Drivers and Challenges for Future Events and their Impact on Hotel Industry

Omar A. Alananzeh*

Department of Hotel Management, Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management, Yarmouk University, Irbid-Jordan, Email, o.ananzeh@yu.edu.jo
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8233-8037

*Corresponding Author

Abstract

Events are a vital ongoing industry either because of their necessity for the daily operation of enterprises and countries or because of their enormous economic returns. Therefore, this study is conducted to determine the most important drivers and challenges for future events and their impact on the hotel sector. A quantitative approach is utilized and an electronic questionnaire was designed and sent to the study population. 113 responses were obtained from the staff of the meetings and events department at hotels. The study showed that artificial intelligence is the main driver of events followed by social media. The results revealed that virtual events and competitiveness are the most challenges affecting hotels. The contributions of the study come from the attempt of filling this gap in the literature, its uniqueness in addressing future events and their impact on the hotel sector, and its results in providing suggestions for hotel establishments, planners, and researchers.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; social media; stimulus packages; competitiveness; virtual conferences

Introduction

Events, whether political, economic, sporting, educational or luxury, are an important part of the hospitality industry, as they continue to grow exponentially in all circumstances and create loyalty among event tourists (Nolan, 2020; Getz & Page, 2016). The revenues of hosting events around the world are estimated in the billions and tourism destinations recognize that events are a vital element in attracting investment. Meetings, Conferences, Events, and Exhibitions (MICE) are the main part of hospitality organizations (Getz & Page, 2016). The rapid growth and expansion of events have been driven by a number of factors; recent technological developments, customized events, wise management, accompanying services, and the emergence of unconventional venues such as inter-enterprise partnerships, webinars, and international conventions are increasingly driving the industry (Dredge & Whitford, 2011; Elgin et al., 2021).

Over the past two years, the Coronavirus has caused the worst economic crisis the world has known which witnessed a decline in GDP in the first quarter of 2020 (Elgin et al., 2021). The impact of this crisis was on developing countries as well as on the developed world (Khalid et al., 2021). The world, especially the developed countries, also witnessed strong declines in GDP to more than 20% in the second quarter of 2020. This has been accompanied by a massive increase in unemployment rates around the world (Ari et al., 2021). The event industry has been negatively affected by the resulting shutdowns around the world. The sector faces several major challenges, both in the short and long term (Augustin et al., 2021). Such as the challenges of reopening, competition in hosting events, flexible costs, switching to virtual conferences, low occupancy rate, changeable price, renewable closures, and public safety requirements.

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Technology is among the challenges faced event and the hospitality industry's progress and development (Barua, 2020).

It turns out that the event industry is of very great importance and deserves global attention at the level of countries, companies, and institutions. Thus, it is necessary to study the future of this industry. Many studies (Weber, 2000; Quinn, 2009; Abdelkafy & Hizah, 2016; Jungyoung et al., 2017; Alananzeh et al., 2019; Bueno et al., 2020; Khalid et al., 2021) have touched upon the importance of the events industry, but there is a scarcity of studies dealt with the determination of the drivers and challenges that affect the future of this industry. Therefore, this study aimed to know the most important future drivers that affect this industry and to identify the challenges that will cast their shadow on the event industry, as the hotel sector relies heavily on events. Therefore, this study is conducted to shed light on the impact of these drivers and challenges for the future of events and their reflections on the hotel sector and to provide the sector with recommendations to maximize the benefits and overcome the challenges.

Literature review
Drivers of events
Events provide opportunities for people to network, spend time, celebrate, experience the diversity of cultures, and foster creativity and collaboration (Quinn, 2009). It allows the community to come alive and provides an opportunity for a destination to showcase its experience in the event and maximize its economic benefits. Events contribute significantly to community and lifestyle building, recreational promotion, cultural development, tourism promotion, increased re-visits, volunteer participation, fundraising, and economic development. Most importantly, the events create a sense of playfulness and liveliness, resulting in a strong sense of community, connection, and belonging to the place. Goldblatt (2005) notes that special events are unique moment that is celebrated for specific needs. Getz (2008) notes that events are spatio-temporal phenomena and that each phenomenon is unique due to the interactions between setup, people, and management systems.

