

Adaptive Resilience of Hospitality Enterprises: Key Practices Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Hospitality enterprises are prone to frequently encounter adverse events, such as the recent outbreak of the pandemic of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), as they operate in a turbulent and uncertain business environment as well as provide services of a vulnerable nature. Hence, the adaptive resilience of hospitality enterprises has captured the attention of both academics and practitioners. Drawing on insights of hospitality executives and hotels' key performance indicators, this study seeks to assess the perceived adaptive resilience of the hospitality enterprises to the COVID-19 pandemic as well as to identify the key practices learned from this pandemic concerning improving the adaptive resilience of hospitality operations. A mixed-methods approach was adopted in this study using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data was gathered using semi-structured interviews with 31 hospitality executives and data was analyzed using the thematic analysis technique. Meanwhile, document analysis was adopted to conclude quantitative data from official reports of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The findings revealed that hospitality enterprises showed limited adaptive resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic and took a prolonged time to slightly recover and restore business. However, experiencing such an unprecedented disruptive event drove hospitality enterprises to undertake various adaptive practices to withstand this pandemic and maintain reasonable business flow such as services diversification, resources reconfiguration, creative solutions, and attentive leadership. This study contributes to the growing literature on hospitality management and provides valuable suggestions for practitioners.

1. Introduction

The first case infected with the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was officially registered in Wuhan, China, on 31 December 2019 (Foo et al., 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Jamal & Budke, 2020). Since then, the virus had rapidly spread around the world and by mid-March 2020, it had infected thousands of people in 146 countries (Anderson et al, 2020). By April 15th, 2020, the number of confirmed cases infected with COVID-19 had reached 2 million in over 200 countries causing the death of 125

thousand people (ECDC, 2020). To contain the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries around the world had taken a series of strict protective measures such as travels bans, quarantine restrictions, grounding flights, closure of accommodation and recreation facilities, lockdown/curfew, social distancing (Gössling et al., 2021). Such measures resulted in devastating effects on tourism and hospitality enterprises in terms of minimized revenues and employee layoffs (Carr, 2020; Gössling et al., 2021). The accommodation and events/meeting venues were hit harder due to complete shut down or limited guest flow while restaurants maintained a slight business flow because of permitted take-out or home delivery services (Gössling et al., 2021). To date, after two years of the advent of this pandemic, and despite the availability of various effective vaccines, COVID-19 still poses a serious threat to the entire world causing several health and economic issues. Hence, to survive these ongoing and unprecedented circumstances, hospitality enterprises are forced to adapt and operate according to certain precautionary measures such as operating curfew, social distancing, strict sanitation standards, and capacity instructions (Ntounis et al., 2021).

Given the continuity of the COVID-19 pandemic and considering the vulnerability of the tourism and hospitality industry to its ramifications, hospitality enterprises ought to develop and implement strategies and techniques to maintain reasonable business flow. In this context, adaptive resilience—the ability of an organization to make proper adjustments to withstand disruptive events (Acquaah et al., 2011)—represents a powerful technique for business survival. Jamal and Budke (2020) argued that tourism and hospitality enterprises are likely to experience pandemics more frequently, therefore adaptive resilience of tourism and hospitality enterprises is an essential survival strategy. However, Chowdhury et al. (2019) reported a lack of resilience of the tourism and hospitality industry to external shocks or serious disruptive events. Therefore, it is imperative to revisit and assess the adaptive resilience hospitality operations to the recent pandemic of COVID-19.

Although several studies have investigated the ramifications of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality industry (see for example Carr, 2020; Foo et al., 2020; Hall et al., 2020; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020; Dube et al., 2021; Ntounis et al., 2021), research on hospitality adaptive resilience to pandemics remain scarce and context-specified or regionally-focused (such as Engeset, 2020; Gong et al., 2020; Knight & Reddy, 2020; Mao et al., 2020), particularly in Egyptian hospitality settings. Chowdhury et al (2019) agreed with Cowell et al. (2016) that there is a lack of consistency on the internal and external factors that enable the development of business resilience. In a similar vein, more recent studies (Prayag, 2020; Ntounis et al., 2021) argued that limited knowledge about the resilience of the tourism and hospitality operation during the pandemic of COVID-19. This creates a gap in the literature and leaves an interesting issue for further investigation.

