

# Gone or Go On? The Existence of Hybrid Events As Urban Tourism Strategy

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## Abstract

As the name might suggest, a hybrid event is a mix of live and virtual events. Starting its popularity in the middle of 2020, it emerged as a response and survival strategy for the creative community and the tourism industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in urban areas. This form of adaptation was acknowledged several months after the virus outbreaks. Following the title, hybrid events during the pandemic may be seen merely as a non-permanent solution or a novelty for further development. This research believes that the transformation influences four fundamental aspects—technology, institution, people, and environment. Those aspects are essential in shaping a new form in the global era. Based on the ideas of transformation in the globalization era and tourist experience theory, the discussion focused on the people involved in the events industry, how the hybrid events have been carried out to date, and how they relate to urban tourism. This research aims to discover the existence of hybrid events for urban tourism years after the COVID-19 pandemic. The results highlight how hybrid events during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impact the tourist movement and directly affect the tourism industry. Unlike the conventional event, the participant did not gain the utmost tourism experience in the urban destination. Following that, some patterns have been found in the hybrid event. Those patterns indicate the existence and hybrid event's potential for further development.

**Keywords:** Hybrid events, urban tourism, tourism strategy, tourism industries, COVID-19

## Introduction

In early 2020, the tourism and event industry met its black swan, COVID-19. It has prompted almost all countries worldwide to introduce restrictions on international travel. Domestic travel is also limited due to strict health protocols. The situation suddenly has a massive impact on industries, including travel and tourism. As a depiction, foreign tourist arrivals to Indonesia cumulatively plummeted 73.32% from January to October 2020 compared to the previous year. Indonesia lost foreign exchange up to USD 460 billion. Approximately 100 million tourism workers in Indonesia risk losing jobs (Central Bureau of Statistics Republic of Indonesia, 2020). Tourism Industries, including event organizers, have been forced to pivot their strategy to cope with the current situation. It was done as an attempt to adapt to the pandemic situation. In the beginning period of the pandemic, they postponed or cancelled the event, while some shifted to virtual events. A research of 4973 events by Lyyti Ltd.—a private event organizer—found that from March

to May 2020, 53% of events had been postponed, 40% were cancelled, and 16% shifted into a webinar or similar virtual event. However, the trend changes quickly by the end of 2020. G2, a prominent online marketplace company based in Chicago, discovered how the virtual event platform had experienced massive growth from July to December 2020, from 15 products to 67. By April 2021, it spikes to 119 products.

However, as the pandemic seems indefinite, event organizers look at virtual events to survive. Virtual events have been predicted to become the future since humans can coexist with smart-intelligent technology (e.g., augmented reality, artificial intelligence, etc). A study of the typology of virtual events and their contribution to the tourism experience stated that hybrid and various methods of virtual reality (VR)-embedded events possess immense potential for practitioners to deliver unique event experiences to the attendees (Yung et al., 2022). Moreover, reviewed the literature on virtual events and contributed a point of view on virtual tourism's past, present, and future (Verma et al., 2022). The paper presents a finding on how organizations must understand the value before investing information and communication technology (ICT). Therefore, big data and intelligent technology, such as Augmented Reality (AR) or Virtual Reality (VR), play essential roles concerning virtual events in urban tourism.

According to the study of globalization, hybridity is a concept that emerges from combining two or more concepts or refining its previous concept. In simple terms, it is called a transformation, which is supported by the agent of change (Ritzer & Dean, 2011). By considering the previous statements, this paper aims to discover the hybrid event's existence during the COVID-19 pandemic and further development from the perspective of urban tourism. As claimed by the event organizer, it is a mix of live and virtual events. In Indonesia, the new form is also recommended by the government and welcomed by its industries. In September 2020, the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism released a Handbook for CHSE (Clean-Health-Safety Environment) to help the event industry cope with the situation. It provides guidelines to organize the event in a hybrid, with some of the attendees allowed to visit the venue and virtual parties. Most of the local government welcomed the policy, including the government of the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The media have constantly reported upcoming events, especially art and culture ones. Tourism industries and local communities welcomed it by planning and promoting the hybrid events. At the end of 2020, the hybrid events market in Yogyakarta was in high demand.

