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RESEARCH ARTICLE



## A review on non-economic legacies of business events

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### ABSTRACT

The global expansion of business events has led to an increase in organizations hosting events, attracting participants from around the world, and promoting the host countries as travel destinations. While past research has primarily focused on the economic impact of these events, this paper seeks to address the gap in understanding the non-economic legacies of business events. Through a review of related literature from 2010 to 2020, the paper examines a sample of 37 articles and identifies emerging themes related to social, cultural, and environmental legacies that extend beyond the management period of the business event. The paper contributes an initial conceptual framework that highlights the impact of non-economic legacies on social, economic, and environmental factors, and proposes future research avenues for different stakeholders.

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### KEYWORDS

Business event; cultural legacy; environment legacy; non-economic legacies; social legacy

## Introduction

Business tourism has brought significant benefits to the global tourism industry and economy. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has brought significant impacts to the business event industry, event organizers were quick to adapt to 'the new norm' and many events transitioned to online or hybrid platforms. The lifting of travel and meeting restrictions in 2020 allowed the business events industry to come back strong, with more options to organize business events in a face-to-face, online and hybrid modes to accommodate various expectations of event attendees. The opening of multiple platforms has even brought a larger group of attendees to travel and participate in business events contributing immensely to both economic and non-economic factors. Even though the value of business events is largely measured from economic terms, it has a larger value impact on other non-economic factors (Dwyer et al., 2000). For instance,

Swarbrooke and Horner (2001) viewed that the social aspects of attending business events bring multi-fold benefits in terms of job opportunities, establishment of host country infrastructure, and enriching ideas and knowledge for both participants and employees of the events. Additionally, the issue of the legacies left behind by business events has gained traction and attention over the last decade. This is evidenced by the efforts of ICCA and BestCities to create and reward awareness and actions that leave a positive impact on the communities as a whole (ICCA, 2023).

To frame this paper, we begin by defining the notion of 'legacy' in the context of business events. The concept of legacy was first mentioned when Melbourne, Australia, prepared for the Olympiad in 1956 as Lord Mayor James S. Disney mentioned that the city was all set to "establish, as a legacy of the XVI Olympiad, an Athletic Centre" that would showcase Amateur Sport ideals (Leopkey & Parent, 2012, p. 927). Since then, this concept has gained the attention of both practitioners and academics (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010). Initial definitions were found to be linked to sporting events (Preuss, 2007) before being adopted in mainstream business tourism research. A prominent use of the term legacy is in the International Olympic Committees (IOC) charter which states that their aim is "to promote the positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries" (International Olympic Committee, 2007, p. 15). Preuss (2007) proposed a 'legacy cube' of planned and unplanned, intangible and tangible, and negative and positive elements (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010) as a means of understanding this concept.

In addition to these, researchers have also extensively attempted to define the meaning of legacy in events, whether it should focus on the legacies, benefits, or outcomes (Kim, Choe, Kim, & Kim, 2019). The multiple perspectives in defining legacies include understanding the concept of legacy (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Preuss, 2013), the measurement of legacy impacts on hosting countries and cities (Karadakis & Kaplanidou, 2012; Scheu and Preuss, 2018) and legacy as a means of gaining media attention and developing tourism related infrastructure (Kaplanidou & Karadakis, 2010; Li & McCabe, 2012; Ferrari & Guala, 2017). Preuss (2007) and Agha, Fairley, and Gibson (2012) however, admit that there is no clear and straightforward consensus in defining a legacy. What is apparent is that the legacy concept has become synonymous with large-scale transformations of both tangible and intangible nature (Preuss, 2007), and that the term is often used interchangeably with various notions such as effect, impact and heritage. Thus, for the purposes of this paper, we frame the concept of legacy as changes which are positive or negative (Chappelet, 2012) economic or non-economic (Li & McCabe, 2012) experienced by the stakeholders of the host location in which a business event is held. In sum, legacy may be defined as the "long-term or permanent outcomes

for a host city from staging an event” (Thomson, Schlenker, & Schulenkorf, 2013, p. 111). The rationale for such a definition stems from the emphasis on these key terms as the main outcomes of a business event.

The discussion of legacy has been predominantly in the area of economic outcomes but there is still a lack of literature on the issue of non-economic legacies of business events. As Preuss (2007) highlighted, the construct of an event’s sustainability must be seen in both economic and non-economic terms as social, cultural and environmental legacies of a business event last long after the event is concluded, thereby underlining the need for a study of non-economic legacies.

The aim of this study is to address the gap in existing studies through the examination of available literature to gain an understanding and recognition of the non-economic legacies of business events. As such, we have provided in detail, the related literature search in the next section and themes that emerged to conceptualize the explanation for the framework in the findings. We further analyzed the themes to identify the positive and negative impacts of each legacy and recommendations for future research avenues for different stakeholders.

