

Sonja Lazarević¹
Milena Laban²

JEL: Z30, Z31, Z32, Z38
DOI: 10.5937/industrija52-50803
UDC: 330.35:338.45(497.11)"2022"
616.98:578.834]:339.13
Original Scientific Paper

Post-covid recovery of the meetings industry in the Republic of Serbia

Article history:

Received: 2 May 2024

Sent for revision: 26 August 2024

Received in revised form: 2 September 2024

Accepted: 8 September 2024

Available online: 20 September 2024

Abstract: *The meetings industry is one of the fastest developing segments of the tourism market and inevitable component of performances achieved on the destination level. The Covid-19 crisis has transformed the way this industry operates, leading to new ways of holding meetings. The aim of the paper is to analyze the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on meetings' industry performances of the Republic of Serbia, as well as its post-covid recovery in this country. The results of the analysis showed a decrease in the meetings held in pandemic years, but also a recovery in 2022. Results also showed that holding virtual meetings became the new normal. Moreover, online meetings were the foundation for developing novel approaches for the new future of the meetings industry and special event management.*

Keywords *meetings industry, Covid-19, recovery.*

Post-covid oporavak industrije sastanaka u Republici Srbiji

Apstrakt: *Industrija sastanaka je deo turističkog tržišta koji beleži najbrži rast i neizbežna komponenta performansi ostvarenih na nivou destinacije. Kriza Covid-19 je transformisala način na koji ova industrija funkcioniše, što je dovelo do novih načina održavanja sastanaka. Cilj rada je da se analizira uticaj pandemije Covid-19 na performanse industije sastanaka u Republici Srbiji, kao i njihov post-covid oporavak u ovoj zemlji. Rezultati analize su pokazali smanjenjani broj održanih sastanaka u godinama pandemije, ali i oporavak u*

¹ University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja, sonja.milutinovic@kg.ac.rs

² University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja

2022. godini. Rezultati su takođe pokazali da je održavanje virtuelnih sastanaka postalo nova normala. Štaviše, onlajn sastanci su bili osnova za redizajniranje strategija za novu budućnost industrije sastanaka i upravljanja posebnim događajima.

Ključne reči: *industrija sastanaka, Covid-19, oporavak.*

1. Introduction

The meetings industry has grown in recent decades as a significant contributor to national economies and is regarded as fastest growing sector of tourism. The meetings industry fosters trade and investment, creates jobs, strengthens local economies, and promotes destinations (Disimulacion, 2020). Therefore, any interruption along its value chain, like the Covid-19 pandemic, may result in substantial losses for its stakeholders, including the event's organizers, participants, suppliers, sponsors, and host locations. The impact of this pandemic is unparalleled when compared to prior crises. According to reports, the greatest worldwide disasters between the 2001 and 2015, such as the SARS pandemic and the September 11 terrorist attack, pale in comparison to Covid-19's unpredictable nature (Gössling et al., 2020). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimate that the effects of Covid-19 crisis are five times larger than those of the 2009 Global economic crisis (WTTC, 2021).

Up to March 2020, the meetings industry was one of the main service industries for international travel (Alananzeh et al., 2019; Bueno et al., 2020), accounting for about 21.5% of all travel expenditures (WTTC, 2019), and it was characterized by dynamic expansion year after year (UNWTO, 2022). This growth was abruptly stopped due to the Covid-19 pandemic dealing a major blow to the meetings industry globally. According to International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) in 2020, the pandemic affected 94% of international meetings; some were canceled, while over 64% were conducted virtually or in a hybrid format (ICCA, 2021).

Despite its detrimental impacts, a contributing factor of the pandemic to the meetings industry was in its qualitative transformation (Rudnicki & Borodako, 2023). This industry will seamlessly enter the fourth industrial revolution thanks to the long-lasting effects of technological progress that were employed during the lockdowns and restriction. Studies of the literature demonstrate not just gains in recovery but also higher-quality service delivery, such as the adoption of virtual and hybrid meetings (Wu et al., 2022).

