

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic Towards the Arts Creativity and Ideas Among Local Artists in Pahang

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ABSTRACT

Arts are important in daily life and human growth from the aspect of physical and mental. Creativity is more important than ever. The challenges of the 21st century require new ways of thinking, making it crucial for educators and policymakers to understand the processes of creative thinking and achievement. When people hear the word creativity, most often they first think of the arts. Both art making and art appreciation are deeply emotional processes. The arts take us on a rollercoaster ride of sadness, tranquility, and anguish (Ebert et al., 2015). These research objectives are to study the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on creativity and generate new ideas among local artists in Pahang. A qualitative method has been used: an in-depth interview with 7 local artists in Pahang. A set of questions was prepared for the interview to get the data. Data were analyzed and there four major themes emerged from the discussion. The first theme is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the artist's creativity in creating artwork. The second theme is the level of creativity in artists and the third theme is the obstacles that local artists face during the pandemic. The fourth theme is the growth and changes in art style among the local artist during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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1. Introduction

Arts can be seen as a way for someone to express their emotions, feelings, and situation visually. In the past, art has been variously defined as imitation or representation as a medium for the transmission of feelings (Tolstoy 1995). There are a few types of art that can be found such as drawing, painting, and sculpting. Drawing is a picture made with dry media such as a pencil, pen, crayon, marker, and colored pencil. Although the age-old art of pencil drawing is the foundation of all the visual arts, its elemental beauty allows it to stand on its own, and pencil art is amazingly versatile it can be ranging from simple, unshaded contour line drawings to complex (Foster, 2005). Other than that, painting can be defined as a way for one's express their feelings or ideas through water-based media on any flat surface in a form of two-dimensional (2D). More than that, art also is famous for sculpting. Sculpting can be defined as creating or representing a situation or something by carving, casting using a certain tool, and other shaping techniques. These three are the most basic art that you can try and do anywhere you could do. These three basic arts are the ones that most people are always been exposed to since they are kids.

Art is very useful in daily life as art is a way for someone to express their feelings about something or a scenario. From ancient to modern times, aesthetics theories have emphasized art's role in evoking, shaping, and modifying human feelings (Silvia, 2006). The person can use art to express their feelings such as joy, anger, sadness, sorrow, and other feelings visually to help other people to understand what the person is trying to say. Humanist, or critical, theories of the art form, can be used to describe the works of art and to understand their design as an emotional stimulus. Arts is living proof that you can describe your feelings not only in a verbal

way but in a more physical way. With all the emotions being expressed, it can help a person to relax and helps them to go through their days. This shows that art can be a therapy for some people. Rather than expressing a feeling wrong, they can draw a story they want, paint a scene they loved or sculpt a person they adored.

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, everything was chaos. People are panicking left and right because they thought the world was going to end. Not only that, but the economy was also getting more and more devastated because of the pandemic. According to new research (World Bank, 2020), The World Bank estimated that global GDP would fall by an average of 5.2% in 2020, with per capita income in advanced economies shrinking by 7%. Big companies went through bankruptcy, and they must fire many of their workers to pay the bills. People are losing their jobs left and right which causes problems such as starvation, hunger, people being homeless, depression, and many more. In 2019, the unemployment rate of Malaysia is 3.3% which means there are 508,200 individuals unemployed (Shankar, 2020). Other than that, the artist also was affected by the pandemic.

With the pandemic Covid-19 strike, the most artist can't expand their ideas because they were forced to stay at home. Their expression and feelings were trapped inside their home only. Most artists want real-life experiences with their subject matter. They like to see the subject matter, touch them, taste them, and feel it. This is the way an artist finds their subject matter so that they can express it on canvas or paper with much more details and more feelings. During the pandemic, the artist's subject matter is limited to what they have inside their home. They can't go outside such as the woods, parks, school, and many more places where they usually find the subject matter that they are interested in. In spring 2020, approximately 4 billion people, or half the world's population were under lockdown as governments attempted to limit the spread of the disease by enforcing physical distancing (Sandford, 2020). Not only that, if they wanted to do some research on their subject matter, they just can search it up on the internet. Plus, they can see the subject matter from one side and are limited by the size of the screen of the device that the artist is using. The presence of the Internet, along with other new information technologies, appears more and more influential in daily life beyond the questions of access or sociability. With a limited choice of subject matter, the artist's ideas and creativity also can be affected by it. The limited subject matter also causes the number of ideas for their artwork to be limited.

