

# Event Planning and Management Practices of Funeral Rites among Asantes in Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

The success of organizing funeral celebrations depends largely on how events are managed. Funeral celebration has been one of the major cherished tradition in Ghana. The study sought to examine event management practices on funeral rites among Asante people using Kumasi metropolis as a case study. The study employed the mixed method paradigm with exploratory and descriptive design. Convenience sampling technique was adopted in selecting sample size with eighty (80) event planners as the targeted population. Questionnaire and observation guide served as the main data collection tools for the survey. The results were analysed using descriptive statistics. It was established that most event managers get connected to their clients largely through referrals and advertisement on various radio stations. The financial position of clients influences the products and services rendered to them. The study concludes that challenges to event management on funeral rites include delay in releasing funds and lack of effective communication between event managers and clients. Event management practices as an essential tool to minimize cost and increase satisfaction is yet to defeat the large expenditure incurred by most Asantes in organizing funeral rites in Kumasi. The study recommends that event planning and management firms should create awareness and educate the public on the significance of adopting effective event management practice in funeral celebrations.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Funeral rite celebrations among Akans are organized depending on the circumstances that led to the death of a person. For example, the funeral of a person who hangs himself or commits suicide is quite different from someone who dies 'a natural' death. It may also depend on the stature and position of the person in the community. Sarfo (2008) opines that in Asanteland, a person who is suspected to have been murdered is buried with a knife in his hand. It is believed that he/she is taking the knife to the underworld as evidence for the ancestors to support him avenge his/her death.

The passage of time has brought about many changes in the Ghanaian culture, and certain cultural practices in Africa, to the extent that even the ways of performing funerals rites have drastically changed. One might blame it on modernity and technology, which have brought about many flaws in the way of doing things in the society.

The belief in life after death by Asantes compels them to give a befitting funeral rite to their family members when they die. Their grief for the loss of a human makes them perform certain rites, since they believe that after the death of the person, one goes to another world to start a new life. Among the Asantes, as in many parts of Ghana, the village is a social as well as an economic heart of society (Mensah, 2007). Everyone is expected to participate in the major ceremonies. The most popular ceremonies are funeral rite celebrations, which typically last several days. Funeral rites are thus seen as major events among the Asantes. Mensah (2013) posited that in Ghana and to be precise among the Asantes, people believe that, the spirit of the dead cannot rest peacefully if they are not interred in what is described as a befitting burial. The bereaved families will go every length to provide the adequate ceremony for the deceased – often at the expense of the living. Honouring the dead is a ritual in Ghana and a norm of the customary laws that almost no Ashanti family can afford to ignore (Mensah, 2013). The dimension which contemporary Ghanaian funerals have assumed over the last decades give a great cause for concern if not worry. While in other parts of the world people are busily working hard sometimes seven(7) days in a week, people in Ghana spend time on the non-essentials- celebrating one week, final funeral rites and forty days of the dead (Adomako, 2007).

Event planning and management require strong organizational, budgeting and creative skills. Those who work in event management fields must be comfortable with interacting with all levels of individuals both inside and outside of their organization (Hard, 2014). The event planning and management companies that organize marriage ceremonies, birthday celebrations and other activities are now offering their exclusive services in funeral rite management. These ranges from decorating the place for keeping the corpse to preparing the grounds for funeral processions and other special functions are all managed by the event management company. Mensah (2007) opined that comparatively, the economies with more of the present type of funeral celebrations appear to be more vibrant and booming.

