



## **Reviewing Venue Management and Operations in Events from a Qatari Perspective**

**Ian Richards**

Leeds Beckett University

**Abigail Lebeter**

Leeds Beckett University

## ABSTRACT

This case study explores and reviews venue and operations management of sports events from a Qatari perspective. There has been a significant investment in the construction of sports arenas and multipurpose entertainment venues in Qatar in the last decade. This has been a result of the strategy of the Qatari Government to bid for and stage major sports events, culminating in the 2022 FIFA World Cup. This growth in the number of new multipurpose sport and entertainment arenas has created the need for training and development for the staff to manage and operate them. The case study starts with a review of the key academic and practitioner literature in venue and operations management. Next, the venue and operations management sector will be reviewed in Qatar and the MENA region. It concludes with an in-depth case study of the Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena.

## A REVIEW OF VENUE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT LITERATURE

There is a relatively small body of academic and practitioner literature related to venue management and operations management. There is no literature which relates specifically to the Qatar and MENA Region. Therefore, a systematic literature review of key frameworks and models of best practice that have been utilised in worldwide venue management and events operations has been undertaken. Several key authors in the field of venue management and operations management were identified.<sup>1 2 3</sup>

The systematic review of the literature around venue and operations management of events has identified the following key functional areas:

---

1. Chris Wosley, Sue Minten and Jeff Abrams, *Human Resource Management in the Sport and Leisure Industry*, Abingdon, Oxon (Routledge, 2012).

2. T. Christopher Greenwell, Leigh Ann Danzey-Bussell, and David J. Shonk, *Managing Sport Events* (Human Kinetics, 2014).

3. P. Jones & M Dent, "Lessons in Consistency: Statistical Process Control," *Forte Plc* 6, No: 1 (1994): 18-23.

## 1. Organisation and Management Structures

- Chain of Command / Span of Control

## 2. Human Resources Management

- Psychological Contract with both employees and volunteers

## 3. Health Safety and Risk Management

- Risk Management
- Capacity Management

## 4. Operations Planning Process

- Queueing Theory
- Customer Experience

### 1.1 Organisational and Management Structures

The structure of management in organisations within the events industry is often demonstrated through an organisational chart document outlining the accountability and responsibility between the different parties. This is an important and fundamental element of good governance within organisations as it allows a sense of transparency between both the customer, the employees and the management. Two main types of structure can be identified from the limited literature, tall and flat. A tall structure named chain of command is a top down hierarchical structure as shown in Figure 1<sup>4</sup> and a flat structure known as a Span of Control system, in which subordinates have a closer relationship with their superiors.<sup>5</sup>

It is thought that the more effective organisations form their strategy and structure around the external context,<sup>6</sup> meaning that understanding the customers and the employees in terms of their level of skill, knowledge and ability is paramount. Wosley, Minten and

---

4. Greenwell et al., *Managing Sports Events*.

5. Wosley, Minten & Abrams et al., *Human Resource Management*.

6. Ibid.

Abrams<sup>7</sup> suggest that “as a rule of thumb it is thought that it is better to have a wide span of control rather than a narrow chain of command”.

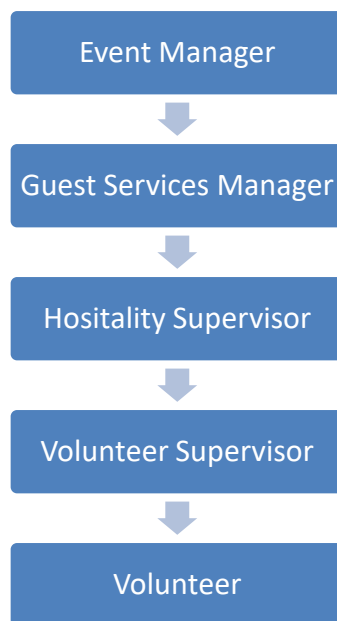


Figure 1. Chain of Command for Hospitality, Adapted from Fig12.1<sup>8</sup> (Source: Greenwell et al., *Managing Sports Events*)

The idea behind this train of thought is that employees have a more direct method of communication with their superiors, meaning that they are able to act in a more autonomous and proactive way,<sup>9</sup> whilst employees within a chain of command system will know their immediate supervisor and reporting responsibilities, denoting a reduced level of autonomy throughout.<sup>10</sup> Within a young organisation the most productive way to organise the structure requires a little more thought. Usually in these types of organisations, where levels of

---

7. Ibid, 39.

8. Greenwell et al., *Managing Sports Events*.

9. Wosley, Minten & Abrams et al., *Human Resource Management*, 39.

10. Greenwell et al., *Managing Sports Events*.

experience are low, a wide span of control will be counterproductive and “cause poor job satisfaction and performance”.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.1 Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management (HRM) plays a major role in the Events and Facilities Industry because of its service nature, meaning that the industry is extremely staff intensive. Add to that the high turnover of volunteers needed for these “pulsating organisational structures”<sup>12</sup> means that HRM is an extremely key component.

Getz points out that the key principle applying to all events is that they are temporary stating that: “Every such event is unique, stemming from the blend of management, program, setting and people.”<sup>13</sup> It is this unique and staff intensive nature of events that makes the psychological contract between employers and employees so significant. The Psychological Contract exists between workers and employers and is designed to motivate workers to “fulfil commitments made”.<sup>14</sup> It is a series of role expectations which are related to the external context in which the organisation exists. Generally, this exchange of benefits includes a financial aspect; however the use of volunteers in the industry negates this characteristic.<sup>15</sup> Rousseau<sup>16</sup> suggests that “Human resource practices such as training and performance appraisal processes can signal promised benefits” meaning that the training of staff members

---

11. Wosley, Minten & Abrams et al., *Human Resource Management*, 39.

12. Clare Hanlon and Graham Cuskelly, “Pulsating Major Sport Event Organizations: A Framework For Inducting Managerial Personnel,” *Event Management*. 7 (2002): 231–243, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/143900333.pdf>.

13. Donald Getz, *Event Management & Event Tourism*, 2nd ed., Elmsford, New York (Cognizant Communication Corporation, 2005).

14. Denise Rousseau, “Psychological Contracts in the Workplace,” *Academy of Management Perspectives* 18, No: 1, Accessed November 14, 2018, <https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/AME.2004.12689213>.

15. Geff Nichols & Ellen Ojala, Understanding the Management of Sports Events Volunteers through the Psychological Contract Theory, *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, No:4 (2009).

16. Rousseau, “Psychological Contracts in the Workplace.”

and subsequent apportion of responsibility in line with authority can have a greater significance in terms of the employers' interpreted requirements for the job.