The subject of the paper is to examine the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on meetings' industry performances of the Republic of Serbia, as well as its recovery in this country. Despite the fact that the impact of Covid-19 on tourism has been researched extensively in papers, and particularly on meetings industry and its post-covid recovery, there is still no significant academic discussion on this topic in the Republic of Serbia. The purpose of the paper is to address this gap in the literature. In order to draw valid conclusions concerning research subject, a qualitative research methodology based on the study of relevant and current literature in this field will be applied. To compile the theoretical background of the research, as many relevant articles written in English as possible were collected. Two of the most widely used academic database, Scopus and Web of Science were used. The databases were instructed to search only for articles containing the words meetings industry, MICE, convention industry, congress tourism, Covid-19, post-covid recovery in the title, abstract or keywords.

2. Theoretical background

The meetings industry is a rapidly growing part of international tourism, with particularly pronounced growth in the last few decades. It is regarded as one of the most significant forms of travel (Spiller, 2002), that is, in the context of tourism, its economic and social impact is becoming increasingly pronounced (Park & Boo, 2010). The cities are utilizing the meetings industry to increase their economic and tourism potential (Walas et al., 2021). One significant measure of economic competitiveness that is employed to produce credible worldwide city rankings is the number of international conferences. As a result, the meetings industry increasingly dominates urban economies. The industry has an organizational structure known as the Convention Bureau which is typically public-private.

When it comes to the destination's economy, the positive impact of congress tourism is especially evident (Mykletun et al., 2014). Due to the fact that the meetings industry is considered as a high-quality product with high costs and high incomes, whose customers are willing to pay high price for that product, meetings industry generate significant financial income for a destination. Large numbers of business people provide an economic boost to destinations, as these visitors, compared to leisure tourists, typically stay longer and spend more money while visiting the destination, and also tend to revisit the destination in the future (Spiller, 2002; Park & Boo, 2010). Any income generated from the organizing of meetings and conferences also initiates a number of economic relationships and transactions, further creating additional

transactions in the national economy (Braun, 1992). According to studies, every dollar made from a business event generates a series of economic contacts that encourage further circulations and repetitions in other industries, potentially doubling or even tripling the benefits (Lee & Back, 2005).

The meetings industry supports local and national economies significantly by creating jobs and generating more income, as well as by attracting new investments (Mykletun et al., 2014). Ritchie and Goeldner (1994) state that this kind of business event supports regional services, cultural and sporting events, tourist attractions, local retail sales, gift and souvenir stores, and local transportation providers. Therefore, a significant portion of the revenue from meetings industry is also created by hotels, congress organizers, stores, transportation firms, and other businesses in addition to travel expenses, which account for nearly half of the total spending of congress participants (Bernini, 2009). The meetings industry's positive economic impact on the local community has motivated many destinations around the world to invest significant funds in convention centers, accommodation facilities and transportation infrastructure (Weber & Ladkin, 2003).

3. Materials and methods

In accordance with the subject of the paper, which is to ascertain the effect that the Covid-19 pandemic had on business meetings in Republic of Serbia, as well as post-covid recovery path of the meetings industry in this country, the method of data comparison was used. Relevant reliable literature, official documents and publications were examined. Furthermore, analysis of theoretical material and results of previous research was performed. In order to compare meetings industry performances before and after the Covid-19 crisis, as well as to draw conclusions about the recovery of the meeting industry, the relevant statistical data of international organizations and associations (such as International Congress and Convention Association, Union of International Associations and Serbia Convention Bureau) were used.