Ideas can be defined as a thought or suggestions as to a possible course of action. Ideas are the backbone of art industries. New ideas are highly needed in art industries because of the competition of finding which design or illustration is the best to represent someone or some company. Ideas in the art are the most crucial things because they can show the direction of art that someone would make. If the idea is good, the meaning and the expression inside the arts also potentially can be good. Good designers and artists always make sure that their ideas always refresh and are not recycled from their past work. Ideas in the artwork are changing from the traditional way into a more modern way.

Not only idea is important, but creativity also is a big part of it. Creative thinking is defined as the thinking that enables students to apply their imagination to generate ideas, questions, and hypotheses, experiment with alternatives, and evaluate their own and their peers' ideas, final products, and processes Kampylis and Berki (2014). Certain arts activities promote growth in positive social skills, including self-confidence, self-control, conflict resolution, collaboration, empathy, and social tolerance. Ideas that are generated can be good but if the artist expresses them without any creativity in them, the idea will look bad and will not look good as it should be. Artist creativity is crucial in expanding the ideas that they have and turning the ideas into something enjoyable and understandable to the audience.

2. Objectives

There are a few research objectives and targets that are needed to be achieved for this research. Therefore, the objectives of this research are divided into three parts, which is:

- i. To study the effect of Covid-19 on the creativity of the local artist in Pahang.
- ii. To identify the level of creativity among the local artist during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- iii. To recognize the challenges that the local artist faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- iv. To distinguish the changes in the art style among the local artists.

3. Literature Review

There has been a lot of research was done about what happened to the art industry when the Covid-19 pandemic started. A few totals of articles and research were reviewed for the current literature review. With all the articles and research that were reviewed, a lot of information was gathered for the use of this research. Each study shows a theme that can be relatable to this research topic.

According to a report by Guiberg and Hyde (2021) that studies the impacts of Covid-19 on the arts and culture shows that many types of performing arts were affected by the pandemic Covid-19. Many parts of the creative

sector such as art galleries and museums across the United States were initially forced to close end, if allowed to reopen, were severely restricted by distancing and capacity requirements.

Their research also shows that in the art industry from 2019 to 2020, a lot of unemployment among artists was happening. The data from this research showed that there was a decline in the employment of artists by nearly a quarter of a million people. For example, in 2019, only 1.1% of musicians were unemployed but the number rose to 27% in the third quarter of 2020. Not only that, artists like art directors, fine artists, and animators also were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The unemployment rate for them in 2019 is only 2.1% but significantly jumped to 9.3% in the year 2020. This shows that during the pandemic, most artists started to lose their jobs and the percentage for the rate of unemployment among artists also keeps getting higher and higher. According to the (United States Census Bureau, 2022), 61% of businesses in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sectors were having a huge number of negative effects because of the pandemic Covid-19 in November 2020 compared to the national average for all sectors which is only 31%. With the Covid-19 pandemic, many companies and organizations started to work on their methods into controlling the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on their business and activity.

Szostak and Sułkowski (2021) study the identity crisis of artists during the Covid-19 pandemic and the shift towards entrepreneurship. This study is mostly studying about how an artist can have an identity issue because of the Covid-19 pandemic and how the artist can shift into a more entrepreneurship mindset to help them excel in the art sector. This study uses the qualitative method for data gathering. Most creative artists are self-employed but relatively few art schools develop capabilities for venture creation effectively. A good artist always implements themselves with hard work, self-discipline, mental resilience, responsibility, ability to observe the world. With this attitude, it can help the artists themselves to help them in expanding their market for their artwork and products. Not only that, with all the attitude, it can help the artists to find their identity in their carrier. Artists started to change into a more entrepreneurial style to fit and adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic economic situation.

Most artists change into artist-entrepreneurs because they want to look for more freedom, and possibilities and make more income. This is because artist-entrepreneurs are much more organized and have a much more formal type of carrier. Creativity can be defined as inspiration; the act of creation in the image of nature; discovering and incorporating timeless ideas in a work; imitation of divine creativity; meeting the needs of a social group (sociological theory of creativity); excess energy remaining after basic needs fulfillment (human life physiology); the state of culture having various artistic ideals at a certain level of human development (cultural approach); sums of socio-economic (ideological) conditions in which the artist lives (historical approach); expression of the creator's personality (psychological approach). Artists started to feel like entrepreneur helps them organize their businesses and finance by boosting their confidence in managing their businesses.