Following the previous background, this paper is keen to examine the potential of hybrid events as a tourism strategy. This study is taking place in Yogyakarta. This research has been done in three steps to answer its purpose. The first is to find out how industries see hybrid events. The second is to examine the participant's experience of hybrid events. The third is to forecast the further potential development of hybrid events from the urban tourism perspective. This research strongly correlates with the strategy to withstand the tourism activity and its multiplier economic impact, especially in urban areas, where the residents rely on the business dominantly.

Yogyakarta, for example, is famously known as a tourist city. Many researchers have recognized the link between events and area developments.

## Literature Review

Studies found that mega-events significantly impact major economies, whereas many believe small-scale events help improve the well-being of local communities (Gholipour et al., 2020). A sports mega-event can also support the city's economic, socio-cultural, and political development (Caiza and Audretsch, 2015). Along with ongoing discussion among scholars on how to stimulate urban and rural regeneration, particularly in ways that support economic development by using creative ways (Zukin, 1995), there is a discussion on how events and music festivals had significant roles in Urban Tourism Development (Liberato, 2019). Whatever its scale is, an event can be considered a part of a tourism attraction. In his well-known theory of the tourism system, Leiper (1990, via Lohmann, G., & Netto, A. P., 2008) mentioned how tourists (previously known as travelers) moved from the generating or origin region to the destination region. The departing tourist always has the motivation to trigger their willingness to move. Motivation may vary for each individual, and the attraction within the destination can be different. However, tourist will always bring the experience of tourism activity back to their home (Fig 1).

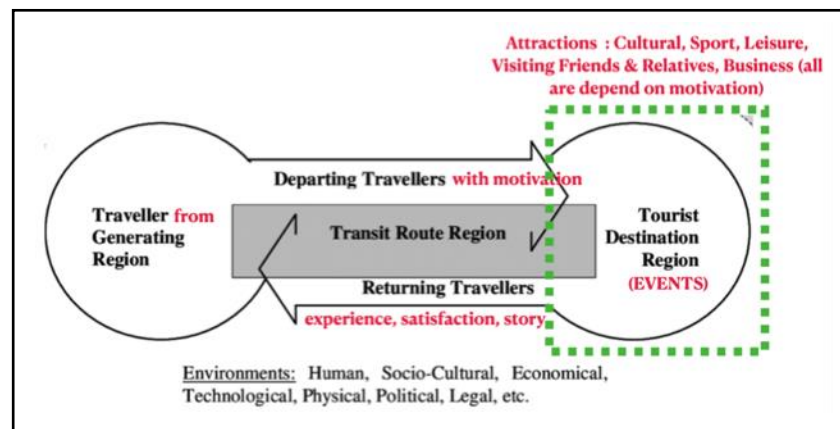


Figure 1. An illustration of how an event could be part of the tourism system  
(Source: Adaptation from Leiper, 1990)

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defines Urban Tourism as a type of tourism activity that unfolds in an urban space with its inherent attributes. These attributes are characterized by a non-agricultural-based economy, such as administration, manufacturing, trade, services, and being nodal points of transport. Urban tourism destinations offer a wide and diverse range of cultural, architectural, technological, social, and natural experiences and products for leisure and business. On the other hand, local events play a significant role in shaping the destination image and creating innovative tourist products (Mihajlović, 2017). Urban Tourism is often associated with a crowd and mass tourism activity, with the character of such tourism

often described as fast mobility. Urban areas are known for providing a multitude of tourist attractions, ultra-infrastructure, easily accessible accommodation and transportation, and advanced technology. An urban traveler typically seeks a crowd experience, as opposed to someone who appreciates the serenity of nature. Jacobsen et al. (2019) suggest that tourists may have approaches or avoidance as reactions to crowding, which can influence their perception of tourist spots within the city. Furthermore, Ruiz et al. (2021) highlight the importance of physical characteristics and experience in determining tourist satisfaction.

