

THE EFFECT OF COVID-19 ON TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA, RESURGENCE IN THE POST-PANDEMIC ERA: A CONCEPTUAL CRITERION

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: This study aims to provide an overview of the key issues and challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Malaysian tourism and hospitality industry, lessons learned from its devastating effects on the industry, and to contemplate possible solutions and strategies for post-pandemic recovery from a global perspective.

Methodology: This is a conceptual study. In doing so, a comprehensive review of the most recent selected literature was gathered from academic and online news portal and relevant online platforms to extract the current state of the art knowledge. Based on the conceptual analysis, this study unfolds the uncertainties about the critical outcomes of the past events to provide some significant insights focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, which is denoted as post-crisis analysis based on current and past events.

Main Findings: Based on the comprehensive review of the related literature this paper finds that both from the academic and industry perspective that the emphasis should be given to study, teach and engage with current tourism-related concepts and theories to provide a holistic pedagogy to rebuild and transform the tourism and hospitality industry rather than maintaining the current tourism and hospitality trajectory in the post-Covid 19 pandemic age.

Applications of this study: The practical implications of this paper is to assist the tourism and hospitality managers by providing a glimpse of the current and forthcoming challenges in the industry and to provide critical recovery strategies in the post-pandemic phase for the related tourism and hospitality operators to plan effective business strategies, activities and policies to adopt the new normal.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study exposes the vulnerability of an already gruesome Malaysia tourism and hospitality industry in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic based on the post-crisis analysis in relation to the current and past events, and consequently suggested some critical sustainable resilience strategies for a resurgence in the post-pandemic period from a global point of view.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Tourism, Hospitality, Malaysia, Social Media Engagement, Movement Control Order (MCO).

INTRODUCTION

The alarming spread of the coronavirus infection (COVID-19) has halted the world, especially hitting the tourism and hospitality industry most severely. Unexpected travel restrictions and border closures for most countries across the world have caused millions of livelihood and jobs lost. In the tourism and hospitality sector alone 100 million jobs were already lost and putting more than 197 million more jobs at the risk along with an estimated loss of 5.5 trillions of travel and tourism GDP in the current year due to prolonged travel restrictions and Movement Control Order (MCO) imposed by the nations ([World Travel and Tourism Council, 2020](#)). In Malaysia, the MCO was imposed by the government on 18th March 2020 and currently in the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) stage until 31st December 2020. These actions are taken to curb the spread of this disease. In addition, while the ban on international tourists remains effective as the COVID-19 cases around the world continue to rise ([Puvaneswary, 2020](#)), the tourism and hospitality sector in Malaysia has already experienced losses of approximately RM 3.37 billion within the first two months of MCO period ([Dzulkifly, 2020](#)). Hotels are struggling to survive to the extent that 35% of hotels had to cease their operation temporarily. Malaysian Association of Hotels has estimated that there will be 60% loss of tourism businesses, and 15% of the hotel operators will not be able to survive and will completely close their operation by 2020 ([Dw, 2020](#)).

It is revealed that when the current COVID-19 pandemic crisis ends the visitor is not comfortable as before to travel to a tourism destination, dine in at the restaurant and stay at a hotel ([Gursoy & Chi, 2020](#)). This reflects that we are unable to return to normal because the normal that we had was precisely the problem ([Benjamin, Dillette, & Alderman, 2020](#)). If we are back to the old normal, in such case the theory of black swan would be confirmed. According to the theory an unprecedented event of major socioeconomic effect, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, has passed, it becomes inappropriately rationalized, assuming such occurrence was predictable, and things get back to normal 'as usual' ignoring the benefit of its

hindsight (Taleb, 2007). With this point of view, the current pandemic crisis will not infer any substantial change to the tourism and hospitality sector in terms of its future management, operation, and planning, rather prevail business as usual like post-crisis business environment. This would be precisely worrying because we should not overlook the fact that the current pandemic crisis has not only aggravated the tourism industry downfall but also reflects the lack of business resilience and vulnerability of the global hospitality industry players including Malaysia. Over the last decades the industry itself is known to be a major agent of practicing unsustainable modus operandi, over-tourism, taking sustainability conception for granted, and operating businesses in neoliberalism and capitalistic manner (Carr, 2020; Cheer, 2020).