From the findings and the result of the research, half of the Informants were confident with their professional entrepreneurial activities such as a company, organization, or project. They are confident with their responsibility for professional and financial stability and development meanwhile the other half of the Informant (who is not own or run their own business and organization) had some struggles with calling themselves an entrepreneur, even though they have been doing activities fitting into the different meaning of entrepreneur. In the case of creativity, the Informants were more unequivocal like in the case of artistry, almost all found themselves as having a creative identity equaling it with artistry without any doubt.

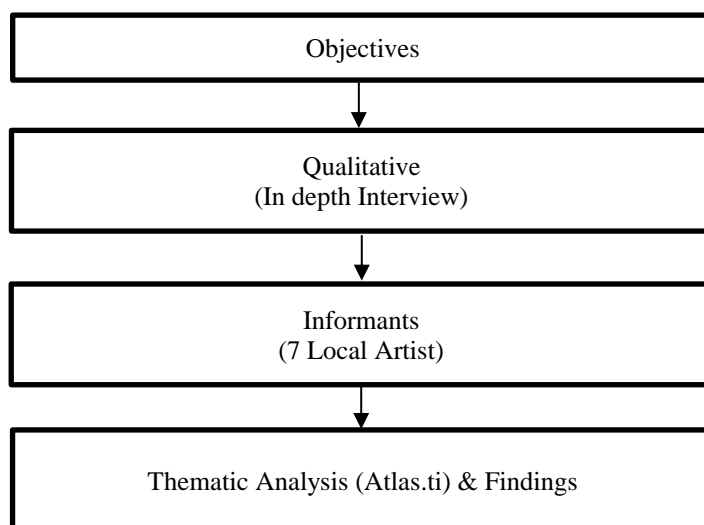
4. Methodology

This research uses the qualitative method to gather data and information to reach the objectives that have been set. This research uses in-depth interviews as its instrument for collecting and gathering data. The in-depth interview method was used because the data that are collected is much more accurate. The informant also can answer the question in their way and not be limited to a choice of answer.

A total of seven local artists were interviewed for data collection. The responses of the seven local artists have been examined and analyzed. The question for the interview session is divided into five sections. The first section of the question that was asked is about the artist's demography such as their names, ages, years of experience in the art sector, and how they see art. The second section of the question is about the effect the Covid-19 pandemic gave on whether in their own life and their arts carrier. The third section of the question will ask a question related to how their creativity levels during the pandemic to see if their creativity is getting more developed or not. The fourth section is a question related to the challenges that they faced and their way of coping with the problems during the pandemic. The last section of the question is to see the changes in the artist and the changes in their art style.

The interview session is being done by the end of the year 2021. A conducive environment during the interview is important because the Informant can give their honest answer and the interview session with them also will not be disturbed. The data that will be collected will be more accurate.

Table 1. *Research Design*



5. Results and Discussion

The data was gathered through an interview that took place over the course of two weeks. Four of the seven informants are men, while the other three are women. All Informants range in age from 22 to 46 years old. The age difference reflects the years of experience of each Informant in the art field. Results are presented as four themes. These themes were named as follows: (1) Covid-19's influence on local artists, (2) the artist's level of creativity during the Covid-19 pandemic, (3) the challenges for the local artist during the pandemic, (4) The fourth theme is the changes in art direction in the artist's artwork because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.1 *The Impact of Covid-19 Towards the Local Artists' Creativity*

5.1.1 *Effect of covid-19 towards the artwork creativity*

According to the interviewees, the epidemic has an impact on their work and creativity. They stated that they believe Covid-19 has an impact on the marketing of their artwork because they are unable to exhibit and display their artwork to the public. Almost all activities outside the home have stopped, from schools, offices, art exhibitions, performances, and many others (Tunnikmah, 2021). There is also a positive aspect of the pandemic to their artwork in that they believe the pandemic has given them much more time to create and produce artwork as stated in the excerpts below.

"We can't exhibit, cannot develop more because we created artwork to exhibit and display at the exhibition or museum." A1

"It gives some effect to exhibit our artworks because I can only be at my home because of the lockdown." A2

"So, during the pandemic, there isn't much exhibition and people don't even go out and even if there is exhibition, there won't be as many people as it was before." A3

As a result, their impact on the sales or marketing of the artwork itself is emphasized. Artists face challenges because there are no exhibitions or galleries where they can display or exhibit their work. People can contribute their true experiences and emotions through these online exhibitions, producing alternative media that is more informational, conscientious, and comforting than the state media (Feng, 2020), as stated in the excerpts below:

"It didn't give any effect because I can use the digital way. So, I'm okay with using the internet." A5

"I face no difficulties because I can get in touch with the audience through online platform." A3

This may indicate that most artists are affected by the epidemic, particularly in terms of selling their artwork. They also find that the covid-19 epidemic makes it difficult for them to show off their artwork to the public or their audience. Aside from that, the other two Informants are experiencing no difficulties or thinking the epidemic had any effect on their artwork. This is because both are already embracing an internet platform for the creation and marketing of their artwork as stated in the above excerpts.