Furthermore, tourist satisfaction is a marketing and promotion tool for the destination and is directly related to revisit intention (Meng & Cui, 2020). Since the late '20s, experience has been convinced to be the highest stage in the level progression of economic value. It is on the top by leaving commodities, goods, and services (Fig 2a). Moreover, the experience can be determined by 4 (four) categories: (i) educational value and (ii) escapist. Both require the consumer's active participation, considered a tourist in this article. The other two are (iii) entertainment and (iv) aesthetics, which can be obtained passively by tourists (Fig 2b) (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

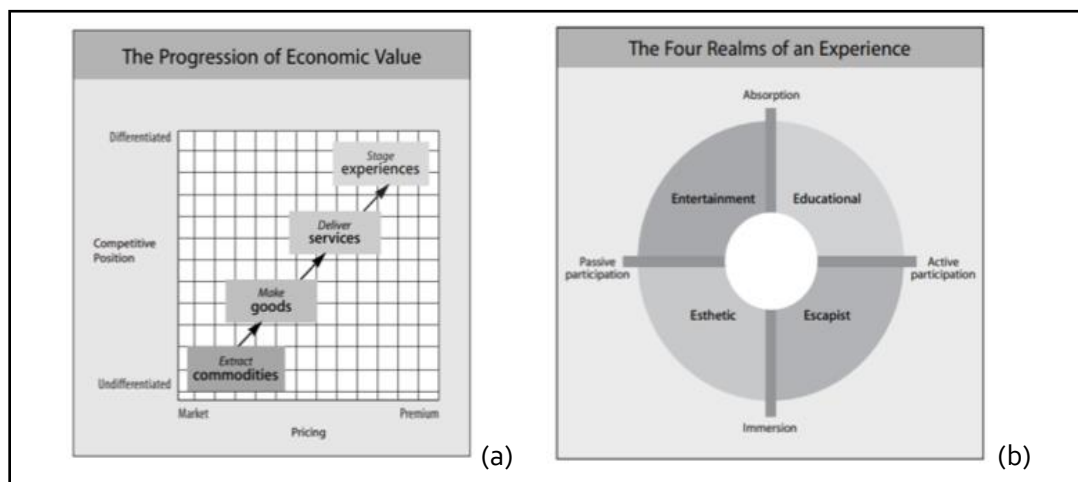


Figure 2. Level of economic value (a), and illustration of experiences interpreted by an individual (b)

(Source: Pine and Gilmore, 1998)

One of the other reasons for developing events as a part of urban tourism is the impact of multipliers on the economy. The multiplier economy refers to an effect in the economic field where spending produces, national income, and consumption increases are more significant than the initial amount spent. In Europe, mega events can shift billions of euros of public expenditures (Arnegger & Herz, 2016; Massiani, 2018), while small art and cultural events can affect the economic surplus of the local community or social welfare more generally (Torre & Scarborough, 2017). Event industries can push others and businesses of all sizes by direct, indirect, or induced

matter. The direct impact will be on the first circle relationship bubble diagram (light grey circle): accommodation, event organizer, goods and services supplier, transportation and travel agency, venue, food and beverage industry, and tourism destination or attraction. The second (dark grey) circle shows the indirect and induced impact hereafter. As seen on the diagram, there are tourism facilitation-operator-amenities, tools, and equipment rental, employment in hospitality and professional, and small supporting shops, such as those selling tourism souvenirs or personal use (Fig 3). According to those statements, the relationship between events and tourist destinations can be understood as mutualism. Those are the reasons why the event is considered a catalyst for urban development.



Figure 3. An illustration of an event and its multiplier effect  
(Source: Author, 2021)

As our world becomes increasingly globalized, the development of knowledge and technology has paved the way for the emergence of hybrid events. Globalization is often associated with change and transformation, and it typically manifests in three distinct patterns: Homogeneity, Heterogeneity, and Hybridity (Ritzer & Dean, 2011; Mac Leod, 2014). Homogeneity refers to the quality or state of being all the same or all of the same kind, while heterogeneity is the opposite. Hybridity, on the other hand, is a concept that arises from the combination of two different elements. Some view it as a mixture of two or more characters, while others see it as a new shape or concept formed by two or more previous concepts. Moreover, the literature suggests that the agent of change in this context is influenced by four fundamental aspects: people, institutions, environment, and technology.

## Methods

This qualitative research aims to inquire about the further potential of hybrid events in Yogyakarta. The primary data was gained by field observation and interviews with related stakeholders. It is essential to look deeper into the relationship between events and urban tourism by interviewing the relevant stakeholders and respondents and engaging in participating observation. A literature study was used to collect the supporting data from various hybrid events in Yogyakarta.