## **Literature review**

### ***Legacies of business events***

This paper is anchored by a key research question, namely, what are the non-economic legacies of business events? The aim of this study is to address the gap in existing studies through the examination of available literature to gain an understanding and recognition of the non-economic legacies of business events. For a better understanding, we bring to attention the different legacies including economic, social, cultural and environment.

### ***Economic legacies***

By far, literature in the area of events legacies have centered around the economic outcomes left by such events. Economic legacies arise out of the business relationships between private and public business networks (Spilling, 1996) as well as between regional and global contacts (Kaplanidou et al., 2016) and these relationships act as the catalyst to gains in “increased tourism, improved public welfare, additional employment, more local business opportunities, better corporate relocation, and chances for city marketing” (Gratton & Preuss, 2008). While there have been arguments that the long-term economic outcomes of events are not always positive nor identifiable (Gratton & Preuss, 2008; Spilling, 1998; Duignan, 2019), the

economic argument is the most compelling reasoning for hosting a business event.

### *Non-economic legacies*

Non-economic legacies of business events refer to the long-term social, cultural, environmental, and educational impacts that business events can have on the host communities, attendees, and other stakeholders (Foley, McPherson, & Goldblatt, 2012). These legacies may include improvements to the infrastructure, such as transportation and accommodation facilities, development of environmental policies and initiatives, promotion of cultural exchange and understanding, and the fostering of relationships between stakeholders in the host destination and the business event attendees (Foley et al., 2012; Hall, 2003). Non-economic legacies are often measured in terms of social capital, which is the value created through the relationships and connections between individuals, organizations, and communities that can lead to long-term benefits such as trust, cooperation, and collaboration (Burt, 2000). Other non-economic legacies may include enhanced cultural awareness, improved education and training opportunities, and the development of community pride and identity (Foley et al., 2012; Hall, 2003). These legacies can have a significant impact on the social, cultural, and environmental make-up of host destinations.

*Social legacies.* Edwards, Foley & Schlenk (2011) conceptualizes social legacies as representing the friendships that emerge during congresses and engagement with similarly minded people, which in turn bolsters relationships that flow to communities in terms of collaborative learning. Additionally, the social space afforded by business events enables the social interactions among attendees, further enhancing the opportunity for networking and contact building. Some of the social legacies highlighted in the Business Event Sarawak Legacy Initiative Guideline (Business Events Sarawak, 2021) included gaining new knowledge; networking among global experts and gaining a better understanding of the meeting industry; improve tertiary education and quality of graduates and grow local knowledge and capacity building, engagement with local suppliers and providers; conduct corporate social responsibility (CSR) that benefits to children from rural areas.

*Cultural legacies.* According to Gratton and Preuss (2008), cultural legacies are characterized by the sharing of cultural ideas, identities, and products. This is often exemplified through the visual and performing arts and cultural traditions of the host countries (Faber Maunsell, 2004). The cultural aspect of business events is often most visible during the opening

ceremonies, which offer a condensed version of the host country's culture. The emphasis on cultural legacies also necessitates that the host country confronts its history (Gratton & Preuss, 2008) and educate its citizens and tourism representatives on what it means to be a citizen of the host country.

*Environmental legacies.* Leopkey and Parent (2012) state that the concept of environmental legacy encompasses several aspects, such as environmentally friendly architecture and engineering, policy, and education. However, the development of new infrastructure to accommodate business events is likely to have ecological implications, as mega-events tend to consume significant resources in the short term while leaving long-term consequences (Preuss, 2013). Despite these contentions, it is worth noting that environmental legacy has received considerable attention in many events, especially in the sporting industry. As Chappelet (2008) observes, the awarding of the 1972 Winter Olympic Games to Sapporo, Japan was reportedly influenced by the Japanese delegation's commitment to protecting the natural environment. Given the increasing focus on sustainability across various industries, it is crucial to incorporate environmental legacies into the legacy planning of business events.

## Methodology

To answer the research objective, the first step in this work was to analyze associated articles from various databases, including Scopus, Science Direct, Web of Science, SAGE, Emerald, Taylor & Francis, EBSCO, and Springer Link. In an initial search, we examined the definition of non-economic factors, stakeholders, and business events. We looked at synonyms and found that non-economic terms refer to values of noncommercial or non-financial whereas stakeholders related terms are partners or associates and business events refer to conferences, trade events, corporate events, business meetings and congress. These efforts led to the identification of 478 records from the databases and a further 55 records from Google Scholar. Articles were selected from journal articles, conference papers and book chapters published in English and limited to a 10-year period (2010 to 2020). The articles were from the fields of economics, management, arts and humanities, social sciences and multidisciplinary.

