

Research Paper

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Business Events Industry in Malaysia

Dhiya Hikmahana Abdul Razak, Khairiah Ismail, Ng Wai Yee, Lisa Tung and Sharon Linang Jimbun
Taylor's University, Malaysia

© The Author(s) 2023. This article is published with open access by Taylor's Press.

Abstract: The aim of this study is to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the business events industry in Malaysia. This study is exploratory which is suitable for qualitative research, as the source is based on the understanding of the social context. Using the business events industry in Malaysia as the setting, the study adopted a phenomenological approach to acquire an understanding of behavior. Purposive sampling was used to select the study sample consisting of various stakeholders from the business events industry in Malaysia. Findings show that most of the business events in Malaysia have either been postponed or cancelled, while business models have been converted or re-strategised to provide essential services, and/or extend their services to virtual events. Findings also reveal other implications such as dismissal of contract employees, loss of revenue, and reduced wages. The study hopes to provide local governments and business industry professionals with a better understanding of the importance of improving their response and preparedness in the event of infectious disease outbreaks. This is critical for the business events industry, particularly due to its major contributing role in the local economy.

Keywords: Business events, impacts, pandemic, events management, crisis, COVID-19

Suggested citation: Abdul Razak, D. H., Ismail, K., Ng, W. Y., Tung, L., & Jimbun, S. L. (2023). The impact of COVID-19 on the business events industry in Malaysia. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism*, 12(3), 79–96.

Correspondence: Dhiya Hikmahana Abdul Razak, Taylor's University, Malaysia.
Email: dhiyahikmahana.abdulraza@taylors.edu.my

Introduction

The business events industry has been recognised as a key contributor to Malaysia's economic growth under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) as reported by Malaysia Convention and Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB). In 2020, the business events industry was projected to contribute RM3.9 billion incremental Gross National Income, 16,720 job creation and visitor arrivals was expected to reach 2.9 million with an increased percentage from 5% to 8%.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of a novel virus named coronavirus in Wuhan, China in December 2019 (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020a) led to a global pandemic lasting close to two years. As of Nov 22, 2021, this pandemic has caused 258 million positive cases worldwide and 5.15 million deaths (WHO, 2021). In Malaysia itself, total number of positive cases till November 22, 2021 reached 2.59 million with 30,002 total deaths (Ministry of Health of Malaysia, 2021). To contain the spread of the virus, lockdowns as well as border closures and travel bans were imposed by many countries. In Malaysia, lockdowns as well as interstate and international travel bans were enforced. These safety measures caused many businesses to close down and market prices to fall.

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 drastically impacted global markets and various industries, prompting industry leaders and players in their respective fields to innovate and develop new ways to survive in this situation. The tourism and hospitality industry was the most hard-hit and continues to struggle post-COVID. According to recent studies conducted around the world, the events industry suffered a total loss of more than \$666 million through April 2020, due to event cancellations worldwide, with 85.9 million jobs at stake (Madray, 2020). Event businesses endured losses from a severe lack of capital to sustain themselves in the long run, despite the use of technology such as live chat, webinars, online discussion shows, podcasts, and so on to support virtual events. These virtual events were not able to replace the revenue from large-scale events in terms of money and attendance (Madray, 2020).

According to Datuk Vincent Lim, former President of MACEOS (Malaysian Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers & Suppliers) (as cited in Kamel, 2020), the COVID-19 pandemic brought an end to the industry's growth, where trade events such as meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions drew in 540,000 international business travellers and contributed RM9.2 billion the year before. On the same note, the current President of MACEOS, Francis Teo ("Business events players", 2020), stated that it was projected that more than 1,550 business events in Malaysia have either been postponed or cancelled, with numerous industry players having no income since the beginning of 2020. This has resulted in an estimated loss of RM2.25 billion.

To endure this critical period, the players in the business events industry have been working hard for survival and pushing for the government to assist them

through financial aids and support programs. Based on this background, it is critical to gain an in-depth understanding of the effects of COVID-19 on the business events industry and how to overcome them, which this study intends to attain.

Literature Review

Impact of COVID-19 on the Events Industry

Numerous studies on the impact, crisis scenarios, problems, and recovery process of outbreaks have been conducted (Zakirai@Zakaria et al., 2022). In March 2020, COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020b). In April 2020, a survey conducted by Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) showed that 87% of the 1,176 respondents have had to cancel their events due to COVID-19 and these events remained cancelled till the end of 2020 and even 2021. The majority of the respondents (63%) had to postpone all their events that were scheduled for March – December 2020 (PCMA, 2020).