## Finding And Discussion

### Hybrid Events in Yogyakarta During Covid-19 Pandemic

Virtual events have undergone a massive transformation in the past year. It had been popularly known before the Covid-19 outbreaks but increased globally during the pandemic. A virtual event could appear in various types and forms. For example, *Google Virtual Museum* -as a part of *Google Arts and Culture*- is one of the leaders in the form of Virtual Reality Tour. The platform used free-movement 3D (three dimensions) walking tours to provide the participant with an authentic experience of museum tours. Another successful example is the virtual edition of the Cannes Film Festival, which used a combination of live-streamed events, pre-recorded content, and interactive Q&A sessions to engage its audience. The other method to hold virtual tours could be a series of 360° photos linked together, 360° videos, or 2D (two dimensions) video tours offering a non-interactive guide usually uploaded on social media (e.g., *YouTube*).

As mentioned earlier, hybrid events saw a significant increase by the end of 2020. Yogyakarta, known for its rich heritage, art, and cultural events, took the lead. The city hosted a variety of events, each showcasing its unique cultural richness. For instance, *ArtJog MMXX Resilience*, *Jogja Netpac Film Festival 2020*, *Jogja Festivals Forum Expo 2020*, *Prambanan Jazz 2020*, and *Ngayogjazz 2020* are just a few examples of the diverse art and hybrid cultural events that took place in Yogyakarta in 2020. Other categories included the *Jogja Run 10k* for sports tourism, MICE events in tourist accommodations, and virtual tours of tourism villages, all contributing to the city's vibrant cultural scene. Herewith is an overview of the Hybrid Events in Yogyakarta from different types and scales:

### Art and cultural event

ArtJog art exhibition has been held once a year since 2012. Every year, visitors may come from various geographic areas within and outside Indonesia to enjoy this prestigious annual art and cultural event in Yogyakarta. Instead of tourism, *ArtJog's* primary purpose is for art exhibitions. 2020 the exhibition was held in a hybrid event combining live and online displays. It set the on-the-spot exhibition into three daily sessions under strict CHSE (Clean, Hygiene, Safety Environment) regulations. Each session is limited only to 60 people. The visitors could conveniently purchase a ticket online from the official websites and pay using a bank transfer or credit card to attend. The website can be accessed by first registering to the official account. The online exhibition provides live video on the official website and social media platforms like

YouTube and Instagram. The committee also sells souvenirs that can be ordered on the official website and bought at a small shop on-site to enhance participant attachment and event revenue.

Similarly, the other art and cultural events, deeply rooted in their communities, provide live and virtual performances. These events, primarily organized by strong communities with extensive resources and networks, foster a sense of connection and belonging. *Prambanan Jazz* is always held at *Prambanan Temple*, while *Ngayogjazz* moves from one tourism village to another every year. *Prambanan Jazz 2020* and *Ngayogjazz 2020* run a collaborative project with a broadcasting company. The previous two events are unique since they are always held in tourist destinations, further strengthening the bond between the community and the visitors.

#### Tourism village virtual tour

The virtual tour was a subject in art and culture that has been introduced previously. In 2011, Google established an online museum platform, *Google Art & Culture*, allowing internet users to enjoy displays from over 2000 leading museums worldwide using AR (Augmented Reality) technology (Sari et al., 2020). During the pandemic, many tourism destinations provided virtual tour experiences in Indonesia. For example, *Nglanggeran Tourism Village* and *Jurang Jero Jeep Trail* are two sites that can change the virtual into a hybrid model and allow the participants to engage with the host.

#### MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Convention, and Exhibition)

In urban areas, the type of tourism accommodation may be diverse. Large hotel companies have various categories, from resorts and convention hotels. In a smaller size, it has a boutique hotel to a youth hostel. Each of these subgroups of MICE has different characteristics. The convention office increasingly supplies meetings, incentives, exhibition organizers, and service providers.

#### The Pattern

This part focuses on the analysis of hybrid event existence by using four variables that influence a transformation. These four variables are as follows: (i) people, (ii) institutions, (iii) environment, and (iv) technology. People can be seen as who is involved, who is the driver, who consumes, and most importantly how they accept the change. Meanwhile, institution refers to the organization where the change occurred. Is it tough? Is it solid and rich in resources? Environment indicates external support and encouragement from others. Technology for the last is defined as the crucial source that made it happen.