4. Results and discussion

As it was stated, tourism was heavily influenced by the Covid-19 crisis. The outbreak of the virus affected all countries, when it comes to tourism and travel, and especially small and developing ones. However, the existence of various studies on the pandemic effect on the economy and tourism in particular, little attention has been given to the global and local impact to meetings industry (Aburumman, 2020). The outbreak of the pandemic caused the governments

of many countries in the world to adopt emergency measures aimed at the recovery and revitalization of tourism industry in general. All measures could be divided into the following several groups:

- *Economic measures*

The economic measures that the governments of the countries established after the outbreak of the pandemic are primarily reflected in the release of short-term aid in the form of funds for the survival of the tourism industry, establishing the tourism relief fund in an effort to lessen the effects of the lockdown and the number of jobs lost (Villacé-Molinero et al., 2021). The European Union (EU) has made one billion euros available as a guarantee for the European Investment Fund, in order to provide 100,000 small and medium-sized businesses within the travel industry with guarantees for loans worth 8 billion euros. The European Commission has adopted a program that aims to help its members in covering the costs of national short-term work schemes and similar measures that permit employers to preserve jobs. It also emphasizes the significance of funding initiatives for job support, digital skills training, and reskilling, which should prevent job losses. Several EU member states have taken measures to provide direct grants or loans under favorable conditions, while some companies have been granted compensation for business damage caused by the pandemic (Radić et al., 2021).

The majority of countries worldwide have often used fiscal measures as a kind of policy response (UNWTO, 2020), such as Taiwan (Wu et al., 2021), South Africa (Villacé-Molinero et al., 2021), Rwanda (Rwigema 2020), New Zealand, Israel, Japan (Duperyas et al., 2020). In EU, fiscal and monetary measures were brought in 36 European countries, and included measures pertaining to tax policy, budgetary direct incentives (benefits), and liquidity preservation. The majority of countries combined all measure groups, including the Republic of Serbia, where measures were introduced through three packages (Center for European Policies, 2020), which would ensure economic stability and help micro, small and medium-sized companies in the private sector to cope with the recession (Marjanović & Đukić, 2020). The third package of measures in the form of subsidies was intended for companies operating in the tourism industry. This package includes subsidies for tourist agencies, licensed tourist agencies as support in their work, as well as subsidies to all tourist agencies that have a license and are not in bankruptcy proceedings, and grants subsidies for hotels. The packages of measures introduced are similar to those used by European countries to help their economies. The most popular measure from the package is three minimal net wages that are directly provided to all workers in micro, small, and medium-sized businesses. This measure enabled companies to pay salaries to employees, had an impact on the reduction of company expenses and enabled survival (Center for European Policies, 2020).

- *Health and hygiene measures*

At the beginning of the outbreak of the pandemic, it was necessary to coordinate agreements regarding international travel, as well as to adopt standardized protocols for health checks before travel, and therefore the communication of public authorities was of fundamental importance. Reliable, current and timely detailed information were necessary in order to minimize the level of uncertainty and the risk of illness among passengers. Communication was vital as well for health and safety measures in order to strengthen health and hygiene protocols, including nationwide quarantines coordination (Villacé-Molinero et al., 2021).

The meetings industry, given the nature of gathering people, is certainly one of the areas that suffered the biggest impact of the pandemic. The common health measures in meetings industry included “social distancing, temperature screening, sanitizing and disinfection procedures, health symptom check, arrival protocols, as well as supervision of these procedures“ (Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2021, p. 2003).

In the Republic of Serbia, after the curfew was lifted in May 2020, several recommendations related to the meeting industry remained in force: distance between meeting participants, limited number of participants at gatherings, shortened duration of sessions, regular use of disinfectants, testing meeting participants, wearing masks indoors, having a covid passport as proof of vaccination (Official Gazette, 2020-2022; Institute for Public Health “Dr. Milan Jovanović Batut”, 2024). However, from an economic and social point of view, it is much more rational to invest in research and vaccine development (Radić et al., 2021) than isolation of travelers and strict quarantine rules (Rwigema 2020).