In the following phase, a screening process was conducted to identify and eliminate duplicate articles and to determine the inclusion and exclusion criteria for selecting articles (Shaffril, Ahmad, Samsuddin, Samah, & Hamdan, 2020). In this article, the review was limited to articles published between 2019 and 2020. This time period was chosen because the number of published articles was sufficient to conduct a representative review. In addition, articles published after 2020 were excluded as the Covid 19 pandemic

**Table 1.** Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	2010–2020	2009 and earlier, 2021 and after
Document Type	Articles (with empirical data), book chapter	Review articles, conference, proceeding and etc.
Language	English	Non-English
Subject area	Social science	Non-science studies

resulted in a shift of business events from ‘offline’ to ‘online’ or even “hybrid”. The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA, 2020) report shows that more than 8,400 international events held in 2020, 44% were postponed, 30% switched to virtual formats, 14% were canceled, 2% adopted a hybrid format, 1% were relocated and 9% remained unchanged. Consequently, the legacies of the business events still yet to be explored during this transition period. In addition, only studies written in English were included. As the review focused on the context of business events, only social science research studies that pertained to conferences, trade events, corporate events, business meetings and congresses were selected. The summary of the inclusion and exclusion criteria is provided in [Table 1](#).

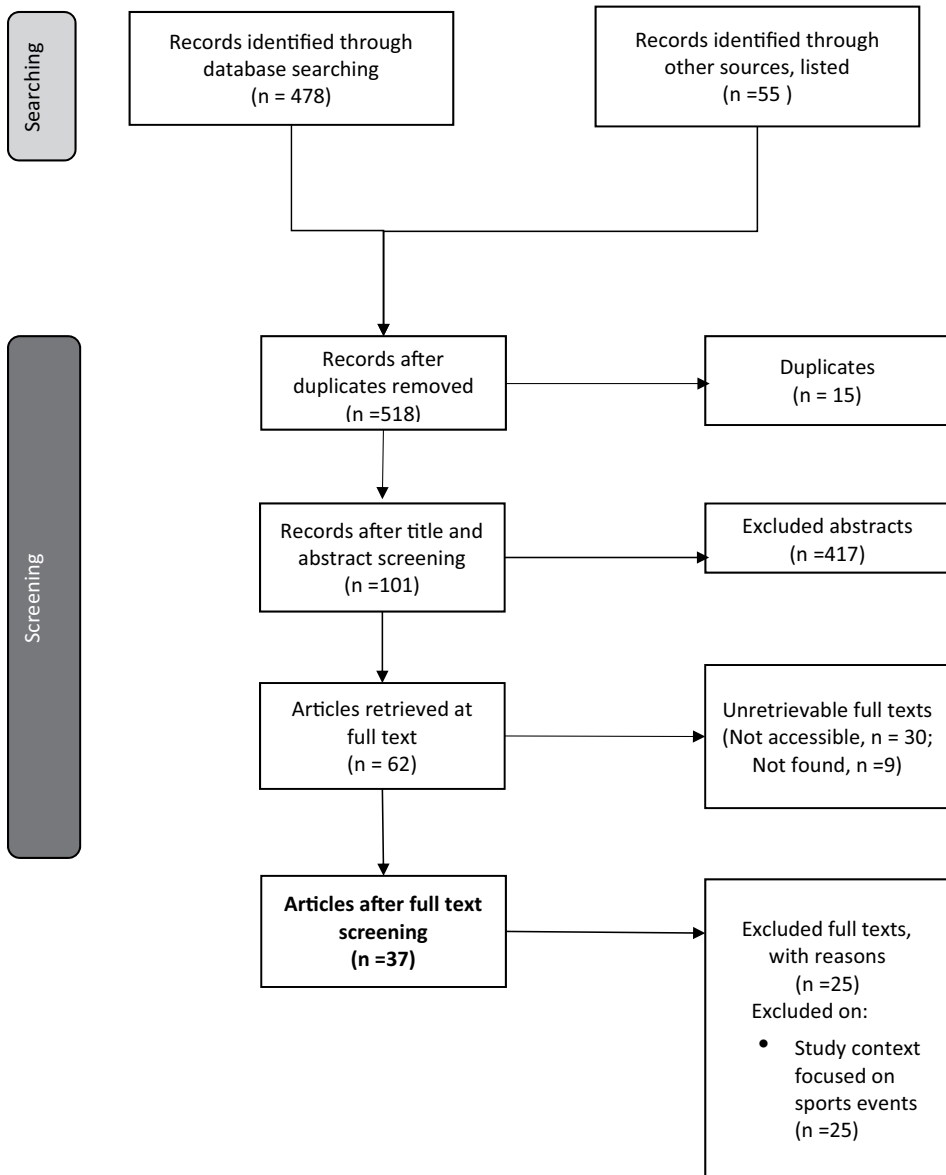
Based on the predetermined inclusion criteria, a total of 533 articles were initially screened, with 15 duplicate articles being removed, resulting in 518 articles. From the 518 articles, 417 articles were excluded due to focus on irrelevant contexts, sustainability events, events bidding process, published in news or book chapters. 62 articles were retrieved at full text and there were 39 articles excluded due to inaccessible (33) and not found (5). From the 62 articles that remained, 25 articles were removed as the context was relating to sporting events. Overall, there were only 37 articles remaining for further review. The flow of the screening process is summarized in [Figure 1](#).