Economic Impact

According to Ho and Sia (2020), more than 2 million Malaysians, mostly those working in the tourism industry, are anticipated to become unemployed because of COVID-19. Additionally, the authors also stated that as more people become unemployed and unable to support themselves, the risks of becoming involved in criminal activity increases which gives rise to crime rates. This is supported by Perera (2021) who found certain event management companies and related business establishments were forced to close due to bankruptcy and were forced to manage their companies with personal savings. By June 2020, despite the outbreak being successfully managed by the Malaysian government, Malaysians continued to be wary and avoided attending various events and big gatherings (Chu, 2020).

Given the importance of the business events industry as one of the key contributors for Malaysia's economy (Hussain et al., 2017), Malaysia's future status as Asia's business event hub remains unclear (Mohd Nasir et al., 2021). Hence, the failure to respond and recover from this unprecedented crisis will not only jeopardise Malaysia's economy, but the growth of the entire industry as well. It is critical that suitable strategies are put in place to rejuvenate the industry's viability post-pandemic. As a vital contributor to Malaysia's tourism and GDP, the business events industry needs to rebound as soon as possible (Ho & Sia, 2020). Acknowledging the need for business events players to recover rapidly from the COVID-19 repercussions, this article investigates what these impacts are and how they have changed the industry.

Changes to Event Operations and Risk Management

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, more researchers have paid attention to risk management and crisis management issues in tourism and events. Ho and Sia (2020) recommended that event organisers should develop detailed instructions or procedures for event safety, as the Malaysia business events industry market is expected to undergo changes, for example, bigger, simpler, and even smaller events held at large venues, limited number of international events, usage of mobile apps for interaction as well as increased utilisation of virtual event platforms. Given that virtual events and hybrid events are anticipated to become the future norm, the authors also speculated that participants' perceptions of value may have shifted after the pandemic.

Besides that, Ziakas et al. (2021) mentioned, that now more than ever, the events industry must build capacity for readiness, adaptability, and resilience for their own recovery, survival, and prosperity, as well as cultivate versatility to serve the changing needs of their target markets in the post-crisis recovery.

Event Digitalisation

Silva and Teixeira (2022) commented that the pandemic accelerated the digital revolution in all industries, including the events industry. For instance, Rubinger et al. (2020) highlighted that since the beginning of the pandemic, hybrid events have increasingly become popular, mostly fuelled by online conferences and/or gatherings. In this regard, keeping up with digital trends is crucial to evaluate and determine the direction of business digitalisation. Similarly, Yao et al. (2021) reported that due to the rise of concern in pandemic risks and safety, the demand for virtual conference has risen.

In light of the digitalisation of events, Zakirai@Zakaria et al. (2022) stressed that, nowadays, the future of the event management industry is highly dependent on technology, and event professionals must be proactive in learning new skills like digital skills. Moreover, event planners must realise that this sector no longer relies on traditional platforms and to thrive in this sector, innovativeness and creativity are vital to stay ahead of competition.

New Ways of Marketing

Evidently, the success of digital marketing today is determined by technological and digital marketing advancements (Silva & Teixeira, 2022). Studies intending to investigate attendees' perceptions of the benefit of attending business events after COVID-19 might consider this. Hence, business event planners will need to develop new marketing strategies in light of this new trend. However, the business event sector lacks best practices in marketing tactics, particularly in Malaysia (Al-Hasan &

Chris, 2019) as well as an in-depth understanding of marketing techniques (Haneef & Ansari, 2019).