Artificial intelligence
Artificial intelligence (AI) is an accurate simulation of human intelligence by machines, especially computer systems (Dong et al., 2020). Specific applications of artificial intelligence include computer software, natural language processing, speech recognition, and machine vision (Duan, 2020). Businesses all over the world have realized how important it is to include modern digital technology to generate consistent growth and revenue. The past decade has seen amazing innovations and breakthroughs in the digital solutions landscape. One of these attractive technologies is called Artificial Intelligence (Makadia, 2019).

In any case, the wishes and needs of the event organizers and guests are evolving (Getz & Page, 2016). Customers are accustomed to using technology to deal with their private lives and need the same while staying in a hotel or dining in a restaurant (Ivanov et al., 2018). There are many areas where AI will become a major driver in the tourism industry including guest messaging, especially in the post-coronavirus times. Providing AI-based information on hotel missions is essential for flexible communications taking into account hotel policies, event organizers, and customers' requirements (Tussyadiah & Park, 2018). AI is pretty much everything, but its entry into the event industry is rapid across the globe (Ross, 2018). With the new social distancing measures, sanitary requirements, and focus on hygiene that hospitality establishments have followed, check-in / check-out is now electronic as guests do not have to come to the front desk to get a key. Digital technologies via mobile applications have become the basis for the interaction between the service provider and its recipients (Awan et al., 2021)

AI will allow hotels to implement better procedures for event hosting and development, increase customer and participant satisfaction, anticipate their needs, make suggestions, and achieve their desired engagement model (Tung & Law, 2017). Hotel's AI is the process of acquiring, processing, collecting, and transforming customer data into insightful and noteworthy information to deliver a superior guest experience (Martijn, 2017.) Hotels must plan the entire event and guest activities. This means the customization that entire hotel owners hope to expand to all Customers during each stay and participation (Murphy et al., 2017). One of the main applications of artificial intelligence is the Internet of Things (IoT), these associated devices are meant to be smart devices that collect and exchange information starting with one device and then on the next (Lad & Zade, 2020).

Access via mobile applications (via smartphones and tablets) allows potential participants to find the most suitable hotel among the many hotels in the process of staying while participating in the events (Broadbent, 2017; Kuo et al., 2017). These applications also enabled the participant and organizer of the event to view the event halls and learn the most important services they provide. The customer can also virtual check-in to different types of rooms and choose the most suitable, as well as virtual tours of dining facilities, spas, and other service departments of the hotel (Ivanov et al., 2017). In other words, mobile technologies have transformed intangible hotel services into tangible services (Lukanova & Ilieva, 2019).

Social media
Electronic social media and new technologies have revolutionized communication, especially in the tourism and hospitality industry (Marine-Roig et al., 2017). Social media (Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.) allowed personal networks and mobile phones to take quick action and make the required modifications (Dijck & Poell, 2013). User-generated events fully enhanced through social media are becoming a more formal, theme-specific organization (Lee & Tyrrell, 2012), enhanced by the general use of mobile devices. Event organizers, planners, and hotel meeting departments communicate directly with their target market through social media which is becoming increasingly huge. In addition, the power of social media to promote, organize and promote mass events (festivals, conferences, exhibitions, etc.) on a large scale (Marine-Roig et al., 2017). In this regard, social media has not only revolutionized the way we communicate and publish hospitality services (Hays et al., 2012), but it has also changed the way we view event sellers and their role in organizing events, from relatively passive agents to actively enabling content generation and sharing with each other through mobile devices (Sigala et al., 2012).