## **Finding and discussion**

The ensuing discussion centers on the outcomes of non-economic legacies resulting from business events, as obtained from an examination of previous literature. Specifically, this section scrutinizes the sub-themes that arise from the three primary legacies, which encompass social, cultural, and environmental aspects, all gleaned from the previous literature analysis.

### ***Social legacies***

A dominant theme arising from the literature pertains to the social legacies resulting from business events. These legacies include both positive and negative outcomes, with the former comprising of (i) networks and collaboration, (ii) knowledge sharing, transmission, and application between various stakeholders, and (iii) the emergence of new friendships. The



**Figure 1.** Article screening process.

negative outcomes comprise social disruptions encountered by local communities, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections.

#### ***Positive—network and collaboration***

One of the most prominent sub-themes emerging from prior research is the importance of networking and collaboration resulting from business events. Numerous scholars have underscored the significance of business events as an ideal platform for facilitating networking and collaboration



among various stakeholders (du Cros et al., 2017; Edwards, Foley, & Malone, 2017; Foley, Schlenker, Edwards, & Hayllar, 2010; Foley, Schlenker, Edwards, & Lewis-Smith, 2013; Foley, Edwards, & Schlenker, 2014; Foley, Edwards, Jasovska, & Hergesell, 2019; Hansen et al., 2020; Kitchen, 2017; Jago et al., 2010). Bringing together practitioners and researchers within a particular industry creates a strategic network among the participants, acting as the catalyst for fostering future research collaboration (Du Cros et al., 2017; Foley et al., 2010; Foley et al., 2013; Foley et al., 2014; Foley et al., 2019). Edwards et al. (2017) have explained how networking at business events can have a ‘multiplier effect’, wherein the established network is extended to a broader group of people who introduce one another to more individuals whom they may not have encountered otherwise. This is particularly critical for early- and mid-career business event participants from the host destination who have limited resources and are more likely to be stimulated by new ideas and knowledge than late-career participants (Du Cros et al., 2017).

By bringing together practitioners and researchers within the sector, it catalyzes the creation of a strategic network among the members that help in future research collaboration (Du Cros et al., 2017; Foley et al., 2010; Foley et al., 2013; Foley et al., 2014; Foley et al., 2019); developing long-term relationships and a sense of community (Hansen et al., 2020); facilitation of connections and sourcing for future funding from both private and government sectors (Du Cros et al., 2017; Foley et al., 2013; Foley et al., 2019; Hansen et al., 2020) and development of new products and technologies (Du Cros et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2017; Foley et al., 2010; Foley et al., 2013; Foley et al., 2019; Zhong & Luo, 2018).

In addition to the networking benefits for event participants, several scholars have also highlighted the potential for business events to create new opportunities for stakeholders to expand their networks and pursue further business prospects (Di Vita, 2017; Edwards et al., 2017). As the organization of business events involves collaboration between various parties, including suppliers, planners, government and non-governmental organizations related to the meetings industry, regional authorities, and even local communities (Celuch, 2019), it presents an opportunity to showcase local businesses and communities (Brown, Lee, King, & Shipway, 2015). Through interaction and collective learning during these events, there is potential for human capacity building (Di Vita, 2017), the development of new business links, and the strengthening of commercialization opportunities (Du Cros et al., 2017) within the host destinations.

### ***Positive—knowledge sharing, transmission and application***

This study identified a significant sub-theme in the systematic review that pertains to knowledge sharing, transmission, and application during and

after business events (Celuch, 2019; Di Vita, 2017; Du Cros et al., 2017; Jago et al., 2010; Kitchen, 2017; Jago & Deery, 2010; van der Zee & Olders, 2016). Researchers widely acknowledge that business events provide a conducive platform for participants to engage in problem discussions, gain insights into new opportunities and needs, and facilitate knowledge transfer and exchange, which can ultimately bring about tangible changes in the real world (Celuch, 2019; Di Vita, 2017; Edwards et al., 2017; Jago et al., 2010; van der Zee & Olders, 2016). According to Foley et al. (2010), knowledge sharing at business events can take place through formal workshops or publications, or through informal interaction with colleagues during the event. These types of interaction allow individuals from different backgrounds and perspectives to engage in discussion and debate about specific topics, thereby generating new knowledge, ideas, and solutions (Du Cros et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2017). Furthermore, business events offer a platform for delegates to showcase the latest technologies, tools, and insights that have not yet been published or commercialized in the market, which keeps participants ahead of the curve in their thinking (Edwards et al., 2017).