Table 1. Summary of published articles

Authors	Year	Title	Country
Madray	2020	The impact of COVID-19 on event management industry	India
Uğur & Akbıyık	2020	Impacts of COVID-19 on global tourism industry: A cross regional comparison	Turkey
Hanaei et al.	2020	Emerging standards and the hybrid model for organising scientific events during and after the COVID-19 pandemic	Cambridge
Jiang & Wen	2020	Effects of COVID-19 on hotel marketing and management: A perspective article	Hong Kong & Korea
Ho & Sia	2020	Embracing an uncertain future: COVID-19 and MICE in Malaysia.	Malaysia
Aldao et al.	2021	Modelling the crisis management and impacts of 21st century disruptive events in tourism: The case of the COVID-19 pandemic	Spain
Simge & Yasar	2021	Online event management on Twitter in the COVID-19 pandemic process: The example of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism	Turkey
Choi & Kim	2021	Changes and challenges in museum management after the COVID-19 pandemic	South Korea
Margvelashvili	2021	Sport and tourism facing the COVID- 19 pandemic	Georgia
Chiappini et al.	2021	The impact of Covid-19 lockdown on sustainable indexes	Europe & USA
Ghaharian et al.	2021	Crisis management practices in the hospitality and gambling industry during COVID-19	USA
Kwon & Kwak	2021	No games to watch empirical analysis of sport fans' stress and coping strategies during COVID-19 lockdown	USA
Harriet & Lovisa	2021	MICE and the effects of COVID-19: A qualitative study on how the effects of COVID-19 have affected MICE professional meetings companies in tourism globally	Sweden

Table 1. (cont)

Authors	Year	Title	Country
Yao et al.	2021	Public health and online MICE technology during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of health beliefs and technology innovation	China
Sheptak & Menaker	2022	When sport event work stopped: Exposure of sport event labor precarity by the COVID-19 pandemic	USA
Ludvigsen & Hayton	2022	Toward COVID-19 secure events: Considerations for organizing the safe resumption of major sporting events	United Kingdom

Table 1 presents several articles on COVID-19 and its impacts on MICE and event management published in 2020–2022.

Research Methodology

The objective of this study is to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the business events industry in Malaysia. Additionally, the authors sought to investigate the changes in the industry's operating norms that have emerged in the pandemic's aftermath. To achieve these aims, a qualitative research approach was adopted, utilising semi-structured interviews with business events industry experts in Malaysia. A total of eight interview sessions were conducted over a six-month period, each lasting between one to one and a half hours. The interview questions focused on eliciting the informant's views on the impact of COVID-19 on the business events industry in Malaysia.

Sample

This study focused on the stakeholders in the Malaysian business event industry. To obtain rich data, a less extensive sample with informants who fulfil a specific characteristic was selected to align with the study aim, instead of a sample with low specificity. Purposive sampling was used to select eight informants based on their operational knowledge of business events in Malaysia as well as their experience and expertise at a different levels of management such as director, president, or manager. A two-step strategy was employed to select the sample. First, the researchers identified the types of business events in Malaysia. Second, the researchers used their own contacts to approach the identified informants who were deemed suitable for this study. The selected informants were then contacted through email with an invitation to participate in a virtual interview, together with a consent letter. Details of the informants are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Informants' profile

Informant	Title	Types of Business Events	Gender
I-1	Managing Director	Business event supplier	Female
I-2	Sales Director	Exhibition organiser	Male
I-3	General Manager	Business event organiser	Male
I-4	Country General Manager	Business event organiser	Female
I-5	General Manager	Venue provider	Male
I-6	Founder	Conference organiser	Female
I-7	Group Executive Director	Venue provider	Male
I-8	President	Business event industry association	Male

Semi-structured Interviews

This study employed semi-structured interview, which is a common method used in qualitative research, whereby a pre-set question guide is provided to the potential informant prior to the interview. This study refers to Creswell (2014), who suggested that the semi-structured interview is the best qualitative technique for eliciting individual perspectives on the issue discussed. The interview was conducted via the Zoom platform and informants were given flexibility to provide further clarification on their responses to the questions posed. According to Yin (2003), 'how' and 'why' questions are more appropriate for interviews because they are designed to gather information about people's views. Below are some sample questions used in the interview:

1. What was the impact of COVID-19 on your organisation?
2. How has COVID-19 affected your organisation?

Analysis

As the interviews were conducted on the Zoom platform, they were directly recorded, and then were transcribed, and analysed using thematic content analysis to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, or themes. Since there were only eight informants, the data were manually analysed by labelling and categorising similar themes. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), theoretical saturation is reached when any new data no longer contributes to the development of emerging themes or concepts of the selected research topic. In this regard, the researchers have gathered enough data from the eight informants to gain a comprehensive understanding to answer the research objectives. In addition, the relationship of the identified themes were also determined. The final stage of the data analysis included identifying the core themes and providing further discussion. To summarise, the researchers implemented six steps of collecting and analysing data as recommended by Phondej et al. (2011) (Figure 1).