### 3.1 Health and Safety and Risk Management

Spengler, Connaughton, and Pittman<sup>17</sup> define risk management as “reducing or eliminating the risk of injury and death and potential subsequent liability that comes about through involvement with sport and recreation programmes and services;” whereas Atkin and Brooks<sup>18</sup> offer a slightly wider definition to include risks and hazards at all stages in a facilities lifecycle. However, irrespective of a particular choice of definition, the consensus is that you must identify potential hazards.<sup>19</sup>

“The safety of large-scale events is an issue that has to be addressed from the first notification up to its very end and even in retrospect for evaluation purposes.”<sup>20</sup>

One major potential hazard in event and facility management is crowd control and more specifically capacity management. Events require a very detailed level of understanding and planning regarding how spectators will both get to and leave the event. This can include, but is not limited to parking, public transport and signposting for those spectators who come on foot.<sup>21</sup>

Figure 2 highlights an ingress and egress spectator model. Created by Könnecke & Schneider,<sup>22</sup> this model is directly linked to crowd flow within a large facility and highlights

---

17. John Spengler, Daniel Connaughton & Andrew Pittman, *Risk Management in Sport and Recreation*, (Human Kinetics, 2006)

18. Brian Atkin and Adrian Brooks, *Total Facility Management*, West Sussex (Wiley & Sons, 2015).

19. Greenwell et al., *Managing Sports Events*.

20. Rainer Könnecke, & Volker Schneider. “BaSiGo: Safety of large scale events - Crowd flow modelling of ingress and egress scenarios,” at The Conference on Pedestrian and Evacuation Dynamics (PED2014), *Transportation Research Procedia* 2 (2014): 501 – 506.

21. Olympus Insurance, Special Events Ingress and Egress, Accessed November 17, 2018 [https://www.olyins.com/blog/special-events-ingress-and-egress\\_](https://www.olyins.com/blog/special-events-ingress-and-egress_)

22. Könnecke & Schneider, “BaSiGo: Safety of large scale events.”

the process that a manager would need to adopt in order to prevent customer complaints, or worse, civil law cases of potential negligence claims because of inadequate planning. Regulation 17 of the Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations<sup>23</sup> state that:

1. Every workplace shall be organised in such a way that pedestrians and vehicles can circulate in a safe manner.
2. Traffic routes in a workplace shall be suitable for the persons or vehicles using them, sufficient in number, in suitable positions and of sufficient size.
3. All traffic routes shall be suitably indicated where necessary for reasons of health

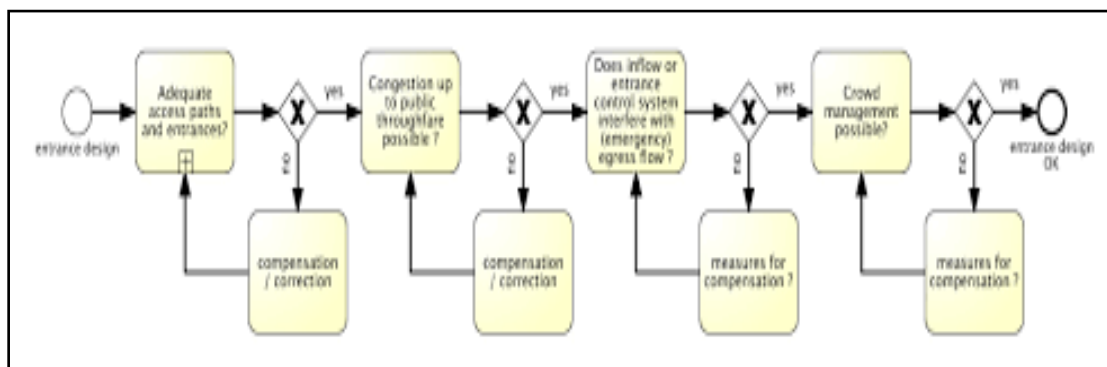
or

safet

y.

Figure

e 2:



Ingress and Egress analysis process (Source: Könnecke & Schneider)<sup>24</sup>

#### 4.1 Operations Planning Process

Queuing theory is essentially the study of queues and the way that the length of them can be predicted in order to help with operational planning for decisions, such as, the number of staff needed at particular events. Jones and Dent<sup>25</sup> outline how just under 70 per cent of all service complaints in retail and leisure operations are time related. The implications of this are a loss of customers, poor customer satisfaction, a reduced customer goodwill, negative publicity, poor reputation, stress to staff and the additional cost of providing waiting areas.

23. Health and Safety Executive, Health, Safety and Welfare UK, Accessed November 18, 2018 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/l24.pdf>.

24. Könnecke & Schneider, "BaSiGo: Safety of large scale events."

25. Jones & Dent, "Lessons in Consistency."

The characteristics of queuing have been identified as:<sup>26</sup>

- Source of population
- The number of arrivals and number of entry channels available
- Arrival patterns in terms of the size of the crowd and the types of queuing behaviour
- Service pattern
- Queuing discipline

Jones and Dent<sup>27</sup> argue that the measuring of the performance of a queue and queuing models are vital in respect of helping the manager make decisions over cost of providing service the cost of queuing. They further outline the importance of venue and event operators understanding Queuing Psychology in order to reduce the impact of queuing on customer experience. They highlighted the following factors:

- Unoccupied time feels longer than occupied time
- Pre-process wait feels longer than in-process wait
- Anxiety makes wait seem longer
- Uncertain waits are longer than known, finite waits
- Unexplained waits are longer than explained waits
- Unfair waits are longer than equitable waits
- More valuable a service, the longer a customer will wait
- Solo waits feel longer than group waits

The following key features of approaches to managing waiting times have been identified accordingly to help reduce negative experiences.

- Fairness – appointments, taking tickets

---

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.



- Environment – comfort, colour, sound, refreshments
- Entertainment – reading material, T.V, info. boards, live entertainment, pre & interval entertainment
- Communication – notification with ‘truthful’ reasons, potential delays, length of delays and pre-emptive information
- Perception – snaking queues, overstatement of waiting times, speeding up automated programmes
- Discrimination – example from the airline industry first v business v economy class.
- Complimentary services
- Principle of first in, first out

The idea of Will Call or in the United Kingdom Care of Box Office (COBO) is another way of reducing these negative customer experiences created by queuing. Mainly found in ticketing literature, Will Call or COBO is where already purchased tickets can be picked up, this then negate the need for long queues thus improving customer experience.

## **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE VENUE MANAGEMENT AND EVENTS OPERATIONS SECTOR IN QATAR AND THE MENA REGION**

### **Arena Growth and Development in Qatar**

There has been a significant growth in the construction of sports and entertainments venues in Qatar since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. This is linked to the Qatar National Vision 2030, which was launched in 2008, that aims to build a bridge between the present and the future. A key feature of this strategy has been the growth in the staging of international sports events. This process began prior to the launch of the Qatar National Vision 2030, with the successful bid for the 2006 Asian Games. This became the catalyst for

Qatar to move towards becoming a significant player in the major international sports events market. This has resulted in Qatar winning the rights and staging numerous international and major sports events including the 2012 IAAF World Indoor Athletics Championships, 2016 UCI World Road Race Cycling Championships, 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships and culminating in the successful bid in 2010, to stage the 2022 FIFA World Cup. Alongside these developments in the sports sector has been the growth of the entertainment sector, and in particular, the live music sector. The growth in multipurpose venues that can be utilised for concerts and other live events has seen an ever-growing number of concerts and live music by both major international and local artists.