Notably, Edwards et al. (2017) provide a comprehensive explanation of how knowledge sharing can benefit individuals, industry, and community in business events. The authors categorize these benefits as ‘intrinsic legacies’ and ‘professional and practices legacies’. Intrinsic legacies refer to the individual benefits that delegates gain from attending business events. The collaborative environment of business events allows for the development of knowledge, skills, and practices through sharing sessions with diverse audiences, including those from industry, government, and not-for-profit organizations. It provides individuals with opportunities for professional growth and enables them to reach their full potential (Edwards et al., 2017).

Moreover, attending business events provides delegates with the opportunity to gain new insights, techniques, and information from international delegates. They can then bring this knowledge back to their local communities to improve current knowledge and skills (Du Cros et al., 2017; Edwards et al., 2017; Foley et al., 2019; Leo, 2017). Norton, Howell, and Reynolds (2016) add that knowledge sharing at business events can lead to policy changes, improved service quality, and the development of training and instructional resources, as well as changes in practices. Additionally, Ferrari and Guala (2017) suggest that the knowledge gained by stakeholders in the bidding process for business events can be reutilized as a professional skill in bidding for future events.

### ***Positive—new friendship***

The third sub-theme that emerged is the informal relationship-building between delegates during or after business events (Foley et al., 2014).

Foley et al. (2014) assert that business events provide a platform for delegates to meet new people, reconnect with old friends, and reaffirm existing friendships that were formed during previous events. The study highlights that the establishment and strengthening of friendships are one of the primary motivations for delegates to attend the same events year after year. While the terms "partnership" and "network" have come to replace "friendship," Foley et al. (2014) draw a clear distinction between the two types of relationships in terms of formality and objectives. The network or partnership is more structured and corporate-based, less intimate, and always associated with enhancing individual or organizational performance. In contrast, friendship is more informal, and it is usually cultivated during the "time-out" sessions of the events where like-minded delegates engage with each other. Foley et al. (2014) study suggests that the friendships developed in these informal settings can lead to personal legacies, such as individual well-being, and broader social legacies, such as a sense of belonging and innovation within the community.

#### ***Negative—social disruption***

In addition to the positive social legacies identified in previous literature, the review reveals a fourth sub-theme: the social disruption that business events can cause in host communities. This sub-theme is supported by several studies (Celuch, 2019; Deery & Jago, 2010; Deng, Poon, & Chan, 2016; van der Zee & Olders, 2016; Maguire, 2019; Li, Hsu, & Lawton, 2015; Liu, 2017) that report the inconveniences faced by local residents due to the influx of mass tourists during business events. Congestion, crowding, and noise pollution are identified as the most common problems by scholars (Celuch, 2019; Deery & Jago, 2010; van der Zee & Olders, 2016; Maguire, 2019; Li et al., 2015). In addition, event visitors' overuse of public facilities such as restaurants and public transport leads to inconvenience to local residents (Celuch, 2019; Li et al., 2015), increased cost of living (Deng et al., 2016; Liu, 2017), and, most notably, an increase in crime (Maguire, 2019; Li et al., 2015), which includes theft, vandalism, and other criminal behaviors, leading to tensions in the newly formed relationships between event-goers and local communities. Furthermore, Celuch (2019) highlights the negative impact of business events on local businesses, as most venues are closed to local residents during events for safety reasons, resulting in a decline in business for surrounding shops and businesses. Although some scholars suggest that most local communities could tolerate the inconvenience due to the greater economic benefits, the criticism of the minority who did not enjoy the events should not be ignored nor underestimated (Celuch, 2019; Liu, 2017).

## ***Environmental Legacies***

According to Tsaur, Yen, Tu, Wang, and Liang (2017), environmental legacy refers to the degree to which officials promote nature conservation and enhancement of ecological surroundings in business events which become one of the primary concerns in destination selection for major business events. The sub-themes revolving around the environmental legacies of the hosting destination are urban renewal and enhancing eco-consciousness.

### ***Positive—urban renewal***

The first emergent sub-theme under environmental legacies is urban renewal, which involves both enhancements of event infrastructure before the event and the overall impression of the host destination after events have been conducted. Past scholars agree that hosting business events can be beneficial for local communities as they can share the upgraded infrastructure and event spaces that were originally constructed to cater to event attendees, such as shopping, leisure, and recreational facilities (Di Vita, 2017, Li et al., 2015; Liu, 2017; Tsaur et al., 2017). As environmental legacies planning has become a crucial element in major events' proposal bidding, some regions have chosen to preserve or restore historic buildings, ecosystems, and heritage sites (Deng et al., 2016; Tsaur et al., 2017), which contributes to improving the overall image of the city and land use (Li et al., 2015; Liu, 2017).