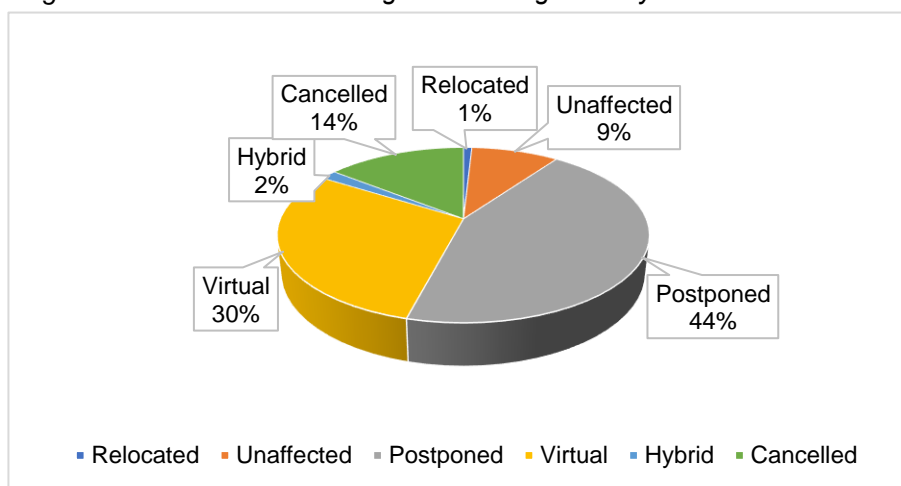
- *Organizational measures*

The onset of the pandemic had a major impact on the change in consumer behavior habits, travel habits and lifestyle, so it was essential to adjust to the new circumstances. In meetings industry, it caused cancellation of events, and therefore new policy strategies and re-adjustments were a necessity (Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2021).

The ICCA and the Union of International Associations (UIA) annually publish data on the number of held international congresses, conferences and business meetings. In light of the pandemic’s current effects on global instability, ICCA has implemented the following classification for all meetings: relocated, unaffected, postponed, virtual, hybrid, and cancelled. The biggest percentage of all the meetings scheduled for 2020 were virtual meetings (44%) and hybrid meetings (2%). Merely nine percent of the 8,409 scheduled meetings are

classified as “unaffected” (ICCA, 2021). The Figure 1 presents the distribution of meetings held during 2020.

Figure 1. Distribution of meetings held during 2020 by ICCA’s classification



Source: ICCA Statistics Report, 2021

In 2020, only 61% of business meetings were held. According to ICCA statistics, of all the meetings that were held in 2020, the largest percentage was virtual meetings and hybrid meetings (Zhylenko et al, 2022). As can be seen from the Figure 1, the largest number of meetings was postponed (44%), while 30% were held virtually (ICCA, 2021). In addition, bigger meetings carried significantly heavier consequences than smaller ones when they are canceled or postponed (ICCA, 2022).

Holding virtual meetings during the pandemic is the result of adaptation to the new circumstances. This type of meeting is economically decimated and reflected, given that the impact of virtual and hybrid meetings on the destination is limited, when it comes to costs related to travel, accommodation, food and beverage and other costs in the destination. Virtual meetings also had a strong impact both on the number of participants and on the amount of registration fees. Whereas hybrid meetings incorporate both live and online platforms, virtual meetings entirely depend on internet technologies (Disimulacion, 2020). Virtual meetings during the pandemic, therefore, reduce the costs of transportation, accommodation, and thus generated significantly lower consumption in the destination (ICCA, 2021).

