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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Edito	orial Board	iii
Recto	or's Message	iv
From	The Desk Of The Head Of Faculty	v
1.	INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (IR) 4.0: IT IS ESSENTIAL IN TODAY'S BUSINESS Abd Rasyid Ramli, Norhidayah Ali & Rosliza Md Zani	1
2	YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC: DOES THE GOVERNMENT CARE? Azyyati Anuar & Daing Maruak Sadek	3
3	ISLAMIC BANKING INDUSTRY IN FINTECH ECOSYSTEM: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES Hasmah Laili Jamalurus	6
4	APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY IN FOOD INDUSTRY Baderisang Mohamed, Mohd Sukor Md Yusoff & Siti Nur Athirah Mohd Kamal	10
5	ANNOTATIONS GIVE MEANINGFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCE Farah Merican Isahak Merican, Nizar Nazrin & Shafilla Subri	13
6	AN INTRODUCTION TO ENSA: THE ANIMATED SCREEN ANNOTATION APPLICATION Farah Merican Isahak Merican, Syafiq Abdul Samat & Abdullah Kula Ismail	15
7	E-COMMERCE ISSUES IN RETAIL INDUSTRY Baderisang Mohamed, Mohd Sukor Md Yusoff & Nurul Ain Syauqina Azlan	17
8	DIGITALISATION OF MALAYSIAN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR Baderisang Mohamed, Mohd Sukor Md Yusoff & Nurul Ain Syauqina Azlan	21
9	STUDENT INTERNSHIP CHALLENGES DURING COVID-19 Fatihah Norazami Abdullah, Nor Edi Azhar Mohamed & Noriza Mohd Saad	25
10	INDUSTRY 4.0 AND ITS CHALLENGES Rosliza Md Zani, Ramli Saad & Mohd Radzi Mohd Khir	28
11	BALANCING THE SCALE OF WORK AND LIFE Norhidayah Ali & Azni Syafena Andin Salamat	31
12	NANOCREDIT PROGRAMMES: WHEN MICROCREDIT IS TOO BIG Zuraidah Mohamed Isa, Dahlia Ibrahim & Zaiful Affendi Ahmad Zabib	34
13	ERGONOMICS WORKSTATION FOR HOME OFFICE Norafiza Mohd Hardi, Norhafiza Hashim & Hasyimah Razali	36
14	RETIREMENT SAVINGS: HOW IT FARES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC Dahlia Ibrahim & Zuraidah Mohamed Isa	39

15	LEVERAGING AR-RAHNU MICRO FINANCING FOR FLOOD VICTIMS Mohd Shafiz Saharan, Mohd Fazil Jamaludin & Khairul Azfar Adzahar	41
16	WHAT IS LEAN 4.0? Azyyati Anuar & Daing Maruak Sadek	43
17	21ST CENTURY SKILLS - THE NEEDED SKILLS NOW Azfahanee Zakaria, Syed Mohammed Alhady Syed Ahmad Alhady & Sarah Sabir Ahmad	46
18	NEW MARKETING STRATEGY THREATENING THE TRADITIONAL HEALTHCARE BUSINESSES Sarah Sabir Ahmad, Azfahanee Zakaria & Isma Fazlini Ismail	49
19	COVID-19: DOES IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN ASEAN MOTOR VEHICLE SALES? Anita Abu Hassan, Najah Mokhtar & Mohd Syazrul Hafizi Husin	52
20	FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS READINESS TO TRAVEL DURING PANDEMIC Wan Shahrul Aziah Wan Mahamad & Ramli Saad	55
21	THE USE OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT IN ADVERTISING PROMOTION Ramli Saad, Wan Shahrul Aziah Wan Mahamad & Yong Azrina Ali Akbar	57
22	FACTORS ROCKETING IN THE PRICE OF ESSENTIAL GOODS IN MALAYSIA Nor Azira Ismail, Jamilah Laidin & Shahiszan Ismail	61
23	THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON POVERTY IN MALAYSIA Nor Azira Ismail	63

FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURIST READINESS TO TRAVEL DURING PANDEMIC

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INTRODUCTION

Some of the countries in this world have been affected by an unprecedented event which is the COVID-19 pandemic. Regional quarantine, lockdown, travel ban, and border closure policies have been issued by most countries to break the chain of the spread of this virus. These restrictions are considered to be most effective in containing the spread between people but indirectly it is strongly affecting the tourism sector (Gossling et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2020). Even though vaccination programs have been implemented in various countries, there is still uncertainty on the effectiveness of the vaccines and also when the pandemic will end (Esterman, 2020), and this may influence tourist readiness to travel during this pandemic.

FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURIST READINESS TO TRAVEL DURING PANDEMIC

Tourist readiness to travel during a pandemic may be influenced by several factors. One of the factors that tourists may consider when deciding to travel is perceived risk (Rittichainuwat et al., 2018). In the tourism context, perceived risk is associated with a tourist's perception of uncertainty and potential outcomes resulting from the consumption of travel and tourism offerings (Liu et al., 2016). This factor becomes one of the influential elements that may affect individuals' decision making, as potential tourists will avoid risky situations and to visit destinations that in their perceptions are safe. Rittichainuwat et al. (2018) found that tourists make travel decisions based on their own perception rather than the actual situation. In the context of the pandemic, when someone believes that COVID-19 is dangerous, they will maintain physical distance and avoid traveling. The attitude to stay at home and protect oneself is influenced by the perception of the negative effects or the loss that could be caused by traveling (Rahmafitria et al., 2021)

Consciousness in hygiene and safety also influences tourist readiness to travel. Tourists relate this factor with the potential effects to their health and well-being when they engage in travel and tourism activities (Olya & Al-Ansi, 2018). Safety and hygienic needs in public transports, hotels and also recreational sites are among the highest concerns for potential tourists (Sigala, 2020). Wen et al. (2020) also indicated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, potential tourists are generally likely to find destinations based on safety and hygiene, cleanliness, established infrastructure, and high-quality medical facilities.

Furthermore, the trustworthiness of information is another factor that influences the readiness of tourists to travel. The decision to travel is affected by the level of trust that potential tourists have on the information they receive prior to their travel; the higher the level of risk, the more information tourists will find in order to support their decision to travel to a selected destination. Thus, the credibility of the information source is very critical to the risk information processing of tourists especially during the pandemic (Aliperti & Cruz, 2019).

CONCLUSION

To summarize, based on the factors that have been mentioned above it can be said that potential tourists are still conscious of the spread of COVID-19 and this may influence their readiness to travel during this pandemic. The self-awareness and reinforcement of new social norms among the public have made potential tourists be more careful in selecting their travel destination during the pandemic.

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