5.1.2 *Creating a good artwork during pandemic*

According to the informants, there are limited effects of the pandemic on the quality of artwork produced by the Informant. The Covid-19 pandemic has an effect in that it encourages some artists to take their time in creating higher-quality artwork. Some artists believe that the Covid-19 pandemic has helped them improve their artwork and make it finer when compared to their earlier work before the pandemic began. Furthermore, some of the artists manage and adapt to the circumstance by using the internet to make artwork during the Covid-19 pandemic. They are using internet platforms such as Google, Zoom, and Pinterest as a reference and a medium to connect with the audience as stated in the excerpts below.

"I wouldn't say I can produce a much better artwork, but it is much sharper than before." A4

"Just create it, design...we as artists need to know how to rethink during this pandemic." A3

"There's a lot of digital platforms...use it to research the idea...so, you can just design, paint and create your artwork." A2

There are also some negative impacts, such as some artists experiencing financial difficulties in getting the right materials required to create their artwork since their audience or purchasers do not want to spend so much money on the product, leaving the artist with a limited budget to spend on making the artwork. Not only are some artists concerned about their financial resources, but they are also concerned about the limited number of references available to them during the pandemic. This has a minor impact on the creation of an artwork, but it hurts the artist's artwork as stated in the excerpts below.

"It's hard to get the material during the Movement Control Order (MCO). I just must use only what I have at that time. So, it's like I am not satisfied with it." A1

"The source is quite limited. For example, looking for references and all. It's kind of limited and hard."

A5

"For example, for a commission, the material for an art project is hard to get because people don't want to spend so much on art during the pandemic but for creating the artwork, I have no problem with it." A6

This shows that the quality of the artwork is not affected with the Covid-19. Few of them find the pandemic gives them a positive impact on the quality of their artwork and some artists have trouble with the item or material to create because of the financial situation during the pandemic. This causes the artist to be less motivated to create artwork. For example, The A1 Informant also said that *"The other 20% is the material that needed. With the border is now closed, it's hard to get the right equipment and tools that we wanted"*.

5.2 Level of Creativity During the Pandemic

5.2.1 Effect of the selection of topics/issues for artwork

Most informants respond that they select the topic for their artwork based on their sentiments and emotions. We can observe that 5 out of 7 Informants stated that their mood was important in creating the theme or subject that they wished to develop on that day or at any moment. Informant A6, for example, is taking a request from his audience, and while the artwork style is realistic, the artist himself prefers the expressive style.

According to the theory of creativity as a personality expression, the creator can also express what others feel through expression; the expression that underpins creativity is controlled by the creator's consciousness; art is a way of communicating, and its role is to communicate internal states; artists visualize their states of mind to enable recipients to achieve similar states (Szostak & Zukowski, 2021). This may indicate that the artist enjoys expressing their thoughts and sentiments via art. Some artists gain motivation and inspiration from seeing new places, as stated in the excerpts below.

"Mostly I will do abstract art because it's related with our feelings and our emotions. I will go and visit other places such as museum or beach. It's somethings or a place that can motivate or inspired our emotion." A1

"It's depending on my mood on that day. To create something, it's really related to the mood." A2

"For my own art personally, I'm more into expressionism. We express our feelings." A6

"The topic really depends on the mood on that day." A7

Based on the discussion, most informants use their emotions and feelings as their topic or subject when creating any artwork. In both lay and technical assessments, art has frequently been associated with emotion (Konečni, 2015). The places people travel to might influence their emotions and moods, which can change or boost their emotions and mood when making artwork.

The other three Informants choose their topics based on what is currently viral. They have a sense of what is going on currently, particularly in the artist's surroundings. They believe that an artwork relating to a current

subject is far more essential and influential since it can deliver a message to the audience about the current condition, problems, and viral stuff, as stated in the excerpts below.

