Event Industry Predictions for a Post-COVID Asia

EVENTX

Summary

The calamity of the 2020 pandemic has utterly changed the way that brands and organizations across the globe perceive holding events. Though industry experts had long advocated for a massive increase in the adoption and incorporation of digital methods, it was only with the advent of Covid-19 that virtual and hybrid events truly went mainstream.

The sudden spike in popularity for these formats might have just begun as a necessary response to the limitations placed by worldwide safety precautions, but as the proverb goes, "Necessity is the mother of invention." In 2021, companies and consumers alike have become completely accustomed to digital gatherings, not just tolerating the medium but appreciating it and continuously building on its strengths.

It appears that vaccination programs are finally pushing back the waters of the global pandemic. And a real hope exists that an eventual worldwide repeal of social distancing policies and travel restrictions is now on the horizon. But as that time draws closer, a question remains regarding what form the events industry will take once the dust has cleared. Is there a going back to the way events were run prior to the pandemic? And will the industry even want to?

This is why EventX has created this new white paper, gathering opinions from the event organizer community regarding the current state of events, both virtual and physical, and their future in a post-covid Asia.

Methodology

On 30th March 2021, EventX held a [free webinar](#), which gathered regional leaders in the events industry to share their views on post-covid events. As part of this webinar, its 200 participants were polled on four points related to their event organization activities during the pandemic and their opinions on the future.
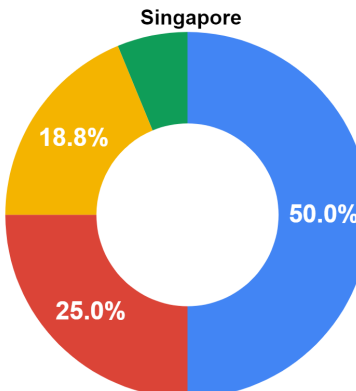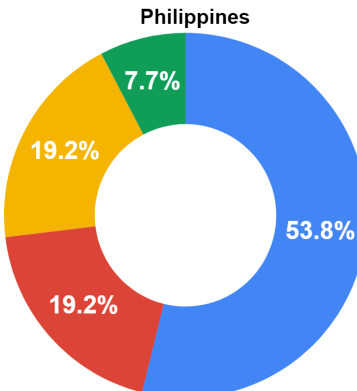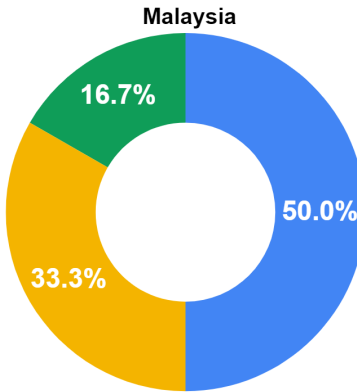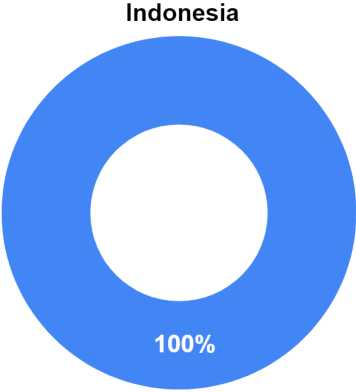
They were as follows:
1. Which events by industry will emerge first from the pandemic?
2. What percentage of events will turn to a virtual or hybrid format after the pandemic?
3. What has been the deciding factor between the virtual event platforms you have used?
4. Have you noticed a shift in the diversity of attendees from different countries?

Countries in Asia where multiple attendants had answered every question were given special attention. This included Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore.

Insights

1. Which events by industry will emerge first from the pandemic?

In your opinion, which events by industry will emerge first from the pandemic?

- Corporate Events
- Exhibitions and Conferences
- Sports and Music Festivals
- Trade Shows