#### Perspectives on opportunities and loss in organizing hybrid events

As explained previously, conducting a hybrid event in the accommodation industry will unconsciously affect the hotel revenue. That is why hotel management believed it would only last a short while. Another reason is that hybrid events do not support the utmost additional revenue. Room occupations, for example, are dominantly related to the event at convention and business hotels. Although they appear to have enough resources to adapt, they are shuffling. The company

must spend more money than usual to organize small group meeting attendance. There is a gap between the operational cost and its profit since the amount of space required per person increases. In addition, they have to prepare a lot for the technology requirement. The company identifies it as a critical situation.

On the other hand, local and art communities are keen to think in opposite ways. They can turn adversity into an opportunity. They believe organizing a hybrid event is a chance to upgrade human resources skills. The local community that maintains a tourism village or small accommodation type is included in the group, as is the community that manages art and culture hybrid events. Eventually, its self-awareness attracts more influential organizations to support it. Unexpectedly, these institutions can widen the network and teach the highest level of knowledge.

#### Hybrid events as temporary strategy

Tourism organization's responses may vary depending on the organization's value and how they perceive it. Managing hybrid events during the COVID-19 pandemic could be financially challenging. This group bears the burden of operational costs, taxes, and employee salaries. Even if it only provides small revenue, hybrid events during the pandemic threaten their financial stability. According to an interview with the head of the Indonesian Association of Hotels and Restaurants (*Persatuan Hotel dan Restoran Indonesia/PHRI*), the MICE industry in hotels usually supports approximately 30 to 40 percent of hotel revenues. The percentage excludes the hotel rooms booked by the attendees. Almost all of the upcoming events were cancelled after the COVID-19 outbreaks. This problematic situation during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a significant loss of staff. The human resource strategy primarily provides unpaid leave for non-permanent staff. It means that the staff is only paid when there are any projects or events at the hotel. The CHSE protocol has always been applied to a hybrid event held in the accommodation industry. In addition, the standard demands the highest cost for a small group of meetings. It is necessary to have spacious space and the highest level of human resources competence. Consequently, the only hotel with excellent and robust resources is the one with the potential to survive.

The local community in a tourism village stated that they had never organized an event before, but they immediately maneuvered their activity into a hybrid virtual tour. How did the community that was thought to be the most vulnerable turn out to be the tougher ones? The appealing fact about the hybrid virtual tour is the eagerness of the management to engage with other organizations, private organizations, and universities. The tour was conducted through software, ranging from the simplest *Zoom Meeting* to the most advanced, *Lapentor*. Unlike the preceding virtual tour, *Nglanggeran Village* and *Jurang Jero Jeep Trail* provide interactive sessions for online participants (Fig 4). They believe it will increase the participant's attachment to the place and raise their willingness to visit. This move allows the community to promote and develop further tourism in their place. Locals generally work in agriculture and micro trade to maintain their household income. However, they still consider conducting a hybrid event effortful and exhausting, even



though supporting resources are available. Like the hotel industry, the community does not see hybrid virtual tours permanently.

Conversely, the creative community sees this as a breakthrough and a prospective future. This group has powerful resources and networks. The most important thing is that profit has never been their primary goal. The government, local international artists, supporting companies, and industries usually support the events. Following the interview with one of the event committees, Yogyakarta residents dominated the live participants. It is related to travel policy. The events serve as a reminder of an innovative tourism attraction, and they have a genuine economic impact on the destination and any businesses that rely on tourist activity. How about the government? They seem to expect nothing but perceive it as a strategic defense. The policy was designed as rescuing missions for many event workers. The ideal goal is the group's ability to push their management to the highest capability. It is also a strategy for quickly turning over the devastating moment for future use.