Stimulus packages
Economic stimulus packages help create an opportunity for renewal and re-attraction of tourism to incorporate sustainable changes into the tourist destination. Stimulus packages also support tourism towards sustainability (Khalid et al., 2021). Rich countries tend to offer a larger economic stimulus package to counter COVID-19 and support the tourism sector (Elgin et al., 2021). For example, Malaysia has taken a proactive stance in relying on stimulus packages to support its tourism sector for COVID-19 as this package included assistance to the transportation industry and lending to tourism companies (Morrisett, 2020). Governments have followed several policies to reduce the repercussions of Covid 19, including closing the international borders, lockdowns cities, and implementing stimulus packages to provide support to workers and companies. On the other hand, hotels and travel and tourism companies followed multiple policies to overcome this crisis, including incentive packages for tourists, tangible discounts for event organizers, and appropriate prices, including several services for participants, which had a positive impact on the recovery of hotels (Narayan et al., 2021).

Finally, coordination between the sectors providing hospitality and events services to provide financial stimulus packages that are supposed to be supported and increased at the same time, ensuring that any change in prices does not affect other sectors (Laboure, 2010).

Challenges of events
Competition
The increasing number of hotel establishments is greatly exacerbating competition in the hospitality industry and leading to relatively high levels of essential services and products. As well as the presence of many conference centers that provide conference and exhibition services to competition in hosting events. Therefore, the efforts of hotel organizations have become great because the hotel services and goods provided have similar characteristics and how they are presented (Lukanova, 2014). Hotels these days operate in a very competitive environment and competition can be defined as the most important challenge in the hotel strategy as it determines its direction and development (Lukanova & Ilieva, 2019). The intense competition in the hotel industry makes the process of attracting guests and retaining loyal customers difficult (Myo et al., 2019). Competitors may affect service quality and customer satisfaction and reduce existing customer loyalty (Nguyen et al., 2020). There remains a basic rule in the hospitality industry, which is the interest in customer satisfaction and customer loyalty in order to maintain the market share (Khalifa, 2018). In light of the current circumstances, competition in the market for hospitality services and the coordination and hosting of events has intensified. When competition increases, the effect on competitors (Minh & Huu, 2016).

COVID-19 safety procedures
Hotels particularly rely on face-to-face events in their daily operating performance, demand generation, and growing their client base (Baum & Hai, 2020). But the outbreak of COVID-19 had a tangible impact on all the economic sectors, especially the tourism and hospitality industries, which had a negative impact more than the rest of the industries because they rely heavily on people in the roles of guests and employees, and the reason is that all countries of the world have implemented strict restrictions on travel and social distance (Gössling et al., 2020). Due to public safety measures, many services inside hotels such as food and beverage halls, banquet halls, and events were closed or operated with limited stock. This resulted in hotels adjusting their operating systems to reduce the risk of the spread of the coronavirus (Chan et al., 2021).

The impact of the coronavirus on the hotel sector has also been devastating. Many hotels faced the threat of closure, and many employees lost their jobs (Rawal et al., 2020). The impact of the coronavirus on the industry falls into three main categories: employment, occupancy, and travel demand (Ko, 2021). These facilities have started to make some gains after reducing public safety measures, restaurants and bars have reopened, but partially, transportation allowed to use half the capacity and hotels to use half the capacity of the halls (Ramely et al., 2020). With an occupancy rate significantly lower, hotels generated expected profits from room sales, food and beverage sales, and event services (Gursoy & Chi, 2020).

Virtual events
A virtual event is one that provides an engaging experience for event participants and its content online rather than gathering in person (Howard, 2022). Given the current circumstances, marketers are planning events and investing more in digital channels in order to market them. The current pandemic affected everything, and everything stopped, except for meetings, as they continued at a stronger pace than before, as there was an urgent need to

conduct matters and communicate with employees and authorize what was required of them through remote work using means of communication, social communication, and advanced technology systems (Porpiglia et al., 2020). That's why events are instant and planned by default, and those meetings expanded to make international conferences or convert conferences that were planned and face-to-face to electronic (virtual). Depending on the repercussions for the coming years and their expectations for what is to come, it will continue as it is but hypothetical events may turn into reality after things return to normal (Marquart et al., 2021).