Tourism and hospitality experts such as Galvani, Lew, and Perez (2020) noted that epidemiologist has predicted such pandemic will happen in near future, and now that it has occurred and changed the tourism landscape to move forward towards more global sustainability. Steered differently, the hospitality industry needs to adapt to the “new normal” practised worldwide post-pandemic. A critical turn dubbed by numerous scholars that the new normal already recognized and exposed the tension and crisis inhabited by the pre-pandemic tourism practices related to pro-equity and sustainability. It is expected that post-pandemic tourism will emerge in a more just and equitable manner in terms of its operations and ultimately how it affects people, the planet, the environment, and the host community (Cheer, 2020; Benjamin, Dillette, & Alderman, 2020). However, the existing literature offers very little insights into the resilient strategies on how the tourism industry will be restructured and emerged in the post-pandemic era, especially in the Malaysian context. Therefore, this study aims to explore the following research questions:

What are the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Malaysian Tourism and hospitality industry? What are the lessons that could learn to make it more sustainable and equitable in the future? And finally what would be the suggested resilient strategies for the tourism and hospitality operators to regain the business in the context of the new normal in the post-pandemic era?

The main objectives of this paper are to provide an overview of the key issues and challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Malaysian tourism and hospitality industry, lessons learned from its devastating effects on the industry, and to contemplate possible solutions as post-pandemic recovery. Eventually, to posit possible directions for future research. In doing so, a comprehensive review of the most recent selected literature was gathered from academic and online news portal and relevant online platforms to extract the current state of the art knowledge. Theoretically, this paper postulates an urge to the tourism scholars, educators, and students to ponder on what has caused this pandemic and the critical contributing factors involved. With this view, the emphasis should be given to study, teach and engage with current tourism-related concepts and theories to provide a holistic pedagogy to rebuild and transform rather than maintaining the current tourism and hospitality trajectory in the post-pandemic age. The managerial implications of this paper are to assist the tourism and hospitality managers by providing a glimpse of the current and forthcoming challenges in the industry. Furthermore, to provide critical recovery strategies in the post-pandemic phase so that beneficial business strategies and policies can be achieved.

METHODOLOGY

This conceptual study was carried out by reviewing the literature gathered from various peer-reviewed journals and media reports focusing on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality and tourism industry. Based on the conceptual analysis, the study unfolds the uncertainties about the critical outcomes of the past events to provide some significant insights focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, which is denoted as post-crisis analysis based on current and past events (Prideaux, Thompson, & Pabel, 2020). A comprehensive review of the most recent selected literature from both academic journals as well as relevant online news portals, online platforms to extract the current state-of-the-art knowledge. This method gave an opportunity to understand the current concerns and consequently to portray some critical policies to respond to the pandemic in the post-crisis period.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Impact of COVID-19 on Hospitality and tourism industry

COVID-19 has negatively affected the financial, health, and mental wellbeing of citizens worldwide. Travel and tourism are known as the focal elements of world economics and financial backbone. Without it, the world economy will suffer tremendously in terms of financial, social, and peoples' mental haphazard aspects in the years ahead (World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), 2020). It was highlighted by WTTC in a report released by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) that international tourism has shown 22% decline in Q1, 2020, and the estimated trend of decline by end of 2020 is expected to hit at 60% to 80%. The industry has already experienced 67% less tourist mobility and USD 80 billion loss from tourism export compared to Q1 in 2019 (WTTC, 2020).

In Malaysia, the effect of COVID-19 has restrained the Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign. As 64% of Malaysia's tourists came from China, Singapore, and Indonesia, which are also badly impacted by the pandemic and led to the decline and cancellation of a substantial number of tourism trips to Malaysia (Foo, Chin, Tan, & Phuah, 2020; Ganesan, 2020). The

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) estimated losses incurred by the country's mainstream tourism players (transportation, accommodation, restaurant sector, and event business) from January to March 2020 as 9 billion Malaysian Ringgit ([Mypf, 2020](#)).