"The topic selection is based on nowadays like viral. we as an artist created our artwork to deliver a message to the audience about any issue." A3

"What is happening around the will be reflect towards the artist. So, the issue will be created through the reflection of the artist about what is happening in the artist surrounding." A4

"I follow the trend for nowadays." A5

Some artists use the expressive approach in their artwork to show the public their feelings and emotions, but others use a current trending issue such as the Covid-19 pandemic. This demonstrates that each artist has their style in creating art, which is how each artist differs from the others; nevertheless, there is a possibility that this difference is the key that brings the artists together and creates unity among them.

5.2.2 Reference selection for artwork

Each Informant has a unique method for identifying inspirations for their artwork. Some informants stated that they enjoy going outside and seeing places and others stated that they will see other artwork from various artists. Informants also stated that they enjoy seeing their references on social media platforms. For example, A1 and A7 strategies for locating references are very similar in that they often go to topics of interest and study their surroundings as stated in the following excerpts:

"I'll have a peek at the surroundings." I'm going to the museum and the seaside to get some emotional inspiration for us." A1

"For me when creating an artwork, I like to go outside. I love to see the environment and the people." A7

Aside from that, some artists will take the work of other artists as inspiration for their own. Only the elements and principles of art can be discovered in the artist's work. They will then attempt to produce a fresh idea inspired by the other artist's art. As stated further below:

"At the same time, I will see the artwork from another artist that uses the contemporary concept." A4

"I don't have a specific artist reference, but I love to watch the style of many artists." A7

Apart from that, some artists use media such as news, television, and apps for inspiration. Informant A6, for example, indicated that he used current events as his reference. Other informants believe that social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook are places where people look for references, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic as stated in the following excerpts:

"So, when MCO struck, I could just see that on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and others. That reference source is really limited." A1

"I will usually look on Instagram looking at other artist artwork as a reference. From there I will try to create my own idea and artwork." A2

"During MCO, I use media as my reference such as television like the message that the government sends or the visual about MCO or Covid-19 that was shown in the news." A3

"I mostly search for my reference from media social such as Instagram, Google, and Pinterest. I will search on this platform to create my artwork." A5

"I will see my reference based on the current news that is happening nowadays." A6

We can see from this that each artist has their unique way of gathering their reference when creating an artwork. Some people are pushed to use social media to obtain their references.

5.3 Art Activity Before Covid-19 Pandemic Happened

Before the pandemic, most artist activities were concentrated around the outside world. Due to the beginning of the pandemic, the artists were very active. The artist participates in activities such as visiting museums or galleries and holding or attending art exhibitions, art camps, art workshops, and art classes. When COVID-19 arrived, galleries all over the world were forced to close, big art fairs were postponed or soon went virtual, and important auctions were postponed. Aside from that, other artists also devoted more time to produce the artwork. Some artists even meet with other artists to discuss, hang out, and even develop an idea regarding art together as stated in the following excerpts:

"Mostly I will go to the museum, and have a table talk with the other artist at Kuantan. We will talk and hang out, share, and develop ideas together." A1

"I also use to create my artwork at the art studio and not at home. From there I can brainstorm ideas with other friends. There is also a lot of trip and visits." A3

"We used to make the exhibition at the gallery. We will invite people to come to the gallery. We also have an art camp and an art activity workshop. There are also art classes such as figure class." A4

Some Informants have a different kind of activity during the pandemic. They mostly just stay at home, and they feel it's much more conducive to producing their artwork at home. For example, Informant A2 stated:

"I used to stay and draw at home. I rarely go outside if it's something unnecessary." A2

This could be due to the A2 Informant's profession as a graphic designer. Because most graphic designers' work does not entail contact with the outside world, and their references and artwork are primarily stored digitally, the A2 Informant may rarely leave the house.

5.4 Changes in Art Activity During Pandemic

During the Covid-19 outbreak, we saw most Informant activity shift to a more technological direction. Most informants believe that activity is restricted because most stores and places are closed during the Covid-19 pandemic. They lost their intimate ways of engaging audiences with the closure of gallery locations, art fairs, and live auctions (Buchholz et. Al 2020). As a result, the artist's activity is distracted and harmed. They are unable to participate in art activities as they did before the pandemic as stated in the following excerpts:

"During the pandemic, there are almost no activities at all. We can just plan for what the future activity that will be done after the pandemic is over." A1

"There are changes in the activity during the pandemic. I cannot go anywhere that I wanted to. I can only stay at home." A5

"My artwork is limited because i can only do it at home. I can't explore many places. So that's the effect of Covid-19 pandemic. It making the activity limited." A7