However, online meetings and conferences, according to Valenti et al. (2021), as a best alternative “are increasing the diversity of speakers allowing much

higher levels of participation of researchers from all scientific sectors internationally, from countries with low-to-middle income economies, and early-career researchers” (p. 335). By utilizing a variety of technologies and formats, including in-person meetings, video conferences, and online communication tools, hybrid events, on the other hand, enable a wider audience to be reached and extended event duration. Documents and audio-visual materials can also be posted on the event website (Valenti et al., 2021). Despite having a lot of advantages, this technical solution has several serious drawbacks (Porpiglia et al., 2020). Human interaction, affection, and feelings are nearly impossible to replicate online. The chances for networking could be reduced as a result of a fewer informal encounters among teachers, delegates, scientific societies, and industries being in danger. Moreover, given the economic effects of such reorganization, the role of scientific societies itself may be in jeopardy. Table 1 shows the number of meetings during 2020, 2021 and 2022. According to UIA (2021), the report considers 471,800 meetings that are hosted by 27,465 international organizations in 256 countries and 11,647 localities.

Table 1. Events with meeting status information

Year	Cancelled	Postponed	Virtual	Hybrid
2020	645	1642	2578	118
2021	46	219	729	189
2022	1	16	4	13

Source: UIA, 2021

There is a noticeable growth in the number of virtual meetings held in 2020, which gradually decreased during 2021 and 2022, while the reverse case was recorded with in-person meetings. After the wave of the pandemic, the number of face-to-face meetings started to increase.

It is important to point out that the data collection methodologies of these two organizations differ. ICCA collects the information from its members and from international associations, while UIA derives its information mainly through direct and regular contact with international associations, and from national, regional, and civic tourist authorities (UIA, 2021).

According to Disimulacion (2020), tourism industry in general, as one of the first industries to use ICT, needs to review the advantages and characteristics of various event technology. Technologies may be used “to collaborate among stakeholders, digitize processes for registration and payment; integrate artificial intelligence, online surveys; enable co-creation of immersive experiences, communicate through social media, and share critical data analytics for marketing and strategic planning” (Disimulacion, 2020, p. 13-14). Therefore, use of ICT in meetings industry may serve as an instrument for improving visitor satisfaction and participation (Zeithaml et al., 1990; Katsoni & Kavoura, 2013; Disimulacion, 2020).

According to ICCA Statistical Report for 2019, the Republic of Serbia, with a total of 65 business meetings in 2017, took 26th place on the European ranking list. In 2018, 63 meetings were held, while in 2019, number of meetings held in Serbia was 58. However, ICCA emphasizes that the data on the number of meetings may deviate from the real number, given the fact that some business meetings are held in more than one destination (ICCA, 2019).

The Serbia Convention Bureau was founded in 2007 as a special department of the Tourist Organization of Serbia, with the mission to develop, promote and position Serbia as the leading and fastest growing destination in Southeast Europe (Serbia Convention Bureau, 2023). This institution collects data on the development of business tourism and meetings in the Republic of Serbia. In order to analyze the congress performances of the Republic of Serbia before, during and after the outbreak of the corona virus, the internal data of the Serbia Convention Bureau were used (Table 2). The following four categories were taken as the most important parameters in the analysis: number of meetings held, total income from meeting registration fees, average total consumption of meetings, and total number of participants.

Table 2. Data on congress performances in the Republic of Serbia (2017-2022)

Year	Number of meetings	Income from fees	Total expenditure	Number of participants
2017	68	6.041.951 €	27.463.413 €	16.604
2018	64	6.251.658 €	28.416.627 €	18.59
2019	64	2.915.454 €	13.252.064 €	13.977
2020	7	635.036 €	2.886.527 €	1.097
2021	15	1.215.817 €	5.526.440 €	3.048
2022	42	4.698.140 €	21.355.183 €	13.015
Total	260	21.758.055,85 €	98.900.253,88 €	66.331,21

Source: Serbia Convention Bureau, 2023

When comparing congress performances of the Republic of Serbia in the period before and after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, it can be seen that in 2020 the number of business meetings decreased by 89.06%, the income from registration fees and the average total consumption decreased by 78.22%, while the estimated total number of participants recorded a drop of 92.15%.

In 2021, on the other hand, compared to 2020, an increase in congress performance was noted: the number of meetings increased by 114.28%, income from registration fees and total consumption increased by 91.46%, while the estimated total number of participants increased by 117.85%.

