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Studying the Effectiveness of Government Approaches to Incidents and Crisis in the Egyptian Hospitality Sector

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Abstract

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The research investigates the crisis and incident management strategies employed by the Ministry of Tourism to address challenges including food poisoning, harassment, drowning, terrorism, and the impacts of COVID-19. Using a quantitative approach, the study assesses the effectiveness of these procedures and identifies areas for improvement to enhance resilience, aiming to boost Egypt's tourism management practices and create a globally competitive sector. Targeting tourism specialists at various job levels within the Ministry of Tourism with judicial control status in key regions (Cairo, Alexandria, South Sinai, Red Sea, Luxor, and Aswan), the study achieved a 100% response rate from 54 participants via a Google Form in October 2023. Findings showed neutrality regarding the ministry's effectiveness in preventing trained hotel workforce leakage and mixed opinions on the protection of hotel staff rights during COVID-19. However, there was strong agreement on hotels' compliance with COVID-19 precautionary measures and a general consensus that the ministry effectively limits incidents like drowning and food poisoning. Mixed views were noted on the ministry's proactive crisis planning. The research underscores the pivotal role of the Ministry of Tourism and emphasizes the necessity for clear policies aimed at safeguarding hotel staff rights during crises, alongside the provision of ongoing training to ensure compliance with health and safety standards. Additionally, the study advocates for the development of a tailored crisis management plan for the hospitality sector. There is also a pressing need to enhance preventive measures against safety issues, conduct a comprehensive evaluation of past management strategies, and establish a robust crisis management framework. Finally, implementing a strong crisis communication strategy is essential for rebuilding traveler confidence in the wake of declines in demand and occupancy rates.

1. Introduction

The government promotes consumer protection by regulating the tourism environment, minimizing harmful effects, providing development incentives, grants, and loans, and

enhancing tourism flows. It plays a crucial role in regulating economic relations, potentially increasing efficiency by correcting market failures (Nianping, 2014; Shelygov et al., 2021; Hendrawan et al., 2023). The repeated incidents of drowning and food poisoning in Luxor, Sharm el-Sheikh, Marsa Alam, and Hurghada ended with the death of two British tourists, forcing Thomas Cook to evacuate the hotel due to the presence of high levels of *E. coli* bacteria and *Staphylococcus*, according to the statement of the Egyptian public prosecutor in 12-9-2018 (Thomas-Cook, 2018). Another incident where 29 Russian tourists, 12 Estonian nationals, and 4 tourists from the Czech Republic were hospitalized after having dinner in a hotel as per a statement of Egypt's public prosecutor's office (Ranasinghe et al., 2020). It is very crucial for the destination managers to identify and minimize the negatives of these incidents and respond quickly to the undesired incidents (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018).

The aim is to understand the impacts and implications of such unpleasant incidents, which is essential for service providers and destination management to maintain and grow a destination's competitiveness. It is significantly easier to avoid disappointment than to rectify unpleasant events (Lujun et al., 2023)

The hospitality industry in Egypt has faced multifaceted challenges, including incidents of food poisoning, sexual harassment, terrorism, and the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. These incidents raise alerts about the effectiveness of the Ministry of Tourism. (Breisinger et al., 2020; Hassan Abbass, 2021; Polyzos et al., 2023; Touni & Mohamed Hussien, 2021).

The research problem centers around the Ministry of Tourism's effectiveness in addressing and managing incidents facing Egyptian hospitality, trying to see how governments' responses to different crises can enhance recovery and competitiveness in the industry. For instance, how can the industry cope with emergencies like food poisoning, drowning, terrorism, sexual harassment, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, identify the gaps in the government approach and explore potential improvement areas to sustain the growth of this industry. The study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Ministry of Tourism's strategies in workforce retention, crisis preparedness, and incident prevention, especially in light of recent challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic. The study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving the Ministry's role in safeguarding the hospitality sector, enhancing staff rights, and ensuring compliance with safety measures to foster resilience in the face of future crises.