Total: 90

51.1%

23.3%

20.0%

Hong Kong

50.0%

31.3%

15.6%

Indonesia

100%

Malaysia

50.0%

33.3%

16.7%

Philippines

53.8%

19.2%

19.2%

7.7%

Singapore

50.0%

25.0%

18.8%

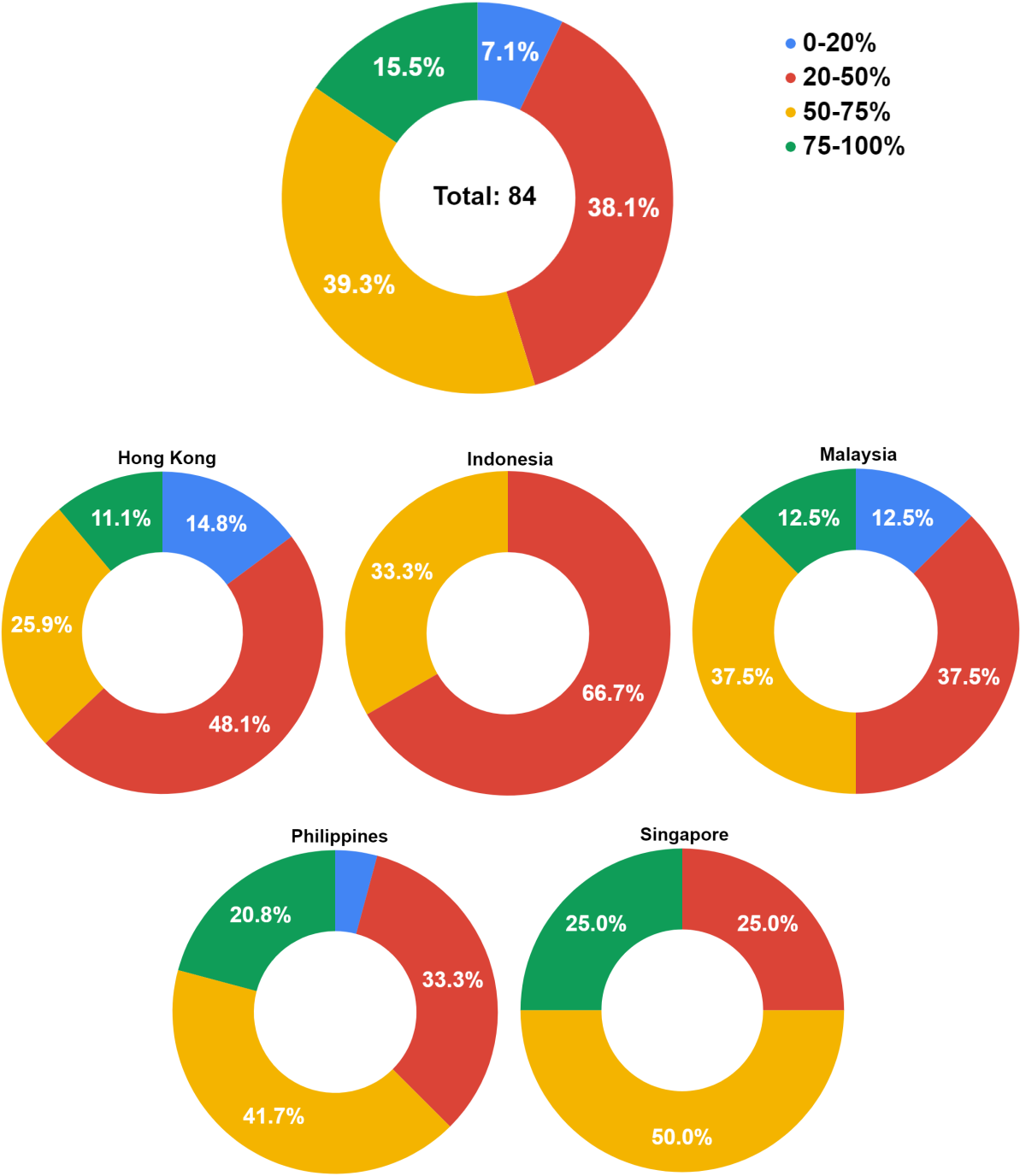(3) **Event Industry Predictions for a Post-COVID Asia**
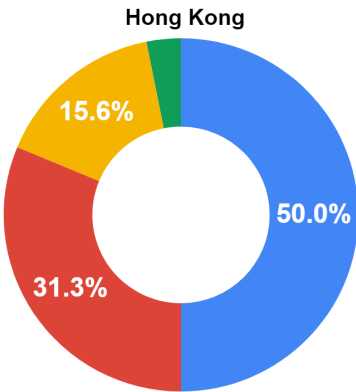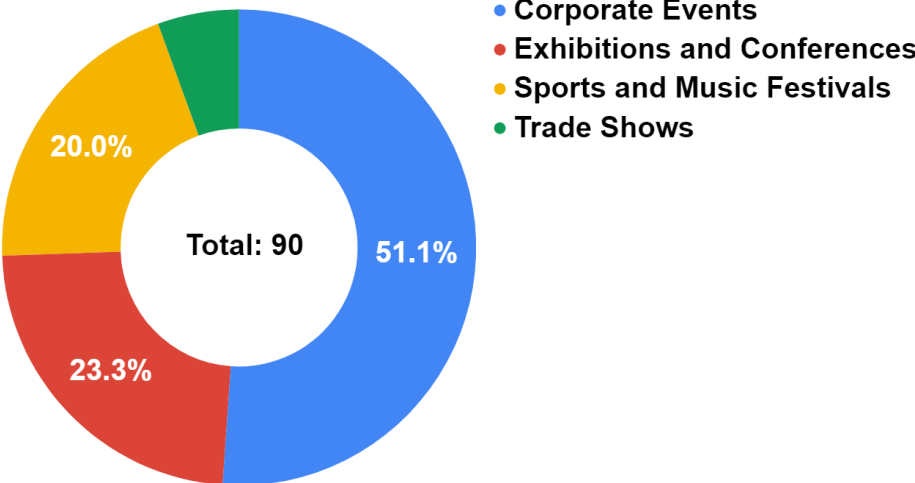
Findings