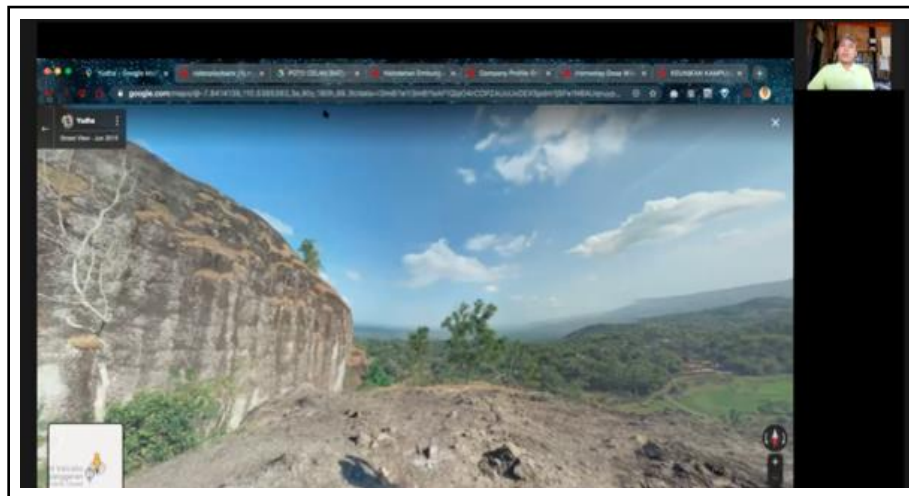


Figure 4. An interactive virtual tour in Nglanggeran Tourism Village  
(Source: Sari, 2021)

#### Organizations value and the benefit of the hybrid events

In tourism, the sustainable concept underlines three dimensions: economic, social, and environmental. Financial stability could be crucial in the tourism business. At the same time, others believe in upgrading social capability. Rather than gaining revenue during the pandemic, it is more critical for some tourism businesses to maintain their existing communities. For them, hybrid events, a combination of in-person and virtual experiences, are a simple message of their existence. “Yes, we are still here.” The message is essential for consumer engagement, which, in this case, is a hope for the tourism business to bounce back.

In Yogyakarta, communities are the soul of tourism. It drives tourism development in a particular urban area stably and uniquely. The activity of communities attracts people to visit Yogyakarta. Meanwhile, the visitors provide economic opportunities for locals. Tourism Village, for example. The community perspective of tourism cost and benefit in a tourism village depends on its primary value. Some believe in cultural environment preservation and the long-term community well-being, while some need to gain economic benefit. However, there is agreement on how tourism businesses should directly impact tourism. The measurement depends on profit amount, the number of room occupations, additional revenue, operating costs, employee salaries, and extra spending for the high-tech network. On the other hand, the value of the local community will increase in the future. Furthermore, they choose to organize a hybrid event for future development since their income is independent of tourism activity.

### Hybrid Events and Urban Tourism Experience

Examining consumer experiences can be advantageous for measuring the product's quality and potential for sustainability. This section aims to evaluate the participant's benefit and experience as an urban tourist. As Pine and Gilmore (1998) noted, experience can be categorized into four broad areas: education, entertainment, aesthetic, and escapist. This categorization, which we adopt in this study, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the urban tourism experience.

The first experience category is about education, which refers to how participants can gain knowledge of Yogyakarta directly from the site visit, either during or after/before the events. In tourism activity, tourists gain new knowledge of the destination through watching, listening, touching, and other forms of active participation. In the hybrid event, virtual and in-site participants have equal opportunities to gain knowledge and new networking under the event's theme. However, the opportunity to maintain direct interactions with the tourism destinations is limited for the virtual participants. Following the realms of experience theory (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), knowledge transfer can be memorized better by someone who actively participates in a learning activity, which is learning, which refers to tourism activity. This concept of active participation requires the participant to exist in the "real place," to move (e.g., take a breath, walk, sing, dance, and another form of movement), and actively participate in tourism activity. The second category is entertainment, which means participants feel like tourists can afford leisure and pleasure from activities such as art and music performances, sports, tourist attractions, and other events. Next, the third is aesthetic. This article defines *aesthetics* as Yogyakarta's experience of beauty related to colour, shape, composition, sound, and movement (e.g., architecture, art, or natural scenery). The definition of aesthetic remains arguable. Similar to entertainment, the experience perceived by each individual is different. It depends on personality and taste. Escapist, the last category, refers to movement or mobility from the participant's daily routine to enjoy the time and situation in Yogyakarta. Table 1 shows further how event participants potentially experience urban attraction.