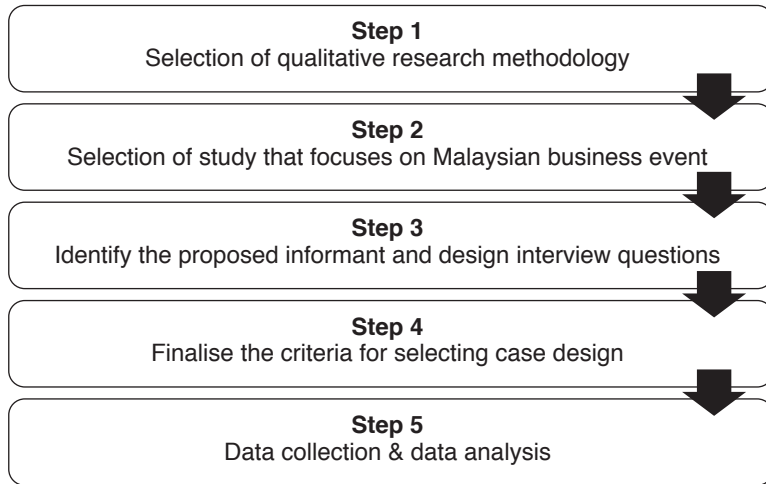


Figure 1. Research methodology

Findings

Data analysis revealed six final themes that describes the effects of COVID-19 on business events in Malaysia: cancellations & postponements, financial loss, new business models, event technology, salary cuts and restrictions by government.

Cancellations and/or Postponements

As reported in the previous section, more than 1,550 business events in Malaysia were either postponed or cancelled in 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is evident from the following interview excerpt :

Last year, there were more than 700 cancellations of meetings in World Trade CenterStarting March 2020, we've had a lot of cancellations, postponement value around RM50 million ringgit Malaysia. (I7)

Since the first COVID-19 outbreak, the events industry, including business events, saw an increase in cancellations from 2020 to 2021 worldwide. These cancellations or indefinite postponement led to drastic financial losses for many event businesses.

Financial Loss

The Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) and Singapore Tourism Board (STB) (2021) reported that of the 450 companies in the exhibitions industry that participated in their survey, 30% saw a drop of more than 50% in their profits, while

a tenth admitted that they would have to close down if they had no business in the next six months.

There was a similar observation from one of the informants:

The industry also reported more than RM2.25 billion from the cancellation and postponement of around 1,550 business events due to the interstate and international travel restrictions. (I7)

The snowball effect of the cancellation and postponement of events affected all the stakeholders and its supply chain of the events industry, resulting in huge financial losses, permanent or temporary closure of businesses and job losses.

New Business Model

A survey done by MACEOS (2020) found that several business events professionals felt the need to explore other business opportunities and look for alternative sources of income. Changes in business models was highlighted by one of the informants:

“Opening our new F&B outlets setting up very quick E-commerce shop to handle online orders and working on strengthening our online presence, we also reoriented our operations and strategised our external catering services for 2021 ... (I7)

Tough times call for drastic measures and therefore, businesses had to navigate through the pandemic and pivot to a new business model that was deemed feasible for short-term survival. Some even changed the nature of their business or modified their services to align with the new normal or satisfy customers’ needs that had changed.

Event Technology

COVID-19 changed people’s preferences with regard to events. There was a stronger demand for digital or hybrid events in Asia as reported by PCMA, UFI and STB (2021). The informants displayed a similar point of view as this excerpt shows:

We have to accept that, you know, event digitalization is here to stay.... Being better by adopt the event digitization In future... in any event, it will be hybrid events ... 20/30% could attend or even 200% could attend through virtual. (I8)

The pandemic changed the way events are planned and attendees’ experience or satisfaction are assessed, which led the industry to experiment and adopt numerous

event technologies. While the trend of digitalisation was already rapidly expanding, the recent pandemic greatly accelerated it. With event technologies, attendees can choose to whether attend in person or virtually.

Salary Cuts

Many businesses in the events industry also had to let go of their employees or reduce their pay in order to stay in business (MACEOS, 2020). Many informants reported the same:

A lot of smaller players in business events had to cut jobs and cut salaries.
(I4)

As the economic impact of the prolonged pandemic continued, employers begin to cut salaries and jobs, especially small and medium enterprise (SME) owners. Salary cuts ranged between 5% and 15%. Recognising this, the Malaysian government offered a three-month wage subsidy program that helped SMEs pay their employees.