The construction of these new sports, entertainment and multipurpose arenas and venues has created the need to develop a skilled workforce in the area of venues and operations management to operationalize these, and fully utilise this latent potential to contribute to the pillar of economic development identified in the Qatar National Vision 2030. The Vision aims to develop a “competitive and diversified economy, capable of meeting peoples' needs and securing a high standard of living for Qatar's population now and in the future”. The growth of this relatively new sport and entertainment sector is a key element of the diversification of the economy and links to the growth in the other related sectors, such as, conferences, hotels and tourism. In 2016, it was claimed that the value of the MENA sports industry was QAR 57.6 Billion (USD \$15.8 billion).<sup>28</sup> The building of world class sport and entertainment venues also provides entertainment and leisure activities for both the Qatari and international business community and international tourists. This is a key feature of attracting inward investment to a country. This contributes to the social and sustainable development goals of the Qatar National Vision 2030.

---

28. “Josoor Institute Launches Research Division to lead on Proprietary Studies on MENA Sports and Events industries,” Josoor Institute (website), 3 April 2017, <https://www.josoorinstitute.qa/media/press-release/josoor-institute-launches-research-division-lead-proprietary-studies-mena-sports>.

## The Venue Management and Operations Sector in Qatar and MENA Region

The potential of the venue management and operations sector to attract foreign investment was highlighted by the Ministry of Economy and Commerce in a series of business workshops staged to attract foreign investment in the sector. The Ministry of Economy and Commerce highlighted to potential international investors that “facilities management presents a lucrative opportunity for Qatar-based companies wishing to provide services for planned sports venues in Qatar and the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council)”.<sup>29</sup> The growth of Qatar as a key player is highlighted by the fact that facilities management sector in Qatar represents more than 8 per cent of the Middle East market and is third only to KSA and UAE.<sup>30</sup> They highlighted that the market for sports venue operations in Qatar was expected to grow at a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 8 per cent between 2016 and 2025.<sup>31</sup> The facilities management sector in Qatar was predicted to increase from QAR 12 billion in 2016, to QAR 25 billion in 2025. The sports facilities management market, however, was identified as being in a developing stage and was projected to grow from QAR 213 million in 2016 to QAR 701 million in 2025 (see Figure 3).<sup>32</sup>

---

29. Ministry of Economy and Commerce (nd), *Facilities Management Workshop Business Plans*, <https://www.mec.gov.qa/en/services/economic-corner/Pages/Sport-Business-Opportunities.aspx>.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

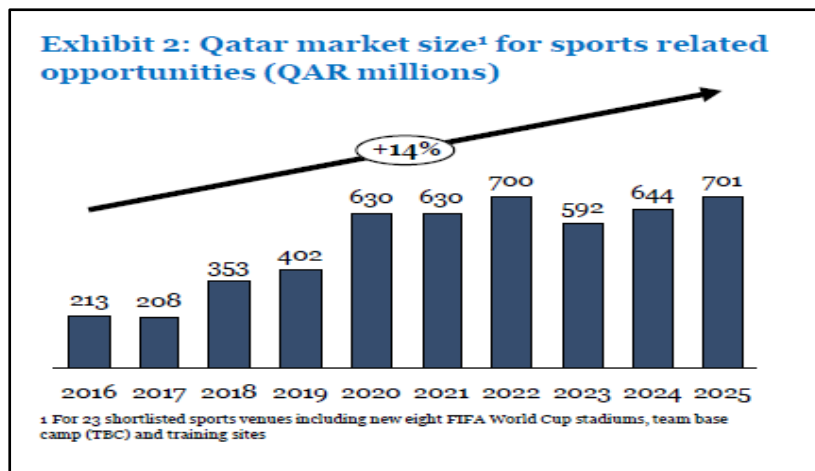
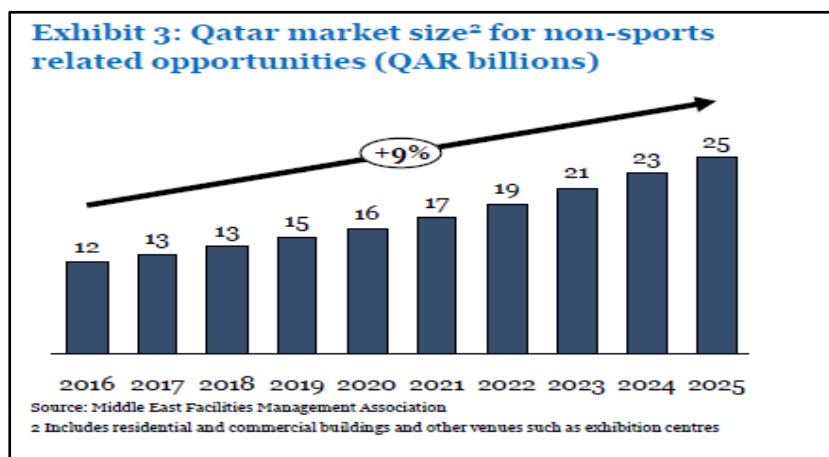


Figure 3: Qatar market size for sports related opportunities (QAR millions) (Source: Ministry of Economy and Commerce)<sup>33</sup>

They also highlighted similar projected trends for growth in the non-sports related entertainment venue sector as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Qatar market size for non-sports related opportunities (QAR billions) (Source: Ministry of Economy and Commerce)<sup>34</sup>



They Ministry of Economy and Commerce<sup>35</sup> further outline how in relation to facilities management, that

“At present, the facilities management market in Qatar is fragmented and evolving. Only a limited number of players (international and local) are capable of meeting service requirements for these high profile venues. Furthermore, few Qatari companies have international experience that they can leverage. The opportunity may require new/currently operating companies to collaborate with international competitors to deliver these services.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

Most of these venues/facilities are high profile facilities and host events of national and international importance. FM companies play a key role in helping venues make a lasting impression on all the stakeholders. This provides an opportunity for local Qatari entrepreneurs or Qatar based companies to play a more prominent role in providing facilities management services to meet growing demand.”

They also highlighted the potential for Qatar (see Figure 5) to become a hub for regional investment in the sector across the MENA and GCC Countries in relation to sports and non-sports related facilities in terms of the facilities management sector.