Table 1. Hybrid Event Participant Experiences on Urban Destination

No	Urban Tourist Type of experience (adaptation from Pine and Gilmore, 1998)	Findings
1	Education: Being educated/Gaining new knowledge	Hybrid events allow virtual participants to get new information in virtual space. They have no chance to be directly connected with any parts of the urban area, for being a tourist. In that case, they have limited opportunity to learn additional information and value of the city and surroundings at the same time.
2	Escapist: Feeling of escape from daily routine	Tourism encourages visitor to move from the generating region (their place of origin) to the destination region, so they are able to walk and move within the city and enjoy the atmosphere of the destination. This experience is different from hybrid events.
3	Entertainment: Being Entertaining	Personal experiences among event participants may vary. However, virtual participants will not gain as much as in-site participants. To be more detailed, personal motivation is suggested to be part of the analysis. This assumption is strongly supported by Pine and Gilmore's active participation theory to absorb these categories. However, there are strongly believe that for virtual participants, the entertainment could be more limited and related mostly to the events, while for in-site participants the feeling of being entertained is possible to come from various places and attractions of the destinations.
4	Aesthetic: Experiencing Aesthetic things	The virtual attendances may still face it since they do not require active physical space participation. Even though they are facing fewer aesthetic experiences, there is the possibility that the hybrid virtual tour may increase the desire to visit at other times.

### The Existence and Future of Hybrid Events as an Urban Tourism Strategy

The impact of hybrid events on urban tourism can be understood by comparing the existing events and further potential development. According to Table 2, both of them have an impact on urban tourism. The existing event brings in a small amount of impact, but it keeps the major one for the next round. Urban tourism's significant aspects, such as marketing, number of visitors, human resources, infrastructure development, economic impact, and urban value (social factor), have been used as the variables (Table 2).

Table 2. The Existing and Potential Development of Hybrid Events for Urban Tourism

No	Urban Tourism Variables	Existing	Further Potential Development
1	Event content and its benefits for urban tourism marketing and promotion	The event can be recorded, uploaded, and disseminated through social media. It has the potential to reuse the content.	It can be enjoyed by the public (non-attendances) and used for long-term destination marketing and promotion.
2	Benefit for the number of visitors at Tourist Destinations or Attractions	Almost none, due to the travel restrictions, health protocol, and awareness of COVID-19.	As public interest in visiting a particular destination grows, it is expected that the number of tourists will increase.
3	Knowledge development of human resources in Tourist Destinations or Attractions	Sharing information through different scales of organization, limited transfer knowledge (especially for the young generation who are familiar with the technology), and capacity building for the creative and local community.	Sharing information through different scales of organization, limited transfer knowledge (especially for the young generation who are familiar with the technology), and capacity building for the creative and local community.
4	Infrastructure development	Supporting the development of technology infrastructure rapidly.	Supporting the development of information technology, soft infrastructure, and others.
5	The multiplier effect on economic	Cause less multiplier economic impact for locals and other supporting tourism sectors.	As public interest in visiting a particular destination grows, the economic multiplier effect is expected to expand.
6	Urban Value (tourist motivation, experience, and satisfaction related to the urban spatial)	There is a mismatch with the concept of “movement or mobility” in tourism (from origin to destination area). The restricted number of live participants results in limited potential consumers (in tourism, it is called a potential tourist). It leads to a lack of “in-person” experience.	It is possible for hybrid events to stay still in the future when there is no limited number of live participants.

Source: Data Analysis, 2021

## Conclusion

Several organizations in the event and tourism business, as well as the government, have implemented hybrid events in response to COVID-19. Primarily, such events are organized by businesses, creative communities, or the local communities in tourist destinations. Each community has an equal opportunity to develop hybrid events, although they have different values. There is no consistent correlation between the size of an organization and its capacity to manage

it. Some individuals rely on others for support, while others require assistance from external organizations. Local communities are perceived to possess deficiencies in human resource expertise and knowledge. They view hybrid events as a chance to enhance their human resource capabilities. The main issue faced by a hotel firm is the disproportionate ratio of active participants to the significant expenses incurred in operations. They experienced a significant decline in hotel occupancy revenue due to the shift in event management, resulting in a loss of over half of their revenue.

Some organizations consider hybrid events exclusively as a temporary strategy for crisis management. The lack of robust human resources and financial backing is the reason why weaker organizations are unable to sustain their strategies even after the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, whereas stronger organizations continue to do so. However, hybrid virtual events have an indirect impact on the growth of urban tourism. It has the potential to evolve and yield further advantages post-pandemic. The hybrid event also offers the chance to transcend geographical boundaries, engage with a broader audience, and expand the digital presence on online platforms. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the prominent use of technology in the process of reviving the tourism industry. Simply put, virtual and hybrid events cannot fully replace a physical live event. Nevertheless, it is currently the optimal option for survival

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