Despite the creation of jobs during funerals others see funerals with its attendant hardships. Some people are of the view that because of the affluence that people attach to it, huge sums are spent on its activities (ie costumes, make-ups and props). There have been claims by some sections of society that on extravagant spending which are channelled to funerals which comes in the form high cost of coffins, many souvenirs, radio announcements and cloths to mention a few. These critics are of the view that such monies could be used to help brilliant but needy pupils in schools and developmental projects in the towns (Adu-Gyamfi, 2010). In a debate on the floor of Parliament in 2007, the then Minority Leader, Alban Bagbin, is reported to have said that we are investing in the dead rather than the living through expensive funerals and that is bad. He added that the dead should be given decent and not expensive burial knowing very well that whatever was done to the dead it was destined for the grave. He argued among other things that, after spending on expensive cloths, coffins and keeping the corpse in expensive morgues, the widow and children are left with nothing and are expected to fend for themselves" (Adomako, 2007).

Among the Asante people, to make the funeral arrangements, bereaved families have to pull together unavailable resources normally through borrowing. The complication in managing events during funeral rites celebration gives cause for concern in Ghana and among the Asante people to be precise. In managing event, several constraints such as poor estimation on cost of food and drinks are usually experienced during funeral rites. Poor estimation on number of people expected to honour invitations against available resources meant for funeral rites give call for concern.

Among the Akans in Ghana, songs are used to express emotions such as thankfulness, seeking explanations for what happens, and conveying messages of condolences to the bereaved family. Huge sums of money and time are spent by people to perform funerals. The importance and seriousness the Akans attach to funeral rites are expressed in the following proverb: "Abusua do funu", literally, "the family loves the dead". During funerals rites, different traditional songs are sung. These may be Hi-Life, Adowa, Sikyi, Bosoe or Church songs. At the various stages of the funeral rites, different songs are sung by the mourners to convey messages directed at different or specific social issues (Creentsil, 2007).

The messages may be directed to God, the dead person, the bereaved family or to Death itself. The funeral stages among the Akans include when the deceased is laid in state, the procession to the cemetery, and the final goodbye before covering the grave with soil, after the burial, at the thanksgiving service and the final funeral rites.

Celebrating the life of the dead has been an integral part of rich Ghanaian culture; it is a period where the dead is laid in state in many instances for family and friends, and the community members to pay their last respect and to bid the departed soul farewell to the world of the unknown. This is followed by a gathering of family and friends as well as some sympathizers. The practice is as old as the earliest history books and contemporary as the morning newspapers, and varies among the various ethnic groupings of the country; but notable among them all is the manner in which the Akans mourn their dead (Cudjoe, 2012). More so, this has brought about a new business venture in Ghana at a cost. Funeral Homes are a group of experts or professionals which mostly take care of funerals and funeral organization, this kind of funeral celebration is mostly common among the rich folks in Ghana. To have a stress free funeral, the service of a funeral home is employed. Funeral Homes virtually take charge of the deceased body from the day of demised to burial (Ekow, 2012).

After having committed so much money to keep the corpse in the morgue for so long a period to enable all relations and friends to be adequately informed, the tone is now set for permanent and ad hoc funeral committees to begin rapturous preparations for the final funeral rites. Among the several demands on family and relations to meet, funeral fees are levied on every household within the "ebusuafo", about two or more different types of funeral clothes are prescribed to be purchased for use by the elders on the funeral day. It is believed that the levies go into the organization of the funeral rites, but varies among the various clans (Cudjoe, 2012). The Asantes are traditionally strict observers of Akan culture and as they are noted for "they do not do things by halves." Things are done by them to the fullest, hate them or like them, that's who they are! They are truly a people of culture and they are worthy ambassadors of rich Akan culture and traditions. One of the Akan cultures that Asantes do not play with is funeral rite. They are well known for their strict observance and co - operation during funeral to commemorate the deceased and they unique event that takes place after the burial. Like every culture, Asantes celebrate the transition of the soul of the deceased, into the ancestral world where it becomes a protective spirit for the clan; as results, the dead

person is highly venerated through funeral rite celebrations.

