

# Does COVID-19 stop night market's traders from losing their income?

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## Abstract

Night markets, also known as night bazaars, are nighttime street markets that are devoted to more leisurely strolling, browsing, and dining than daytime markets. Usually, they are open-air economies. Locals refer to night markets as Pasar Malam, which simply translates to "night market," with "pasar" referring to "bazaar" in Persian or "market" in Malay, and "malam" referring to "night." A pasar malam is a night-time street market found in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia, typically in residential areas. Since the vendors travel around various neighborhoods on different days of the week, a night market usually only happens once or twice a week. Most people like going to night markets because of the ease, lower prices, the opportunity to browse for fun, the temptation of local food that is not available in supermarkets, and the opportunity to walk. Currently, members of the public are concerned about the National Security Council's decision to allow Pasar Malam to work from 4pm to 10pm during the Movement Control Order 2.0, after Malaysia reported more than 5,000 new Covid-19 cases (MCO). Many worried that reopening Pasar Malam would be a mistake in the fight against Covid-19, as authorities try to strike a balance between lives and well-being. Therefore, this study aims to recognize and address the preventative factors that would be used by authorities and government to prevent the pandemic Covid-19 from spreading while also boosting the economy and assisting Pasar Malam's traders in weathering difficult times. The study entails content analysis, which helps the researcher to explore further into the conceptual and theoretical questions raised by the data obtained from previous studies and other secondary sources. The overall results show that the prevention methods that can be practiced throughout the night market in Malaysia, namely, *cashless payment mechanism* and *the use of thermal imaging scanners*. The study concludes that the prevention methods can break the virus from spread as well as help our night market owners especially those from the B40 income group that make up most of our traders.

## Keywords:

CoViD-19; Cashless Payment Mechanism; Thermal Imaging Scanner; Night Market Traders

## 1 Introduction

Night markets, also known as "Pasar Malam," have long been a common feature of Malaysian shopping options. A night market is a collection of temporary outdoor stalls or stands that sell merchandise, snacks, and other products. They were found in almost every village, small town, and city in Malaysia. A night market will be held at a certain venue, as determined by the Local Authority or Council, one or more times per week. Traders also shift their operations to local neighbour hoods on various days of the week. Night markets, also known as farmers' markets, have long been a common alternative to mainstream shopping among Malaysians. The night market, according to Aziz (2012), is a small business that runs in the evening and sells a range of low-cost products and cooked food. Since it is normally close to a suburban area, it is gradually becoming a favourite option for consumer attraction. The 'Pasar Malam,' or night market, is a traditional Malaysian institution that attracts both young and old. Hundreds of stalls are set up along the roadside every day and night, selling a variety of products and foodstuffs. The night market is a perfect way to sample a variety of local delicacies and desserts while still getting a taste of local life. (Chin & Harun, 2015). Furthermore, a night market typically consists of a series of stalls that sell items such as fruits, vegetables, sweets, toys, clothing, movie discs, and ornaments at low or fair prices. Customers will not be able to find the best discounts at other locations, so the night market is normally the best option. Since the prices offered are not sufficiently set, the buyer may bargain with the vendor to get the best price for each good. As a result, haggling over rates is popular at such markets (Fung, 2013). The cost of living has created a major economic challenge for low-income families. Because of the high cost of raw materials, food has been sold at a high price. According to Huang, Liou, and Tzeng (2009), a night market is a selling spot where local businesses sell a range of goods and prepared food at cheaper prices during the evening. Furthermore, night markets are temporary open markets that run in public spaces and have many of the same physical attributes as most markets, such as visibility, traffic flow, utilities, parking services, and safety and security features. Previously, many research reports on the night market have been completed (Au & Law, 2002; Aziz, 2012; Chin & Harun, 2015; Cohen & Aveili, 2004; Hsieh & Chang, 2004; Huang, Liou, & Tzeng, 2009; Kuo, Kuo & Chung, 2012; Lee, Chang, Hou, & Lin, 2008).

Numerous studies have focused on the inspiration, happiness, and behaviour of tourists in shopping activities over the last decade, however, there are limited debate in the literature to address the detailed and reliable knowledge about small local business owners' experiences (Lee & Pearce, (2019) especially during and after a pandemic. Based on the information presented earlier, it is critical to decide the preventive method that can sustain night market traders to keep on doing their business and in turn be able to accommodate their lives. As a result, the aim of this study is to recognize the contributing factors that will suggest the local authorities to act to prevent the pandemic Covid-19 in the night market in Malaysia and will keep Malaysia's night markets thrive, such as the use of cashless payment systems and thermal imaging scanners.