### ***Positive—enhancing eco-consciousness***

Scholars have noted the increasing trend of environmental awareness in the business events industry (Celuch, 2019; Di Vita, 2017; Li & McCabe, 2012; Pelham, 2011; Tsaur et al., 2017). The concepts of green meetings, corporate social responsibility and venue sustainability have become a fundamental element in event bidding worldwide (Celuch, 2019; Venske, 2016). Pelham (2011) emphasized that sustainability regulation will definitely be an important trend in the event industry in the near future, leading to a change in the business events model. However, the author highlighted the economic barriers that must be overcome for the further diffusion of sustainability in the events industry, including the perception that sustainability is costly and the cost of acquiring the necessary knowledge.

Tsaur et al. (2017) states that business events not only raise the environmental awareness of industry professionals, but also help to raise the environmental awareness of local people, for example, by encouraging the use of public transport, walking short distances and environmentally friendly practices.

### ***Negative—wasting of resources***

The discourse on evaluating the efficacy of infrastructures intended for hosting business events has also been under scrutiny. As stated by Brownill (2013) and Deng et al. (2016), the creation of such dedicated event spaces or buildings could potentially yield counterproductive outcomes, given that these infrastructures may remain unutilized ‘white elephants’ or function as exclusive ‘urban islands.’ The main argument put forth by this perspective is that the majority of venues designed for business events are not accessible to the public post-event, rendering them unsustainable and economically unviable in the long run. Recognizing this waste of resources, Deng et al. (2016) cite the example of the Bureau International des Expositions, which, in 1994, passed a resolution concerning the “Conditions for the introduction and reuse of the site” with a view to ensuring that the host cities committed to repurposing the Expo site and creating a lasting legacy. However, as BIE (2008) notes, the issue of affordability has deterred prospective residents, property buyers, and local business tenants from utilizing the building, thereby compromising its sustainability.

### ***Cultural legacies***

The final theme emerging from the literature is cultural legacies, with a focus on the impact of hosting or participation in international events. Business events largely attract high-caliber delegates including those capable of delivering presentations, participating in conferences, and contributing to various projects, which significantly aid in promoting the destination image to a wider audience. It brings multi-fold non-economic benefits, in particular, enhancing the positive image of the destination’s tourism sector, attracting global talent, promoting a sense of community pride, and fostering local business connections. While these outcomes are predominantly positive, the negative impacts of business events cannot be overlooked, particularly in relation to their potential insensitivity to local culture.

### ***Positive—promoting destination image***

Business events not only become a meeting point for delegates but also open doors for the education sector as a whole. Participants who meet regularly during business events can recognize local talents and simultaneously build connections for collaborations (Du Cros et al., 2017). Alongside that, participants who wish to deepen their knowledge after the encounter with the local talents and have yet to secure a job tend to select the destination to pursue their education. It attracts young researchers, practitioners, senior management, and mature students to embark on the education sector. This influx of global talents into the education system results in an overall

better quality of education and graduates entering into the workforce (Foley et al., 2010). Business events indirectly cultivate research interest and thus improve the global reputation of the education sector (Foley et al., 2019). It is therefore evident that business events may positively promote the destination's image as a knowledge or educational hub.

In addition to opening doors to the education sector, the role of business events in promoting the region to the attending delegates cannot be overstated. In most cases, the event location gets into the limelight through media exposure and promotional activities (Jago & Deery, 2010). Besides their significance in the education sector, these events also attract media attention and other promotional activities that bring the event location into the spotlight (Jago & Deery, 2010). As such, hosting a business event provides an advantage in promoting the destination and its unique cultural attributes (Brown et al., 2015). The views of event attendees about the location can also have a significant impact on raising the international profile of the place (duCros et al., 2017). Additionally, an event brings image transformation of the city's outlook from old and traditional to something different (Ferrari & Guala, 2017) helping to promote and create awareness of the sectors and stakeholders involved in the event (Foley et al., 2010).

#### ***Positive—reviving a sense of community***

According to Jago et al. (2010), the scale and large costs involved in business events attract wider media coverage that leverages the benefits of partnerships between private and public organizations as well as corporate sponsorships. The engagement of these corporations creates a broader network of relationships and enhances connectivity with local communities (Brown et al., 2015). Business events also serve to facilitate the coming together of local communities for a shared purpose, leading to improved interactions and a sense of bonding that can shape future actions (Gibson, 2011). Community involvement in the form of art and activities within event programs showcases the uniqueness of the local culture (Ferrari & Guala, 2017). Moreover, the interactivity during these events exposes participants to the local culture, providing an avenue for the exchange of cultural views (Li et al., 2015; Leo, 2019).