2. Literature review

Due to the tourism dependency on local culture, natural environments, and complex networks of entities, tourism is vulnerable to the impact of a catastrophe (Jiang & Ritchie, 2017). Brown et al. (2018). defined disaster as « A sudden event where the trigger is outside the current control of the affected area. The occurrence disturbs the operation of that region and necessitates the use of additional resources to respond and recover from the event » This terminology is intended to represent a broad meaning that encompasses natural disasters, terrorism, and health-related catastrophes. The crisis as a key event, like fires, floods, or other disasters, leads to losses in the physical assets of the companies and affects their profitability. There is also another meaning of crisis, which is an unanticipated incident that affects the organization's operations and results in a deterioration of the organization's reputation and its financial situation (Coombs, 2018).

Crisis events have been occurring for millennia, however; what has recently changed is the mobility and scale of tourism (Hall, 2010). The notion of crisis has become one of the most

widely accepted in modern societies, but its application to the tourism industry in general and the hotel sector in particular has grown more complicated due to the economic and regulatory crises that the Egyptian hospitality industry is experiencing (El Shaer, 2018) .

The International Organization for Standardization (2018). defines risk management as « coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to risk » while Hubbard (2020). has defined risk management as « the identification, assessment, and prioritization of risks followed by coordinated and economical application of resources to minimize, monitor, and control the probability and impact of unfortunate events ».

2.1. The Impacts of Crisis on Tourism and Hospitality Sector

The hospitality sector has historically shown a high level of sensitivity to changes in the economic environment, with an immediate negative effect on occupancies and average rates even when there is an expected downturn in the business scenario; it has become imperative for hospitality organizations to be aware of the inner and external risks inherent in the business to avoid being negatively impacted (Bharwani & Mathews, 2012).

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the global financial crisis of 2008 significantly impacted the hospitality and tourism sectors. Given that tourism is considered a discretionary consumer good, it tends to be more vulnerable to adverse economic conditions compared to other industries. These shocks have had a profound effect on industry revenues (Korstanje, 2021; Türkay & Atasoy, 2021). Since hotel expenses make up the largest portion of tourist expenditure, hotels feel such an impact on occupancy, rates, and overall hotel performance (Song & Lin, 2010).

2.2. The Importance of Crisis Management

It is becoming increasingly important for hospitality organizations to shift their focus from simply responding and reacting to crises and emergencies to proactively identifying, analyzing, and assessing risks while formulating their business strategies to gain a competitive advantage and develop business resilience (Tiwari, 2024). Today, hospitality and tourism constitute a vital part of the global economy, accounting for more than a third of all global service trade (Bharwani & Mathews, 2012). The organization must have clear strategies to help in the successful management of various crises, which pass amidst these volatile environmental conditions (Sokoly et al., 2024). Crisis management represents the methodology through which the crisis is dealt with in light of the knowledge, awareness, available capabilities, skills, and prevailing management patterns (El Shaer, 2018).

Developing disaster resilience within the hospitality industry may be facilitated by developing an understanding of what constitutes disaster resilience for this industry; building resilience is a lifelong process that needs continual learning, flexibility, adaptability, and assessment (Douglas & Haley, 2024). Disaster resilience enhances a hotel's capacity to endure and recover from disasters, safeguarding both people and property (Brown et al., 2018). Recovery can be enhanced by disaster, allowing hotels to swiftly regain operational status following a disaster (Lo et al., 2023). Resilient systems experience reduced consequences, such as, decreased negative economic effects (Massaro et al., 2017). Disaster resilience refers to a hotel's ability to analyse, innovate, and adapt while overcoming potential disaster-related interruptions and reducing the disaster's negative impact (Hendhana et al., 2024). Furthermore, disasters may be caused by terrorist activities, health crises, and technical disruptions; regardless of the cause of the disruption, the impact of a disaster may frequently be mitigated by human effort before the occurrence (Brown et al., 2018).

2.3. Government and Hospitality sector commitments in Crisis

Governmental involvement is pivotal in tourism development, facilitated through formal ministries and local institutions. The implications of crises, such as terrorist attacks or global financial downturns like the 2008 recession sparked by the US real estate crisis, often transcend national borders, highlighting the interconnectedness of the global economy (Hall, 2010; Smeral, 2009). National economies across the world have been severely impacted, with several lowering or reporting negative economic growth (Papatheodorou *et al.*, 2010; Song & Lin, 2010). Consumers are more inclined to spend on their essential requirements after global crises, such as economic and financial ones, than travel, which is seen as discretionary (Iordache, 2013; Papatheodorou & Arvanitis, 2014). As demand for lodging falls, hotels see fewer guests, as well as a large drop in average spending per guest (Youn & Gu, 2010).