Hence, the aim of this study is twofold. First, to critically evaluate the perceived adaptive resilience of hospitality enterprises to the pandemic of COVID-19. Second, to identify the key practices, procedures, or activities learned from this pandemic about enhancing the adaptive resilience of hospitality operations. In doing so, the

current study addresses a gap in hospitality literature and provides some practical implications that enable practitioners to boost the resiliency of hospitality enterprises to disruptive events such as the recurrent pandemic of COVID-19.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Adaptive Resilience

The relevant literature provides several definitions for the term resilience, all of which refer to resilience as the ability of a business organization to withstand adverse events or the ability of a system to adapt its basic structure and functions to face disturbance. For example, McManus et al. (2008) identified resilience as the overall awareness and management of vulnerabilities and the capacity to adapt to a complex and dynamic environment. Resilience refers to the adaptability to changing circumstances through undertaking appropriate adjustments (Ismail et al., 2011; Morisse & Prigge, 2017). Put differently, it is the ability of an organization to withstand catastrophic or disruptive events and navigate unfavorable changes in its business environment (Acquaah et al., 2011). In other words, resilience refers to the organization's ability to commence situation-specific, robust, and transformative actions to confront unexpected incidents that threaten its business performance of long-term survival (Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2016).

Additionally, the literature distinguishes between two types of resilience: planned resilience and adaptive resilience (Nilakant et al., 2014). Planned resilience refers to using predetermined plans that are usually prepared in the pre-disaster period. Adaptive resilience, on the other hand, occurs during disaster time and includes dynamic response and the development of new capabilities to confront emergent situations or circumstances (Lee et al., 2013; Nilakant et al., 2014). In other words, adaptive resilience is the capability of an enterprise to perform effective responses and lead a quick recovery from adverse events (Nilakant et al., 2014). The current study focuses on investigating the concept of adaptive resilience of hospitality enterprises to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The significance of adaptive resilience is well-acknowledged in the business management literature. It enables business organizations to restore normal performance standards after severe negative events and inspire positive and better transformations or even seize opportunities stem from experiencing serious disruptive events (Lengnick-Hall & Beck, 2016). Chowdhury et al. (2019) further explained that adaptive resilience has strategic importance for business organizations because of its role not only in ensuring business survival but also in creating competitive advantages.

2.3. Adaptive Resilience of Hospitality Enterprises

Adaptive resilience in the tourism and hospitality domain refers to the capacity to effectively handle catastrophic incidents, to maintain business stability, and ensure flexibility and diversity for further development (Bultjens et al., 2017; Ntounis et al., 2021). Adaptive resilience of business organizations is important survival strategy, particularly for hospitality enterprises due to the fragile and vulnerable nature of the hospitality business toward disasters or adverse events. Evidence from precedent

research showed that the tourism and hospitality industry has been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of massive booking cancellations and huge decline in hotel revenues including major destinations such as Malaysia (Foo et al., 2020), Caribbean Islands (Knight & Reddy, 2020), Indonesia (Aldianto et al., 2021) and Egypt (Salem et al., 2021). In addition, post-disaster recovery of tourism and hospitality business usually takes a prolonged time due to safety and security concerns (Hall et al., 2018; Chowdhury et al., 2019). Moreover, Chowdhury (2019) added that adaptive resilience has a significant influence on the business performance of tourism and hospitality enterprises.

Reviewing prior studies and relevant literature revealed several practices, procedures, or strategies that can help to develop adaptive resilience for business enterprises. For instance, Pal et al. (2014) suggested four internal factors to establish business resilience including (1) attentive leadership, (2) operational flexibility, (3) assets and networking, and (4) finance and cash flow. Morisse (2017) also suggested some practices for industrial resilience such as understanding the environment and work system, incorporating information technologies, adjusting processes, and qualifying people. Similarly, Tibay et al. (2018) conducted a study on the resilience of family hospitality enterprises in Auckland, New Zealand, and concluded certain attributes to ensure the resilience of hospitality business such as preparedness plan, awareness of situation, leadership, and competence of staff. In a tourism-focused context, Gössling et al. (2021) suggested that integrating local market or domestic tourism is significant for creating more resilient operations. Aldianto et al. (2021) concluded some key drivers for the resilience of tourism and hospitality businesses including dynamic capabilities, technology capability, agile leadership, knowledge stock, and innovation ambidexterity. Ghaderi et al. (2021) further added that innovative operations and adaptability—initiating changes to adapt to new circumstances caused by disruptive events—are major that reinforce hospitality resiliency.

Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2016) also revealed some attributes of a highly resilient organization such as flexibility and agility, in addition to being well-prepared and relentlessly dynamic. Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2016) further explained that achieving resilience capacity involves creating three main dimensions that work independently and interactively to respond to disruptive incidents. The first dimension is cognitive resilience and refers to the ability of detecting, analyzing, formulating, and initiating appropriate responses to adverse events. The second dimension is behavioral resilience and includes the implementation of particular routines, resource configurations, and interaction patterns as a response to disruptive conditions. The third dimension is contextual resilience which involves the interactions and resources that shape the context of an organization's response to unfavorable events. Chowdhury et al. (2019) further explained that adaptive resilience arises during a crisis as a result of many factors such as strong leadership, leveraging knowledge, and quick decision-making.