Virtual events are a new type of event organization, and consist of four main types; Seminars, which last 45-80 minutes online and are attended by attendees from all over the world to join and listen while one or more speakers present the content. There may be a fee to attend or it may be offered free of charge. Virtual conferences with a live agenda including keynotes, sessions, breaks, multi-session content, and community participation. However, virtual conferences are not as effective in terms of capturing potential clients and communicating as in-person events. Internal Hybrid events are used to share the corporate message of all employees who are not all grouped in the same place (Howard, 2022). It should be noted that there are some differences between in-person and virtual events; Virtual events have limitations that are not found in personal events. Where in-person events can attract attendees with a unique destination, virtual events should be content-based. Another reality is that they lack face-to-face participation in virtual events. There is no way around this dilemma. Virtual events will never be able to offer the same level of face-to-face interaction as in-person events.

Methodology
As mentioned earlier, this study aims to identify the most important drivers and challenges facing future events and their impact on the hotel sector. It also aims to provide advice and suggestions to event operators, stakeholders, and planners to improve the industry and reduce its risks to the hotel sector. Thus, this study relied on the quantitative approach in order to achieve its objectives. Because of the lack of previous studies that dealt with the most important drivers and challenges of the event industry and its impact on hotels. Therefore, preliminary meetings are held with a number of personnel in the Banquet and Event department in hotels and with others working in companies specialized in organizing events in order to extract the most important variables that will be addressed in the study. After that, many previous studies are revised that dealt with these variables sporadically. The items of the questionnaire were formed by referring to previous studies such as (Quinn, 2009; Minh & Huu, 2016; Tung & Law, 2017; Ross, 2018; Makadia, 2019; Ramely et al., 2020; Marquart et al., 2021) and through extracting others from the interviews with the aforementioned primary sample. After that, the questionnaire is presented to a number of academic experts in hospitality for auditing, coordination, and making suggestions. Accordingly, the questionnaire is modified in its final form to be distributed to personnel in the Banquet and Event department in hotels. All classified hotels in Jordan (166 classified hotels) were chosen as the population of the study (MoTA, 2022) and the convenience sample technique is utilized.

An online questionnaire consisting of three variables was designed to measure drivers of future events (artificial intelligence, social media, and stimulus packages) and three variables to measure challenges of future events (competitiveness, COVID-19 safety measures, and virtual conferences). The hotels were randomly selected and the survey link was sent directly to the attached email on the banquet and events department on the hotel's website. The concerned department was contacted again to allow its staff to answer the questions of the questionnaire, and 113 responses were obtained. The questionnaire was developed based on several literature sources (see Quinn, 2009; Minh & Huu, 2016; Tung & Law, 2017; Ross,

2018; Makadia, 2019; Ramely et al., 2020; Marquart et al., 2021). Based on the survey, data on meeting room numbers and hotel classifications were collected as shown in Table 1.

Table I. Hotel characteristics

Category	Category	Frequency	Percentage%
Hotels Category (Stars)	5 stars	48	42.5
	4 stars	43	38.1
	3 stars	7	6.2
	2 stars	10	8.8
	1 star	5	4.4
	Total	113	100.0
Number of meeting rooms	1 Venue	4	3.5
	2 Venues	21	18.6
	3 Venues	39	34.5
	More than 3 meeting rooms	49	43.4
	Total	113	100.0

Data analysis and results

Table (2) shows the measured variables and the items measuring each variable.