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Malaysian government has imposed four phases of movement control order (MCO) and recovery movement control order (RMCO) from March 18, 2020, to December 2020 ([Foo, Chin, Tan, & Phuah, 2020](#); [Prime Minister's Office, 2020](#)). As of 16th March, hotel booking cancellation reports show that 170,085 rooms were cancelled worth of RM 68 million revenues ([MAH, 2020](#)). According to the report, a sign of depression among the hotel employees has raised as 17% of employees had to take unpaid leave, 9% had to undergo pay cuts, and 4% were permanently retrenched. During the first phase of MCO which was from 18th March to 31st March 2020, the hospitality sector has lost RM 510 million from room revenue and in the 2nd phase of MCO, the estimated incurred loss is RM 570 million ([Ganesan, 2020](#)). According to Yap Lip Seng, The CEO of Malaysian Association of Hotels (MAH), for the period of January to June 2020 the approximate loss of RM 3.3 billion revenue compared to the same period of 2019 (see table 1) from the room revenue alone ([Mypf, 2020](#)). In this scenario, the expected average occupancy rate for the current year is around 30% (MAH, 2020). Typically, hotels are not expected to record any profit below 50% occupancy rate, and considering such projection, consequently, the Malaysian hotel industry will see around 30% of the industry player closing down their operations either permanently or temporarily if the global pandemic situation continues to surge ([Ganesan, 2020](#)).

Table 1: Malaysia's hotel occupancy comparison for 1st half of 2020 vs. 2019 and estimated losses due to extension of MCO until April 28, 2020

Comparison	2019			2020		Estimated loss of Room Revenue (RM)
Month	Occupancy (%)	Average Rate (RM)	Daily	Occupancy (%)		Based on 200,000 star rated hotel rooms only
January	58.5	227.89		55		(49,452,130)
February	67.72	238.07		44		(327,527,183)
March	64.99	223.64		22		(596,085,583)
April	64.68	219.55		6		(1,126,568,133)
May	52.91	206.70		11		(537,093,414)
June	64.10	228.75		16		(660,172,500)
Total Amount (RM)						(3,296,898,943)

Source: This table is based on a survey conducted by MAH, published on The Edge Malaysia Weekly on 27th April 2020

COVID-19 exposes the vulnerability of an already gruesome tourism and hospitality industry

The crisis caused by COVID-19 on the tourism industry is strongly apparent. Long before the pandemic occurred, tourism has been negatively related to its impact on social, environmental, and human ecology including the loss of local community values, expansion of over-tourism consumption on to previously untouched areas ([Benjamin et al., 2020](#); [Galvani, 2014](#); [Galvani et al., 2020](#)). For example, in the plight of the world's largest freshwater Lake Baikal in Russia which was badly impacted by over-tourism ([Kosyrev, 2019](#)). On the other hand, Boracay Island in the Philippines had to be shut for six months long in 2018 for a mass cleaning exercise. Similarly, other beaches in Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia also suffered the same ([Kosyrev, 2019](#)). It was highlighted by several researchers (e.g. [Benjamin et al., 2020](#); [Cheer, 2020](#); [Higgins-Desbiolles, 2010](#)) that over history the industry has normalized and integrated a series of imbalance in the system. However, when a new normal is practised due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism communities and the industry found themselves in a dilemma for sustainable resilience.

Over tourism is a topical issue that is in need of serious attention in the pre-pandemic period ([Chin, 2019](#)). As Datuk Tan Kok Liang, the President of Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) pointed out that Malaysia was engrossed with the increasing number of tourist arrival, although it has brought considerable economic benefits but it was putting alarming danger to the country due to the negligence in some societal and environmental aspects, placing greater stress and risks to the tourism ecosystem such as beaches, national parks, and coastlines. ([Chin, 2019](#)). For instance, in major tourist spots such as at Pulau Redang, Terengganu visitors kept disturbing the turtles like domestic pets hence causing threats to them. A report from WTTC, 2019, cited in [Zainal and Chung \(2020\)](#) mentioned that Kuala Lumpur is at risk of being one of the cities facing over-tourism like Manila and Istanbul due to the lack of ethical and responsible tourism practices. The tourist was seen to impair a lot of tourist spots, vandalising the facilities, collecting plants from the reserved natural sites, harming marine creatures which were found abundantly on the beaches ([Zainal & Chung, 2020](#)). However, as the pandemic

has hallowed out the over-tourism destinations, it has tremendously reduced the impact on these once badly affected sites ([Cheer, 2020](#)).