3. Methodology

3.1. Instruments

A mixed-method approach was adopted in this study using both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection. Quantitative data on hotels' key performance indicators were gathered from the official statistical reports of the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities using document analysis technique. On the other hand, qualitative data were collected using semi-structured with owners and/or executives of various hospitality enterprises (including resorts, hotels, and restaurants) in order to represent the entire hospitality sector and gather various insights that enrich the results and help achieving the study purpose. The interview included four main sections. Section one captures personal information about the interviewees such as name, job position, years of experience, etc. Section two included three main questions and aimed to assess the perceived adaptive resilience of participants' enterprises to the COVID-19 pandemic. The third section involved two main questions and sought to determine the key practices that hospitality enterprises have undertaken to withstand and tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and preserve business stability. Section four contained one question that collects additional comments or suggestions raised by the interviewees. To ensure the validity of the interview questions, a panel of seven experts and peers have reviewed the interview form and confirmed its face and content validity. In addition, confidentiality of respondents' information was also assured to encourage interviewees to provide honest and detailed information.

3.2. Participants and Procedures

Qualitative data collection was accomplished through several steps. First, interview candidates were selected using convenience sampling technique, then approached and asked to participate in the study. A total of 50 potential interviewees were approached and 31 consented to partake in the study with a response rate of approximately 62%. This sample size is considered to be sufficient for qualitative inquiry as explained by Creswell and Clark (2017). Moreover, a data saturation point was reached in the last three interviews and no new information was obtained. Next, appropriate time for interviews and means of communication were scheduled for each participant in addition to sending interview questions to all participants in advance. Due to accessibility difficulties, only 9 interviews were personally conducted while the other 22 interviews were conducted electronically using different software applications such as Imo, Zoom, Facebook messenger, or telephone interview. The average duration of an interview ranged between 30 to 45 minutes during which detailed notes of all respondents' comments were registered.

3.3. Data Analysis

After conducting each interview, collected data was transcribed, translated in English, and prepared for analysis. This study adopted thematic analysis and followed the procedures suggested by Burnard (1991) for qualitative data analysis. Specifically, major themes/headings were identified from the collected data, these headings were grouped in higher-order themes, and participants' responses were coded according to

these themes. The final themes were presented and discussed in the results section and some quotes from the respondents' comments were cited in the results section.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Profile of the Participants

The first section of the interview captured the profile of the interviewees including name, age, gender, job position, experience, and affiliation. This enabled that researcher to establish their capability to provide relevant, thorough, and accurate data about the investigated issue.

Table 1

Profile of the participants

| Participant No. | Gender & Age | Job position | Experience | Affiliation of participant |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------------|------------|--|
| 1 | M - 37 | Owner & manager | 10+ | 200-seat wedding hall, Minia |
| 2 | M - 47 | FO manager | 10+ | Five-star resort, Hurghada |
| 3 | F - 39 | FO manager | 7 | Four-star hotel, Minia |
| 4 | M - 36 | Manager | 6 | 75-seat fine dining restaurant, Cairo |
| 5 | M - 55 | Deputy manager | 6 | Four-star hotel, Minia |
| 6 | M - 48 | Manager | 9 | 50-seat seafood restaurant, Alexandria |
| 7 | M - 55 | General manager | 12+ | Three-star hotel, Minia |
| 8 | M - 49 | Marketing manager | 8 | Four-star resort, Hurghada |
| 9 | M - 48 | Owner & manager | 12 | Accommodation apartments, Alexandria |
| 10 | M - 39 | Sales manager | 5 | Five-star resort, Hurghada |
| 11 | F - 36 | Partner & manager | 7 | 80-seat restaurant & café, Cairo |
| 12 | M - 34 | Owner & manager | 8 | Fast food restaurant, Minia |
| 13 | M - 50 | Deputy manager | 15+ | Four-star resort, Hurghada |
| 14 | M - 49 | Financial manager | 5 | Four-star hotel, Luxor |
| 15 | F - 30 | Owner & manager | 5 | 60-seat Italian restaurant & Café, Minia |
| 16 | M - 49 | Marketing director | 6 | Four-star hotel, Cairo |
| 17 | M - 41 | Owner & manager | 5 | 100-seat restaurant & café, Minia |
| 18 | M - 52 | General manager | 9 | Four -star hotel, Luxor |
| 19 | M - 47 | Deputy manager | 10 | Four -star cruise hotel, Luxor |
| 20 | F - 38 | Owner & manager | 5 | 120-seat restaurant & café, Hurghada |
| 21 | M -39 | FO manager | 7 | Five-star hotel, Hurghada |
| 22 | M - 48 | Manager-on-duty | 6 | Four -star hotel, Hurghada |
| 23 | M - 40 | Partner & manager | 8 | Accommodation apartments, Alexandria |
| 24 | M - 42 | General Manager | 7 | Two-star hotel, Minia |
| 25 | M - 53 | Deputy manager | 10+ | Four -star resort, Hurghada |
| 26 | F - 39 | Sales manager | 5 | Four -star hotel, Cairo |
| 27 | M - 50 | Owner & manager | 10+ | Accommodation apartments, Hurghada |
| 28 | F - 35 | Acting manager | 5 | 50-seat Cafe & juice bar, Cairo |
| 29 | M - 55 | Deputy manager | 10 + | Four -star cruise hotel, Luxor |
| 30 | F - 48 | Marketing manager | 5 | Four -star hotel, Alexandria |
| 31 | M - 45 | Marketing director | 5 | Four -star hotel, Luxor |