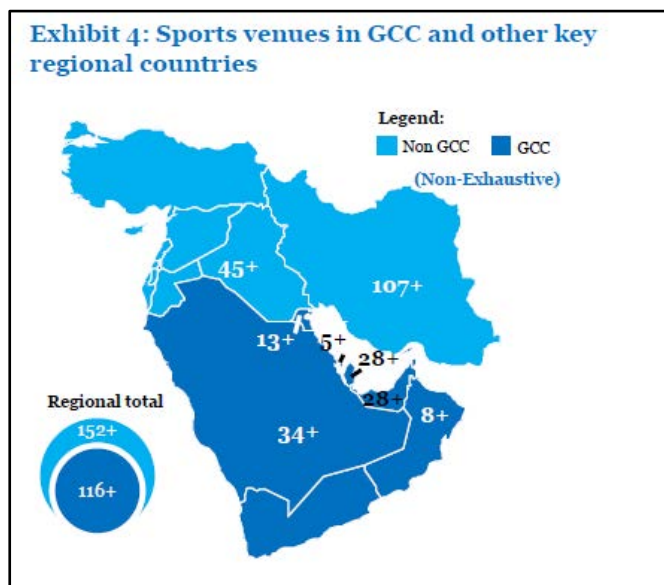


Figure 5: Sports venues in GCC and other key regional countries (Source: Ministry of Economy and Commerce)<sup>36</sup>

The GCC market is estimated to be valued at QAR 136 billion in 2016 with a CAGR of 8%, including inflation<sup>37</sup>. The KSA and UAE are the biggest markets in the GCC as can be seen in Figure 6.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

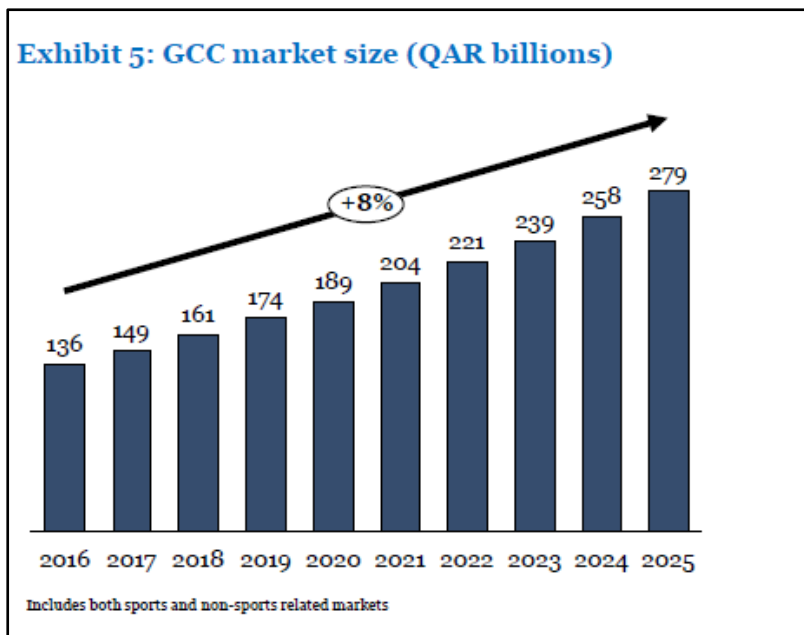


Figure 6: GCC market size (QAR billions) (Source: Ministry of Economy and Commerce)<sup>38</sup>

### Technology and the digitalising of the stadium customer experience

Another specific area for potential foreign investment and growth is the digitalising of the stadium experience to provide event owners and venue operators with the opportunity to increase attendance at matches and earn more revenue. The Ministry of Economy and Commerce argue that the use of technology and digital applications can be used to attract customers back to the stadium. This includes offering real-time updates to fans on traffic or weather, providing entertainment in waiting zones, pre-game and post-game discussions on social media, as well as showing replays and live interviews. Additionally, this could include digital payment solutions, ordering food to seats or getting different views (e.g., bird's eye view) of the game. Providing seamless processes and a unique experience to in-stadium customers will improve stadium attendance and increase overall revenues from concessions, and targeted advertising.

The Ministry of Economy and Commerce outlines how levels of attendance at local events in Qatar does not mirror the strong interest and popularity, shown by the regional

<sup>38</sup>. Ibid.

population in watching sports on television, for example. The strategy that has been adopted to tackle this problem of attracting local spectators to attend live matches has been to make tickets inexpensive or free. However, this has had the impact of distorting gate revenue potential and has not resulted in a significant improvement with regards to stadium attendance. Research has found that 57 per cent of young fans prefer to watch games at home, as they view stadiums to be a black hole of connectivity.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, venue operators have started the process of digitalising the stadium experience in order to lure millennials and others back to the stadiums for an in-house game experience. Most of the existing and new sports venues (including eight new FIFA World Cup stadiums and training pitches) in Qatar are owned and/or managed by government or government-related entities. These venue owners can team up with, for example, mobile phone companies in order to help digitalise the stadiums and partner with companies, such as beIN Sports, to improve the overall customer journey and experience in Qatar. This will create a win-win situation for all key stakeholders. Venue owners and event managers earn additional incremental revenue from ticketing; concessions and merchandise sales go up; beIN Sports or similar earn additional revenue from advertising and telecom service providers earn money from rental services.<sup>40</sup>

Venue operations presents a lucrative opportunity for companies wishing to provide services to planned and existing sports venues in Qatar and the rest of the GCC. The Ministry of Economy and Commerce<sup>41</sup> predicted the market for sports venue operations in Qatar would grow at a CAGR of 8 per cent between 2016 and 2025. The construction of new stadiums and training pitches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup presents an opportunity for reputable international venue operators to provide venue operations and maintenance services

---

39. *Cisco Connected World Technology Report 2011*, CISCO (website), Accessed 23 October 2018, [https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en/us/solutions/enterprise/connected-world-technology-report/2011\\_cisco\\_connected\\_worldtechnology\\_report\\_chapter\\_2\\_report.pdf](https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en/us/solutions/enterprise/connected-world-technology-report/2011_cisco_connected_worldtechnology_report_chapter_2_report.pdf).

40. Ministry of Economy and Commerce.

41. *Ibid.*

in Qatar and the GCC area. It has been argued that the success of sporting venues is dependent on the ability to create a memorable experience for both the participating athletes and the audience. These play a key role in ensuring athletes and spectators, are keen on returning to the venue to attend future events and in generating repeat custom from the event or rights owners.<sup>42</sup>

State-of-the-art stadium require capable and effective management that focuses on driving efficient and sustainable operations. This includes functional areas such as, daily maintenance routines, parking management, event setup, cleaning, venue operators and related suppliers and sub-contractors. Venue operations and management suppliers typically provide the following services.<sup>43</sup>

- **Venue operations and organisation:** managing the venue by identifying key revenue streams, understanding key clientele requirements, training staff, long term planning and outsourcing technical services.
- **Maintenance and repair:** Maintaining and repairing venue infrastructure, landscape, equipment. This can be either insourced or outsourced. This service increases the lifespan of the venue.
- **Event management:** Managing events to be held at the venue through the event life cycle, form the bidding phase to event delivery and post-event services.
- **Sales & marketing:** Attracting either permanent tenants (e.g., football clubs), temporary tenants (e.g., concessions or merchandisers), regular events (e.g., exhibitions), or one-off events (e.g., concerts, tournaments) to ensure revenue streams and high usage of the venue.

