

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and the suitability of events to provide better, personalized convention incentives and packages.

ii) Value Positioning (Bii)

By way of comparison, value positioning is a process by which *a higher value is positioned on a similar or comparable product or service, over and above that of a competitor within an industry.* In this regard, SCB has developed four value positioning strategies. Basically, these four value-positioning approaches comprise appealing products, services, equipment, or resources that hold value comparisons. Chew Chang Guan says, *it is a matter of how we capture the value, to fully suit with the fulfilment of the clients' needs and other offers in convention market.*

a) Liaising Strategies

SCB serves as a liaison between clients, local service providers, local government, and other related parties. Chew Chang Guan says, *if they need quotes and ideas or proposal, SCB will work with the suppliers to come out with all the quotes and proposals to suit their needs.* In this context, SCB works towards effectively conveying useful information to all related parties. SCB ensures that all related individuals are made fully aware and kept informed of progress and changes made before, during and after events, to maintain SCB's reputation and Sarawak as a host destination of choice. To this end, SCB aims to develop and to maintain clients' confidences by soliciting and conveying useful information according to their needs. Network relationships with all related parties within the external circle of network are crucial (**Aiic** → **Biia**) when fostering liaison strategies. *Our staff must be responsive and sensitive to the people we are dealing with,* says Elynnie Dominic Jau. SCB staff are encouraged to apply their problem-solving skills to accommodate this strategy and to develop trust among network partners, culminating in high levels of professionalism value in the eyes of clients and delegates for current and future events and conventions.

b) Lobbying Strategies

With clear and specific goals, SCB proactively lobbies clients to attain rights to host specific conventions. As stated by Chew Chang Guan, *normally we will help our ambassador to do that (lobbying to bid a conference). We give support and prepare all the items needed, such as documents, letters of support and also limited financial supports. Then the ambassador will put forward their request. We will always make sure that we give our best to win that business.* As part of this bid, SCB and ambassadors assess and review themes that might fit clients' interests (**Ai** → **Aiia** → **Biib**). With this issue in mind, SCB aims to be *clear, accurate and brief when providing the relevant information, so clients and delegates can expect all to be right,* says Chew Chang Guan.

c) Boosting Support Strategies

While SCB strives to win a bid, they *also share the responsibility with the client (convention planner) to maximise delegate attendance to Sarawak.* Network relationships between SCB and clients are strengthened when executing this strategy (**Ai** → **Aiia** → **Biic**). Support activities include direct mailing or emails to members of pertinent associations to encourage individuals to attend events, publicity campaigns in trade magazines, advertising in relevant association's newsletters or website, and manning booths at association conventions. *In boosting delegate attendance efforts, it is important to go for quality of efforts, instead of*

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quantity. For instance, emails are sent to targeted potential participants who might hold a high level of interest in a conference, rather than taking a mass distribution approach.

d) Business Matching Strategies

SCB holds road-show activities and meets potential trade partners in other locations or countries worldwide, in order to open-up new markets and opportunities for the local convention-related business operations. As stated by Chew Chang Guan, providing better value than competitors is achieved *through extensive cooperation and links across countries*. In terms of network relationships, *SCB attempts to link the wide-ranging convention industry for attaining the shared benefits like cost efficiencies and effectiveness in communications and business transactions*. Chew Chang Guan added that *we match make interested buyers with relevant sellers, so that they find that Sarawak is a good place for their conferences or events*.

4.3 Performance (C)

For SCB, performance involves *intermittently checking of implemented strategies*, in order to achieve long-term business sustainability (**C→D**). The personal assistant of the CEO, Elynnie Dominic Jau says, *by looking at the latest performance (C) achieved, SCB evaluates its strengths and weaknesses in the quest to sustain its business growth and continuing business for the long-term*.

Performance is considered from three main perspectives: efficiency, effectiveness, and industry awards granted from convention-related worldwide organizations. In terms of efficiency, success is evaluated in relation to how available resources (economic, cultural resources) in Sarawak are creatively developed and optimized in order to generate economic and non-economic benefits, via the convention industry. Then, diverse resources that generate revenue are assessed against the incentives or convention packages that are well-liked and accepted by clients.

Performance (C) is also considered in regard to the effectiveness of roles executed by SCB. In this context, the performance is measured by fulfilled clients' expectations, while simultaneously achieving supplier's business objectives, including client's expectations when *no or less complaints are received during the facilitation of specific event*. Supplier's objectives are achieved *when there is business growth in specific related sectors*.