The results showed that interviews included participants from various hospitality enterprises (5 resorts, 14 hotels, 8 restaurants/cafes, 3 accommodation apartments, and 1 wedding hall) across major tourist cities in Egypt including Alexandria, Hurghada, Cairo, Minia, and Luxor. The sample was dominated by males (24 interviewees, 77.5%) while females represented only 22.5 % (7 respondents) of the participants. The results also revealed that all participants assumed executive job positions with years of experience ranging between 5 and more than 15 years. Specific details about the study participants are presented in Table 1.

4.2. Perceived Adaptive Resilience

This section presents the assessment of the perceived resilience of hospitality enterprises to the COVID-19 pandemic through analyzing two sets of data. The first set includes statistical reports issued by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities focusing on key performance indicators including occupancy rate and average daily rate (ADR). The second set involves the responses of the interviewees regarding the adaptability of their hospitality enterprises to the ramification of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reports of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (Table 2) indicated that hotels in the major tourist destinations in Egypt had witnessed a substantial decline in their occupancy rates in 2020 compared to rates of 2019 which is mainly attributed to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the precautionary measures imposed by the government to control it. It was noticed that hotels in Cairo were hit harder with a change rate of -52.01% while hotels in Alexandria maintained a positive, yet slight, change rate (2.43%) in occupancy. Similarly, hotel average daily rate ADR (Table 3) had dramatically dropped throughout 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 compared to 2018 and 2019.

Table 2

Hotel occupancy rates in major tourist regions in Egypt 2019-2020.

| Tourist region | Yearly Occupancy rate (%) | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|-------|--------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | Change |
| South Sinai | 49.9 | 24.81 | -25.09 |
| Red Sea | 72.73 | 24.1 | -48.63 |
| Luxor | 33.6 | 14.48 | -19.12 |
| Aswan | 42.78 | 15.45 | -27.33 |
| Cairo | 77.62 | 25.61 | -52.01 |
| Alexandria | 66.86 | 69.29 | 2.43 |
| North Coast | 25.14 | 9.53 | -15.61 |
| Cruise hotels | 59.21 | 10.68 | -48.53 |
| Overall | 62.21 | 25.39 | -36.82 |

Source: developed the researcher based on reports of The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2021).

Generally, all tourist cities in Egypt had experienced a huge downturn in occupancy rates and ADR throughout 2020, which indicated that adaptive resilience of hotels

was very slim or nonexistent. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels in Alexandria managed to achieve higher occupancy rates in 2020 than in 2019 and registered no decline in ADR. This can be explained by the notion that Alexandria is mainly a domestic tourism destination that is visited by local tourists who were mostly price-sensitive and did not struggle with flight bans or travel restrictions.

Table 3
changes in hotel average daily rates in major tourist cities in Egypt 2018-2020.

| City | Changes in Average Daily Rate ADR | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|------|------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | Q1 2019 | Q1 2020 | Q1 2021 |
| Cairo | +11% | +4% | -15% | -11% | -5% | -86% |
| Alexandria | +15% | +24% | 0% | -1% | -8% | -40% |
| Sharm El Sheikh | +25% | +23% | -17% | -5% | -11% | -76% |
| Hurghada | +25% | +19% | -2% | -9% | -3% | -59% |

Source: developed the researcher based on reports of The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2021).

Alongside the aforementioned reports, interview participants were asked three questions that aimed to critically evaluate the perceived adaptive resilience of their hospitality enterprises to the COVID-19 pandemic. First, participants were asked if their enterprise initiated any substantial alterations or adjustments to cope with the ramifications of COVID-19. The results indicated a consensus among respondents that the adjustment of hospitality enterprise to the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic were performed in two phases. The first phase included only complying with the strict regulations, including the complete shutdown of accommodation facilities and curfew restrictions, imposed by the government during the second quarter of 2020. In the second phase (i.e. the third quarter of 2020), the total lockdown was revoked giving hospitality enterprises a chance to resume business based on certain conditions including capacity limits (25% then 50%) and precautionary measures. It was only at the second phase when hospitality firms were permitted and able to undertake response procedures to navigate the pandemic. Among the comments of the interviewees, a marketing manager of a 4-star resort explained that:

Throughout the first three quarters of 2020, there was nothing to do, we all had to follow the decisions made by the Prime Minister which dictated a full closure of certain properties such as hotels and resorts.... it was a tough time and unprecedented business circumstances during which we had zero business flow!
(Participant No. 8).