---

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.



- **Soft services:** Providing catering, cleaning and security services during events and non-event time.
- **Technical services:** Providing/managing/monitoring building access control. This includes services around building management systems, security monitoring (e.g., CCTV), energy and environment management, IT and communications and logistics, administration services, staff training, health and safety management, procurement, legal and quality control.

Capability and capacity constraints in the Qatari market create an opportunity for local and global venue operators. The Ministry of Economy and Commerce<sup>44</sup> (p.32) highlighted the latent potential of the emerging sports venue operations market in Qatar and predicted it would grow from QAR 347 million in 2016 to QAR 716 million in 2025, which represents a CAGR of 8 per cent as illustrated in Figure 7.

The Ministry of Economy and Commerce<sup>45</sup> (p.32) outlines how the operations market in Qatar has capacity for investment and growth and limited local players who are “capable of meeting service requirements” for the new high profile venues. In 2016, they highlighted that no international specialised sports or entertainment venue operators had a branch registered in Qatar. This was highlighted as a significant investment opportunity for multinationals to partner with Qatar-based companies to provide venue operations & maintenance services to new and upcoming sports venues in Qatar and the GCC. It highlighted in particular the opportunities in facilities management and maintenance, which are the biggest contributors (34 per cent) to a venue operator’s revenue, as illustrated in Figure 8.

---

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

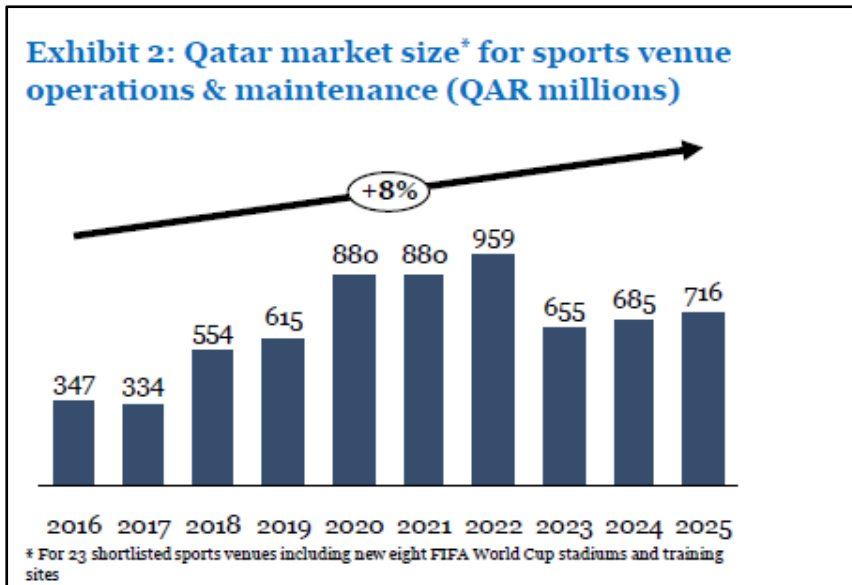


Figure 7: Qatar market size for sports venue operations and maintenance (QAR millions) (Source: Ministry of Economy and Commerce)<sup>46</sup>

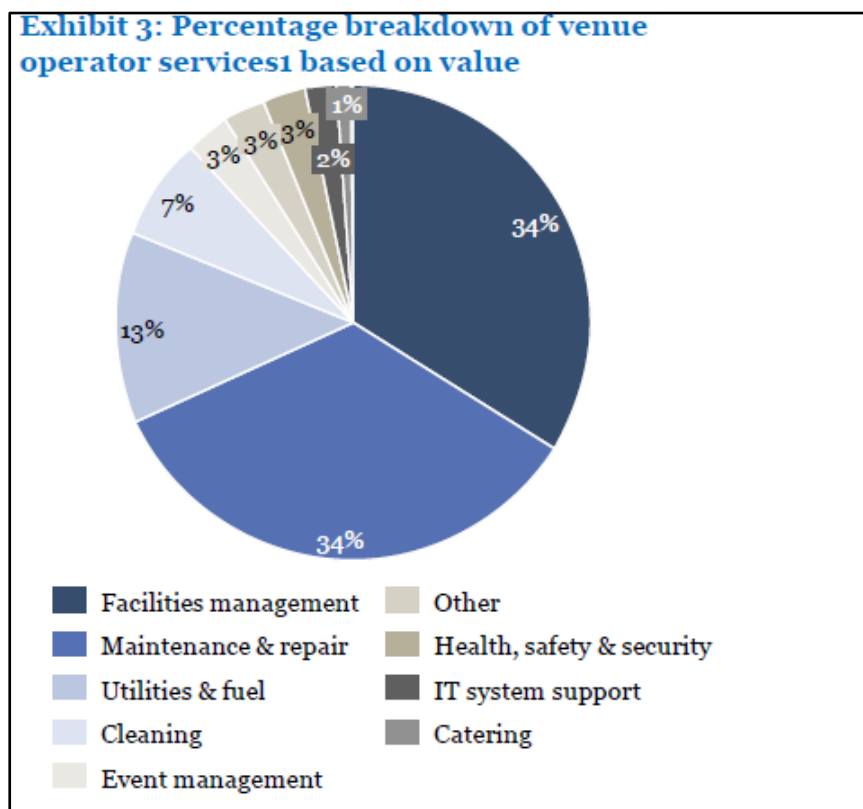


Figure 8: Percentage of breakdown of venue operator services based on value (Source: Ministry of Economy and Commerce)<sup>47</sup>

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid.

In summary, there is an emerging venue and facilities management sector in Qatar that has been created by government economic growth strategies and the catalyst of venue construction for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The Government has highlighted venue and facilities management as a sector in Qatar that is lacking knowledge, skills and expertise and has embarked it as an area to attract foreign investment and the collaboration of multinational operators with Qatari businesses. In the next section we will examine a specific case study of this process.

### **CASE STUDY OF THE ALI BIN HAMAD AL-ATTIYAH ARENA**

This section will provide a specific in-depth case study of the Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena, Doha, Qatar. The Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena was constructed for the Qatar Olympic Committee to host the 2015 World Men's Handball Championship. It was opened in November 2014, ahead of the World Handball Championships. It cost USD \$142 million (EUR €10 million) to construct. The development vision was to create a multipurpose hall that applies innovative technologies to indoor sporting events while maintaining sustainability for the long term.<sup>48</sup>

The Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiya Arena has become a sporting hub in Doha, Qatar, hosting handball, badminton, boxing, basketball, volleyball, hockey, ice skating and rhythmic gymnastics.<sup>49</sup> The arena has a total site area of around 84,700m<sup>2</sup> and a gross building area of approximately 54,600m<sup>2</sup> with the capacity to accommodate 7,700 spectators. The complex comprises a main building, two training halls and a microwave tower for media broadcasting. The key architectural and design feature was the dynamic, oval-shaped exterior design. The

---

48. Astad (website), Accessed 23 October 2018, <https://www.astad.qa/sites/website/default/en/our-projects/all-projects/ali-bin-hamad-al-attiya-arena>.