Family, friends and acquaintances, sometimes in their hundreds, take part in the celebrations. The participants dress in accordance with tradition, the dress worn by relatives is in red while the others wear black cloth and every piece of gold jewellery their bodies can support. There are many rituals: giving offerings to the spirits of the ancestors, food, drinks, traditional dances accompany him in the world of the ancestors in a flurry of drumming and wild dancing. To the Asantes, funeral rite is like a festival of a sort. They hardly have festival except their Akwasidee festival of the Asantehene. Funeral ceremonies are not only a time of mourning to them but also a festive occasion and an avenue for meeting long lost friends and family. As a result of these, funeral rites have become serious business and social gathering that no Asante wish to miss at the weekends. Every amount of money is spent to celebrate funeral rite in Ashanti Region.

Lack of adequate planning in terms of cost on equipment and materials such as chairs, tables, sound system and stage performers (local dancers) have tainted effective organisation of funeral rites among Asantes. It has been observed by the researchers of late that inability to allocate spacious area for funeral rites can be largely attributed to poor event managerial skills of organisers and families. These shortfalls have greatly undermined successful organisation of funeral events with repercussions on achieving projected outcomes of funerals. These unwarranted situations have brought conflicts among funeral organisers and bereaved families. Addressing these challenges identified and curbing its effects on families and the society in general is a step in the right direction which this study seeks to achieve using Kumasi Metropolis as a case study. These have necessitated for the need to examine the event planning and management practices and funeral rites among the Asante people in Ghana. The main objective for the study was to identify challenges associated with event planning and management of funeral rites celebration, ways to mitigate the challenges and analyse effects of managing events during funeral rites in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study hinges on the mixed method paradigm where both quantitative and qualitative techniques were adopted. The exploratory and descriptive designs were adopted for the study. The nature of research questions made it imperative for adopting both techniques in dealing with issues in the study. The qualitative technique enhanced direct contact with participants through observation to gather data on their perceptions, views and comments on issues raised in the study. This design was used because data were collected on the study variables at a single point in time with a questionnaire. In addition, the design was deemed appropriate because the study involved different stakeholders in managing events in funeral celebrations with different age, experiences, and status. Also, the study utilised questionnaire as the main tool for data collection. This design was used because data were collected on the study variables at a single point in time with a questionnaire analysis. This was used because the study involved different stakeholders in planning and managing events in funeral rites celebrations with different age, experiences, and status.

The study adopted convenience-sampling technique to select 80 event planners and managers within Kumasi Metropolis. The selection of event planners and managers were done where individuals available and willing to respond to the survey were given the opportunity to participate in it. Thus the selection was done to cover only people available at the time the researchers visited the funeral rite grounds and the funeral event companies. Questionnaire, observation and interview were designed to examine event planning and management practices on funeral rite celebrations and the challenges using Asantes as the focal point. The descriptive statistics was employed in analysing the data. These were supported in some cases with tables, to bring out any comparisons that the researchers desire to make. In view of this, the results obtained from the data gathered were presented per the outcome without any other additions or omissions.

## III. DISCUSSION

This section of the study encompasses the presentation of data collected as well as the analysis and discussions which accompany it. Crucial issues dealt with in this section of the study include demographic characteristics of respondents, funeral rites eventp7 planning and management practices, factors considered in managing events during funeral rites, materials and logistics employed for planning and organising funeral rites, factors which influence event planners in selecting materials and logistics, challenges associated with funeral rites celebration among Asantes, effects of these challenges on planning and managing events and effects of event management practices on funeral rites among the Asantes.

### A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents involve their age, gender, educational background, and years worked as event managers. Eighty (80) funeral event planners and managers were selected for the study.

### B. Gender Distribution of Respondents

TABLE I: GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

Gender of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Male	44	55
Female	36	45
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Table I presents gender characteristics of funeral event managers who responded to the study. It was established from the results that 44 respondents representing 55% were males while 36 respondents representing 45% were females. This indicates that there were more males respondents than females which implies that there are more males in the event managing business than females in the Kumasi Metropolis.