Subsequently, the first case of COVID-19 was discovered in Malaysia on January 25, 2020 and was linked to three Chinese nationals who had previously had close contact with an infected individual in Singapore. The first positive case of COVID-19 was verified on February 4, 2020, despite the Ministry of Health (MOH) rapidly developing uniform recommendations for the management of COVID-19 in each state of Malaysia. In March 2020, other states, including Penang, announced their first COVID-19 event. On March 16, 2020, the Malaysian government implemented MCO owing to an increase in the number of positive cases to 553. According to MOH (2020), after the MCO, the government issued three further national directives to reduce outbreaks: The Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO), the Recovery Conditional Movement Control Order (RCMCO), and the Restricted Movement Control Order (RMCO).

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Cashless Payment Mechanism**

Many benefits of cashless transactions are logistical, such as avoiding long lines at ATMs or the security risk of transporting large sums of cash (Odior & Banuso, 2012). According to Kumari and Khanna (2017), the cashless payment mechanism is a shift in people's behavior that eliminates the use of currency in favor of payment technology. It is a comparatively modern concept that enables consumers and retailers to perform electronic financial transactions for goods and services. In a conventional cashless payment situation, customers are the ones who make the payment, while retailers are the ones who collect it. It is a straightforward unification of transactions between certain parties (Liébana-Cabanillas et al, 2014). The use of a cashless payment scheme varies. The most recent invention is mobile payment (Aron, 2018). As a result of the widespread and pervasive usage of cell phones, people are more likely to move from cash to cashless payment (Putri et al, 2017). Furthermore, as more people use mobile payment, more retailers enter the cashless payment system (Au & Kauffman, 2008). As a result, the proliferation of retailers would be influenced by the prevalence of mobile payment users. Finally, it brings importance to the customer-merchant relationship in terms of the payment connection. While the mobile payment ecosystem, which includes financial institutions, multi-national operators (MNOs), and retailers, has supported the use of cashless payment systems, consumers' intention to accept it is still below expectations (Humbani & Wiese, 2017). Furthermore, Ng (2018) discovered that the acceptance of electronic payments in Singapore was slowed by a shortage of merchants able to accept cashless payment methods. From these two comments, both consumers and merchants of mobile payments face the same issue: low acceptance. However, the current situation in Indonesia is conflicting, especially in cities, where many people have already used the cashless payment method for purchases, both from users and merchants. Due to numerous promotions from third party providers (TPP) to lure consumers and retailers to use their cashless payment system, this is becoming a theme. However, several studies focused solely on customer acceptance of mobile payment systems, ignoring the importance of contingency considerations and other dimensions in gaining a more comprehensive view of the mobile payment ecosystem (Dahlberg et al, 2015). At this point of

studies, in research from Krishnan (2021), he reported that alternatively, if the government still wants to allow night markets to operate, then they should provide incentives for hawkers to switch to cashless payment mechanism.

## **2.2 Thermal Imaging scanner**

Thermo-graphic scanning is a well-established technique focused on infrared imaging that is used in several applications including tracking, diagnosis of industrial equipment and goods, and health diagnosis (Bagavathiappan et al., 2013); (R. Usamentiaga et al, 2014). According to Walter et al. (1985), they have been using thermal imaging equipment for fever diagnosis since 1985. They reported that the most precise readings were obtained near the eye and the E- spot below the ear lobes. Since the virus epidemic, infrared thermometers have been used in public spaces to monitor people's body temperatures to distinguish sick people among the crowd. This precaution is also lacking because it takes a long time to monitor each person's body temperature, and the most important factor is that direct contact with the infected will spread the infection to the person who does the screening procedure or to the person in charge of screening to the patients who are being screened. According to Surico, A. (2020), thermal imaging scanners are the most practical, appropriate, and readily available groundbreaking way to address the safety issues posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Companies and businesses may utilize thermal imaging scanners to screen out consumers or workers with high temperatures (a typical side effect of infectious viruses to diseases) and defer at-risk individuals from entering a place or event of business.