Attaining industry awards from convention associations worldwide like the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) is another indicator of performance. To date, SCB has achieved a number of industry awards, including the Best Destination Marketing Campaign Award: 2009 provided by the European Incentive, Business Travel and Meetings Exhibition (EIBTM), the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) Best Marketing Award 2008, and Diamond Award for its convention video commercial shown at the *Das Goldene Stadttor* (the Golden City Gate) Film Competition in Berlin. Elynnie Dominic Jau emphasized, *we believe, if we are not portraying our own name via international success, then the big industries will not see our existence among other convention bureaux throughout the world*.

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4.4 Business Sustainability (D)

Business sustainability (**D**) is achieved through consistent long-term, stable business coordination and management. Recently, *SCB*, signed a ten-year agreement with the Sarawak State Government. Achievements will be reviewed over this ten-year period to determine consistency of business development. Competitiveness (**Di**), business survival (**Dii**), and distinctive advantages (**Diii**) are three major characteristics that contribute towards business sustainability.

i) Competitiveness (Di)

Competitiveness is considered in terms of competitive bidding, development of long-term trust among business partners and clients, and positioning of Borneo and *SCB* as strong brands in the convention industry worldwide. The *SCB*'s tagline reads: *Recharge in a New World – Changing Perspectives*.

ii) Business Survival (Dii)

Business survival is a critical aspect of long-term business sustainability. As the convention industry involves many parties from different sectors and countries, business survival requires thorough planning and risk management of unexpected business consequences. The *SCB*'s internal network capabilities including a high capacity for problem-solving, fast decision making, and quick responsiveness to changes, adapting with the current market trends to maintain business survival.

iii) Distinctive Advantages (Dii)

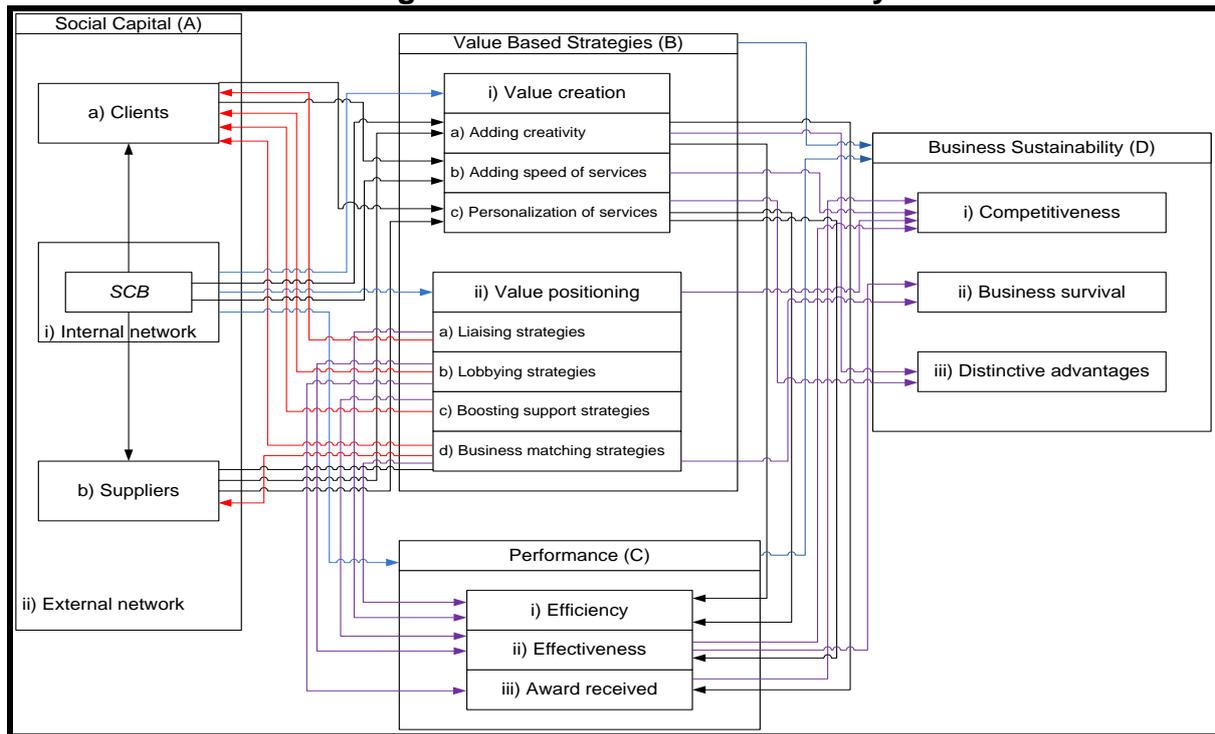
An ability to create unique convention packages also contributes to long-term business sustainability. These convention packages foster an air of excitement and satisfaction for clients and delegates. In the long-term, uniqueness helps to strengthen the brand and perceived value of Sarawak as a host destination, and encourage return visits, follow-up convention bookings, and holiday tourism.