As tourists' absence from the cities following the almost worldwide lockdowns, nature can now take its much needed "respite" from the polluted atmosphere ([Everingham & Chassagne, 2020](#)). Surplus evidence shows that due to the drop of international and local tourist mobility, the air quality in many localities is cleaner than it was in past decades ([Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020](#); [Watts & Kommenda, 2020](#)), clearer water at Venice canals ([Everingham & Chassagne, 2020](#)); the usually turbid and dirty Sungai Klang in Malaysia is now clean and swimmable; turtles beaching and laid eggs while dolphins were sighted at Port Dickson ([Vincent Tan, 2020](#)). Thus, in the shadow of a pandemic like COVID-19, the inclination to regenerate, rethink and recalibrate prior tourism practices has receded dramatically.

In recent decades, the tourism industry was recognised as a major contributor to global GDP and annual economic growth. On the basis of neoliberalism, tourism destinations around the globe have persisted in highly environmentally deregulated 'modus operandi' in a shun manner ([Prideaux, Thompson, & Pabel, 2020](#); [Cheer, 2020](#)). In a statement on the COVID-19 pandemic, the tourism alert and action forum have clearly mentioned that the tourism industry has created dependencies on non-sustainable practices instead of focusing on well-structured and diverse community wellbeing ([TAAF, 2020](#)). Similarly, [Hamzah \(2020\)](#) indicated that Malaysia's tourism industry is operating on a high volume/ low-profit margin business model as well as the increasing dependence highly on a few lucrative niche customer segments such as the Chinese outbound market. Following this, [Romagosa \(2020\)](#) revealed that the European destinations were in a ceaseless search for new emerging marketing strategies to attract long-haul tourists from India, China, and southeast Asian regions. Thus, it is much apparent that so far the tourism industry was mostly relaying on the mechanism of capitalist accumulation based on exploitation, globalization, the suffering of the natural environment, and the less privileged host communities (e.g. [Carr, 2020](#); [Cheer, 2020](#)). Now, the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that such a system has failed to deal with the consequences by quick band-aid solutions to those who have benefited so far in the pre-pandemic era ([Romagosa, 2020](#); [Everingham & Chassagne, 2020](#)).

Extensive job loss has intensified the injustice, vulnerability, and long facing challenges by the workers in the form of less benefits, low wages, and "right on time" labour policies in the industry ([Lucas, 2020](#); [Benjamin et al., 2020](#)). COVID-19 has magnified the previously unimpeded abusive management practices, Malay Mail (2020) reported that from 18th March to 27th April 2020, the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC) has received a total of 678 complaints reported from the hotel sector employees involving 37 cases for forced leave, 383 for a pay cut, 186 for dismissal, 54 were forced to take unpaid leave and 17 cases in connection with the enforcement of MCO. Coupled with this, according to the Secretary-General of National Union of Hotel, Bar and Restaurant Workers Peninsular Malaysia, they do not have the actual number of hotel workers who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic because a large number of hotels are not registered members of the trade union ([Malay Mail, 2020](#)). [Lucas \(2020\)](#) reported a renowned company like Darden Restaurants, a subsidiary of Olive Garden offered employees to take sick leave amidst the outbreak. Similarly, [Hamzah \(2020\)](#) expressed his disappointment in a group discussion which was a part of the planning process and preparation of the National Tourism Policy Malaysia (2020-2030). The participants comprising various tourism associations were asked whether the members would clinch with a more ethical form of tourism business operations in the next decades. Surprisingly, none of the members could envision a sincere commitment towards this ideal. Hence, [Romagosa \(2020\)](#) has argued in connection with the logic of governments disburse bailouts to the giant companies (e.g; cruise line) that are fabled for their dubious and unethical business practices when it comes to act in accordance with the standard guidelines pertaining to protect the environment and workers' right.