## **3 Methodology**

This study is focused on secondary sources, which are evidence that has already been generated and is also known as data from previous studies, papers, documents, books, web information, and statistical data. The contributing factors that will suggest the local authorities to prevent the pandemic Covid-19 in the night market were established in this report. The content review was carried out manually after a detailed reading of previous articles, newspapers, or views, and was assisted by primary sources. Content analysis, according to Krippendorff (1969), is a reliable approach for drawing clear inferences from text to other states of its source and the use of replicable methods. From 1969 to 2016, all knowledge and evidence related to the study topics were obtained from previous researchers.

## **4 Findings**

From a Malaysian viewpoint, this segment identified the preventive factors that will be enforced in the night market. The inquiry entailed a detailed study of previous papers, documents, books, statistical evidence, and manual research. Two categories have been identified based on the content analysis, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Content analysis

Category	Definition	Example
C1: Cashless Payment Mechanism	<p>A cashless society is one in which transactions are carried out electronically rather than using actual cash (Jain &amp; Jain, 2017).</p> <p>Cashless transactions are often required through online banking, mobile banking, prepaid instruments, credit cards, debit cards, and electronic payment systems (Rahadi et al., 2020; Ramya et al., 2017).</p> <p>Furthermore, consumers of cashless transactions are communities that use online digital payment systems rather than cash (Z. Zhao,2019).</p> <p>As a result, consumers must be able to conduct cashless transactions over the internet using internet banking payment systems or via e-commerce sites.</p>	<p>Because of the constant threat of contamination, using cash poses a risk because the coronavirus will spread across banknotes. As a result, cashless electronic payments have increased (Liebana-Cabanillas et al., 2018).</p> <p>Credit card payments have risen in Europe, not only because of the growth of e commerce, but also because of banks relaxing the contactless credit card payment cap in conventional stores (Jones and Nikolaeva, 2020).</p> <p>Cashless payments via smartphones have increased in countries such as China, India, and others (Rooney, 2020). If people become more familiar with mobile payments, their use is likely to rise (Fortune, 2019).</p>

Category	Definition	Example
C2: Thermal Imaging Scanners	<p>Thermal imaging scanners produce an image of infrared radiation that is sensitive to heat wavelengths rather than light. When vision is clouded, these scanners have historically been used by law enforcement officers, firefighters, and anti-terrorism teams to identify people. It has also been used in the fields of medicine, agriculture, and engineering.</p>	<p>Thermal Imaging Scanners are the answer to the effected industry's sustainability and regeneration following the COVID-19 epidemic.</p> <p>Thermal Imaging Scanners are effective for measuring elevated body temperatures in groups or individuals. These scanners can create a heat map of exposed skin and quickly spot people with dangerously high temperatures.</p> <p>Individuals with elevated temperatures can be separated from the rest of the group for further tests for contagious diseases, or they may be barred from accessing some areas of a business (WHO, 2020; David, Robert, Nicholas. Currie, Michael Wicks &amp; Mohamed, 1997; Leinonen, &amp; Jones, 2003; Ring, 2010)</p> <p>Thermal imaging scanners are successful enough in slowing the dramatic exponential growth of virus outbreaks, particularly in the early stages, that they should be installed at several transportation hubs and large gatherings (Gostic et al., 2020).</p>

## **5 Results and discussion**

Based on the result findings above, all the preventive factors to be introduced by the authorities at the night market site have been established. The cashless payment system would easily avoid close contact with human and stop the virus transferring from the money to the people. According to a report commissioned by the Bank of England (Caswell et al., 2020), the virus remained stable on banknotes for one hour, before being significantly reduced to around 5% of its initial level over the next five hours. But this was disputed by Riddell et al. (2020), say that the corona-virus that causes COVID-19 is still observable on polymer and paper notes 28 days after inoculation.