Restrictions by Government

One of the interesting insights that emerged from the interviews was the conviction of the informants that events can be a controlled environment and their discontentment with the social restrictions imposed by the government. The following is one response that suggests this:

Government thinks we are like a normal gathering, dinner, but we are not. Business event is a very controlled environment. We can track and know who are coming. If shopping mall can be open, why we cannot open? Events can be planned safely, we record everything, we follow SOPs (I1)

During the pandemic, the government imposed a series of movement control orders (MCO) that suspended local and international travel, as well as restricted social or large gatherings, all of which brought the business events industry to a halt. Industry players came together to convince the government that business events should be categorised as an essential service and allowed to operate safely and responsibly under strict SOPs. Especially, since business events is one of the sectors that generate billions of ringgits of revenue for the country. However, their pleas were in vain and business events were categorised as prohibited activities during the MCO periods.

Discussion

The aim of this study is to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the business events industry in Malaysia and to investigate what will be the new normal for this industry post-pandemic. In-depth interviews were conducted with the director, manager or president of event companies and industry associations. All informants agreed that the main impacts of COVID-19 was the large volume of event postponements and cancellations that led to other repercussions such as financial loss, job loss, salary cuts and temporary/permanent closure of businesses. Similar implications were identified for other types of events such as sports events. A study by Swart and Maralack (2020) found that the Premier Ultramarathon in Malaysia and the Two Oceans Marathon in Africa, which were cancelled three weeks ahead of their actual dates, resulted in similar repercussions.

On the other hand, a survey done by PCMA (2020) found that 87% of their respondents, who identify as business event professionals and suppliers, confirmed that they had cancelled an event because COVID-19 (Turner, 2020). Besides that, Aburumman (2020) also found that due to the restrictions of traveling and cancellation of business events, women, young people, and the indigenous population were the most disproportionately impacted by employment losses in the MICE sector. MICE businesses that are owned and run by women may have smaller staffs and fewer financial means to deal with a crisis such as a pandemic. In a salary survey, Russell (2022) found that although 23% of the respondents (350) stated that their salary was unaffected, about 8% suffered a salary cut.

In addition, a number of businesses reverted to a new business model as a way of surviving the pandemic. Similarly, Duar (2021) from Ernst & Young reported that, 85% of their Asia-Pacific respondents stated that “their organisations are undergoing significant business and technology transformation as companies try to redefine success in a post-pandemic landscape.” The survey also revealed that most of the companies’ aim post-pandemic is to reduce debts and achieve financial stability.

With regard to technology, many business event players started adopting innovative technologies to conduct virtual conferences, meetings, or exhibitions. This finding is supported by Williams and Santos (2021) who found that during the pandemic, online events were more successfully carried out, and this pivot to online events required “upskilling”. While the hybrid model is still very new for most business event players, it is anticipated this trend will stay and new major developments will continue to take place such as digital conferences. In Rwigema’s work (2020), 61.8% and 32.8% of respondents strongly agreed that virtual events primarily acted as a good replacement for physical exhibitions and attendees were susceptible to economic downturns, respectively.

Lastly, the majority of the informants agreed that the Malaysian government's misconception about business events is something that needs to be addressed. Business events was one of the sectors that was not allowed to re-open during the National Recovery Plan Phase 3 while other businesses like dine-in restaurants, camping, interstate tourism, cruise, spa and wellness, live and/or recorded entertainment program, cinema and shopping malls were allowed with a standardised SOP (*Majlis Keselamatan Negara* [National Safety Council] [MKN], 2021).

According to the informants, while leisure or social events like festivals or concerts are considered as an unmanageable mass gathering/social activity, business events (MICE) can be conducted in a controlled manner, where the attendees/delegates/exhibitors are all registered participants. which allows the organisers to control the capacity and movement of the attendees. They added that MACEOS had already designed and presented a comprehensive health and safety framework with best practices from around the world as standards for organising business events and meetings in the new norm as early as June 2020. These standards included sanitisation of venues, delegate health checks, crowd management, contact tracing processes, social distancing techniques, and more ("Reopen borders", 2022).

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly indicate the dire need of support for the business events industry in Malaysia post-pandemic. The study identified several impacts of COVID-19 on the industry, which include cancellations/postponements, financial loss, new business model, event technology, salary cuts and restrictions by the government. These findings add on to existing literature on impacts of COVID-19 (Aburumman, 2020; Madray, 2020).

