

# **Exploring the Impact and Survival Strategies of COVID-19 Pandemic: A Conceptual Study on Independent Hotels in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah**

## **ABSTRACT**

Covid-19 had a devastating effect and hugely impacted the entire global economy, particularly in the hospitality business. The accommodation sector is one of the hardest hit, especially the smaller tourism businesses like independent hotels. In line with this, this conceptual paper aims to study how Covid-19 impacted independent hotels and how these hotels respond to the pandemic's effect and remain viable in a competitive market. Given their limited ownership structure and absence of a distinct brand identity compared to chain hotels, these hotels are often short on resources and have trouble adapting their operations to crises such as Covid-19. Thus, this research is an early attempt to explore the strategies and practices adopted by the independent hotels that managed to survive during this troubled period. This study will also explore the implications of the applied strategies and practices during the various movement restriction control orders. The outcomes of this prospective study should aid independent hotels in regaining revenue following a pandemic and dealing with future pandemic scenarios. It will also be valuable to the government and other relevant agencies that support the tourism and hotel industry's growth and sustainability.