The other informant also stated that physical activities such as exhibitions began to shift toward a more online and digital format. The use of digital media to transmit information about museum collections has evolved (Choi, 2021). Few respondents stated that they are considerably more engaged with online activities than they were before the Covid-19 epidemic as stated in the following excerpts:

"During the pandemic, we engage a lot online with other people like with my friends. During MCO, much of the physical activity changes into more online activity." A3

"There are changes. For example, exhibition cannot be held physically. We must convert the exhibition into a digital exhibition." A4

From this, we can see that some changes are happening in artist activity before, during, and after the pandemic. According to Szostak (2021), during a crisis, artists-entrepreneurs are increasingly looking for new types of activity.

5.5 Challenges for Local Artists During the Pandemic

Several difficulties encountered the artist during the Covid-19 pandemic. The first difficulty is that the artists struggle to come up with the proper idea when creating their artwork. The artist may have difficulty making artwork that they like or are satisfied with as stated in the following excerpts:

"Mostly idea. Covid-19 causes the brain to block all the ideas of art." A1

"The challenge for me is how the artist itself want to create an artwork that themselves like or satisfied with." A4

"For idea, before pandemic I used to see and visit my art friends to share the idea but since Covid-19 started, I can only communicate with them through online." A7

The informant's financial situation was the most challenging. This is due to the high cost of producing high-quality artwork. The artists must purchase the materials and tools needed to create their work. The price and availability of art tools are extremely expensive. Not only that, but some artists are also unable to promote or sell their artwork because, once the pandemic started, the audience began to discern between desire and need. For the arts and cultural sector, itself, changing consumer preferences and behaviors during the pandemic, a protracted period of social isolation for many Americans may have longer-term effects on audience patterns, and therefore on the livelihoods of artists and arts organizations, even when vaccines become widely available (Guibert & Hyde, 2021). This will make some artists lose their income and cause them to have financial problems as stated in the following excerpts:

“There are challenges in buying and acquiring the tools for creating artwork because of the lockdown. The number two is the cost of creating the artwork itself.” A3

“Many artists cannot market their artwork because people started to save money to buy basic needs things.” A4

“People will find that basic need is much more important than buying artwork. So, they will stop buying the optional things such as artwork.” A6

“First, we cannot find the material that we wanted. There is certain item that are not available in Kuantan. We also cannot cross the border during the pandemic. That’s the problem with the material and tools.” A7

5.6 The Effect of Challenges During the Covid-19 Pandemic

The challenges give an effect on the local artist during the Covid-19 pandemic artist. 5 of the Informant feels like the challenges that they faced during the pandemic gives them some effect. There are a few effects that the Informant faced. The first effect is mental. This is because some artists' mental health was affected by the pandemic, and they want it to be over. The lockdown and social distancing measures have also made evident the importance of arts and culture for people's mental well-being – and possibly, through the increasingly documented psychosomatic effects of cultural access, also health (Travkina & Sacco, 2020). The A1 Informant stated that “It gives some effect. It gives some effect because I want the pandemic to be over. That’s from mentally”.

Apart from that, some Informant also feels like when the pandemic causes artist to block their physical contact with their friends or peers, it can give negative effect such as not knowing if they have an improvement in their artwork or not. Plus, the artist also cannot exchange their ideas and their thought about an artwork.

“Yes, there is because I don’t know the current level art for my artwork. I don’t know if I’m moving forward with my art or not.” A5

“I do feel like it gives an effect on me because the idea cannot develop and grow for artwork creation, I use to exchange ideas and thought with my friends and anyone. Since I’m creating an artwork alone now, there are not many ideas, or the idea cannot develop.” A7

There are also Informant who finds that the challenges didn’t give them any effect because they feel like an artist should be a professional at their work. They should have good attributes to be a good artist and survive during the Covid-19 pandemic. Artistic research demands that these ideas expand. As artists, we must express more clearly and emphatically our field-specific ideas about art, research, and quality (Lilja, 2012). The A3 Informant stated that:

“It didn’t give an effect on me, and it didn’t give me much problem. As an artist, we have been professionals, committed and flexible during the Pandemic.” A3

5.7 Way’s to Overcome the Challenges

The Informant has their method of dealing with their problems and issues during the pandemic. The artist's initial approach to overcoming problems is to look for references in other works of art. This is not for the artist to replicate other artists' work, but rather for their reference and inspiration in creating new artwork. Some artists claim to be inspired creatively (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020). As stated in the following excerpts:

“Sometimes I see many references that I am interested in.” A2

“I see and look the other artwork from the other artist as my reference.” A5

Several informants believe that planning is essential for surviving and overcoming problems during the pandemic. Having a strategy ahead of time might assist the artist to manage their time, energy, and costs more efficiently, rather than meeting issues unprepared. Some artists promote their work more aggressively. They use the internet and social media to develop and expand their marketing so that people are aware of the artwork. Artists should participate in any creative activity that would increase their production and help them sell their artwork. As stated in the following excerpts:

“To face the challenges, we need to make planning and plan it early. For example, to handle some art project, we must plan it early, we must see the cost, the equipment, and the issue or the title for the artwork project.” A3

“More towards marketing. This means that more posting on the social media and find exhibition to enter. Not only that, but we also must find a place to publish our artwork. Anywhere that we can join any art activities. We can join an online exhibition and display our art in online platform.” A6

5.8 Changes in Art Direction During the Covid-19 Pandemic

5.8.1 Covid-19's impact on artist art direction

Following that is the effect of Covid-19 on the artist's art style when generating artwork. Most of the informants stated that the pandemic has triggered an alteration in their artistic style. Some informants indicated that the epidemic influenced their art style because they couldn't visit anywhere and whenever they wanted. As stated in the following excerpts:

"I cannot refer to the outside, especially the things that I see. Most reference is from the internet. The picture on the internet is already edited so that it looks pretty but it has slightly different than seeing the original thing." A5

"I'm more towards realistic. I play around with nature elements in my artwork such as forest, beach and the sky are. For me, my art does get effected but not too much because we were forced to stay at our home. So, finding a realistic idea is a quite tough because I can only refer on social media." A2

Not only that, but some informants also have a positive effect during the pandemic. During the Covid-19 pandemic, artists have more time for reflection on their previous artwork styles. They can go back and improve their previous artwork, such as the detailing and other elements. When viewers discover a new approach or process, they cannot be motivated until they conduct an adequate self-evaluation of artmaking (Ishiguro & Okada, 2020). Another advantage is that the artist can express their emotions through the medium of art. They may communicate their thoughts that most of the public can connect to, particularly when it comes to health issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic. As stated in the following excerpts:

"There is an effect. Before the pandemic, I just saw the visual of the art, but as the pandemic started, I began to look back at my prior artwork. Now I have time to go back through my artwork and possibly adjust or touch up the detailing. So, during the pandemic, I'm restoring my art styles in my artwork." A1

"Yes, because the idea is already different with expression style. When we express, we express about our feelings and problems that we are currently facing when we are making an artwork." A6

There was also an informant who believed that Covid-19 did not change their art style but rather changed the shape of the artwork. The artist began to recognize that if people truly require a message type of artwork. The artist must concentrate on the aim of the artwork, and the artist believes that they must determine whether the artwork is for display or promotion. The artists must know and understand the purpose of their artwork. Previous studies on art appreciation have assumed the goal of art appreciation to be evaluating and understanding artworks (Pelowski et. al., 2018). As stated by informant A4 in the excerpts below:

"For me it didn't give any effect towards the style, but it give effect in form of shape. Back then, we created an artwork that maybe only the artist themselves enjoy but now we started to think the real need in creating an artwork." A4

5.9 Opinion About the Changes in Art Direction

As per the excerpts below, most of the informants stated that the change in art direction caused by the pandemic would be both positive and negative. Some informants stated that they believe changes in the art direction are positive because change is a sign of progress, it can help the artist think more creatively, and it allows the artist to use issues that are more meaningful to the audience.

"Overall, it's a good change." A1

"It's a good change because it didn't bother me." A2

"From the positive side, it makes us think more creatively." A4

"From the positive side, we can relate more with the audience because almost everyone is facing the same problems during the pandemic." A6

"It depends on the artist itself. The changes style or any changes in general is an improvement." A7

Some informants believe that the changes that took place to them were negative. This is because the Informant feels it necessary to go out and experience the world with their own eyes to acquire inspiration and ideas for new artwork. They must see the original since the image on the internet is insufficient for them.

"As someone who uses the realistic style, the changes are something that isn't fully good. As an artist myself, I feel like It's not good because I must explore or travel to other places to get the reference or inspiration for me." A3

"Not to good because I prefer the artist's original style. I'd rather see the real thing then photos on the internet. That is my preferred art style." A5

The artist decides whether changes are positive or negative. Some artists believe that the changes are great because they allow them to improve, become more creative, and connect with their audiences, whereas others

believe that the changes are detrimental since the pandemic prevents them from seeing and drawing inspiration from the real world.