The postponement of events due to COVID-19 was initially seen as a short-term impact at the start of the pandemic. However, as time progressed and due to the uncertainty of the pandemic, more and more events were cancelled, and this adversely impacted the industry as a whole. As highlighted in the survey by PCMA in 2020, 87% of the respondents had to cancel their events due to COVID-19. The cancellation and postponement of business events led to huge financial losses for the industry. The subsequent series of Movement Control Orders (MCO) contributed further to the cancellation of events. The ban on business events during MCO, coupled with restricted traveling made it impossible for event companies to generate any income. Some businesses had to resort to job or pay cuts to survive. However, this only worked as a short-term measure and many small-sized businesses eventually had to close down. Businesses that managed to survive during pandemic and MCO were those that changed their business model and diversified into different portfolios, particularly adoption of technology to transform physical events to virtual ones.

The survivability of business event organisers was further threatened by the restrictions imposed by the Malaysian government. As the number of COVID-19 cases in Malaysia escalated in 2021, the business events industry, which was seen as a social activity that presented a high risk of infection, was prohibited while other sectors such as shopping and open markets were allowed. Moreover, the lack of financial support from the government further compounded the business event industry's financial loss.

Apart from the negative impacts of COVID-19, there have also been positive ones. As businesses struggled to survive, they became more innovative in exploring new business models and opportunities. Since event management related services were not allowed during the pandemic, some businesses ventured into essential services such as food and beverage outlets, training programs and transforming their physical events to hybrid or virtual modes. COVID-19 also accelerated the development of event technology. In the past, virtual or hybrid events were seen as an added value but now, has become a norm, especially virtual events. Ho and Sia (2020) anticipated that there will be an increased demand for virtual event platforms for the MICE industry. This positive development will see many more hybrid events in the future, which will open a new market segment for business events.

Furthermore, virtual elements for events are now becoming a norm, in response to the changing demands or expectations of clients or attendees. Thus, the business events industry has changed to incorporate online hosting into event operations. For physical events, logistics planning involves the physical venue arrangement and communication with the venue provider, while virtual or hybrid events will need to consider additional aspects such as internet connectivity, technical troubleshooting, digital hardware and software as well as a skilled crew managing the virtual platform. In this respect, upskilling of technological skills is necessary for business event practitioners so that virtual events can run smoothly.

The pandemic also opened up opportunities for the business events industry to harness a larger pool of speakers for conferences since the virtual events do not require speakers to make any travel arrangements to the venue. From the perspective of planning, it has become more flexible and faster to get confirmation of speakers and to market to more people from various parts of the world. Planning of a virtual event became faster and there was an increase in the number of virtual events during the pandemic through various platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft TEAMS, Webex and many more. As people became more used to virtual events, there was more demand for various features on virtual platforms as well. In addition, there is a growing discussion to relate Metaverse to the events industry, which is something that can be explored further, especially if a new pandemic occurs in the future.

Limitations and Future Research

COVID-19 certainly left a significant mark on business events and changed the way they are carried out. As vaccination rates increase in Malaysia and other countries, more support will be needed to rebuild the business events industry. The reopening of the business events industry effective Dec 19, 2021 (MyCEB, 2021) provided the light at the end of the tunnel for industry players. Given that the business events industry is a major contributor to Malaysia's gross domestic product, as well as creating jobs and revenues for other industries such as tourism, hospitality and food and beverage, it is vital that emphasis is given to the rebuilding of the business events industry post-pandemic so that Malaysia remains as a competitive business event destination globally.

The findings of this study are useful as a point of reference for the Malaysian government on the impact of COVID-19 on the business events industry in Malaysia. In addition, the understanding of these impacts allows the industry to review and reflect on their business structure and develop new ideas for business viability. As this study is only limited to exploring the impacts of COVID-19, it may not provide further insights on solutions to rebuild the business events industry. Further research can be conducted to identify the type of support needed by the business events industry and to explore the strategies for its recovery and resilience in the future. Another limitation of this study is that the study focused only on several event organisers and not all the stakeholders of business events. Thus, future researchers can expand the study to include more stakeholders and compare the differences of impact on various stakeholders.

Open Access: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY 4.0) which permits any use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and the source are credited.