In 2022, the difference in performance is even more pronounced and noticeable. The number of meetings in 2022 increased by 500% compared to the pandemic period, the total revenue from registration fees and the total

consumption of all meetings recorded an increase of 639.13%, while the average total number of participants in business meetings increased by 1,086.42% .

Comparing the congress performances from the pre-pandemic period with the period from 2022, when the measures were weakened and when life returned to normal flows, a clear recovery of the meetings industry can be observed in Republic of Serbia. Namely, the number of meetings is still not at the level of the pre-pandemic, but income from registration fees and total consumption are higher in 2022 compared to 2019. The average estimated number of participants is approximately the same as in 2019. It is important to point out that during the corona virus pandemic in 2020, the number of virtual and hybrid meetings increased strongly, both at the world level and in the Republic of Serbia. The Expo 2027 the will take place in Serbia can certainly contribute to the further development of congress tourism in the coming period, for the needs of which a large material base will be built.

6. Conclusion

The outbreak of Covid-19 imposed restrictions on travel and gatherings, which greatly affected the tourism industry, not leaving out the meeting industry. The global community was compelled by new conditions to develop new channels for knowledge and information sharing. In the Republic of Serbia, as a result of restrictive measures such as travel limitations, border closures, and gathering prohibitions, performances of business meetings in 2020 declined drastically in all segments. However, existing digital platforms and new systems have enabled it to hold numerous online business meetings through various platforms, such as Zoom, Live Stream, GoToWebinar Seminar, Google Hangouts, Skype, Microsoft Teams, etc. In this case, holding hybrid and virtual events proved to be an effective way to keep the meetings industry alive. These types of meetings became the foundation for developing new tactics for the meetings industry's and special event management's future. However, this solution has some disadvantages. For instance, chances for networking could be reduced as online meetings reduce informal meetings of participants.

Meetings industry in the Republic of Serbia follows the international business market, and is recovering after restrictions related to gatherings and travel. The performance of business meetings in the Republic of Serbia during the last observed year shows a multiple increase. The number of meetings, profit from registration fees and average total expenditure, as well as the expected number of participants, has increased drastically. The income from registration fee and total expenditure for all meetings held during 2022 exceed the same figures

from the pre-pandemic period. In addition, a significant factor in the further development of congress tourism in the Republic of Serbia will be Expo 2027, with a remarkably material base that will be built for its purposes.

The potential contribution of this paper may concern the fact that previous domestic scientific literature did not deal with the problems of meetings industry in the Republic of Serbia and its recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic. The analysis of the existing secondary data processed in this paper can serve as a benchmark for future research on this topic. The paper has its limitations, that is, that the presented performances do not include complete or final data for the meeting industry market of the Republic of Serbia. Furthermore, it is really challenging to ascertain the expenditure of business event participants. Future research can be supplemented by primary data analysis in order to evaluate more precisely the economic contributions of the meetings industry to destination development.

References

- Aburumman, A. A. (2020). COVID-19 impact and survival strategy in business tourism market: the example of the UAE MICE industry. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 7, 141. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-00630-8>
- Alananzeh, O., & Al-Badarneh, M., Al-Mkhadmeh, A., Jawabreh, O. (2019). Factors influencing MICE tourism stakeholders' decision making: The case of Aqaba in Jordan. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, 20(1), 24-43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15470148.2018.1526152>
- Bernini, C. (2009). Convention industry & destination clusters: Evidence from Italy. *Tourism Management*, 30(6), 878-889. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.12.004>
- Braun, B. M. (1992). The economic contribution of conventions: The case of Orlando, Florida. *Journal of Travel Research*, 30(3), 32-37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004728759203000305>
- Bueno, A. R., Urbistondo, P. A., & Martínez, B. A. (2020). The MICE tourism value chain: Proposal of a conceptual framework and analysis of disintermediation. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, 21(3), 177-200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15470148.2020.1740851>
- Center for European Policies (2020). *Effects of economic mitigation measures negative consequences Covid-19 on the economy*. Retrieved 15 January, 2024 from: https://naled.rs/htdocs/Files/06839/Analiza_efekata_ekonomskih_mera_za_ubla_zavanje_negativnih_posledica_COVID-19_na_privredu.pdf
- Disimulacion, M. A. T. (2020). MICE tourism during COVID-19 and future directions for the new normal. *Asia Pacific International Events Management Journal*, 1(2), 11-17