Communities grappling with economic recession experience profound shifts, including decreased disposable income, industry closures, and workforce reduction due to emigration (Stylidis & Terzidou, 2014). Governments must prioritize support for the hotel industry and recognize the significant impact of crises on its stability, as highlighted by Nunkoo (2015). Large shocks to vital economic sectors like hospitality not only harm residents but also strain government finances, as emphasized by Solarin (2016).

Management should work before an incident to anticipate a worst-case scenario that could seriously harm the operations, reputation, financial condition, market share, and brand value to effectively control emergencies and return a tourism-related organization to some degree of normalcy (Alshaer *et al.*, 2019). Tyler and Sadiq (2019). noted that all emergencies are different and emergency managers should tailor their responses to specific emergencies rather than attempting to plan for every possible circumstance

Given the potential far-reaching impacts of crises on destinations, it's imperative for governments to prioritize crisis management at both national and regional levels, integrating it into overall tourism planning, marketing, and management strategies (Kaszás & Keller, 2024). The tendency for tourists to avoid entire regions perceived as dangerous, opting instead for safer, remote destinations (Satar *et al.*, 2023), underscores the need for effective crisis containment measures. Furthermore, successful emergency management necessitates a long-term, methodical strategy to limit the scope and magnitude of possible losses (Jarzabkowski *et al.*, 2023).

2.4. Risk types in Hospitality Industry

Both Bharwani and Mathews (2012). listed several threats to the hospitality industry and categorized them into four risk categories: operational, strategic, external, commercial and financial.

- Operational, which includes health and safety, recruiting and retention, employee relations, fraud and integrity, IT and communication security, operational expenses, supply chain continuity, car liability, fire, and exploitation, property and asset protection, maintenance, and restoration of the property. (Hand, 2009).
- Strategic, which includes new project feasibility, reputational risks, revenue contribution mix in the company portfolio, changing client preferences and demand, seasonality of the business, management contracts and joint ventures, and external reservation channels. (Enz, 2010).
- External like terrorism, pandemics, force majeure including natural disasters, political risks, and economic cycles. (Nhamo *et al.*, 2020).

- Commercial and financial, like compliance with regulations and legislation, legal risks, credit default risks, currency risk, interest and financing costs, compliance with environmental law, taxation, property title ownership, and immovable liquidity (Vij, 2019).

According to Rosselló *et al.* (2020). possible hospitality industry emergencies reasons include Climate change-induced reasons such as « fire, flood, hurricane, blizzard, tidal wave, and earthquake, On-site gang violence, Industrial accident at the hotel construction site, Leak of gas, chemical, or other toxic substance, murder, rape, or other violent crime against guests or the staff, E.coli or other bacterial infection caused by improper sanitation procedures, Embezzlement of organization funds by the employee, auditor, or another party, Publicized charge of sexual harassment against a property manager or executive, Arrest of the employee for drug-dealing or other illegal on-site activity, Sabotage of computer or proprietary data, Major robbery, either of guests or management, and Terrorist or war-related activity, including bombing and sniper fire (Barton, 2008).

2.5. Tourism and Hospitality before COVID- 19

Tourism is still a very vulnerable industry, susceptible to both internal and external factors such as economic and social crises, natural catastrophes, epidemics, as well as national and international conflicts. However, terrorism is the most serious concern in the twenty-first century (Fletcher *et al.*, 2017). Terrorist attacks are a source of perceived hazards of injury, death, and loss of property, as well as a drop in tourist confidence in travel (Dory, 2021). Hotels are becoming increasingly vulnerable to terrorist attacks throughout the world since they are seen as « soft targets » (Wernick & Von Glinow, 2012). and symbols of Western prosperity and power, attracting foreign diplomats, business travelers, tourists, and the local elite. Hence, targeting hotels might result in a large number of deaths, significant fear, and a lot of media attention (Korstanje, 2015).