Out of 90 responses, over half (51.1%) believed that corporate events will be the first industry to take off after the end of the pandemic. This was followed by exhibitions and conferences being chosen by 23 respondents (23.3%), sports and music festivals by 18 respondents (20%), and lastly trade shows with just five respondents (5.6%) picking the category. It is notable that the lower-ranking event types were the ones most commonly associated with a physical presence and traditional events.

This pattern of thought was generally followed across the board, with the only major exceptions being Indonesia where total confidence was placed in corporate events, and Malaysia, where exhibitions and conferences failed to rank at all.

2. What percentage of events will turn to a virtual or hybrid format after the pandemic?

What percentage of events will turn to a virtual or hybrid format after the pandemic?

Legend:
- 0-20%
- 20-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%

Total chart:
- 7.1%
- 38.1%
- 39.3%
- 15.5%

Hong Kong
- 14.8%
- 48.1%
- 25.9%
- 11.1%

Indonesia
- 66.7%
- 33.3%

Malaysia
- 12.5%
- 37.5%
- 37.5%
- 12.5%

Philippines
- 33.3%
- 41.7%
- 20.8%

Singapore
- 25.0%
- 50.0%
- 25.0%

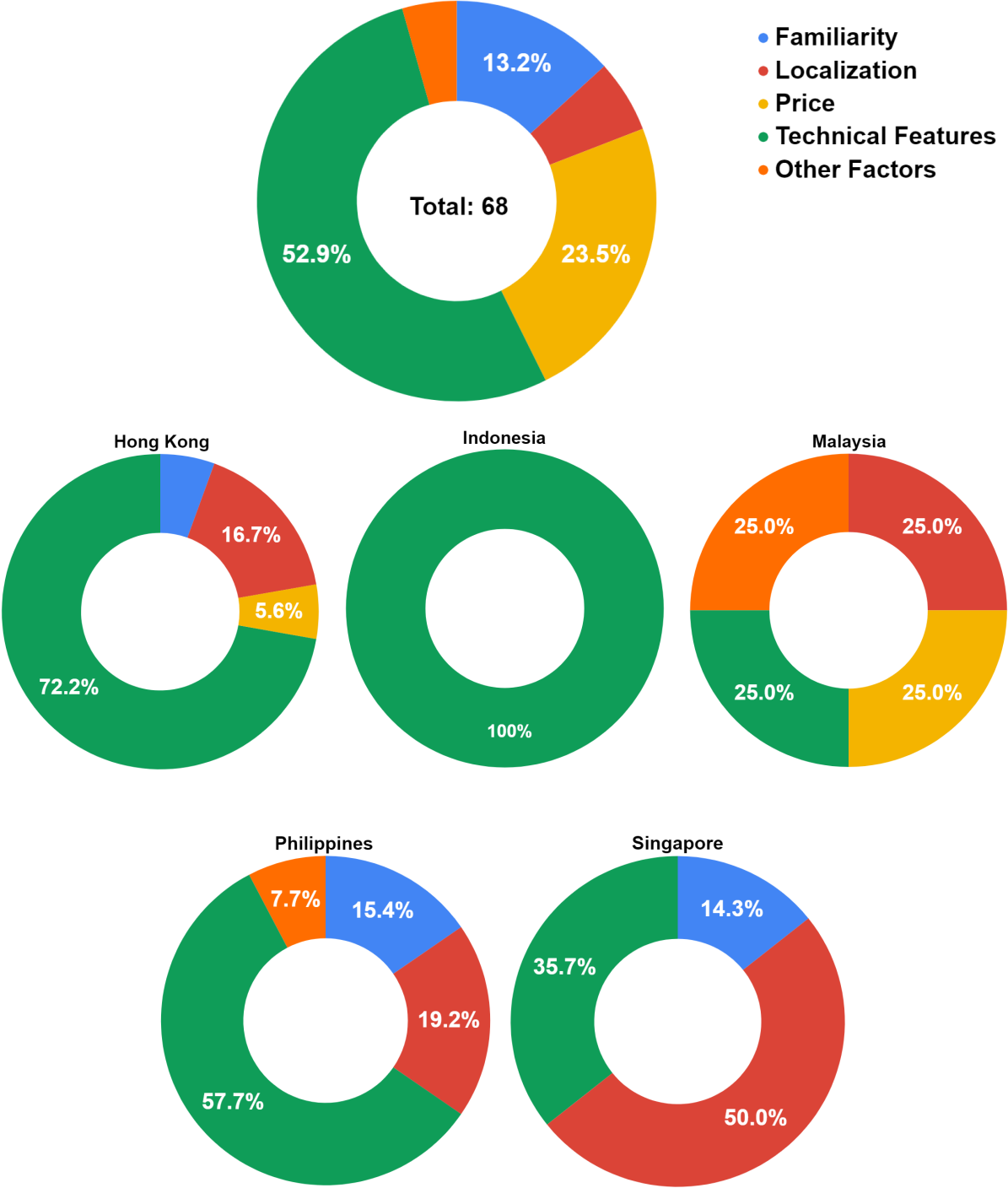(5) **Event Industry Predictions for a Post-COVID Asia**