In addition, the sense of achievement associated with successfully hosting a business event instills a sense of pride among the community, providing opportunities for their involvement in future events (Brown et al., 2015). van der Zee and Olders (2016) further claim that volunteering and organizing events help the communities with knowledge and connection to others within the network, thereby building reciprocal trust, actions, and

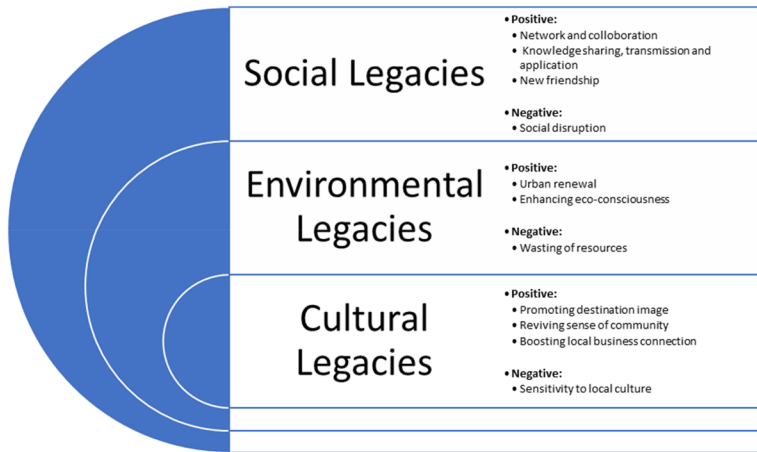
understandings that promote a sense of community. Thus, business events bring not only economic benefits to the stakeholders but also enhance the community's pride, self-esteem, and identity (Di Vita, 2017). They add to the improvement of the community image and cohesiveness as well as nurturing community values that reduce social inequalities within the community (Maguire, 2019).

#### ***Positive—boosting local business connections***

Most business event organizers leverage the event stakeholders such as local industries, suppliers, government, and regulatory bodies for their event (Celuch, 2019). This creates opportunities for local industries to be noticed and build connections or alliances with the event stakeholders for their businesses. Smith (2011) views this opportunity as an "imaginative leveraging" enabling local companies to achieve their community objectives by offering business opportunities for their local people, promoting local products, and creating jobs through the event. The business events help to build on the local communities' talent and capabilities through their cooperation, interactions, and cutting-edge practices (Di Vita, 2017). The diffusion of knowledge also serves to help local industries to grow with better innovations and newly added knowledge (Zhong & Luo, 2018).

#### ***Negative—(In)sensitivity to local culture***

However, it is important to recognize the potential impact on the host communities, destinations, and the cultural heritage they embody. Maguire (2019) asserts that a comprehensive evaluation of the socio-economic changes brought about by hosting an event is essential. Furthermore, it is crucial to openly discuss and address any sensitive cultural issues that may arise during the event (Edwards et al., 2017). Thus, it is important to understand the local culture through collective learning in order to determine themes for the event or programme activities (Di Vita, 2017) that are appropriate, inclusive, and respectful. However, some event planners take extreme measures of shielding the local culture from being noticed by the international audience or delegates. They build megastructures to host the event with restricted entry to deter participants from knowing the local culture or surroundings (Deng et al., 2016). Therefore, the distribution of cultural ideas is determined by the hosts involved in the community's culture. To ensure a balanced approach toward a cultural exchange, it is essential for event planners and hosts to engage in open and collaborative dialogue with local communities and stakeholders. In doing so, they can navigate cultural sensitivities and promote a mutually beneficial relationship between the host destination and event participants. The summary of the findings is presented in [Figure 2](#) below.



**Figure 2.** New framework for non-economic legacies of business events.

### **Recommendation for future research**

To our knowledge, this is the first study to address the non-economic legacies of business events. The relative lack of research focusing on the non-economic legacies of business events emphasizes the need for future researchers to address some of the directions highlighted below.

#### ***Research on sustainable benefits gained by different stakeholders***

It is crucial to acknowledge that business events offer not only short-term economic benefits, such as return on investment (ROI) to the organizers, but also long-term sustainable effects on a variety of other stakeholders, including participants, volunteers, suppliers, host government, policymakers, and community (Brown et al., 2015). However, research exploring the sustainable benefits gained by these other stakeholders remains limited.

#### ***Community—sense of place***

One of the areas that need further exploration is the impact on the community in which the events take place. Besides gaining employment from the event, the community also gains psychic income, a term coined by Crompton (2004) as community perceptions of emotion and psychological benefit gained from hosting the event. The author expanded it to five areas of community pride, ranging from a sense of belonging to the place, elevated country image, improvement in infrastructure, event achievements, and overall community pride. The lifted community pride of a business event and how the sense of place attracts more people, investors, sponsors, volunteers, and media to prefer a particular destination for future business events can be an interesting area for further exploration. In addition to



that, future research also can explore how local governments or authorities can continue to sustain community pride by enlivening different activities as a continuity after the business events.

### ***Participants—value creating activities***

More often participants found that attending business events generates benefits such as helping participants to expand their knowledge, research collaboration, networking and gaining new insights about an innovation (Foley et al., 2013). The benefits of attending the events are not always immediate but accrued cumulatively after the event (Du Cros et al., 2017). Future research has the potential to explore participants' value-creating activities (Du Cros et al., 2017) and how resources are integrated and unfold to realize the full value of attending the business events.