Business sustainability reflects business strengths associated with interrelated industry links. Sound management of these network relationships helps to stimulate business regeneration. Social capital is utilized for achieving business targets, both for short- and long-term business development that leads to business sustainability.

4.5 Causal Network Model

The approach taken here is to explore, through a social capital perspective, interrelationships of internal and external networks that substantially affect strategic value-added processes, leading to sustainable business practices. Figure 3 shows a causal network map incorporate four main dimensions: Points A (social capital), B (value-added strategies), C (performance), and D (business sustainability). As displayed in Figure 3, numbers and lower case letters in parentheses relate to variables outlined in the proposed model.

Figure 3: Causal network model of linkages between social capital, value-added strategies and business sustainability for SCB



In this case study, two dimensions of social capital are of particular interest: internal networks (Point Ai) and external networks (Point Aii). Social capital (A) fosters cooperation of players within external and internal networks, emerging from the interactions between the SCB (firm), conventions (clients) and local suppliers. These interrelationships are important for negotiations of costs and prices, and dealing with related value-added strategies (B) among players. Performance (C) concerns the implemented strategies that are intermittently checked, in order to finally achieve long-term business sustainability (D).

5. Limitations

The current findings should be viewed in the light of two main limitations associated with this case study: limited generalisability of findings, and limitations associated with content objectivity. First, it is explored explicitly on the particular case of SCB within its unique market setting (marketing locality and strengths, uniqueness). Therefore, the analysis from this case study can make no claims to be typical. Second, the key determinant of the quality of a piece of case study research is the quality of the insights and thinking as brought to bear by the present researcher. Furthermore, the rigor of the analysis cannot guarantee the content objectivity of the analysis due to the risk of poor interpretation. Finally, despite the capacities of case studies that capture processes and involve direct and rich observation of real behaviour, the analysis are based on retrospective interviews share with cross-sectional surveys the severe limitations of selection and hindsight biases (Davidsson, 2005).

6. Conclusion

The present case study explores the network relationships, value-seeking behavior, and value-based strategies employed by *SCB* in order to foster economic returns to Sarawak. To this end, *SCB* achieves these economics returns by competing and attracting business, based on client preferences and by being the primary marketing arm for the convention industry.

Findings confirmed that the orientation of network relationships are based on the *relational archetypes* of internal and external networks (Kang, Morris & Snell 2007, p. 251). In the present study, the internal and external network relationships are distinguished based on firm's boundary of affiliation (Houghton, Smith & Hood 2009). Indications on both types of networks show differences in terms of network configuration, presence of trust, and nature of obligation (Casson & Giusta 2007). At *SCB*, internal networks (the staff, ambassadors, Sarawak State Government) and external networks (suppliers, clients, sponsors, trade associations, local community, media) are critical partakers for business development and performance. These business ties underpin the long-term sustainability of the business. Based on the analysis, *SCB* places emphasis on the importance of external networks for accomplishment of business goals.

Sound performance has been achieved through the smart use of embedded resources within network ties for value-based strategies and effective management of network relationships. *SCB* has developed a strong foundation of long-term business networks. This foundation appears to impact indirectly on business sustainability, through the implementation of the value-based strategies.

The present case indicates that the two value-based strategies, namely value creation and value positioning, highlight how *SCB* achieves business targets. Social capital emerges as a key component of these strategies, leading to success in the short- and long-term. The present case indicates that the three performance indicators (efficiency, effectiveness, awards) are achievable via strategies associated with business networks, and a specific strategies aligned with networks and related business circumstances. Business sustainability is achieved through sound management of business resources within established network relationships. Social capital, have steered relationships and value-based strategies, leading to business performance and ultimately long-term business sustainability.

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