49. Ibid.

arena was equipped with the latest technologies to ensure that it retains usability and sustainable in the future.<sup>50</sup> It was built to be sustainable and to minimise the environmental impact. The arena is the first in the world to receive a four stars certification, by the Gulf Organization of Research and Development, in line with GSAS, the Qatar sustainability assessment system. This incorporated the 100 per cent recycling and reuse of greywater, 30 per cent lower energy consumption and 20per cent of material used in construction was recycled materials.<sup>51</sup>



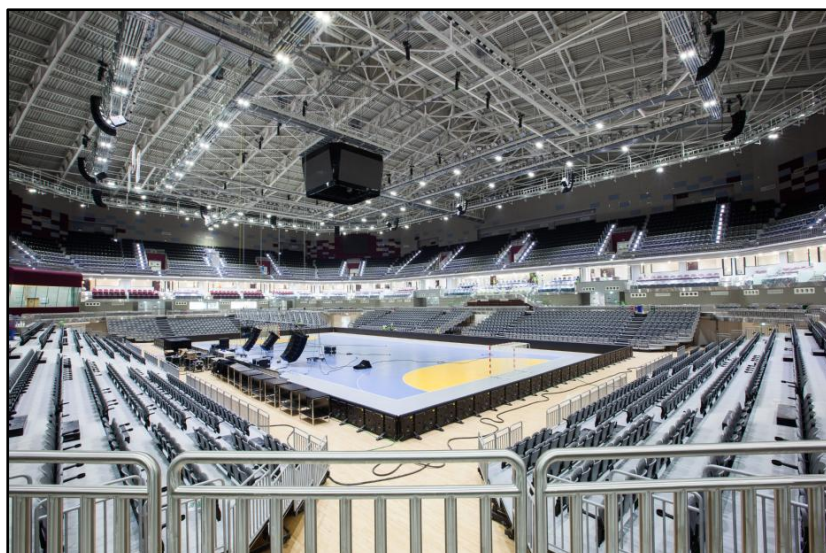
Source: Aktor Qatar<sup>52</sup>

---

50. Ibid.

51. Aktor Qatar (2015), *Newsletter*, June 2015, Issue 01, Accessed 23 October 2018, [http://media.interactive.netuse.gr/pegasus/Multimedia/pdf/AKTOR\\_Qatar\\_Newsletter1\\_engl\\_id5909244.pdf](http://media.interactive.netuse.gr/pegasus/Multimedia/pdf/AKTOR_Qatar_Newsletter1_engl_id5909244.pdf).

52. Ibid.



Source: Aktor Qatar<sup>53</sup>

After the tournament, the management of the arena was transferred to the Al-Sadd Sports Club and become the home venue for Al Sadd Handball Team.

*International Sports Events Staged at Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena*

Event		Dates Held	Event Website
<b>2015 World Men's Handball Championship</b>		15 <sup>th</sup> January to 1 <sup>st</sup> February 2015	
<b>2015 AIBA (Amateur International Boxing Association) World Boxing Championships</b>		5 <sup>th</sup> to 18 <sup>th</sup> October 2015	<a href="http://www.boxing2015.qa/index.php/en/">http://www.boxing2015.qa/index.php/en/</a>
<b>2016 Futsal Intercontinental Cup</b>		24 <sup>th</sup> to 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	
<b>2016 ITTF (International Table Tennis Federation) World Tour Grand Finals</b>		8 <sup>th</sup> to 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2016	<a href="https://www.ittf.com/tournament/2710/seamaster-2016-ittf-world-tour-grand-finals/">https://www.ittf.com/tournament/2710/seamaster-2016-ittf-world-tour-grand-finals/</a>
2016 FIDE World Rapid Chess and Blitz Championships		26 <sup>th</sup> to 30 <sup>th</sup> December 2016	

53. Ibid.

### *2015 World Men's Handball Championship*

This was the third time that the World Handball Championship was hosted in the MENA Region (Egypt 1999, Tunisia 2005). The Qatari national team won its first ever medal in the history of the World Handball Championships when they were defeated by France in final by 25–22. The Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena staged: 19 Group Games, four rounds of 16 Games, two Quarter Finals and two Play-off Games for final places. The largest attendance was for the group game between Sweden and Iran which attracted 7,000 spectators. This represents a 91 per cent of the total stadium capacity. The Group Game between Iran and Austria and the 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Playoff game between Denmark and Slovakia attracted a crowd of 500. This represents just 7per cent of the total stadium capacity.

### *Diversification of the venue into music and entertainment*

In September 2016, the Qatar Ministry of Culture and Sports awarded the operation of the arena to an international management company, ELAN Live Nation. This was a joint venture between the ELAN Group (a diversified and fully integrated media and entertainment group in the Middle East), and Live Nation (the global leader in live entertainment). This joint venture provides arena management, promotional, managerial, and facility maintenance support services for the venue. This exemplifies the strategic investment goals of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce to attract major multinational venue operators to invest in the growing Qatari venue sector.

The ELAN Group was established in 2004, with the aim of bringing international and unique advertising concepts to Qatar. It has evolved into a diversified and fully integrated media and entertainment company offering media, urban city beautification, events, and entertainment services throughout the MENA region. Live Nation Entertainment, is the world's leading live entertainment company comprised of four market leaders: Ticketmaster,

Live Nation Concerts, Artist Nation Management and Live Nation Media/Sponsorship. Live Nation Middle East, has been operating in the MENA region since 2008 and in Qatar since 2016 (Live Nation Qatar). Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al-Maliki, Director of Asset Management and Projects at the Ministry of Culture and Sports said:

“Engaging the private sector for the management of facilities affirms the State's support for the private sector's participation in the national development.” He added, “The development of the sector is a strategic goal for the Ministry to improve sports environment, culture, practice, professionalism and infrastructure in order to enhance the country's status as the capital of sports in the world, especially with regard the 2022 FIFA World Cup requirements.”<sup>54</sup>

Jaber Al Ansari, Group CEO at ELAN Group commented on this award:

“Ali Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah Multipurpose Arena is amongst the best arenas in the region, and we are honored that the Ministry of Culture and Sports put their trust in us to operate them.” He added, “At ELAN Group, we aim at providing the most unique and innovative entertainment experiences in the region. We are confident that our solid experience, combined with Live Nation's expertise in the live events industry will take entertainment in Qatar to a new level.”<sup>55</sup>

James Craven, Managing Director of Live Nation Middle East commented:

“We are delighted to have been awarded the management contract for the prestigious Ali bin Hamad Al-Attiyah Multipurpose Arena. Live Nation, in partnership with Elan Group, will bring global experience in venues, live events and ticketing management to ensure the venues embody the highest of operational and production values. There is also a great opportunity to grow the Qatari venue management industry and develop local talent within the business. We see huge potential in the Qatari market and will work with local and regional promoters to ensure the venues are suitable for a wide variety of new and exciting content. In particular, the family entertainment business is developing fast in the region and having such high class venues suitable for hosting content will enhance the entire experience for the local audience.”<sup>56</sup>

Further diversification into cultural and sporting events is demonstrated by the Arena being the venue for the “Qatar Fan Zone” during the FIFA World Cup, Russia 2018. The event was delivered by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC), Qatar Tourism

---

54. “The Qatar Ministry of Culture and Sports has awarded the operation of two world-class arenas,” *PRNewswire*, 6 September 2016, Accessed 23 October 2018, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/qatar-ministry-of-culture-and-sports-appoints-elan-group-and-live-nation-joint-venture-300322643.html>.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid.