Table 2. Variables and measurement items

Variable	Measurement Items
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	AI1: enables the hotel to partner with local and international event companies AI 2: helps participants locate the event and create the expected value AI 3: enables hotel staff to acquire new skills in event management AI 4: helps the guest to register in the appropriate application before arrival AI 5: will play a major role in planning and organizing conferences in the future AI 6: increases the cleanliness and hygiene of hotel properties such as bedsheets and floors AI 7: enhances event participants' accommodations in hotels AI 8: works more effectively than humans AI 9: Implementation of artificial intelligence is a recent trend to follow AI 10: improves safety and security
Social Media (SM)	SM1: enables customers to participate and organize events SM2: Event websites enable users to share information and opinions SM3: provides event participants with constantly updated marketing content about the hotel SM4: Web platforms allow event participants to send messages, photos, and videos about event facilities at the hotel SM5: allows you to store and share digital photos and videos SM6: Social networking services allow people to share information with their friends or followers SM7: Websites enable users to post reviews and comments about the businesses, products, or services of the hotel hosting the event SM8: presents an enhanced image of the hotel SM9: provides information on upcoming events and entertainment venues SM10: is a unique selling tool (special features) for a hotel
Stimulus Packages (SP)	SP1: enable event organizers and participants to defer and restructure payments. SP2: help provide comprehensive services at an affordable price. SP3: are a marketing method for local tourism SP4: increase hotel sales SP5: create new hotel loyalties SP6: increase the number of participants in events SP7: save hotel companies from stagnation during crises.
Competitiveness (C)	C1: increases hostility between hotels. C2: reduces the economic, social, and cultural development of society. C3: affects hotel's output and outcomes. C4: affects hotel market share and price competitiveness. C5: reduces creativity and the quality of service provided
COVID-19 Safety Procedures (COV)	COV1: affected the event business model COV2: caused the events to be postponed, canceled, or delayed COV3: dispensed a number of employees COV4: increased the cost of dealing with a face-to-face event COV5: increase the cost of safety and sanitation measures COV6: the number of participants in the events COV7: The decision to reduce the number of passengers had an impact on the cost of events COV8: The closures of cities have reduced or canceled events COV9: The ban on buffets in the F and B area affects the number of events and participant satisfaction
Virtual Conferences (VC)	VC1: cause poor interaction between participants and employees VC2: reduce the hotel occupancy rate VC3: affect employee incentive awards which include participation in an external event paid for by the hotel VC4: affect the future revenue of the hotel VC5: Switching to virtual conferences can be costly to get the right hardware and software, and maintain equipment

In order to explore the associations among the research variables displayed in the table above, these variables have been measured using a 5-point Likert scale that varies between strongly disagree =1 and strongly agree =5; reliability and validity analyses were conducted, descriptive analysis was used to describe the characteristics of the sample and the respondent to the questionnaires besides the independent and dependent variables.

Descriptive analysis
To describe the responses to each question in the survey, the mean and the standard deviation were estimated. Tables (3) and (4) show the results.

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation of the study's variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Order
Artificial Intelligence (AI)				
AI 1	4.47	.757	Very low	5
AI 2	4.46	.655	Very low	6
AI 3	4.59	.561	Very low	1
AI 4	4.45	.720	Very low	7
AI5	4.56	.566	Very high	3
AI6	4.58	.563	Very high	2
AI7	4.44	.706	Very high	8
AI8	4.38	.672	Very high	10
AI9	4.41	.663	Very high	9
AI10	4.49	.670	Very high	4
Social Media (SM)				
SM 1	4.74	.439	Very high	3
SM 2	4.71	.457	Very high	5
SM 3	4.72	.453	Very high	4
SM 4	4.79	.411	Very high	2
SM 5	4.47	.757	Very high	7
SM6	4.30	.865	Very high	10
SM7	4.35	.864	Very high	9
SM8	4.36	.802	Very high	8
SM9	4.48	.696	Very high	6
SM10	4.81	.391	Very high	1
Stimulus packages (SP)				
SP 1	3.05	1.187	Moderate	6
SP 2	2.94	1.220	Moderate	7
SP 3	3.12	1.301	Moderate	4
SP 4	3.08	1.218	Moderate	5
SP 5	3.42	1.321	High	3
SP 6	3.45	1.323	High	1
SP 7	3.43	1.308	High	2
Competitiveness (C)				
C1	3.94	.950	High	2
C2	3.71	.998	High	5
C3	3.82	1.269	High	3
C4	4.08	1.105	High	1
C5	3.80	1.259	High	4
COVID-19 Safety Procedures (COV)				
COV 1	4.63	.630	Very high	4
COV 2	4.80	.485	Very high	3
COV 3	4.83	.498	Very high	2
COV 4	4.95	.350	Very high	1
COV 5	4.12	.971	High	7
COV6	4.21	.850	Very high	6
COV7	4.51	.628	Very high	5
Virtual Conferences (VC)				
VC 1	4.47	.636	Very high	1
VC 2	3.41	1.292	High	5
VC 3	3.45	1.312	High	4
VC 4	3.**86**	1.246	High	2
VC 5	3.76	1.241	High	3