Findings

There was healthy confidence in the progress of virtual and hybrid models being used for events in the aftermath of the pandemic. In fact, a majority of the 84 respondents believed that over 50% of future events would be adopting hybrid or virtual formats. The largest share of respondents (39.3%) believed that between 50-75% of events would turn to virtual or hybrid models. This was followed by 32 (38.1%) respondents landing on a figure of 20-50%. The two smallest ranked groups were at opposite ends, with 13 (15.5%) choosing 75-100% and only 6 (7.1%) picking the lowest estimate of 0-20%.

While an overwhelming belief in a high rate of adoption for virtual and hybrid methods being likely was visible across all regions, it was most apparent in Singapore. The territory showed the highest score, with respondents strongly believing in rates of 50% (50%) and 75-100% (25%) rates of adoption.

3. What has been the deciding factor between the virtual event platforms you have used?

What has been the deciding factor between the virtual event platforms you have used?

Legend:
- Familiarity
- Localization
- Price
- Technical Features
- Other Factors

Total: 68

13.2% — Familiarity
23.5% — Price
52.9% — Technical Features

Hong Kong
16.7%
5.6%
72.2%

Indonesia
100%

Malaysia
25.0%
25.0%
25.0%
25.0%

Philippines
7.7%
15.4%
19.2%
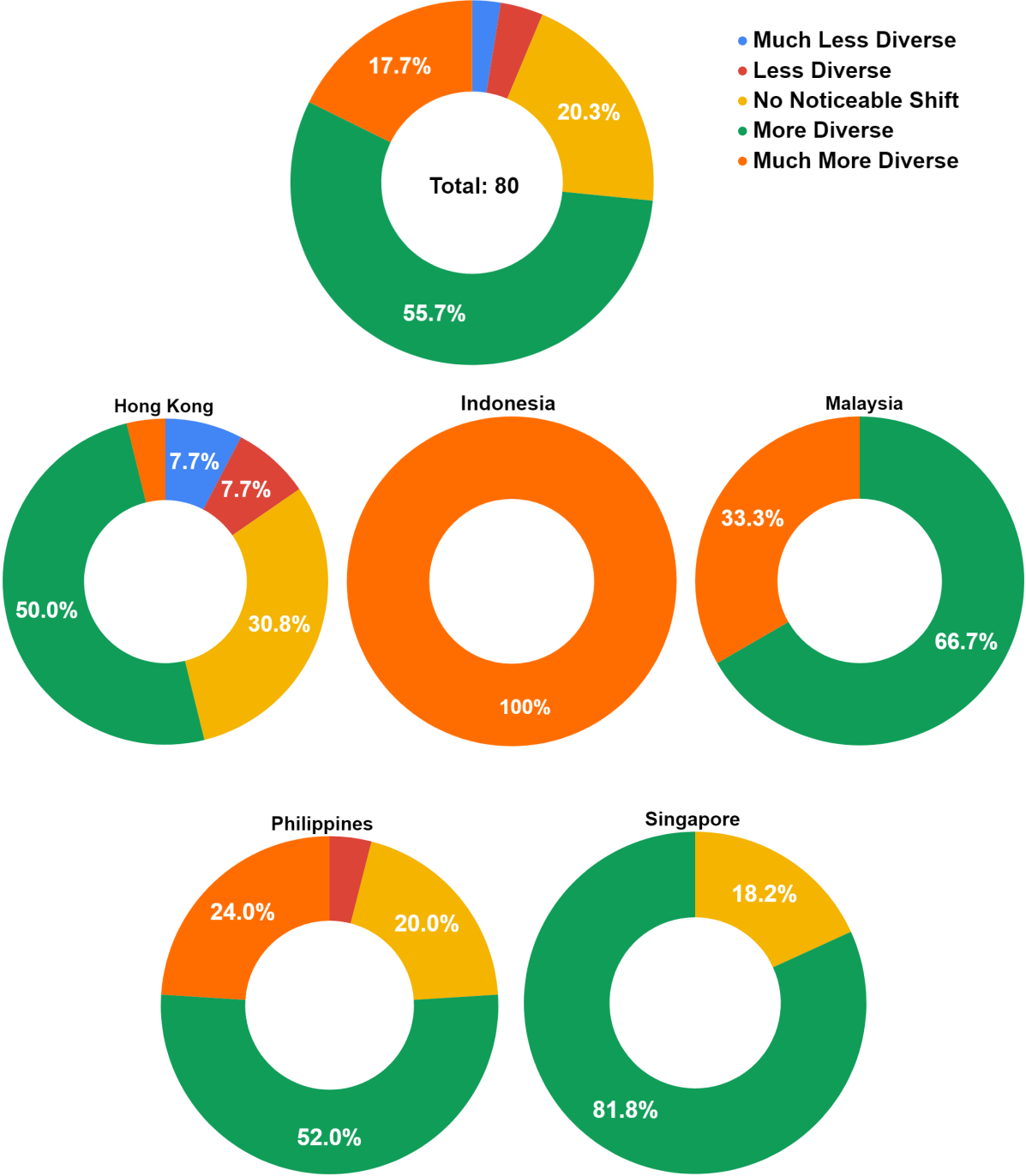57.7%

Singapore
14.3%
35.7%
50.0%

Findings

Technology took the pole position of importance when it came to choosing between virtual platforms. Out of the 68 members of the event industry that were asked, 52.9% cited technical features as the deciding factor between what virtual platforms they had previously used. The next highest-ranked factor was price with half as many (23.5%) choosing it. Bringing up the rear were familiarity at 13.2%, localization at 5.9%, and other factors at 4.4%.