### C. Age Distribution of Respondents

TABLE II: AGE BRACKET OF RESPONDENTS

Age Interval of Respondents (yrs.)	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Less than 30 years	10	12
31-40 years	17	22
41-50 years	32	40
51-60 years	11	14
61+ years	10	12
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Respondents were probed further to indicate their age bracket. Table II presents age distribution of respondents. It was found that majority of event managers who responded were within the age bracket of 41-50 years which constitutes 40%. Next to this were respondents within 31-40 years who attained 21%. 14% of the respondents were found to be within the age bracket of 51-60 years. The least among the years were respondents with less than 30 years and 60+ years that constituted 12% each. The results imply that majority of respondents were in their youthful ages. Event management requires a lot of energy and time for a successful outcome, taking into consideration the planning, organizing, controlling, coordinating, budgeting etc. Beyond the youthful age as one level of energy diminishes, one tends to switch to activities other than the event management which is considered more tedious.

### D. Educational Background of Respondents

TABLE III: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Educational Level of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
SHS, 'O' and 'A' Level	34	43
HND	16	20
Degree	20	25
Masters	10	12
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Respondents were further probed to state their educational background. Table III presents educational background of respondents. Majority of respondents had attained SHS, 'O' and 'A' Level certificates and constituted 43%. Next to this were respondents with Degree obtaining 25%. Some respondents were found to have attained master's degree 12% and HND 20%. The results imply that majority of respondents had considerable high level of formal education. This is reflected in the study as the managers adopted a variety of methods of getting connected to clients to achieve desirable results.

### E. Worked as an Event Manager

TABLE IV: YEARS WORKED AS AN EVENT MANAGER

Years of Experience	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Less than 5 years	22	28
5-10 years	26	32
10+ years	32	40
Total	80	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Table IV shows numbers of year's respondents have worked as event managers. Responses from the survey indicate that out of the 80 respondents, 32 have served for 10+ years representing 40%, 26 have worked between 5 and 10 years, accounting for 32% and 22 have served for less than 5 years representing 28%. Results emanating out of this section suggest that majority of respondents have attained adequate experience on their job and therefore were capable of handling issues as expected. Working experience is usually embedded with efficiency and effectiveness in executing tasks. Event managers with adequate experience on the job are likely to excel in their duties and responsibilities.

#### F. Age Distribution of Respondents per Their Years of Experience

TABLE V: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS PER THEIR YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Age Experience	Under 30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	61+ years	Total
Under 5 years	10	12	-	-	-	22
5-10 years	-	5	21	-	-	26
10+ years	-	-	11	11	10	32
Total	10	17	32	11	10	80

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Response from the survey further revealed that, all 10 respondents under the age of 30 years had worked in the business for less than 5 years. 17 respondents had worked between 31 and 40 years, 12 had less than 5 years working experience as event managers and 5 had between 5 and 10 years experience. Among the 32 respondents between 41 and 50 years, 21 had worked between 5 and 10 years' experience as event managers and 11 had more than 10 years in experience. However, all 11 respondents between 51 and 60 years had more than 10 years in experience. All 10 respondents of more than 61 years had 10 years' experience as well.

The data collected as shown in Table V established that, older event managers have more working experience in event management. They are likely to use their experiences to improve upon their activities. Due to experiences which usually accompany old age, such event managers are mostly privy to situations and this gives the opportunity to solve issues well and usually have rich knowledge in addressing situations using appropriate measures in most cases based on their exposure to past issues which they might have encountered in the course of their duties.

#### G. Ways Event Managers Get Connected to Their Clients

TABLE VI: WAYS EVENT MANAGERS GET CONNECTED TO THEIR CLIENTS

Medium of Connection	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Advertisement	64	80
Referrals	80	100
Reach out from industry partners	56	70
Through the social media such as Facebook etc	48	60
Listening to broadcast of upcoming events	25	31
Routine organization of seminars and fairs	21	26

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Respondents were probed to indicate the medium through which event managers get connected to their clients. As shown in Table VI, it was established that all event managers get connected to their clients through referrals from other clients and the general public (100%). This position suggests that event managers who perform effectively and deliver quality services are the most likely ones to get more connected through referrals. The reason behind this argument is based on the premise that referrals are made by satisfied clients in most cases and therefore recommendations are influenced by the level of satisfaction one derives from services provided by event managers. Since most respondents eluded those referrals were the main channel they get connected to their clients, it is appropriate to infer that majority of event managers provide good and quality services to their clients.