Second, interviewees were also asked to describe the performance of their hospitality enterprise since the outbreak of Covid-19, in terms of occupancy rates, ADR, or seat turnover. In other words, they were asked to explain how well their enterprises adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that the majority of the approached hospitality enterprises (93.5%, 29 participants), mainly accommodation and convention/wedding venues, witnessed a huge decline in their businesses during

2020 reflected in minimized occupancy rates and significantly decreased ADR. Although many hospitality businesses had experienced a slight recovery in 2021, they still have not reached normal performance levels of pre-pandemic times. Some enterprises, namely restaurants and cafés, managed to maintain a small business flow in 2020 and achieved a significant recovery in 2021. One of the interviewees commented:

We had the lowest occupancy rates I have ever seen, specifically in the second and third quarter of 2020... things started to get better and occupancy rates had improved by the last quarter of 2020 and throughout 2021, but of course not as they used to be before this pandemic (Participant No. 2)

Third, participants were asked if they think their enterprises have demonstrated an ability to positively withstand a disruptive event such as COVID-19 considering their overall performance since the outbreak to date. The majority of the interviewees (27 participants) believed that their enterprises undertook several practices and procedures to face the pandemic as effectively as possible. Such practice enabled them to overcome catastrophic times and led to a slight restoration of business levels, considering the unprecedented severe circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, it is fair to infer that these enterprises demonstrated a fair level of adaptive resilience to persist during adverse events. On the other hand, some respondents thought their enterprises performed either well (participants 6 and 12) or bad (participants 27) due to the severe effects of COVID-19. For example, a deputy manager of a four-star resort stated:

Surely our resort had taken many procedures to respond to the harsh circumstances caused by the coronavirus outbreak...I believe that these procedures have definitely improved occupancy rates and helped to generate fair revenue flow. Of course, we still have a long way to go, performance indicators are gradually improving (Participant No.25)

In a broad sense, it can be concluded from both the statistical reports and interviews that the investigated hospitality enterprises have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite their prolonged response to handle the negative impacts of this pandemic, the business performance of hospitality firms has been fairly improved, and it still requires a longer time to fully recover and restore normal business flow. This indicated a limited adaptive resilience of hospitality enterprises to adverse events such as COVID-19.

4.3. Key Practices for Adaptive Resilience

Interviewees were asked about the key practices/activities and critical adjustments that supported the adaptive resilience of their hospitality enterprises and enabled them to positively handle the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance business performance during that time. The analysis of the respondents' comments uncovered eight major practices, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

The first and foremost practice for creating adaptive resilience for a hospitality enterprise is developing a dynamic or changeable work system that encourages

improvisation and enables flexible and adaptable operations. The majority of the interviewees (28 participants) reported that hospitality firms should foster a culture of change and possess a certain level of flexibility and dynamic operations and mindset that help them to improvise and cope with unfavorable market changes and face negative events that affect their business. In this context, many hospitality enterprises have executed specifically designed procedures to withstand the COVID19 pandemic such as applying precautionary measures, training employees on infection prevention, modifying operating hours, and reducing guest flow in public areas. By doing so, hospitality firms managed to stay in business and survived really harsh circumstances. This suggested practice is supported by some prior studies such as Pal et al. (2014), Ghaderi et al. (2021), and Gössling et al. (2021). Among interviewees' comments, a marketing director of a four-star hotel argued:

I think the most important practice for robust hospitality business during negative events is performing swift and appropriate changes or adjustments to cope with any sudden negative events...this can determine failure, survival, or even success of a hospitality enterprise
(Participant No. 16)

Another key practice for boosting adaptive resilience involves resources reconfiguration. A large portion of the respondents (approximately 90%) explained that among the essential practices a hospitality enterprise needs to undertake when encountering adverse events is reconfiguring its resources. This includes reconsidering the enterprise's different resources (such as guest rooms, food/beverage outlets, recreation facilities, employees, etc.) and figure out how to effectively utilize these resources in light of the new circumstances and market changes caused by the disruptive events. This process requires making fundamental adjustments to the firm's resources and identify possible uses of these resources based on the new market conditions. This result concurs with the study of Lengnick-Hall & Beck (2016). For instance, during the peak period of the COVID-19, many hospitality enterprises offered unpaid leave to dispose of excessive employees, leased out some facilities to outsiders, or closed down unutilized facilities. Some hotels and resorts adjusted some accommodation units and were authorized by official bodies to provide mandatory quarantine services for repatriations or international arrivals. Interviewees comments included:

Successful business organizations should always re-evaluate its major resources, particularly during market turbulences, to determine new possible uses of these resources and ensure efficient utilization of them in light of the current market conditions
(Participant No. 13)

Fostering innovativeness and creativity was also among the highly recommended practices for adaptive resilience of hospitality operations. Nearly 84% of the interviewees agreed that hospitality enterprises can enhance adaptive capacity through adopting an open-door policy and encouraging communication with all employees at different levels of the enterprise to develop necessary creative solutions, innovative

ideas, and situation-specific procedures to confront and tackle adverse events. Such a practice results in a pool of original suggested procedures to resolve catastrophic issues and guarantees employee commitment to effectively carry out these procedures. This practice is in line with the study of Ghaderi et al. (2021). For instance, a sales manager of a four-star hotel explained that:

It is really important to encourage all employees to create and share their ideas on how to handle any problem or negative incidents... they may present untraditional ideas that help resolve the issue (Participant No. 26).