- Dupeyras, A., Haxton, P., & Stacey, J. (2020). The Covid-19 crisis and tourism: Response and recovery measures to support the tourism sector in OECD countries. *Global Health and Covid-19. Task force*, 11
- Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, M. (2020) Pandemics, tourism and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708>
- ICCA (2019). *Statistics Report: Country & City Rankings*. Retrieved 15 January, 2024 from: <https://www.stnet.ch/app/uploads/2021/07/ICCA-Statistics-2019.pdf>
- ICCA (2021). *ICCA Annual Statistics Study 2020. Analyzing an exceptional and transformational year*. Retrieved 15 January, 2024 from: https://arinex.com.au/arxiv/wp-content/uploads/ICCA-Statistics-Study-2020_270521_Final.pdf
- ICCA (2022). 2020 ICCA Business Analytics. Retrieved from: https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/iccaweb/ICCA_Rankings_2023_230707_795d8dd3-147a-45e2-b97f-075234e8f0f6.pdf
- Institute for Public Health "Dr. Milan Jovanović Batut" (2024). *Recommendations: how to protect yourself*. Retrieved 15 January, 2024 from: <https://www.batut.org.rs/index.php?content=2070>
- Katsoni, V., & Kavoura, A., (2013). The use of content Analysis on Hotels' websites as communication Tools. In *Third International Conference: Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies in the Economic and Administrative Sciences - QMEAS* (pp. 443-448). Athens, Greece
- Lee, J. M., & Back, K.J. (2005). A review of economic value drivers in convention and meeting management research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(5), 409-420. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110510604832>
- Lekgau, R. J., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2021). MICE tourism policy and strategy responses in managing the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(6), 1997-2012
- Marjanović, D., & Đukić, M. (2020). Economic measures to mitigate the consequences of COVID-19. In *Black swan in the world economy 2020* (pp. 91-105), Belgrade, Serbia: Institute of Economic Sciences
- Mykletun, R. J., Bartkeviciute, M., & Puchkova, Y. (2014). Green meetings – Do they matter to their closest stakeholders? *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 14(3), 211-233. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2014.946229>
- Official Gazette RS. (2020-2022). *Regulation on measures to prevent and suppress the infectious disease Covid-19* No. 151/2020, 152/2020, 153/2020, 156/2020, 158/2020, 1/2021, 17/2021, 19/2021, 22/2021, 29/2021, 34/2021, 48/2021, 54/2021, 59/2021, 60/2021, 64/2021, 69/2021, 86/2021, 95/2021, 99/2021, 101/2021, 105/2021, 108/2021 and 117/2021. Retrieved 15 January, 2024 from: <https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/uredba-o-merama-za-spreccavanje-sirenja-zaraznebolesti-covid-19.html>
- Park, E., & Boo, S. (2010). An assessment of convention tourism's potential contribution to environmentally sustainable growth. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18(1), 95-113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580903147936>
- Porpiglia, F., Checcucci, E., Autorino, R., Amparore, D., Cooperberg, M. R., Ficarra, V., & Novara, G. (2020). Traditional and virtual congress meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic and the post-COVID-19 era: is it time to change the