The second most dominant medium of connection to clients by event managers was through advertisement which involves, radio, billboards, banners, posters and television (80%). It was emphasised that event managers do get connected to their clients through announcement made on radio and television to create awareness on the existence of certain products and services provided by the various event management firms. This mode of advertising was considered as the most costly among the others stated earlier in this section. This has the tendency of reaching more potential clients than any other medium due to its wide coverage. The billboards, banners and posters were also effective in reaching out to many potential clients and were affordable compared to radio and television.

Another means by which event managers get connected was reaching out from industry partners (70%). It was realised that in some instances, clients are gotten from industry partners who lack certain services



provided by event managers. When this happens, the services of such event managers are outsourced to deal with particular function or activities as required.

The fourth most prevailing factor enumerated by respondents was through social media such as Facebook, Instagram to mention a few (60%). The advent of social media has brought a lot of opportunities to businesses to advertise their products and services which event management is no exception. Through Facebook and Instagram, event managers are able to post some of their products and services they have rendered to attract more potential customers. Largely, most people are attracted to the kind of things they see on social media platforms and this lead to patronage of their services. However, it is appropriate to state that the use of social media is commonly used by the youth who are most conversant with mobile phones and other computer software applications. The least medium was found to be listening to broadcast of upcoming events on funeral celebration (31%) and routine organisation of seminars and fairs (26%). Response from the survey further established that, among the 64 respondents who get connected to their clients through advertisement 36 were females (56%) and 28 were males (44%). This implies that all the female respondents get connected to their client through advertisement.

#### H. Advertisement and Age Distribution

TABLE VII: ADVERTISEMENT AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age Interval of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) Of Respondents
Under 30 years	10	16
31-40 years	17	26
41-50 years	32	50
51-60 years	5	8
61+ years	-	-
Total	64	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Based on the data collected from the survey as shown in Table VI, majority of the respondents were in their youthful ages and they mostly subscribe to advertisement as a medium of getting connected to their clients. While older event managers were less responsive to advertisement as a way to get connected to a client.

TABLE VIII: ADVERTISEMENT AND YEARS WORKED AS EVENT MANAGER

Work Experience of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Less than 5 years	22	34
5-10 years	24	38
10+	18	28
Total	64	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

From the data collected it was established that, majority of the clients with experience of ten years and below appreciated advertisement as a way to get connected to their client as shown in Table VIII. It can be inferred that as event managers grow in experience they tend to drift from advertisement as a means of getting connected to their client.

TABLE IX: ADVERTISEMENT AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Educational background	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
SHS, 'A' and 'O' Level	18	28
HND	16	25
Degree	20	31
Masters	10	16
Total	64	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Response from the survey as shown in Table IX indicated that majority of respondents who accept advertisement as a medium of connection to client had attain a higher level of education as all respondents with HND, Degree and Masters appreciate it.

TABLE X: SOCIAL MEDIA AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age Interval of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Under 30 years	10	21
31-40 years	17	35
41-50 years	18	38
51-60 years	3	6
60+ years	-	-
Total	48	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Responses from the survey indicate that all respondents up to 40 years of age subscribe to social media as a way of connecting to clients, also 18 respondents out of the 48 who subscribe to social media falls between the age group of 41 to 50 years. This goes to emphasise that the use of social media are commonly embraced by the youth who are mostly conversant with technological advancement.