The two Asian territories where this view was at all challenged were Singapore and Malaysia. Although technology was still a popular choice for Singapore respondents at 35.7%, it was pipped to first place by pricing with a 50% share of respondents picking it. Malaysian respondents interestingly ranked all elements entirely equal at 25%.

4. During the last few months, have you noticed a shift in the diversity of attendees from different countries?

Over the pandemic, have you noticed a shift in the diversity of attendees from different countries?

Legend:
- Much Less Diverse
- Less Diverse
- No Noticeable Shift
- More Diverse
- Much More Diverse

Total: 80
- 17.7%
- 20.3%
- 55.7%

Hong Kong
- 7.7%
- 7.7%
- 30.8%
- 50.0%

Indonesia
- 100%

Malaysia
- 33.3%
- 66.7%

Philippines
- 24.0%
- 20.0%
- 52.0%

Singapore
- 18.2%
- 81.8%

Findings

The final question posed yielded some of the most surprising results. Lockdowns, social distancing, and travel distractions have hampered traditional events for some time. Yet, when asked about the level of diversity they had noticed at events, most of our respondents clearly felt it had risen. Over half (55.7%) of the 80 respondents said that they had seen a noticeable increase in diversity at events, while an additional 17.7% believed this increase was especially large. The entirety of those who saw zero change or even a decrease of diversity at events totaled only around a quarter, with 20.3% seeing no shift, 3.8% seeing a drop, and just 2.5% believing there had been a significant fall.

The dominant belief that diversity had increased at events was present across all the territories we looked closer at, with over half of respondents believing there had been a rise. It is reasonable to deduce that the adoption of online events has opened up attendance to global audiences and that this has possibly resulted in much greater diversity being seen by organizers.

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