While the mean shows the central tendency of the data, the standard deviation measures the dispersion which offers an index of the spread or variability in the data (Pallant, 2005; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In other words, a small standard deviation for a set of values reveals that these values are clustered closely about the mean or located close to it; a large standard deviation indicates the opposite. The level of each item was determined by the following formula: (highest point in Likert scale - the lowest point in Likert scale) / the number of the levels used = (5-1) / 5 = 0.80, where 1-1.80 reflected by "very low", 1.81-2.60 reflected by "low", 2.61-3.40 reflected by "moderate", 3.41-4.20 reflected by "high", and 4.21-5 reflected by "very high". Then the items were ordered based on their means.

Table 4. Overall mean and standard deviation of the study's variables

	Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level	Order
Drivers	Artificial Intelligence (AI)	4.4832	.42382	Very high	2
	Social Media (SM)	4.5726	.34050	Very high	1
	Stimulus Packages (SP)	3.2124	1.00020	High	3
Challenges	Competitiveness (C)	3. **6**710	.91651	High	**3**
	COVID-19 Safety Procedures (COV)	4.5644	.46815	Very high	1
	Virtual Conferences (VC)	3. 8714	.94388	High	**2**

In order to find out if there are any statistically significant differences with regard to the study variables in favor of the hotel classification, the ANOVA test was used. Where the results, shown in Table 5 indicated that there are significant differences in competition and virtual conferences.

Table 5. ANOVA Analysis of respondent study variables to hotel classifications

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Artificial Intelligence	Between Groups	.123	4	.031	.167	.955
	Within Groups	19.995	108	.185		
	Total	20.118	112			
Social Media	Between Groups	.277	4	.069	.589	.671
	Within Groups	12.708	108	.118		
	Total	12.985	112			
Stimulus Packages	Between Groups	7.311	4	1.828	1.885	.118
	Within Groups	104.735	108	.970		
	Total	112.046	112			
Competitiveness	Between Groups	41.708	4	10.427	21.503	.000
	Within Groups	52.371	108	.485		
	Total	94.079	112			
COVID-19 Safety Procedures	Between Groups	1.970	4	.493	2.357	.058
	Within Groups	22.576	108	.209		
	Total	24.547	112			
Virtual Conferences	Between Groups	83.982	4	20.995	143.506	.000
	Within Groups	15.801	108	.146		
	Total	99.783	112			

Also, Table 6 provided the statistical significance of the differences between each pair of groups for hotel classification. As noticed in Table 6, the five groups (i.e. five- star, four-star, three-star, two-star, and one-star hotels) were statistically different from one another.