TABLE XI: SOCIAL MEDIA AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Educational Background	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
SHS, 'A' and 'O' Level	10	21
HND	15	31
Degree	15	31
Masters	8	17
Total	48	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Based on the data collected from the study as shown in Table XI, 15 respondents out of the 16 who have HND subscribed to social media, 15 out of 20 respondents who are degree holders as well subscribed to social media. Also 8 out of the 10 respondents who have master's degree subscribes to social media as a channel of getting connected to their client. Out of 34 respondents who have SHS, 'O' and 'A' level certificate only 10 subscribed to social media. It can be deduced that the level of education of an event manager has a great impact on the embracement of technological advancement of which social media is no exception.

### 1. Activities Involved in the Practice of Funeral Rites among Asante

It became imperative for the researchers to identify the activities involved in practice of funeral rites among Ashantis in order to determine some of their event management practices. Responses gathered indicated that the first action taken after planning the event activities was retrieval of the dead body from mortuary to the family house. Based on Asante traditions and customs; it is incumbent on family members to retrieve the corpse from mortuary to prepare it for the final dressing before lying in state. In most cases, the family members are the people who are permitted to retrieve the corpse and in some cases other people close to the dead are permitted by the family to conduct such activities on their behalf. The cost incurred on the dead are settled before it can be taken out. This supports assertions made by Mensah (2010) that the dead body is first retrieved from the morgue to prepare for its laying in state.

Secondly, it was shown that after the body has been retrieved from the morgue, it is then bathed and prepared by undertakers. The bathing is done to clean and remove any possible odour that may accompany the body. This is usually done by experts to ensure that there is no unpleasant scent when the body is laid in state. In order to achieve this, powerful perfumes are used on the corpse to give it a refreshing scent which will be comfortable to mourners. This supports the position of Ameyaw-Benneh (1999) that the body of the dead is washed, shrouded and dressed to make way for the laying in state. In some cases, funerary artefacts are brought close to the dead to portray Asante's culture. The nature of the dressing depends on the financial position of the family members. Owusu (1999) stressed that the dead were dressed based on their status and to high extent the financial status of its family members.

The third factor enumerated has to do with laying in state and vigil by the family members. It was found that after dressing, the body is laid in state for mourners to pay their last respect. This is usually performed using coffins made of different kinds based on the status of the dead and the family. The mourning varies from different people consisting of friends, relatives, work colleagues, business partners and other concerned mourners. Once again, Owusu (1999) expressed that different mourners converge at the ground where the dead is laid and portray all forms of activities related to mourning like wearing of distinctive colours and special hairdo.

The fourth factor performed on the dead was religious services for the dead. The dead is recognised by its religious groups and after the laying in state and its related activities, a religious burial service is conducted by the religious group. Among the Christians, the pastors lead the services and sometimes try to portray the good deeds the person stood for to the people. The services are subject to the doctrines of the church and they differ from one another. The Traditionalist and the Muslims also have their unique ways of performing religious services for the dead but the Christians dominate largely.

It was established that next to religious services was burial at the cemetery. The corpse is taken to the cemetery where it is buried. The burial is the last stage that one sees the deceased. Most mourners and other sympathisers troop to the cemetery to wish the corpse farewell. Cudjoe (2012) emphasised that community members and sympathizers pay their last respect to the dead when buried. After this, gathering for the funeral celebration is executed. This usually starts from 1:00pm where all family members, sympathisers and mourners converge to perform the funeral rites. The rites are done usually on Saturdays and Thursdays respectively. During this period traditional songs such as highlife are played and social dance ensembles 'Kete' and 'Adowa' are performed. Some people are hired to perform all kinds of cultural performance. Again, the ability to hire these groups depends on the financial status of family members. Donations are

received from sympathisers and mourners during the ceremony. Thanksgiving services are held on Sundays which usually is done to thank Almighty God for a successful performance of the funeral rites on Saturday or Thursday. After the service, family members, sympathisers and mourners usually converge again to perform the final funeral rites where mourners usually wear specific clothes preferably of white colour way pronounced for the celebration. After this event, gathering for accountability is done in most cases on Monday. This is carried out to ascertain the actual donations got from sympathizers and ascertain whether there were profits or losses.