### ***Local businesses—culture heritage marketing***

As a preparation to hosting business events, host governments and authorities invest in enhancing the physical infrastructure of their destinations mainly focusing on transportation, leisure activities, information provision, and restoration of buildings and properties to project a favorable image to travelers (Tsaur et al., 2017). These investments contribute to the visibility of local businesses and allow for new opportunities for connecting with a broader customer base and potential partners. However, the spillover effects of visitors' engagement with local businesses and the possibility of return visits to the same destination for cultural and heritage interests, such as architecture, food, leisure, and music, could be further investigated to determine the potential for long-term sustainable benefits for local stakeholders beyond the immediate economic impact of hosting a business event.

### ***Non-economic legacies of online business events***

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the way companies conduct business events. In-person events have become rare, and many companies have opted for virtual events instead. As shown in Eventbrite's report in 2020, the number of virtual events increased by more than 34 times between January to November 2020, when the pandemic was rampant (Paley, 2020). This trend is expected to continue as many companies find that virtual events are a cost-effective and convenient alternative to in-person events.

Despite the increasing popularity of virtual events, there is a notable lack of research on the non-economic impact of online business events

(Le, Yung, & Arcodia, 2022). This gap in the literature suggests that more research is needed on the non-economic legacies of virtual events.

One potential reason for the lack of research in this area may be that the focus has been primarily on the economic benefits of virtual events, such as cost savings and greater reach. This has overshadowed the non-economic benefits, which have not been explored in as much detail. Another reason for the lack of research could be the relatively recent rise of virtual events. As the use of virtual events continues to grow, it is likely that more research will be conducted in this area and a better understanding of the non-economic benefits of virtual events will be developed.

In conclusion, the lack of research on the non-economic legacies of virtual business events is a gap in the literature that needs to be addressed. Further research is needed to better understand the non-economic impact of virtual events, as this is crucial for business event organizers.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

In this paper, a new conceptual framework was developed that aims to answer the non-economic legacies of business events based on a review of previous literature. The sample examined 37 articles published between 2010 and 2020. Our findings show that non-economic legacies, including social, cultural and environmental legacies, go far beyond business event management.

This paper has also shown the social disruptions arising from tourism activities. Tourism associated with business events can be a source of conflict between tourists or visitors and hosts or host communities. Potential sources of conflict between these two participants may include cultural differences in terms of attire or social customs due to a lack of sensitivity to local cultural differences. Other consequences may include an increase in criminal activity, drug abuse and poor behavior by crowds. In addition, the waste of resources due to unused buildings and facilities could be another negative problem that needs to be addressed.

Despite these potential negatives, the interaction between the visitor and the local community can serve to strengthen the regional values or traditions and promote better cross-cultural understanding. Business events can help to revitalize the traditions of the host community, introduce new and challenging ideas, and also intensify community pride. In terms of the environmental legacies, hosting a mega business event helps to revitalize urban planning as well as enhance eco-consciousness among the local communities. In addition, hosting business events provides a new platform for the participants to expand their network and encourage more collaboration as well as friendship. This leads to new knowledge generation

and transmission between the participants as well as between participants and local communities.

This study offers several significant contributions. It provides a starting point to understand the non-economic values of business events, an area that has gained little attention in the field of business events. The paper stands to contribute to the initial conceptualization of a framework that addresses the non-economic legacies of business events. In terms of managerial implications, the framework allows policy makers, researchers, business tourism stakeholders and other relevant parties to understand that legacies are not just based on economic outcomes but must also examine the non-economic legacies left behind long after the event. A post evaluation of the events helps to foster a sense of community among the stakeholders by creating space for more conversations and shared memories that have the potential for more future events together.

In addition, this research also has the potential to enable stakeholders in business tourism to strategise the event offerings to ensure that the benefits of the events are dispersed along the value chain of business tourism and explore opportunities beyond those that are economically driven.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study are important to acknowledge, as they may help future researchers in refining their investigations. First, it is important to note that this study only considered publications from 2010 to 2020, without including papers published after 2020. The exclusion of post-2020 literature was influenced by the upheaval caused by the Covid 19 pandemic, which has significantly changed the landscape of business events. Future researchers should consider exploring the lasting impact of these changes, as they could offer valuable insights for both practitioners and academics.

Moreover, this paper provides a broad overview of the non-economic legacies of business events in a general sense. However, it is crucial to recognize that business events come in different sizes, scopes, and locations, which can lead to disparities in the nature and impact of their legacies. Future research should delve deeper into the diversities inherent in business events, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of their legacies. This would enable a more nuanced analysis and yield insights specific to different types of events, which would be beneficial to both academia and industry.

### **Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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