Table 6. Multiple comparisons analysis of the study variables to Hotel classifications
Tukey HSD

Dependent Variable	(I) Hotels Category (Stars)	(J) Hotels Category (Stars)	Mean Difference (I-J) Lower Bound	Std. Error Upper Bound	Sig. Lower Bound	95% Interval Upper Bound	Confidence Lower Bound
Competitiveness	5 stars	4 stars	-1.12012(*)	.14622	.000	-1.5258	-.7145
		3 stars	-1.28592(*)	.28174	.000	-2.0676	-.5043
		2 star	-1.50697(*)	.24206	.000	-2.1785	-.8354
		1 star	-1.28052(*)	.32724	.001	-2.1884	-.3726
	4 stars	5 stars	1.12012(*)	.14622	.000	.7145	1.5258
		3 stars	-.16580	.28382	.977	-.9532	.6216
		2 star	-.38684	.24448	.512	-1.0651	.2914
		1 star	-.16040	.32903	.988	-1.0733	.7525
	3 stars	5 stars	1.28592(*)	.28174	.000	.5043	2.0676
		4 stars	.16580	.28382	.977	-.6216	.9532
		2 star	-.22105	.34317	.967	-1.1731	.7310
		1 star	.00540	.40775	1.000	-1.1259	1.1366
	2 star	5 stars	1.50697(*)	.24206	.000	.8354	2.1785
		4 stars	.38684	.24448	.512	-.2914	1.0651
		3 stars	.22105	.34317	.967	-.7310	1.1731
		1 star	.22644	.38141	.976	-.8317	1.2846
	1 star	5 stars	1.28052(*)	.32724	.001	.3726	2.1884
		4 stars	.16040	.32903	.988	-.7525	1.0733
		3 stars	-.00540	.40775	1.000	-1.1366	1.1259
		2 star	-.22644	.38141	.976	-1.2846	.8317
Virtual conferences	5 stars	4 stars	1.60388(*)	.08031	.000	1.3811	1.8267
		3 stars	1.71905(*)	.15475	.000	1.2897	2.1484
		2 star	1.99797(*)	.13296	.000	1.6291	2.3669
		1 star	2.16064(*)	.17975	.000	1.6619	2.6593
	4 stars	5 stars	-1.60388(*)	.08031	.000	-1.8267	-1.3811
		3 stars	.11517	.15589	.947	-.3173	.5477
		2 star	.39409(*)	.13429	.033	.0215	.7667
		1 star	.55676(*)	.18073	.022	.0553	1.0582
	3 stars	5 stars	-1.71905(*)	.15475	.000	-2.1484	-1.2897
		4 stars	-.11517	.15589	.947	-.5477	.3173
		2 star	.27892	.18850	.578	-.2440	.8019
		1 star	.44159	.22397	.287	-.1798	1.0630
	2 star	5 stars	-1.99797(*)	.13296	.000	-2.3669	-1.6291
		4 stars	-.39409(*)	.13429	.033	-.7667	-.0215
		3 stars	-.27892	.18850	.578	-.8019	.2440
		1 star	.16267	.20950	.937	-.4186	.7439
	1 star	5 stars	-2.16064(*)	.17975	.000	-2.6593	-1.6619
		4 stars	-.55676(*)	.18073	.022	-1.0582	-.0553
		3 stars	-.44159	.22397	.287	-1.0630	.1798
		2 star	-.16267	.20950	.937	-.7439	.4186

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

The main aim of this study is to determine the drivers and challenges of future events. Therefore, three drivers were measured (Artificial Intelligence, Social media, Stimulus Packages) and Social media was rated the highest among them. This is confirmed by Harb et al. (2019) that social media is an effective means of forming the attitudes of event fans towards events. They stressed that event planners and organizers should focus on showing positive images of the depicted events through social media. The respondents strongly agreed that it is a unique selling tool (special features) for a hotel, that the Web platforms allow event participants to send messages, photos, and videos about event facilities at the hotel, and that social media enables customers to participate and organize events. This is also what Rathnakar (2018) points out event marketing has certainly taken a hot spot in social media due to its easy