#### J. Factors Event Managers Consider before Getting Involved in the Management of Funerals

TABLE XII: FACTORS EVENT MANAGERS CONSIDER BEFORE GETTING INVOLVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FUNERALS

Factors Event Managers consider before getting involved	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Sufficiency of time to plan	65	81
Financial capability of the client	60	75
Availability of an appropriate venue for the funeral rite	38	48
Anticipated weather condition on the days of the event	22	28

Source: Fieldwork, 2019.

Upon ascertaining the various activities involved in performing funeral rites among Ashantis deemed it fit to identify underpinning issues which event managers consider before getting into contract with clients. It was established from the results that majority of event managers take into account sufficiency of time to plan in order to achieve desired results expected by their clients (81%). Most event managers consider time frame to plan funeral celebrations. Failure to plan effectively leads to planning to fail the event which amounts to tarnishing the firm's image. In view of this, adequately planning is essential in ensuring successful event management practices in funeral celebrations. International Institute of Event Management (2015) reiterated planning events involve making provisions and budgeting, fixing times, permit acquisition, planning food, activities arrangement, risk management and plans on contingency. This supports assertions by Gascoyne Development Commission (2011) that planning is key to ensuring successful event activities.

Aside this, financial position of clients is highly considered before entering into a contract to perform funeral rite activities on their behalf (75%). The financial position of a client is a great determinant factor which event managers consider before engaging them. It is appropriate for event managers to identify the financial position of their clients to be better informed as to whether they can bear costs involved in their specifications. The ability to meet agreed costs by the event management firm is a pre-requisite to engage clients. In view of these, most event managers ensure that the clients are able to meet their financial obligations before the start of operations. This is in line with assertions made by Cudjoe (2012) that, the status of the dead and his/her relatives, will determine the nature of materials and equipment's that would be used for the funeral. Therefore, most well-to-do families are likely to acquire luxurious and high valued materials and equipment for their events whilst the poor will minimise the cost involved.

The third factor usually considered by most respondents' deals with availability of an appropriate venue for the funeral rite (48%). Event managers ensure that there are adequate and spacious areas to carry out funeral event activities. Failure to get reserved and permitted areas to carry out their activities will ruin the whole event since the place serves as a pivotal tool to undertake necessary activities. Moreover, anticipated weather conditions (28%) on the days of the event is also vital. For instance, during the month of June and July, there are more rainfalls and event managers ensure that their activities are not disrupted by the rains. Some event managers therefore procure materials that are not easily destroyed by the rains and the arrangements of activities are done to give great comfort to mourners or sympathisers.

#### K. Funerals Effects of Event Management on Funeral Rites Celebrations among Asantes

TABLE XIII: EFFECTS OF EVENT MANAGEMENT ON FUNERAL RITES CELEBRATIONS AMONG ASANTES

Effects of Event Management	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%) of Respondents
Minimising leakages in donations by guests	72	90
Proper estimation on the number of people expected for the funeral	70	87
Reduce the inconvenience that guests usually face	68	85
Sequential and timely execution of activities	65	81
Reduced cost	38	48
Reduce possibility of materials and logistics	33	41

Source: Fieldwork, 2019



One of the most crucial factors enumerated by majority of respondents on effects of event management on funerals was minimising leakages in donations by guests. Out of the 80 respondents, seventy-two (72) of them representing (90%) rated it as a key effect. Employing the services of event managers ensures that donations are not largely collected by individual bereaved family members. When food and drinks are centralised at the bosom of the firm, they are served to people who usually donate. For instance, a receipt showing acknowledgement of donation is presented to collect drinks and foods. This goes a long way in ensuring that donations are not hugely diverted to individual pockets but are captured in the records of the donation books. There is always the possibility of having some bereaved family members with the attempt of collecting donations from their guests without paying to the right medium. The services of event managers help to curb this situation considerably when food and drinks are centred at a comfortable, convenient and secured place. This supports the views of Hard (2014) that it is appropriate to entrust event management to people with effective skills to ensure their success and save cost.