In April 1996, the al-Jihad terrorist organization assaulted and killed 16 Greek visitors in front of an Egyptian hotel; in late 1997, militants assaulted and killed another 58 international visitors at the 4,000-year-old Temple of Hatshepsut in Luxor. The terrorist alert resulted in fewer arrivals, as well as losses in accommodation, catering, and transportation facilities (Varani & Bernardini, 2018). On September 11, 2001, the terrorist attack on the New York World Trade Center awakened governments to the risk of international crime and its connection to travel (Foroughi & Mirzaei, 2017). Egypt experienced two suicide attacks in and near Taba on October 7, 2004, which coincided with the penultimate weekend of the main season of Israeli vacations (Karp *et al.*, 2007). The terrorist incidents that happened in Egypt in 2015, when a Russian Airbus crashed in the Sinai Peninsula, recognized as an ISIL assault, deterred visitors and tour operators from choosing Egypt as a tourism destination (Barabash *et al.*, 2018).

Tourism and global climate change, according to Khatib (2023), are two key influences on existing and developing disease trends. As a result of its cross-border nature, tourism introduces new diseases to global populations (Suk *et al.*, 2014). Following the SARS pandemic, the globe was hit by a new outbreak of avian flu (H5N1 virus). However, the WHO did not issue any travel advice at the time (Bonilla-Aldana *et al.*, 2020).

The global economy collapsed in 2008, affecting Egypt; however, the recession had little influence on the tourism sector, and growth returned decisively in 2010. The events of 2011, however, caused considerable damage to the tourism industry (Varani & Bernardini, 2018).

The government failed to effectively manage these crises and reduce their negative effects. Marketing campaigns, financial and technical support for specific hotels, provision of adequate security services, promotion of domestic travel, participation in international travel expos, and hosting of international events were some of the crisis management tactics used (Mohammad, 2016).

Despite the importance of Egypt's tourism and hospitality industry, it operates in a complex environment due to the country's rapid economic and social changes (El Shaer, 2018). There is a need for strategies to manage these crises to meet the needs of the Egyptian hospitality industry's internal and external environments. Egypt needs to develop crisis management practices as an approach not only to respond to crises when they occur but also to prevent and avoid crises by integrating crisis management into the enterprise's strategic planning, as well as using more preventive and handling strategies (Abulnour, 2014). Effective crisis management plans and organized practices are very important to overcome the hazards and return to normal (Mahmoud *et al.*, 2020). According to Salem *et al.* (2022), the majority of hotels were not very pleased with the assistance that the governmental agencies had given them to help them stay in business. They were particularly dissatisfied with the government's attempts to boost domestic tourism as well as its financial and technical support. Additionally, there were no incentives such as tax exemptions, cancellation of past-due obligations, lower loan interest rates, or insurance

2.6. Tourism and Hospitality After COVID-19

COVID-19 has profoundly impacted the globe, affecting everyone and every industry, including international travel, tourism demand, and the hotel sector (Chang *et al.*, 2020). According to Tom Friedman, a New York Times writer, the current generation will refer to BC and AC as Before Corona and After Corona (Nepal, 2020). To mitigate the spread of the virus, governments have imposed lockdowns, severely restricted international travel, and banned all foreign visitors due to confirmed COVID-19 cases. Other measures include suspending all commercial international flights (Guadagno, 2020). enforcing a 14-day quarantine for all travelers, and halting all visa procedures. According to the UNWTO, 93 percent of European destinations have completely closed their borders to international tourism. In other regions, the numbers are 82 percent in America, 77 percent in Asia and the Pacific, 70 percent in the Middle East, and 60 percent in Africa. Many airlines have reduced capacity to comply with new social distancing norms, leading to a sharp decrease in the number of travelers (Haryanto, 2020).