Authority and the Ministry of Culture & Sports and sponsored by Vodafone Qatar. This enabled fans to get a taste of what the fan experience will be like at the FIFA World Cup in 2022.<sup>57</sup>



Source: Qatar Living<sup>58</sup>

The Ali Bin Hamad Al Aattiyah Arena was also part of the Qatar Summer Festival which featured a range of family-oriented activities, such as, free concerts and performances by artists and entertainers.<sup>59</sup>

### *Challenges of Operating the Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena*

The operation and management of The Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena creates a number of challenges. Firstly, for multinational companies in arena management and operations such as ELAN and LiveNation there are a number of challenges of working in the Qatar and MENA Region. Applying the models and good practices developed in other

---

57. "Five reasons why the Qatar Fan Zone at Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena is amazing," *Qatar Living*, Accessed 23 October 2018, <https://www.qatarliving.com/forum/worldcup/posts/five-reasons-why-qatar-fan-zone-ali-bin-hamad-al-attiyah-arena-amazing>.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.



cultural contexts does not necessarily transfer directly to working in different and unique economic, business, social, cultural and political contexts. In 2017, the Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena for example, staged only 10 events. When compared to major multi-purpose arenas in other cities and countries this is significantly lower in terms of usage. A basic principle of arenas that are operated on a commercial model is to maximise the revenue generation by staging the maximum number of events possible in the financial year.

An example of applying the commercial business model of arena operation and the principles highlighted in the Literature Review, is the challenge of generating audiences for sporting and non-sporting events. For example, the staging of sports events and sports, that have little history in Qatar in terms of participation amongst the local population or of attracting spectators. This coupled with a strategy of trying to attract local spectators to sports events and matches by offering cheap tickets or making events free. The Ministry of Economy and Commerce has highlighted how this has had the impact of reducing gate/ticket revenues and not increased attendance.

Another significant challenge for the Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena has been the growth of a highly competitive internal market by the growth in the number of both sporting and multipurpose entertainment arenas and venues in Qatar. This has created a significant challenge for the Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena in attracting sports matches, sports events, entertainment artists and shows and other events.

## **CONCLUSION**

The recent growth of the number of sporting stadia and arenas and multi-purpose entertainment arenas and venues fuelled by the Qatari governments strategy of turning the country into a major player in the sports events, entertainment and conventions and meetings industry has created the need to develop a related industry in venue management and operations management. This ambition to become a major player in the events industry in the

MENA region and globally has seen inward investment in this sector from multinational companies operating in the entertainment industry such as LiveNation working to operate and manage The Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena. To fully optimise the capacity of venues and potential for Qatar to become a major player in this area requires the development of a skilled workforce with expertise in venue and operation management. The Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena provides an illumination case study of the Qatari's government's strategy in this area.

## Teaching Notes

### Case Study Questions

1. Identify who the main internal competitors are for the Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena in Qatar?
2. Identify the main competitors for the Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena in the region?
3. What were the benefits of the Government creating a partnership with a commercial operator with ELAN Livenation?
4. List the key benefits of the Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena being operated in conjunction with commercial sector partners?
5. Identify the types of events and activities the Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena could stage to increase the usage of the facility?
6. How could the Ali Bin Hamad al-Attiyah Arena attract new audiences to these events?
7. How could this new strategy to attract events and customers be underpinned by theories and concepts around venue and facilities management and operations identified in the Literature Review?

### Overview and Learning Objectives

The following Learning Objectives are linked to this case study:

1. To explore the key areas of venue and operations management
2. To understand and apply the key models and processes in areas related to venue and operations management
3. To understand the Qatar and MENA region capacity for growth in venue and operations management
4. To evaluate an in depth case study of the venue and operations management of The Ali Bin Hamad Al Aattiyah Arena.

This subject area is a relatively new area in Qatar, but given the growth in the development and building of stadia and arena related to the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the 2022 FIFA World Cup it is particularly relevant to students. The target group for such a case study would be undergraduate and postgraduate students. It could also be utilised as a case study for practitioners and industry specialists to consider as part of CPD, short course or diploma programmes. This case study provides a detailed Qatari focussed case study of the management and operations of an arena. This provides students with an interesting and authentic real-world case study that can be utilised in learning and teaching. It will provide students with a guide as to how to critically evaluate practice against theory. It can also underpin a pedagogical approach around experiential learning and the solving of authentic real-world tasks which has been advocated in the design of sports and events curricular in the UK and the MENA region<sup>60</sup> (Mueller, 2014; Green et al, 2016).<sup>61</sup> The case study material can then be added to by students undertaking a facilities visit and using it as the basis for problem solving activities and

---

60. Jon Mueller, Authentic Assessment toolbox, Accessed 23 October 2018, <http://jfmuller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/whatisit.htm>.

61. Angela Green, Susan Smith, Ian Richards and Ibrahim Hussein, "Embedding Evidence-based Course Design Principles in Curriculum Design in a UK and Egyptian University," *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* 4, No: 2 (2016): 46–54.

authentic real-world assessments. This enables students to ‘use’ the acquired knowledge and skills in the real world (Green et al, 2016)<sup>62</sup> and deepen their learning (Ashford Rowe, Herrington, & Brown, 2014).<sup>63</sup> Real world authentic assessments (Mueller, 2014)<sup>64</sup>, such as problem solving could be developed in conjunction with facilities operators, such as, The Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena.

### **Background Reading:**

Students should access seminal texts on Event Management to help understand the breadth of challenges Event Managers face in industry today and to provide context to the debates around the governance of the industry and how the industry is becoming more of a “profession”. These would include:

- Schwarz, E., Westerbeek, H., Liu, D. Emery, P., & Turner, P. (eds) (2016). *Managing sport facilities and major events*, Second edition. Publication info: London: Routledge. [electronic resource] (Accessed 23 October 2018)
- Slack, N., & Brandon-Jones, A. (eds), (2018). *Essentials of operations management*, Second edition. Harlow: Pearson.
- Spengler, Connaughton, & Pittman (2006). *Risk Management in Sport and Recreation*. Champaign: Human Kinetics.
- Westerbeek, H. (ed) (2006). *Managing sport facilities and major events*. London: Routledge.