access to a large number of consumers and the economy in its use. In Addition, the study of Redzuwan et al. (2022) also confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the perceived value of the customer and the tendency to use event websites through obtaining informational and entertainment gratification. Then Artificial Intelligence (AI) comes the second driver that affects the future of events. The respondents indicated that AI enables hotel staff to acquire new skills in event management, and that AI increases the cleanliness and hygiene of hotel properties such as bedsheets and floors. In addition, AI will play a major role in planning and organizing conferences in the future, and AI improves safety and security. The results are compatible with that of Ivanov et al. (2018) who assured that AI is essential in the hospitality industry. In addition, Neuhofer et al. (2020) assured that AI is an effective resource in customer experiences for events, and AI is the non-human representative of future experience in event production. Stimulus Packages came as the third driver that impact the future of events. Results indicated that stimulus packages increase the number of participants in events, save hotel companies from stagnation during crises, and create new hotel loyalties. This coincides with the recommendations of Nhamo et al. (2020) which suggest that stimulus packages are a welcomed move at all times that help the hotel sector continue to provide service, overcome economic crises, and offer competitive rates to event organizers and participants.

The results revealed that the safety procedures of COVID-19 came to the first challenges that impact future events. The safety procedures have increased the cost of dealing with a face-to-face event, a number of employees in the meetings and conferences department have been dispensed due to public safety and causing the event to be postponed, canceled, or delayed. This is indicated by the study of Khaled et al. (2021) that tourism sectors must rely on stimulus packages to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and stimulate tourism.

Virtual conferences came as the second challenge. The findings showed that virtual conferences cause poor interaction between participants and employees, affect the future revenue of the hotel and that virtual conferences can be costly to get the right hardware and software and maintain equipment. Farrow and Wentz (2022) indicated that virtual conferences have clear disadvantages for accommodation facilities, although most participants prefer to participate in an in-person event and that virtual events should not dominate face-to-face conferences. Furthermore, the results revealed that competitiveness came as the third challenge that affects hotel market share and price competitiveness, increases hostility between hotels, and affects hotel output and outcomes. The results are consistent with those of Tuclea & Ana-Mihaela (2008) who indicated that competitiveness is very important in the era of globalization with regard to a knowledge-based economy, economic sustainability, better jobs, greater social cohesion, and gaining current market position. Finally, in order to understand the category of hotels that can be affected by event drivers and their challenges, an ANOVA test was used and the results revealed that competition and virtual conferences are among the most challenges that can affect future events and that may have a clear impact in turn on five-star hotels.

Conclusion

Event tourism is a rapidly growing sector of the hospitality industry, as identifying the drivers and challenges affecting this sector enables hospitality organizations, event planners, and event marketers to expand their activity and overcome difficulties. Hence, this study is presented in order to shed light on the most important issues related to the drivers and challenges around the industry of future events and their impact on the hotel sector. The results indicate that AI will be the hallmark and main driver of conference organization and planning, increasing guests' sense of safety and proper hygiene procedures, speed in completing transactions, and accuracy in arranging time. The introduction of AI into guest service has a significant impact

on customer satisfaction, service quality, and ease of transaction. While social media has become a major part of people's lives in their communication, learning, and work. This places a heavy burden on decision-makers and stakeholders to focus on relying on social media in creating, marketing, and evaluating events, as well as AI in the design, marketing, and promotion of events. In addition, social media is taking up most of a person's time and eWOM has replaced traditional WOM.

However, stakeholders and decision-makers should be aware that there are a number of challenges that will affect the future of events, including global crises, the most important of which is Covid-19, which affected all industries, including events. The results also showed that virtual conferences affect the future of in-person events, as virtual conferences lack guest communication and affect hotel occupancy rates. Thus, the results have two implications. The first is the practical aspect which indicates that AI and social media are key drivers and that stakeholders and event organizers in the hotel sector should pay attention to focus on them and concentrate on hybrid conferences in crises because they have fewer downsides than virtual conferences. The second is theoretical, which comes in the form of recommendations and suggestions for researchers to conduct additional research on other sectors related to events and to identify more drivers and challenges facing events and their impact on destinations and host organizations.

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