2.7. The Management of the Egyptian Government for COVID-19

After the announcement of the first case of COVID-19 in Egypt, the government began multidisciplinary national coordination between various ministries. In February, they determined that it was not necessary to close airports, schools, or universities at that time. Instead, Egypt began screening all visitors and tracking them upon arrival. When COVID-19 cases were discovered on a cruise ship in Luxor, the authorities forbade the passengers and crew from leaving the ship and dispatched a medical team to attend to the patients. By the middle of March 2020, with 100 positive cases identified, the government implemented more stringent measures (Medhat & El Kassas, 2020). Subsequently, the Prime Minister issued decree number 718 for the year 2020, suspending all international flights beginning on Thursday, March 19, 2020, as a precautionary measure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, evacuation flights for tourists were allowed to take place. Meanwhile, the governors of the tourist governorates issued decrees to impose a 14-day quarantine for

workers in the tourism sectors based on directives from the Ministry of Health, in addition to suspending domestic tourism (Ministry of Health, 2020).

Further measures included decree number 724, which suspended all cinema and theatre shows, followed by decree number 739, which organized the closing times for stores, shopping arcades, and institutions, and decree number 740, which organized the closing times for sports clubs. Additionally, the Prime Minister enforced a curfew from 19:00 to 06:00 throughout the country through decree 768 for the year 2020, suspended traffic, and imposed the closure of all cafes, casinos, nightclubs, restaurants, recreational facilities, sports clubs, and schools (Prime Minister, 2020).

Addressing the concerns of the tourism labor force, the Minister of Tourism warned the tourism sector against any redundancy plans. He announced the activation of a hotline to receive opinions, complaints, and inquiries from workers in the sector through the telephone number 19654. Due to labor complaints, the minister canceled the licenses of four hotels that did not adhere to the instructions. Additionally, the government provided financial incentives to the tourism industry to retain labor (Salem et al., 2021). In a related effort, the government released a 50 billion loan initiative to support the tourism sector in four categories (Haidar, 2021).

- Financing the salaries and wages of workers in the tourism sector for three months, where they allocated a 3-billion-pound slide from the Referral and Renewal Initiative for hotels and tourism transport fleets at a 5% rate of return (calculated on a decreasing basis), 85% of loans granted to pay workers' salaries and wages, and 15% to finance basic maintenance and operating expenses (Central Bank of Egypt, 2020).
- The initiative of irregular clients of legal persons working in the tourism sector Applicable to companies operating in the tourism sector whose debts amount to 10 million EGP or more If the customer, during the initiative period and until 31 December 2020, makes a cash payment of 50% or more of the debt balance, then they will have deletion from blocklists, suspension of legal issues in courts, and liberating all guarantees related to that debt (Central Bank of Egypt, 2020).
- Replace and renew hotels and tourism transportation fleets where the amount allocated has increased to be 50 billion pounds instead of 5 billion pounds at a return rate of 8% (calculated on a declining basis) for a period of a minimum of 15 years plus granting credit facilities to be paid within a maximum period of two years, in addition to a grace period of no more than 6 months, starting from the date of the grant, during which capitalization of the returns is made, in order to pay the salaries, wages, and other obligations for the supplier's organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2022).
- Postpone the entitlements of companies operating in the tourism sector. The extension of the period of the initiative to support the tourism sector for an additional year that ends until the end of December 2020, during which any requests to postpone bank benefits for a period of a maximum period of 3 years are accepted, so that all the entitlements are deported (Salem et al., 2022).

Since Egypt is looking forward to the safe resume of inbound tourism. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, in coordination with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the Ministry of Health and Population, and the Egyptian Tourism Federation has put a guide In 2020, June 21 for outlining the hygiene safety protocols in hospitality establishments, tourism activities, archaeological sites, museums, airports, and onboard Egyptian aircraft After the abrupt halt

of international tourism and travel industry, the government has set a bundle of hygiene Safety regulations in compliance with the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO), and a « hygiene safety certificate » has been approved as a pre-requisite for hospitality establishments, tourism activities, archaeological sites, and museums to resume their operations and receive visitors (Ministry of Tourism,2020).