In this pivotal situation, a number of authors have argued not just to regain the tourism and hospitality industry in terms of money but also to reform and readjust the industry during the post-pandemic period sustainably (e.g. [Everingham & Chassagne, 2020](#); [Benjamin et al., 2020](#)). Although the tourism industry would not be able to return to its prior state, the pandemic has paved us an opportunity and an outright necessity to shift the priority merely from economic gain towards a greater holistic environmental and meaningful community wellbeing ([Everingham & Chassagne, 2020](#); [Carr, 2020](#)). Therefore, we concur with [Everingham and Chassagne, 2020](#) and [Prideaux, Thompson, and Pabel, 2020](#) that the COVID-19 pandemic has actually made us realised the drawbacks of the pre-pandemic tourism and hospitality industry. Besides that, it also provides us an opportunity to reimagine, relearn, and innovate our strategies in the post-pandemic period.

Lessons learned from the COVID-19 and some recommended resilient strategies in the post-pandemic period

It is obvious that the pandemic is a compelling force in the expansion of human consciousness to make them more competent to better address global issues. So far, sustainability is taken for granted in the global tourism modus operandi (e.g., [Galvani et al., 2020](#); [Cheer, 2020](#)). Although over the last three decades sustainable development has offered a wide range of scientifically validated models ([WCED, 1987](#)) to address the challenges of modern neoliberalism and globalization ([Galvani et al., 2020](#); [Zimmermann, 2018](#)). However, due to the lack of sincere and effective implementation of the sustainability model by the people and culture across various regions in the world, the true concept of sustainability has largely failed to

tackle the intended problems and challenges ([Zimmermann, 2018](#)). [Ioannides and Gyimóthy \(2020\)](#) and [Hanscom \(2020\)](#) paint out that sustainability can be achieved eventually but either by design or by the disaster. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has emerged, the streets are hollowed out and air pollution has decreased. Thus, now is the time to take a lesson to redesign the tourism and hospitality industry landscape to make it more equitable and sustainable for the future ([Benjamin et al., 2020](#)).

For the last decades, we all have heard about sustainable over-tourism eco-tourism but it was not widely discussed ([Benjamin et al., 2020](#)). For instance, several experts highlighted that slow adaptation and ignorance of sustainability by tourism operators is challenging sustainable tourism development in Malaysia (e.g., [Hamzah, 2020](#); [Opalyn Mok, 2020](#)). As [Whitzman \(2020\)](#) revealed that “great pandemics often bring about social reform”. For instance, in 1854 the cholera epidemic in the United Kingdom steered epidemiologist John Snow to discover the link between clean water and cholera disease. Similarly, the current pandemic can possibly teach us the link between the high mass consumption of the environment, human health, and the unsustainable culture in the pre-pandemic age ([Galvani et al., 2020](#); [Everingham & Chassagne, 2020](#)). Therefore, in the recovery plan for the tourism businesses in the post-COVID-19 age, the industry needs to focus on designing a well planned and sustainable business plan based on the collective global consciousness to save the companies, the industry and ultimately to provide job availability ([Galvani, Lew, & Perez, 2020](#); [Opalyn Mok, 2020](#)).

Eventually, it is sustainability in which humans and other creatures will flourish again on the earth in the post-pandemic era. COVID-19 is believed to be a wake-up call in restructuring the tourism and hospitality industry into a more sustainable model that benefits its various stakeholders. Some resurgence strategies suggested from both the academic and industry experts in the recent literature for planning a post-pandemic hospitality and tourism industry is discussed below:

- Historically, tourism has shown considerable resilience in the aftermath of a disaster and crisis regionally and internationally. It was possible often due to integrated intervention from regional, local, and national governments assisting the business through a series of stimulus packages and incentives such as tax breaks and wage subsidiaries. However, several authors have argued that such funding authorities should request the beneficiary businesses to fix issues such as abide by the ethical guidelines mainly related to natural resources and waste management as well as labour exploitation (e.g. [Brouder, 2020](#); [Ioannides & Gyimóthy, 2020](#)) in their resurgence of post-pandemic recovery strategies.
- To further develop the tourism and hospitality industry in a more sustainable and equitable manner. In doing so, it is pivotal to ensure that the tourism destination communities are bequeathed not only with net positive economic benefits but also balance in myriad ecological and social harmony by maintaining gender empowerment and marine ecosystem regeneration ([Cheer, 2020](#)).
- As the impact of COVID-19 is expected to be unpredictable in both time and space, things are not going to get back to normal as it was before the pandemic, rather we need to readjust ourselves to the new normal ([Dube, Nhamo, & Chikodzi, 2020](#)). Therefore, tourism destinations, businesses, and sub-sectors would have to adopt themselves to the new customized measures. As [Hamzah \(2020\)](#) suggested that the Malaysian government should consider to prepare a recovery plan anticipating ahead of the next 1 to 2 years of contingency plan focusing on mostly two aspects: capacity building and digitization of the tourism industry. The former is to put stress on retraining the tourism human capital resources related to hygiene, safety, storytelling, and service quality. The latter is to focus on to transform the integrated spectrum of the whole tourism industry through leveraging information technology for embracing 'Smart Tourism'. In addition, similarly to the initial government response to the SARS epidemic in 2003, which is to encourage the industry player to explore the untapped international markets and promote domestic tourism extensively in the post-pandemic period.
- To reimagine and restart the tourism industry by avoiding exploitative Western neoliberal capitalistic models that disregard places, people, and the natural environment towards a holistic model that has more positive social and environmental impacts such as ‘Buen Vivir’ concepts originated from South America. Compared to the traditional neoliberal capitalism model which mainly focuses on profit maximization, the Buen Vivir model equally considers human health, environmental, and local community’s wellbeing ([Everingham & Chassagne, 2020](#)). The essence of this model is to keep our priorities away from only the mere economic growth rather than towards a superior social connection and meaningful human flourishing tourism environment. Following [Everingham & Chassagne \(2020\)](#), [Benjamin et al. \(2020\)](#) has revealed that in the post-pandemic period, the tourism industry may consider encouraging spatial and social equity in tourism emphasis on crafting marketing plans anchoring on local and slow tourism to support the survival of minority-owned local tourism businesses. With this in view, Buen Vivir can realign the hospitality and tourism industry towards localised and slow tourism since the main concepts of this model lie mainly on the alternative to be local and small scale to leverage the benefits and wellbeing of host communities as well as the tourists ([Chassagne & Everingham, 2019](#); [Dinerstein & Deneulin, 2012](#)).

- Social media platforms inevitably implied to be a vital tool to combat and revive the industry from the aftermath of the current pandemic. Predominantly social media engagement can play an important role in spreading positivity to reboot the pandemic-induced discrimination and negative perception for the affected destination and tourism businesses ([Khan, Hashim, Aziz, & Samdin, 2020](#)). Prioritizing social media and other digital platforms (e.g. blogs) as a source of inspiration could expedite the resurgence process of the tourism industry in the post-pandemic era in an effective manner ([Romagosa, 2020](#); [Yu et al., 2020](#)). For instance, a community-based tourism operator (CBT) in Malaysia known as "Miso Walai Homestay" is preparing themselves for a much anticipated recovery period for the upcoming year by making a video concerning their current course of actions; showing building maintenance and refurbishing activities, re-training the staffs on hygiene and safety aspects, as well as improving their website. Such videos could be used by the local authorities and government agencies to show how local initiatives and efforts could be a source of encouragement for the others to be equipped for the challenging time ahead in the post-pandemic tourism industry ([Hamzah, 2020](#); [Kaos, 2020](#)).
- In the post-pandemic period, the biggest challenge will be for the tourism and hospitality industry to restore the trust of international and domestic tourists. Therefore, introducing a "clean and safe destination" could be one of the ways to regain visitors' trust with the aim to award certification to the tourism operators (e.g. hotels) that comply with the standard operating procedures (SOPs) by the relevant authorities ([dw., 2020](#)). Restaurants and hotels also need to rapidly acknowledge themselves into global, national, and local certification programs or campaigns on COVID-19 compliance related to safety, health, and hygiene procedures ([Dube et al., 2020](#)).
- Finally, in the resilient of the fair and more equitable tourism industry, tourism educators, scholars and students should be critical to understanding the prime causes of this pandemic. They should publicly engage themselves to establish a critical pedagogy to reform and transform the industry rather than maintaining the current trajectory. It is also suggested that they should encourage the critical conversation to unlearn the 'old normal of tourism' to re-learning of what might be more equitable and sustainable in the process of preparing its future and current leader in the post-pandemic situation ([Benjamin et al., 2020](#); [Cheer, 2020](#)).