Acting proactively also represents a key practice for improving an enterprise's adaptive resilience. A significant number of the interviewees (25 participants) suggested a proactive approach for strengthening the adaptive capabilities of hospitality firms. This involves performing certain procedures such as anticipating upcoming negative events through detecting their preliminary signs and trying to mitigate or avert these events before even happening. It also includes ensuring preparedness or readiness of a hospitality enterprise for encountering and surviving unexpected negative events through developing predetermined plans or strategies, qualifying responsible personnel to implement these plans by regularly rehearsing them, and designating an emergency management team. That being the case, hospitality enterprises can act promptly and adequately when threatened by any disruptive events. This proposed practice concurs with the cognitive resilience dimension discussed by Lengnick-Hall and Beck (2016). An experienced general manager of a four-star hotel reported:

It's better to be always ready for facing any adverse events because hotels are operating in turbulent market conditions most of the time, that is why we have certain emergency plans for these situations (Participant No. 18).

Attentive leadership and management also constitute a major determinant of adaptive resilience. A total of 25 interviewees indicated that vigilant leadership, namely top management; including the board of directors, general manager, and deputy manager, is an essential attribute that supports improving the adaptive resiliency of hospitality enterprises. Observant leadership of a business organization enables optimum awareness of the current market conditions and helps to predict any potential events or changes that can negatively impact their business and thereby prepare and execute proper adjustments and protective measures. It also ensures a better understanding of the negative events, a direct involvement of the leadership in handling these events, and an enhanced morale of the employees. This proposed practice is consistent with the studies of Pal et al. (2014) and Chowdhury et al. (2019) which reported that enterprise leadership is a key factor for developing its adaptive resilience. Respondents' comments included:

Managing crises or negative events, such as the recent pandemic of coronavirus, requires taking significant decisions and making serious changes in traditional operations.... all this should come

from the higher management, not the other way around
(Participant No. 10).

Targeting various and alternative guest segments were considered another important practice for strengthening the adaptive resilience of hospitality firms. Many of the study participants (23 respondents, i.e. 74%) argued that some hospitality enterprises focus only on one or few guest/customer segments, mainly international tourist arrivals from certain countries, due to market conditions and accessibility. Instead, targeting and attracting multiple guest segments is a safer option as it enables enterprises to switch focus among these segments based on demand variations and use high-demand segments as a proxy for low-demand ones. For example, the majority of hotels and resorts have focused on the domestic tourist market to compensate for the severe decline in the number of international tourists caused by flight bans during the COVID-19 pandemic. This suggested practice is completely consistent with the conclusion of the recent study of Gössling et al. (2021) that domestic tourism guarantees more resilient destinations. Interviewees' comments included:

Marketing efforts are really important in our field, particularly during a huge crisis like coronavirus pandemic... for example, accommodation enterprises such as hotels and resorts usually seek alternative guest segments, local guests for instance, and provide adequate services at reasonable prices for them to balance the shortage in other guest segments (Participant No. 8).

Diversifying products and services was also considered one of the key practices for ensuring hospitality resiliency. A significant portion of the interviewees (approximately 65%) argued that hospitality enterprises need to provide diverse products and services that satisfy the needs of wants of different customer segments. This includes offering several accommodation plans, a range of room types and rates, different menus/meals, limited and full services packages, and services for non-resident guests such as day-use services. Hospitality enterprises can also provide non-traditional or adjusted services that are concurrent with the market demand during specific times, such as quarantine services. Such diversification and renovation of services allow hospitality enterprises to attract different guests and draw revenues from multiple sources. This practice agrees with the recent study of Ntounis et al. (2021) on tourism and hospitality resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the interviewees' comments, a financial manager of a four-star hotel explained:

Any business firm must achieve reasonable income flow even during extremely bad times...hotels can do so by providing various services to different guest categories to generate as much income as possible
(Participant No. 14).