All hospitality facilities were preceded by full disinfection for hotels, restaurants, archaeological sites, and museums, conducting necessary training and awareness programs for employees and workers in the tourism sector. On May 15, 2020, Egypt started to gradually reopen hotels and resorts that have obtained the « Hygiene Safety Certificate », to receive domestic tourism, with a maximum occupancy rate of 25%. The occupancy rate was then increased to 50% on June 1, 2020. In cooperation with the tourism chambers and international consulting firms specializing in the field of hygiene, the ministry of tourism conducts regular inspections of certified hospitality establishments to ensure efficient implementation of the set regulations. Starting July 1, 2020, Egypt has welcomed inbound tourism in the certified hotels located in coastal cities with a maximum occupancy of 50%. Those three areas have had an excellent epidemiological result, in addition to having equipped hospitals. It is worth mentioning that travel between the three governorates and other governorates in Egypt was not allowed (Prime Minister & Ministry of Tourism, 2020). Additionally, the government has implemented entry fees and visa discounts and launched an online campaign called « Experience Egypt from Home ». (Salem *et al.*, 2022). The government has set an excellent example in managing COVID-19 and assisting its hospitality industry through initiatives and practices that include delaying payments, withdrawing benefits or fines, reducing interest rates, offering financial assistance, giving hotels instructions on how to sterilize and disinfect their facilities, precautionary and preventive practices trainings, and starting an online marketing campaign on social media to support the hospitality and tourism industries (El-Khishin, 2020). According to the World Bank (2021), Egypt's macroeconomic environment has shown resilience in the face of the COVID-19 shock, yet longstanding challenges persist. Government support and cooperation with businesses are essential to ensuring that businesses can survive and remain afloat. (Salem *et al.*, 2022).

3. Methodology

This study employs a quantitative methodology, which encompasses a diverse array of approaches and techniques for the statistical transformation and analysis of numerical data (Saldaña, 2018).

3.1. Questionnaire Layout

To achieve the research goal, a questionnaire was designed using the Likert scale. The Likert scale is an effective measurement tool widely applied to gauge opinions and facts, using different phrases to represent the five levels in the scale. This design was chosen to be compatible with the nature of the research and to accurately capture the respondents' attitudes and perceptions. The questionnaire includes 2 parts: the first one is demographic covering the age, job grade, education qualification, academics, and years of experience. The second part related to the respondents' insights towards the ministry of tourism role and the effectiveness of its approaches to incidents and crisis management in the Egyptian hospitality sector.

3.2. Population and Sample

The questionnaire targeted the ministry of tourism hotel inspectors at various levels of expertise, including first, second, and third categories, as well as general managers who are

holding judicial control status in Cairo, Alexandria, South Sinai, the Red Sea, Luxor, and Aswan. Those are directly involved in supervising the hospitality sector, making their insights particularly relevant to the study. In total, the population consisted of 54 hotel inspectors, as reported by the Ministry of Tourism (2023). The study achieved a complete response rate of 100%, resulting in a sample size of 54. This comprehensive survey included all members of the targeted population, ensuring that the insights gathered are representative of the entire community involved in supervising the hospitality sector. The research was conducted from October 2023 till November 2023.

3.3. Data Collection

Data collection was facilitated through the use of Google Forms. The questionnaire was in English and designed to include various factors connected to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities oversight of the hospitality industry. The link to the Google Form was shared with the targeted participants, ensuring ease of access and convenience in responding. This method allowed for efficient collection and management of the data within a short time frame. The research was conducted from October 2023 to November 2023 using Google Forms.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was subjected to statistical analysis to derive meaningful insights, various techniques were employed to transform and analyze the numerical data obtained from the Likert scale responses, The frequencies and percentages were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample, while means and standard deviations were applied for the descriptive analysis of the study variables. These methods enabled the researcher to identify patterns and trends within the data, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of government approaches to incidents and crises in the Egyptian hospitality sector.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1. The sample characteristics

Table 1: The Sample characteristics

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percent	Rank
Age	Below 30 Years	2	3.7%	4
	From 30 to 40 Years	28	51.9%	1
	From 40 to 50 years	20	37%	2
	Above 50 years	4	7.4%	3
	Total	54	100%	--
Job grade	Third grade	3	5.6%	3
	Second grade	30	55.6%	1
	First grade	20	37%	2
	General Manager	1	1.9%	4
	Total	54	100%	--
Education qualification	Bachelor	34	63%	1
	Master	16	29.6%	2
	PHD	4	7.4%	3
	Total	54	100%	--
Academic major in the	Yes	35	64.8%	1

field of tourism and hospitality	No	19	35.02%	2
	Total	54	100%	--
Years of Experience	5 Years	4	7.4%	1
	10 years	12	22.2%	3
	15 years	14	25.9%	2
	20 Years	24	44.4%	1
	Total	54	100%	--