- paradigm? *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 78(3), 301-303.
<https://doi.org/10.1016%2Fj.eururo.2020.04.018>
- Radić, N., Radić, V., & Stevanović, M. (2021). Economic effects of the corona virus pandemic on tourism and catering. *Megatrend Review*, 18(3), 1-19
- Ritchie, J. B., & Goeldner, C. R. (1994). *Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Research. A Handbook for Managers and Researchers*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Rudnicki, M., & Borodako, K. (2023). Air transport accessibility in business tourism destinations in the COVID-19 pandemic – A Central and Eastern Europe perspective. *Hotel and Tourism Management*, 11(1), 9-23.
<https://doi.org/10.5937/menhottur2301009R>
- Rwigema, P. C. (2020). Impact of Covid-19 pandemic to Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) tourism in Rwanda. *The Strategic Journal of Business & Change Management*, 7(3), 395-409
- Serbia Convention Bureau (2023). <https://www.scb.travel/>
- Spiller, J. (2002). History of convention tourism. In K. Weber & K. Chon (Eds.), *Convention Tourism: International Research and Industry Perspectives* (pp. 3-20), Binghampton, New York: Haworth
- UIA (2021) *International Meetings Statistics Report, 62nd Edition – June 2021*, Comparative tables on the international meetings of international organizations, Retrieved 15 January, 2024 from: https://uia.org/sites/uia.org/files/misc_pdfs/pubs/Look_Inside_UIA_Statistics_Report_ed_62.pdf
- UNWTO (2020). *Covid-19 tourism recovery technical tourism package*. Retrieved 15 January, 2024 from: https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-05/COVID-19-Tourism-Recovery-TA-Package_8%20May-2020.pdf
- UNWTO (2022). *UNWTO Tourism Data Dashboard*. Retrieved 15 January, 2024 from: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/unwto-tourism-dashboard>
- Valenti, A., Fortuna, G., Barillari, C., Cannone, E., Boccuni, V., & Iavicoli, S. (2021). The future of scientific conferences in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic: Critical analysis and future perspectives. *Industrial Health*, 59(5), 334-339,
<https://doi.org/10.2486/indhealth.2021-0102>
- Villacé-Molinero, T., Fernández-Muñoz, J.J., Orea-Giner, A., & Fuentes-Moraleda, L. (2021). Understanding the new post-COVID-19 risk scenario: Outlooks and challenges for a new era of tourism. *Tourism Management*, 86, 104324.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2021.104324>
- Walas, B., Nocoń, M., Nemethy, S., Petrović, F., & Oleksa-Kaźmierczak, A. (2021). Diagnosis of competencies in the meetings industry in Poland, Hungary and Ireland in post-COVID-19 period. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 19(4), 198-212. [http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19\(4\).2021.17](http://dx.doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19(4).2021.17)
- Weber, K., & Ladkin, A. (2003). The convention industry in Australia and the United Kingdom: key issues and competitive forces. *Journal of Travel Research*, 42(2), 125-132. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287503257489>
- WTTC (2019). *Tourism economic impact*. London: WTTC
- WTTC. (2021). *Tourism economic impact*. London: WTTC
- Wu, L. F., Achyldurdyeva, J., Jou, W. P., Fong, W. T., & Jaw, B.S. (2021) Relief, Recovery, and Revitalization Measures for Tourism and Hospitality Industry During Covid-19 Pandemic: Case Study from Taiwan. *SAGE Open*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211040805>

- Wu, J., Rajesh, A., Huang, Y. N., Chhugani, K., Acharya, R., Peng, K., & Mangul, S. (2022). Virtual meetings promise to eliminate geographical and administrative barriers and increase accessibility, diversity and inclusivity. *Nature Biotechnology*, 40(1), 133-137
- Zeithaml, V. A., Parasuraman, A., & Berry, L. L. (1990). *Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations*. New York: The Free Press
- Zhylenko, K. M., Khalatur, S.M., Pavlenko, O. P., & Pavlenko, O. S. (2022). Formation of macroeconomic indicators under the influence of MICE tourism. *Academy review*, 2(57), 249-266. <https://doi.org/10.32342/2074-5354-2022-2-57-19>