Utilizing modern technologies, particularly information and communication technologies ICT, was reported to be another important practice for resilient hospitality operations. many participants (18 interviewees) discussed that employing contemporary information technologies has become more of a necessity rather than a luxury, especially nowadays, for many reasons. ICTs enable swift and efficient

services with minimized human contact which is acceptable or even necessary nowadays for safer accommodation experience during the outbreak of highly contagious diseases such as coronavirus disease. ICTs also help hospitality managers to promptly cope with market developments through acquiring knowledge and updated information on market conditions and directions which is necessary for effective decision making. In addition, ICTs assist managers to identify possible solutions or effective practices/activities for resolving negative events through following and imitating response strategies of the leading companies in the hospitality field, either nationally or internationally. Last but not least, ICTs helps hospitality managers to stay in direct or close touch with customers/guests and detect any changes in their behaviors due to adverse events like COVID-19. An experienced front office manager of a five-star hotel reported that:

Using information technology is important during this pandemic ...for example, social distancing is a safety procedure that requires limited physical contact with and among guests, that is where technology such as electronic registrations forms and folios can be helpful (Participant No. 21).

In like manner, assuming social responsibility was endorsed as another significant practice for hospitality enterprises during catastrophic times or negative events. A total of 15 interviewees (about 48%) acknowledged the important role that hospitality enterprises can play in supporting and benefiting society, particularly during tough times. Participants explained that business firms are morally obligated to give back to the local society from which they operate and benefit. In this context, hospitality enterprises can help their community by engaging in humanitarian or altruistic activities such as donations. For example, many hospitality enterprises had donated a significant amount of money, cooked meals, or medical supplies including gloves, sanitizers, masks, and anti-bacterial wipes to medical and healthcare facilities. Also, several hotels and resorts had offered paid time off for their employees during the complete lockdown period. Such practices enabled hospitality firms to support their community during hard times as well as enhanced their image and ensured the commitment and loyalty of their employees. Interviewees comments involved:

It is important to give back to the community, especially in times of need. A lot of hotels and resorts provided monetary donations for hospitals or medical centers. These donations benefited both the recipients and the hotels as donations will be deducted from their taxes, so it is a gain for all parties, hospitality firms, and the community (Participant No. 14).

4.4. Further Comments and Suggestions

Interviewees were asked if they have any additional comments or suggestions concerning the resilience of hospitality enterprises to negative events such COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of interviewees' responses to this question resulted in two suggestions. The first suggestion was raised by 9 interviewees who explained that surviving severe negative events or crises requires collaboration among all interested

parties including hotels, resorts, restaurants, official bodies, and media. This collaboration should aim to develop and execute an agenda or action plan at a wide range to confront and tackle any adverse incidents. The second suggested practice inherent in lobbying the official to support and assist the enterprises that were severely affected by providing tax exemption for a certain time, low-interest loans, etc.

5. Conclusion and Implications

Considering the vulnerability of the industry and its turbulent and dynamic business environment in addition to the frequent occurrence of negative events, developing adaptive capabilities of hospitality enterprises has become a crucial method for ensuring business survival, continuity, and even competitiveness. Nevertheless, prior studies indicated a lack of resilience of tourism and hospitality operations to adverse incidents. In the same vein, the current study asserted that the investigated hospitality enterprises were severely impacted by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic for a prolonged period which indicated a limited adaptive resilience of hospitality firms to adverse events such as COVID-19.

Hence, this study further investigated this issue and sought to determine the possible practices and attributes that support the adaptive capacity of hospitality enterprises. To that end, the current study utilized insights of many hospitality executives regarding the adaptive resilience of hospitality operations to negative events, focusing on the recent pandemic of COVID-19. Consistently with prior research, this study concluded eight key practices and attributes that enhance adaptive resilience of hospitality enterprises (Figure 1) including attentive leadership, reconfiguration of resources, diversification of services, developing dynamic operations, encouraging creative solutions, assuming social responsibility, acting proactively, and targeting multiple guest segments.