The age group of respondents is mainly aged between 30 and 40 years, with 51.9% of the sample consisting of 28 respondents. The age group aged 40 to 50 years is the second most prevalent category, comprising 37.0% of the sample with 20 respondents. The age group above 50 years makes up 7.4% of the sample, with 4 respondents. This indicates that most of the population is between the ages of 30 and 40, with a smaller proportion of the population being above 50 years old. The job grade distribution showed that the third-grade respondents represent 5.6% of the total sample, for a total of 3 respondents. It is the lowest-ranked group among the job grades in the ministry of tourism, while the second grade is the largest job grade category, with 55.6% of respondents with a total of 30, suggesting that a significant majority of the sample holds positions at the second-grade level, while first grade respondents account for 37.0% of the sample with a total of 20 respondents, making it the second most prevalent category. However, the general manager job grade is the smallest job grade in the sample, with 1.9% of individuals with a total of 1, indicating that a smaller proportion of the study population holds the highest-ranking position of general manager. The distribution of the ministry of tourism respondents based on their education level showed that the respondents with bachelor's degrees represent 63.0% of the total sample, demonstrating a significant majority of individuals in the sample have a bachelor's degree as their highest educational level. However, respondents with a master's degree are the second most common category, with 29.6% of the respondents, suggesting that a considerable portion of the respondents holds a master's degree. While the smallest category in the sample was Ph.D. with 7.4% of respondents, this shows that a smaller proportion of the population holds a Ph.D. as their highest educational qualification. The provided data of whether the academic major of the respondents is in the field of tourism and hospitality or not among the sample of respondents indicated that 64.8% of the respondents have an academic major in the field of tourism and hospitality, representing a significant majority of the respondents, while 35.02% of respondents do not have an academic major in the field of tourism and hospitality and 4.4% of individuals, suggesting that a significant majority of the population has two decades of experience.

4.2. The Results

Table 2: Assessment for the ministry of tourism role

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Perception of Ministry of Tourism efforts to retain hotels workforce								
The ministry of tourism made a significant effort to prevent the	F	8	8	22	16	0	2.85	1.017

leakage of trained hotel workforce to other sectors	%	14.8	14.8	40.7	29.6	0.0		
2. Evaluation of Ministry of Tourism's protection of hotels Staff rights during COVID-19 pandemic								
The ministry of tourism protected the rights of all hotels staff during the COVID-19 Pandemic	F	6	12	17	15	4	2.98	1.124
	%	11.1	22.2	31.5	27.8	7.4		
3. Assessment of hotels compliance with COVID-19 precautionary measures								
The hotels complied with the precautionary measures to combat the coronavirus	F	0	0	6	32	16	4.19	0.617
	%	0.0	0.0	11.1	59.3	29.6		
4. Evaluation of the Ministry of Tourism's crisis preparedness plan								
The ministry of tourism has a proactive plan to deal with potential crises that the hospitality industry may face	F	10	6	26	12		2.74	1.013
	%	18.5	11.1	48.1	22.2			
5. Assessment of Ministry of Tourism measures for preventing incidents in hospitality sector								
The ministry takes all necessary measures to prevent drowning incidents, food poisoning, and harassment	F	2	8	12	26	6	3.48	1.005
	%	3.7	14.8	22.2	48.1	11.1		
6. Evaluation of ministry of Tourism's management in the hospitality sector during COVID-19 pandemic								
The Ministry of Tourism's management to the hospitality sector during COVID-19 pandemic was ideal	F	0	2	21	25	6	3.65	0.731
	%	0.0	3.7	38.9	46.3	11.1		
7. Impacts of crisis and accidents on the hospitality industry								
Crisis and accidents have a negative impact on hospitality industry	F	0	0	4	20	30	4.48	0.637
	%	0.0	0.0	7.4	37.0	55.6		
8. Impacts of accidents or Crises on hotels demand and occupancy rates								
The demand for hotels and the occupancy rates are sharply declining after the occurrence of an accident or crisis in a tourism destination	F	0	0	4	22	28	4.44	0.634
	%	1.9	1.9	3.7	37.0	55.6		