Based on the review of relevant literature, it is quite evident that the impact of COVID-19 is anticipated to be long-lasting. The widely spread virus has largely impacted the continuous development and initiated unintended degrowth in the tourism and hospitality industry. The main objective of this paper was to provide an overview of the key issues and challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic in the Malaysian tourism and hospitality industry, lessons learned from its devastating effects on the industry, and to contemplate possible solutions as post-pandemic recovery from a global perspective. Based on the comprehensive literature review this study found that for the tourism and hospitality industry to flourish in the post-pandemic world it must look beyond merely adopting the strategies of the old normal and instead must seek to understand and adapt to the new normal. Therefore, the resilience of post-pandemic tourism and hospitality must be more just and equitable, in terms of how it is managed, operates, and eventually its effect on place, people, and overall on the local host community. The findings of this study are in line with the other earlier researchers (e.g. [Benjamin, Dillette, & Alderman, 2020](#); [Romagosa, 2020](#); [Cheer, 2020](#)) and suggest to take the advantage of the tourism de-growth to take the opportunity for far reaching structural changes and hospitality and tourism sector focusing more on its sustainability ([Cheer & Lew, 2017](#); [Hall et al., 2018](#); [Prideaux, Thompson, & Pabel, 2020](#)). With this view, based on the extant literature discussed we postulate that the pandemic has exposed the critical problems and vulnerabilities at a glimpse within the industry. Simultaneously, it opened up an opportunity for the industry to reset and rectify its defective system to form a better version of it by adopting the "new normal" from an "old normal".

CONCLUSION

This article provides a brief snapshot of the miserable impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the travel and tourism industry. Followed by examining the negative effect of MCO imposed by the government of Malaysia on tourism GDP and employability to impede the spread of the mentioned outbreak. Besides, the article also sheds light on highlighting the pre-existing vulnerabilities, challenges, and lessons that can be learned for this unprecedented situation for the future transformation of the industry. Finally, from the current literature, some selected resilient strategies for post-pandemic recovery are discussed. The study has both industrial and academic implications. For the former, the findings highlighted in this paper are expected to assist the authorities and the businesses in better understanding the current and future trends to craft appropriate strategies, products, and service features to leverage the tourism and hospitality industry in the post-pandemic period. For the latter, this article argues for a call to the tourism scholars, students, and educators to initiate critique, action plan suggestions as well as to conduct further research to examine the factors that can drive back the hospitality and tourism consumers in post-pandemic tourism.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The main limitation implies most of the literature review and discussion in this paper is based on media reports, peer-reviewed article commentaries, and research letters which is often written and published to reflect the advantage of hindsight in the case of hospitality and tourism literature, given the availability of diverse empirical research articles when studying the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on global hospitality and tourism sector.

For future research, to undertake extensive quantitative and qualitative studies to explore and examine the effectiveness of various resilient factors and how they impact the recovery of the post-Covid -19 pandemic tourism and hospitality industry is recommended. In addition, future research could be a focus on examining the factors that can return and retain the customers back to the tourism destination and hospitality providers.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Md. Ashraful Azam Khan contributed to idea generation, literature review, conceptualization, and preparing the original draft. Haslinda Hashim contributed to the review, editing, and supervision of the manuscript preparation and writing.

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