References

- Aburumman, A. A. (2020). COVID-19 impact and survival strategy in business tourism market: the example of the UAE MICE industry. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 7, 141.
- Aldao, C., Blasco, D., Espallargas, M. P., & Rubio, S. P. (2021). Modelling the crisis management and impacts of 21 st century disruptive events in tourism: The case of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Tourism Review*, 76(4), 939–941.
- Al-Hasan, A., & Chris, O. S. H. (2019). External and internal factors affecting the progress of the event industry in Malaysia. *Qualitative and Quantitative Research Review*, 4(1), 78–112.

- Business events players keen to work with govt to reopen industry. (2020, December 18). *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2020/12/18/business-events-players-keen-to-work-with-govt-to-reopen-industry>
- Chiappini, H., Vento, G., & De Palma, L. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 lockdown on Sustainable Indexes. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1846.
- Choi, B., & Kim, J. (2021). Changes and challenges in museum management after the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Open Innovation: Technology, Market, and Complexity*, 7(2), 148.
- Chu, M. M. (2020, June 7). Malaysia to reopen most economic activity with virus outbreak 'under control'. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-malaysia-curbs/malaysia-to-reopen-most-economic-activity-with-virus-outbreak-under-control-idUSKBN23E08N>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE publications.
- Duar, S. (2021, Sept 6). How to reframe your business for a post-pandemic landscape. *EY*. https://www.ey.com/en_my/restructuring-turnaround/how-to-reframe-your-business-for-a-post-pandemic-landscape
- Gazendam, A., Ekhtiari, S., Nucci, N., Payne, A., Johal, H., Khanduja, V., & Bhandari, M. (2020). Maximizing virtual meetings and conferences: A review of best practices. *International Orthopaedics (SICOT)*, 44, 1461–1466.
- Ghaharian, K., Abarbanel, B., Soligo, M., & Bernhard, B. (2021). Crisis management practices in the hospitality and gambling industry during COVID-19. *International Hospitality Review*, 35(2), 171–194.
- Hanaei, S., Takian, A., Majdzadeh, R., Maboloc, C. R., Grossmann, I., Gomes, O., & Rezaei, N. (2020). Emerging standards and the hybrid model for organizing scientific events during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, 16(3), 1172–1177.
- Haneef, S. K., & Ansari, Z. (2019). Marketing strategies of Expo 2020 Dubai: A comprehensive study. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, 11(3), 287–297.
- Harriet, W., & Lovisa, S. (2021). *MICE and the effects of COVID-19. A qualitative study on how the effects of COVID-19 have affected MICE professional meetings companies in tourism globally* [Unpublished dissertation]. Södertörn University, Sweden.
- Hazira, M. N., Alagas, E. N., Amin, M., Zamzuri, N. H., & Zairul, M. M. (2021). The best practice of marketing strategies for the Malaysian business event industry from experts' perspective. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 5(2), 413–434.
- Ho, J. M., & Sia, J. K. M. (2020). Embracing an uncertain future: COVID-19 and MICE in Malaysia. *Local Development & Society*, 1(2), 190–204.
- Hussain, K., Kumar, J., Kannan, S., & Nor, M. M. (2017). Investigating the size and economic value of the business tourist market in Malaysia. *Event Management*, 21(4), 497–514.
- Jiang, Y., & Wen, J. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on hotel marketing and management: a perspective article. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32(8), 2563–2573.