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, four key themes can be identified in all the completed interview sessions. The first topic found is Covid-19's influence on local artists. Based on the responses of all Informants, the researchers discovered that the artists are having trouble since they do so much with their artwork throughout the pandemic. The artist's activities are affected because they cannot display or exhibit their artwork in public, but it has a beneficial consequence in that it gives them more time to create artwork. Some artists are also unaffected by the pandemic since they specialized in digital art. Most artists also stated that they can continue to create high-quality artwork despite the Covid-19 epidemic. There are some effects, such as giving the artist more time to create a higher quality artwork, sharpening their artwork, adapting, and managing artwork using the internet or social media as a reference. There are several negative consequences, such as the high costs of generating artwork and a limited budget. Aside from that, the artist is having difficulty finding high-quality references on the internet.

The next theme is the artist's level of creativity during the Covid-19 pandemic. When asked how an artist chooses an issue for their artwork, most artists choose to consider the expression style as their art style. This is because 5 out of 7 informants identify emotions and sentiments as their difficulty when creating artwork. The issue theme and title may differ, but they are tied to the artist's expression of sentiments. Some artists also chose their subject to be currently trending or viral to connect with their audience.

There is a difference in artist activity before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, the artist uses to do a lot of activities that involve traveling and visiting places such as visiting museums and galleries. There is also an exhibition that the artist always joined and the way they present their artwork. From an education perspective, there are also acts such as art camps, art workshops, and art classes. Some artist also hangs out with other artists to hang out, exchanging ideas and how to increase the activity in art industries. Most of the activity changed when the Covid-19 pandemic started. Many activities such as exhibitions are canceled, and most places are closed. Most exhibitions also started to change from the conventional way into a more digital way using electronic devices such as phones, tablets, computers, and laptops.

The third theme that was found in this research is the challenges for the local artist during the pandemic. The challenge that artist face during the pandemic is they have a problem finding ideas when making artwork. The artist may or may not be satisfied with the outcome of their artwork. Artists also have problems publishing their artwork in places such as museums and galleries during the pandemic because those places are closed. When the pandemic happened, the artist also faced difficulties in financial because of the high cost of tools and equipment in creating artwork and they have some trouble marketing their artwork. Those challenges give an effect on the artist themselves which is the artist won't know if they have improved because they can't meet their friends to share their critiques and comments about the artwork.

Some artists who are having difficulties with their artwork will see the other artist's artwork to keep them motivated and inspired when producing new artwork. There is also an artist who changes their expensive and exclusive artwork to a more affordable and acceptable one to the audience. They also focused more on commercial art rather than focusing on deep art. There is also an artist who plans in creating artwork that is much more manageable and makes their work much more efficient and looks professional. If the marketing is low, the artist will increase their marketing through social media such as posting and even joining any art activities to boost and help them increase their artwork marketing.

The fourth theme is the changes in art direction in the artist's artwork because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Almost all the informants respond that the pandemic does give an effect and changes their art style. The Informant said that they didn't have the freedom or opportunity to go outside to find their reference and ideas. This will lead the artist to create artwork only based on pictures on the internet and the artist feels that this will make their artwork quality a bit off. Apart from that, the artists also feel like with the plenty of time during the lockdown, they started to look back at their previous artwork and fix it and 'touch up the artwork. This is because they can improve their art style. When the pandemic started, the artist also started to make expression artwork that related to the problems, emotions, and feelings that they had gone through about the Covid-19 issue. This can help the audience to accept the artwork more. Some artists believe that the changes help them improve in process of creating an artwork, making the artist think more creatively in making an artwork that can be related to people nowadays. There is an artist who feels like the changes are something bad because they cannot go out and see nature with their own eyes.

The artist is essential in our country's economic and tourism industry. They were severely hit by the pandemic, and the entire community should come together to help them in a variety of ways, including financial, marketing, and audience support. The artist contributes to the attraction of tourists from all over the world,

including both domestic and foreign visitors. Artists should also work together as a community to assist one another. Since most activities and daily tasks are rapidly changing including gadgets and the internet, the artist should embrace a more digital approach to conceiving, producing, and making artwork. Artists can always advance to the next level by being up to date with technology and gaining additional skills, ideas, and creativity in expanding their art into a much more advanced and futuristic idea.

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