The transmission of corona-virus has gained a lot of interest and recognition among people as the most recent major problem that has occurred around the world. Early identification of corona-virus signs would be one of the most successful ways to avoid the virus from spreading. Several industries, including retail, entertainment, hospitality, and travel, are at risk of continued economic destruction because they need near proximity of workers and/or customers. Since many of these companies depend heavily on events with large numbers of staff or consumers, such as sporting events, concerts, movie theatres, and shopping malls, COVID-19's aftermath would have a long-term detrimental effect on the profitability of restaurants, factories, train stations, hotels, and theme parks for years or decades (WHO, 2020; Cohen & Kupferschmidt, 2020). An innovative real-time early detection of corona-virus and monitoring system using thermal image scanner system must be developed in night market as the thermal image scanner can detect high body's temperature in the crowds and send the measured data to be displayed on a screen immediately. People with elevated body temperatures are one of the most frequent symptoms, so a real-time screening device that automatically displays a thermal picture of their temperature is needed. As a result, the screening process' diagnosis will take less time, and there will be fewer human encounters that may hasten the transmission of the corona-virus. It can be inferred that remote sensing techniques, which include a range of methods for detecting, sensing, and tracking corona-virus, carry enormous promise and potential for satisfying the demands of the healthcare system. In line with that, according to Gostic et al. (2020), thermal imaging scanners are efficient enough at slowing the exponential growth of virus outbreaks, particularly in the early stages, that they should be installed at a number of transportation hubs and large gatherings and in this case of study, at night market.

## **6 Conclusion and recommendation**

Even if the MCO is turned off, normal circumstances cannot be carried out as usual, and society's mentality must remain vigilant because COVID-19 is difficult to detect with the naked eyes. As a result, society's mindset should still be sensitive and informed to raise awareness of the needs and use of cashless payment transactions and thermal imaging scanners. The public's perception of the value of converting the mentality of physically or historically implementing business into a virtual business culture has also been influenced by COVID19. As a result, it is vital to optimize how the use of cashless transactions through cashless electronic payments through

internet banking, e-wallets, digital payment apps, and others can be introduced by reducing differences in understanding and cultural practices against cashless transactions among users. Currently, Pasar Tani and Pasar Pagi have been granted to operate by the government. How about Pasar Malam? According to the authors, it is unfair as they both have the same type of business and operations. Thus, it is necessary to be fair to both and the author suggests that thermal scanners also can be practiced at the premises of Pasar Malam and in turn can give an economic impact to the night market traders and be able to accommodate their lives. Although the government has approved the permission of night market commercial operations, this initiative has not been able to regenerate the situation back to what it usually was before the pandemic. The response from local tourists was huge and encouraging at the time, but the night market was neglected and turned into a relatively secluded and quiet site. Consequently, traders used a variety of techniques throughout the outbreak, including internet sales, as well as roadside and home trading strategies, to sustain their income can be earned despite the fact that the revenues received may still be inadequate.

Based on the observations, the researcher proposes a number of recommendation that the government, organizers and also future researcher might do to alleviate the challenges that night market traders experiences during and after pandemic. The researcher would like to suggest that the government, through the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP), monitor and reevaluate the price of essential goods, based on the criticisms received from several seller regarding the price of essential goods for sales that currently have been increased more. This might be seen as extremely important in order to guarantee that irresponsible parties do not profit from the epidemic by inconsiderately raising prices, and those who do so should face severe consequences. Furthermore, KPDNHEP's operations monitoring ensures that merchants' rights to purchase basic commodities at controlled prices are protected, and that they will not be oppressed by irresponsible parties. As a result, the financial burdens that night market traders suffer can now be alleviated and made more bearable.

Next, the researcher suggests that the government should be tolerant with night market vendors, allowing them to temporarily set up shop along the roadside during this MCO as long as they do not obstruct traffic. The researcher's observation indicated that there are a lot of night marketplaces that haven't started for business, which led to this recommendation. The organisers' decision to close these night market venues for no apparent cause had a significant impact on the trader's income. As a result, if the government grants compassion on this problem, the business owner is more likely to increase earnings. In this matter, the investigator refers to a conditional execution that the government can carry out, such as granting permission to set up businesses on the side of the road as long as they do not obstruct traffic, as well as enabling the business owners to pay the monthly provisional rental fee. Through to this initiative by the government, night market traders will be able to continue to trade and earn money to sustain their income for their survival.

Subsequently, the researcher recommends that the government should be more proactive in terms of announcing as well as promoting to the community



members the reopening of the night market at any particular site of the states. The researcher believes that this is the most important task of the organizers in ensuring that the public is aware of the night market's reopening. The use of various communication mediums such as social media promotion (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook), printed media (flyers and pamphlets), and peripheral media (banners) can all be considered beneficial in allowing information to reach the public. The organizers could use this media social platform in order to assist night market traders to gain and increasing their number of customers back during and after the pandemic.

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