Responses from the survey further revealed that, employing the services of event managers ensures proper estimation on the number of people expected to honour the funeral. Seventy (70) out of the 80 respondents representing (87%) appreciated this as an essential effect. With effective communication and consultation with the clients, a better estimation on the number of guests expected is made. In this regard, the appropriate number of materials and logistics required for quality service delivery is ascertained. This reduces the shortages and excesses of materials and logistics that usually result from poor estimation. This reduces the tension and dissatisfaction among the bereaved family.

Effective event management practice during funeral celebrations was found to have led to reducing inconvenience that guests usually face at funerals and increase their satisfaction. Sixty-eight (68) respondents representing (85%) appreciated this as a critical effect on event management practices. Ensuring proper planning, estimation and controls on event activities lead to convenience on the part of guest. Event managers ensure that adequate chairs, tables, canopies, food, drink, secured car parking space, proper sanitary measures to mention a few are provided to meet demand. Where there is availability of such resources, it creates convenience for sympathizers. Thereby lifting the image of the event management firm as a whole.

Moreover, event management helps maintain a sequential and timely execution of activities. Sixty-five (65) out of the total respondents representing (81%) heeded to this effect. Most event managers provide their services timely and orderly as scheduled. The timely execution of activities enhances achieving desirable results. When there is orderliness, there is efficiency and effectiveness in achieving set targets. In addition, event management practices reduce the possibility of materials and logistics being missing or destroyed. Thirty-three (33) out of the 80 respondents representing 41% appreciated this effect. When the services of event managers are employed to handle a funeral, the likelihood of materials and logistics acquired or rented from various outfits, getting missing is minimised as competent personnel are deployed to handle various schedules. Personnel manning the various activities have an oversight responsibility as to the proper handling and security of the various materials and logistics.

Notwithstanding, event management helps reduce cost. Thirty-eight (38) out of the total respondents rated this as an effect. Poor estimation on the number of people expected for the ceremony, either leads to shortage or excess of materials and logistics needed to grace the occasion. Excess of materials and logistics acquired means extra cost has been incurred. Shortage brings about late inconvenience in the acquisition of materials and logistics which in most case are obtained at a higher cost as it becomes a necessity rather than a need at that time. Cost is also minimised when, event managers are employed as the possibility of materials and logistics been destroyed or missing is reduced. When there is no one to ensure the safety and security of rented logistics and materials during funeral events, some always get missing or destroyed, thereby generating extra cost as extra money is paid to make up for the loss.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The activities of most funeral rite events planning and managers within the Kumasi metropolis are well patronized due to referrals by clients. Therefore, the ability of event managers to get more customers highly depends on the nature of service rendered to their clients. The more people are satisfied with their services, the higher event managers get connected to new clients been referred by previous satisfied customers.

The level of education of an event manager has a positive influence on the medium they get connected to clients as an event management practice in funerals. As the education of a person improves, there is likelihood of better performance and use of appropriate measures to achieve desirable results.

Some clients do not consider their financial position but desire luxurious events. They demand for expensive materials and logistics for the execution of funeral activities with limited resources. This sometimes delays the implementation of activities on funerals due to mismatch between clients demand and what can be done by the event manager based on the client's financial resources.

The study recommends that Event planners and managers must establish proactive and healthy relations with their customers. They must promptly act on complaints from customers. By so doing, a continual referral from clients will always be ascertained. Event managers should upgrade their education status to a higher level at the tertiary institutions that pursue event management studies. Clients should ensure that they are financially prepared and can afford the kind of materials and logistics they desire to be used for the funeral activities in order to ascertain and enhance the satisfaction they require.

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