- Kamel, H. (2020, July 28). Event industry records RM1.8b loss due to COVID-19. *The Malaysian Reserve*. <https://themalaysianreserve.com/2020/07/28/event-industry-records-rm1-8b-loss-due-to-covid-19/>
- Kwon, Y., & Kwak, D. H. (2021). No games to watch empirical analysis of sport fans' stress and coping strategies during COVID-19 lockdown. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 23(1), 190–208.
- Ludvigsen, J. L., & Hayton, J. W. (2022). Toward COVID-19 secure events: Considerations for organizing the safe resumption of major sporting events. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 27(1–2), 135–145.
- Madray, J. S. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on the event management industry. *International Journal of Engineering Applied Sciences and Technology*, 5(3), 533–534.
- Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN). (2021, October 8). *Pelan Pemulihan Negara – Fasa 3* [National Recovery Plan – Phase 3]. //efaidnbmnnnibpccajpcglclefindmkaj/<https://asset.mkn.gov.my/web/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/08/Pelan-Pemulihan-Negara-SOP-Fasa-3-Kemas-Kini-8-Oktober-2021.pdf>
- Malaysia Association of Convention and Exhibition Organizers & Suppliers (MACEOS). (2020, Nov 25). Business events barred, industry players burdened by high operating costs. <https://maceos.org.my/business-events-barred-industry-players-burdened-by-high-operating-costs/>
- Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB). (2020). *Malaysia's Business Events Roadmap: Charting Malaysia's Journey to 2020 and beyond*.
- Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB). (2021, March 13). Malaysia secured 155 business events for next six years. <https://www.myceb.com.my/about-us/media-centre/press-release/malaysia-secured-155-business-events-for-next-six-years>
- Margvelashvili, N. (2021). Sport and tourism facing the COVID-19 pandemic. *Geosport For Society*, 14, 21–27.
- Ministry of Health Malaysia. (2021). Current COVID-19 pandemic situation in Malaysia. <https://covid-19.moh.gov.my/terkini>
- Perera, D. (2021, July 15). Event management companies are on brink of bankruptcy. *Daily News*. <https://archives1.dailynews.lk/2021/07/15/business/253986/events-management-companies-brink-bankruptcy>
- Phondej, K., Kittisarn, A. & Neck, P. A. (2011). The seven steps of case study development: A strategic qualitative research methodology in female leadership field. *Review of International Comparative Management*, 12(1), 123–134.
- Professional Convention Management Association. (PCMA). (2020). *How is COVID-19 changing the business events industry?* <https://www.pcma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/pcma-convencovid19-survey-p5d3.pdf>
- Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), Singapore Tourism Board (STB) & The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI). (2021). *Reimagining business events through COVID-19 and beyond*.

- Reopen borders to reactivate business events. (2022, February 14). *Business Today*. <https://www.businesstoday.com.my/2022/02/14/reopen-borders-to-reactivate-business-events/>
- Rwigema, C. P. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 to Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism in Rwanda. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 7(3), 395–409.
- Sheptak, R. D., & Menaker, B. E. (2020). When sport event work stopped: Exposure of sport event labor precarity by the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 13(3), 427–435.
- Silva, P., & Teixeira, S. (2022). *Digital marketing trends*. CEOS Edições.
- Simge, Ü. L., & Yasar, L. (2021). Online event management on Twitter in the COVID-19 pandemic process: The example of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. *Erciyes İletişim Dergisi*, 8(2), 517–534.
- Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Sage Publications.
- Swart, K., & Maralack, D. (2020). COVID-19 and the cancellation of the 2020 Two Oceans Marathon, Cape Town, South Africa. *Sport in Society*, 23(11), 1736–1752. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2020.1805900>
- Turner, M. (2020, April 16). Stats: 87 percent of business event professionals have cancelled events. *Meeting Spotlight*. <https://www.meetingspotlight.com/article/stats-87-percent-business-event-professionals-have-cancelled-events/> \h
- Uğur, N. G., & Akbıyık, A. (2020). Impacts of COVID-19 on global tourism industry: A cross regional comparison. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 36, 100744.
- Williams, H., & Santos, L. (2021). *A qualitative study on how the effects of COVID-19 have affected MICE professional meetings companies in tourism globally* [Unpublished graduate thesis]. Södertörn University, Sweden.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2020a, March 29). From modes of transmission of virus causing COVID-19: Implications for IPC precaution recommendations. <https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/modes-of-transmission-of-virus-causing-covid-19-implications-for-ipc-precaution-recommendations>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2020b, July 15). WHO timeline - COVID-19. <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/27-04-2020-who-timeline—covid-19>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2021). Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic. https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-019?gclid=CjwKCAjwrvv3BRAJEiwAhwOdM1siqZy7HNSSfaPVCVsUo9QzEbtju37RnQvhOOt1HRoEd6BO7kK9xoC6M8QAvd_BwE
- Yao, J., Pang, Q., Zhang, B., Wang, L., & Huang, Y. (2021). Public health and online MICE technology during the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of health beliefs and technology innovation. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 9.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

- Zakirai@Zakaria, N., Nor Azam, N. H., Bashirun, S. N., Mohd Kodri, A. N., & Jislan, F. (2022). Event Industry: Impact, challenges and evolvement in post pandemic era. *Jurnal 'Ulwan*, 7 (Special Issue I: Organizational Challenges and Impact After Pandemic), 98–108.
- Ziakas, V., Antchak, V., & Getz, D. (2021). *Crisis management and recovery for events: Impacts and strategies*. Goodfellow Publishers.

Copyright of Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality & Tourism is the property of Taylor's University and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.