---

62. Ibid.

63. Kevin Ashford-Rowe, Janice Herrington and Christine Brown, “Establishing the critical elements that determine authentic assessment,” *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 39, No: 2 (2014): 205-222.

64. Mueller. Authentic Assessment toolbox.

## Appendix

### Appendix 1

**Qatar National Vision 2030** - Launched in October 2008, the Qatar National Vision 2030 aims to build a bridge between the present and the future. It also aims to advance Qatar's sustainable development goals, providing its current residents and future generations with a standard of high living. Qatar National Vision 2030 aspires to make Qatar an active and prosperous country, striving for economic and social equality among citizens. The National Vision also encourages all Qataris to work together as a community - backed by strong Islamic and family values.

Qatar National Vision 2030 aims to establish a society based on justice, charity and equality; a society that embodies its constitution's principles, which protect public and personal freedoms. It additionally emphasizes ethical, religious and traditional values and guarantees security, stability and equal opportunities. Qatar National Vision 2030 is therefore based on these four pillars:

- Human Development - developing Qatar's entire population, enabling them to sustain a prosperous society.
- Social Development - developing a just and caring society based on high moral standards and capable of playing a significant role in the development of global partnerships.
- Economic Development - developing a competitive and diversified economy, capable of meeting peoples' needs and securing a high standard of living for Qatar's population now and in the future.
- Environmental Development - managing growth to ensure and maintain harmony between economic growth, social development and protection of the natural environment.

Qatar National Vision 2030 guides future trends and reflects the Qatari people's ambitions, goals and culture. Qatar National Vision 2030 encourages Qataris to create a group of shared goals related to their future.

(Source: <https://www.mec.gov.qa/en/qatar-at-a-glance/Pages/Qatar-National-Vision-2030.aspx>)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Five reasons why the Qatar Fan Zone at Ali Bin Hamad Al Attiyah Arena is amazing.”

*Qatar Living* (website). Accessed 23 October

2018. <https://www.qatarliving.com/forum/worldcup/posts/five-reasons-why-qatar-fan-zone-ali-bin-hamad-al-attiyah-arena-amazing>.

“Josoor Institute Launches Research Division to lead on Proprietary Studies on MENA Sports and Events industries.” Josoor Institute (website). 3 April

2017. <https://www.josoorinstitute.qa/media/press-release/josoor-institute-launches-research-division-lead-proprietary-studies-mena-sports>.

“The Qatar Ministry of Culture and Sports has awarded the operation of two world-class arenas.” *PRNewswire*. 6 September 2016. Accessed 23 October

2018. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/qatar-ministry-of-culture-and-sports-appoints-elan-group-and-live-nation-joint-venture-300322643.html>.

A Framework for Inducting Managerial Personnel.” *Event Management*. 7 (2002): 231–243. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/143900333.pdf>.

AKTOR QATAR (2015). *Newsletter*. June 2015. Issue 01. Accessed 23 October

2018. [http://media.interactive.netuse.gr/pegasus/Multimedia/pdf/AKTOR\\_Qatar\\_Newsletter1\\_engl\\_id5909244.pdf](http://media.interactive.netuse.gr/pegasus/Multimedia/pdf/AKTOR_Qatar_Newsletter1_engl_id5909244.pdf).

Ashford-Rowe, Kevin, Janice Herrington and Christine Brown. “Establishing the critical elements that determine authentic assessment.” *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 39. No: 2 (2014): 205-222.

Astad (website). Accessed 23 October

2018. <https://www.astad.qa/sites/website/default/en/our-projects/all-projects/ali-bin-hamad-al-attiya-arena>.

Atkin, Brian and Adrian Brooks. *Total Facility Management*. West Sussex. Wiley & Sons. 2015.

*Cisco Connected World Technology Report 2011*. CISCO (website). Accessed 23 October

2018. [https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en/us/solutions/enterprise/connected-world-technology-report/2011\\_cisco\\_connected\\_worldtrechnology\\_report\\_chapter\\_2\\_report.pdf](https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en/us/solutions/enterprise/connected-world-technology-report/2011_cisco_connected_worldtrechnology_report_chapter_2_report.pdf).

Getz, Donald. *Event Management & Event Tourism*. 2nd ed. Elmsford. New York. Cognizant Communication Corporation. 2005.

Green, Angela, Susan Smith, Ian Richards and Ibrahim Hussein. "Embedding Evidence-based Course Design Principles in Curriculum Design in a UK and Egyptian University." *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice* 4. No: 2 (2016): 46–54.

Greenwell, T. Christopher, Leigh Ann Danzey-Bussell and David J. Shonk. *Managing Sport Events*. Human Kinetics. 2014.

Hanlon, Clare and Graham Cuskelly. "Pulsating Major Sport Event Organizations: A Framework for Inducting Managerial Personnel." *Event Management* 7 (2002): 231–243. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/143900333.pdf>.

Health and Safety Executive. Health, Safety and Welfare UK (website). Accessed 18 November 18 2018 <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/124.pdf>.

Jones, P. and M Dent. "Lessons in Consistency: Statistical Process Control." *Forte Plc* 6. No: 1 (1994): 18-23.

Könnecke, Rainer and Volker Schneider. "BaSiGo: Safety of large scale events - Crowd flow modelling of ingress and egress scenarios." At The Conference on Pedestrian and Evacuation Dynamics (PED2014). *Transportation Research Procedia* 2 (2014): 501 – 506.

Ministry of Economy and Commerce (nd). *Facilities Management Workshop Business Plans*. <https://www.mec.gov.qa/en/services/economic-corner/Pages/Sport-Business-Opportunities.aspx>.

Mueller, Jon. Authentic Assessment toolbox. Accessed 23 October 2018. <http://jfmuellet.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/whatisit.htm>.

Nichols, Geff and Ellen Ojala. Understanding the Management of Sports Events Volunteers through the Psychological Contract Theory. *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*. No: 4 (2009).

Olympus Insurance. Special Events Ingress and Egress. Accessed November 17, 2018 <https://www.olyins.com/blog/special-events-ingress-and-egress>.

Rousseau, Denise. "Psychological Contracts in the Workplace." *Academy of Management Perspectives* 18. No: 1. Accessed 14 November 2018. <https://journals.aom.org/doi/abs/10.5465/AME.2004.12689213>.

Spengler, John, Daniel Connaughton and Andrew Pittman. *Risk Management in Sport and Recreation*. Human Kinetics. 2006.

Wosley, Chris, Sue Minten and Jeff Abrams. *Human Resource Management in the Sport and Leisure Industry*. Abingdon. Oxon. Routledge. 2012.