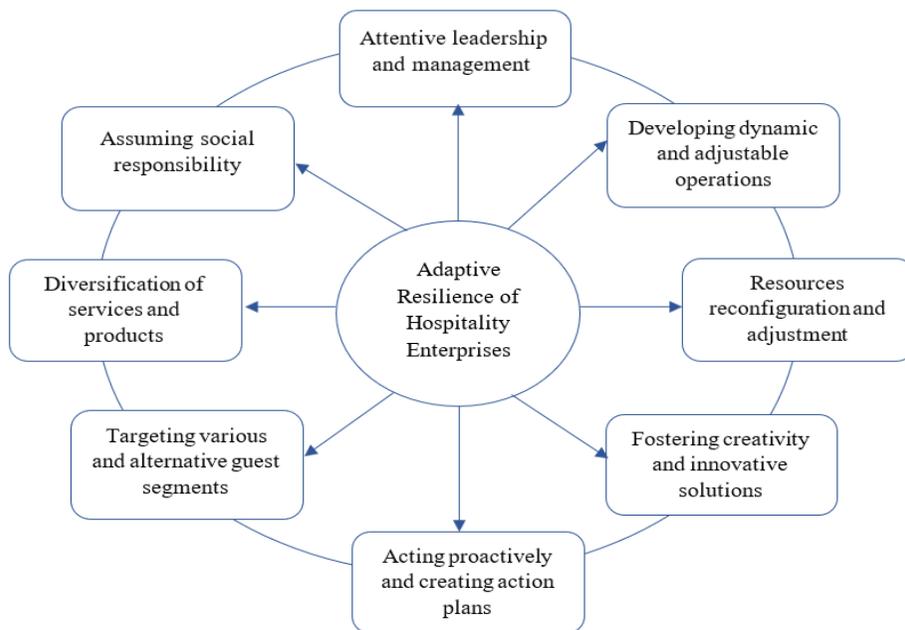


Fig.1. Key practices for developing adaptive resilience of hospitality enterprises

This study encourages executives of hospitality enterprises to implement the suggested practices or identify and undertake adequate practices that help them to adapt and overcome adverse events. Confronting severe and prolonged catastrophic events requires substantial resources and massive efforts that cannot be provided by a single enterprise. Therefore, collaboration among various hospitality enterprises is highly recommended in order to share adequate resources and developed a proper response plan to withstand persistent disruptive incidents such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, official bodies and media are also urged to help hospitality enterprises during a catastrophic time and partake in resolving it through providing marketing, financial or technical support.

6. Limitations and Future Research

The current study has some limitations. Due to accessibility and time constraints, this study adopted a cross-sectional design and collected primary data during specific point of time. However, a longitudinal investigation could have provided detailed operational data and better insights about the adaptive resilience of hospitality enterprises. Thus, future studies can adopt a longitudinal design to examine the adaptability of hospitality operations to adverse events. Future studies can also employ a quantitative approach and survey a larger number of hospitality enterprises to provide different type of findings.

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المرونة التكيفية لمنشآت الضيافة: الممارسات الأساسية المُستفادَة من جائحة مرض الكورونا

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الملخص

تعرض منشآت الضيافة إلى العديد من الأحداث الغير متوقعة التي تؤثر سلبيا في أدائها، مثل تفشي جائحة فيروس الكورونا (كوفيد 19) مؤخرا، وذلك نظرا لأن هذه المنشآت تعمل في بيئة مضطربة ويصعب التنبؤ بمتغيراتها، كما أن هذه المنشآت تقدم خدمات ذات طبيعة حساسة وسريعة التأثير بمتغيرات السوق. ومن ثم، فقد استحوذ مفهوم المرونة التكيفية لمؤسسات الضيافة على اهتمام العديد من الأكاديميين والإداريين على حد سواء. تستند هذه الدراسة على رؤى المدراء التنفيذيين لعدد من منشآت الضيافة والتقارير الرسمية عن مؤشرات الأداء الرئيسية للفنادق في سعيها إلى تقييم المرونة التكيفية المتصورة لمؤسسات الضيافة مع التعامل مع جائحة الكورونا. كما تسعى أيضا إلى تحديد الممارسات الرئيسية المستفادَة من هذا الوباء فيما يتعلق بتحسين المرونة التكيفية لمنشآت الضيافة في مواجهة الأزمات المختلفة. تم إتباع المنهج المختلط في هذه الدراسة وذلك باستخدام كل من البيانات الكمية والنوعية. تم جمع البيانات النوعية باستخدام مقابلات شخصية شبة ممنهجة مع 31 من مدراء منشآت الضيافة وتم تحليل البيانات النوعية باستخدام أسلوب تحليل المحتوى. وعلي صعيد آخر، تم استخدام أسلوب تحليل الوثائق لاستخراج البيانات الكمية من التقارير الرسمية لوزارة السياحة والآثار. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن منشآت الضيافة أظهرت مرونة تكيفية محدودة في التصدي لجائحة الكورونا حيث استغرقت وقتاً طويلاً للتعافي اللطيف من هذه الأزمة. وعلي الجانب الإيجابي، فإن مواجهة تبعات هذا الحدث السليبي الغير المسبوق دفع العديد من منشآت الضيافة إلى القيام بالعديد من الممارسات التكيفية المختلفة للتصدي لهذا الوباء والحفاظ على استمرارية أعمالها بشكل مناسب مثل تنويع الخدمات والخدمات، إعادة تشكيل الموارد المتاحة للجوء إلي الحلول الإبداعية، تنويع شرائح العملاء المستهدفين، القيادة اليقظة، وغيرها. تساهم هذه الدراسة في إثراء الأدبيات المرتبطة بتعزيز وتطوير المرونة التكيفية لمنشآت الضيافة كما تقدم توصيات عملية لمدراء منشآت الضيافة.

معلومات المقالة

الكلمات المفتاحية

المرونة التكيفية؛ جائحة الكورونا (كوفيد 19)؛ الأحداث السلبية؛ منشآت الضيافة.

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