The perception of respondents towards the ministry of tourism efforts to prevent the leakage of trained hotel workforce to other sectors has a mean score of 2.85, which falls

below the midpoint of the scale, suggesting that, on average, respondents tend to be in the «neutral» range. This indicates that respondents are divided in their perception of the ministry's efforts to retain a trained hotel workforce, with neither strong agreement nor strong disagreement prevailing. The standard deviation of 1.017 implies that there is notable variation in respondents' opinions on this issue, with a wide spread of responses. The distribution of responses indicates that a substantial proportion of respondents, 40.7%, remain neutral on this issue, while 29.6% agree with the statement. Additionally, 14.8% both disagree and strongly disagree, and no respondents strongly agree with the statement. These results collectively indicate a mixed perception among respondents regarding the ministry's efforts to prevent the leakage of trained hotel workforce to other sectors. Radwan (2017). emphasized the importance of government support in assisting hotels during economic challenges, particularly in managing the workforce. Additionally, (Salem et al., 2022). highlighted the significance of government initiatives and practices focused on the workforce and training .

The insights of respondents towards the ministry of tourism protection to the rights of all hotel staff during the COVID-19 pandemic have a mean score of 2.98, slightly below the midpoint of the scale, suggesting that, on average, respondents tend to be in the neutral range. Which indicates that respondents are divided in their perception of whether the ministry adequately protected the rights of hotel workers during the COVID-19 crisis. The standard deviation of 1.124 implies that there is a notable variation in respondents' opinions on this issue with a wide spread of responses. The distribution of responses indicates that a significant proportion of respondents, 31.5%, remain neutral on this issue, while 27.8% agree with the statement. Additionally, 22.2% disagree and 11.1% strongly disagree, with 7.4% strongly agreeing. Bruhn et al. (2023). argue that the government's actions and policies have a significant impact on labor markets, firm recovery, and economic activity. During the crisis, it is essential for the government to identify gaps in the readiness respond effectively to the challenges faced by the labor force (Mustari et al., 2021). While Orłowski (2021). emphasized the need for comprehensive policy responses to address the economic repercussions Furthermore, the crisis has necessitated a restructuring and reform of the government's framework to address the adverse situation, particularly in the context of labor and livelihood (Singh, 2021). Additionally, the government's support for the hospitality industry during the crisis is crucial for sustaining economic activities and employment (Ibraheem Ahmad & A Abdelsalam, 2021; Hu et al., 2021). El-Khishin (2020). highlighted that the Egyptian government provides financial incentives to retain employees in the hospitality and tourism industry. These findings suggest the importance of further exploring the specific measures and policies implemented by the ministry during the COVID-19 crisis to protect the rights of hotel workers. Understanding the factors that influence perceptions of the ministry's actions during a crisis is essential for effective crisis management and labor protection in the tourism and hospitality industry. Further research could delve into the reasons behind the divided perceptions and assess the impact of these actions on hotel workers.

The insights of respondents towards hotels compilation with the precautionary measures to combat the coronavirus have a mean score of 4.19, which is notably above the midpoint of the scale, indicates that, on average, respondents tend to strongly agree. This suggests that respondents generally believe that hotels have been effective in complying with precautionary measures to combat the coronavirus. The low standard deviation of 0.617 implies that there is relatively little variation in respondents' opinions on this issue, with

responses concentrated around the «agree» and «strongly agree» categories. The distribution of responses indicates that the majority of respondents, 59.3%, strongly agree with the statement, while 29.6% agree. Additionally, 11.1% remain neutral on this issue, and no respondents expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. These results collectively indicate a positive perception among respondents regarding hotels' compliance with precautionary measures to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Selim *et al.* (2020). indicated that during COVID-19, hotels implemented layoff practices, closures, and focused on safety and hygiene. Ministries of tourism and health decided that it is mandatory for hotels to follow health and safety practices (Salem *et al.*, 2022).

The insights of respondents towards the ministry of tourism proactive plan to deal with potential crises that the hospitality industry has a mean score of 2.74, slightly below the midpoint of the scale, suggests that, on average, respondents tend to be in the neutral range. This indicates that respondents are divided in their perception of whether the ministry has a proactive plan to deal with potential crises in the hospitality industry. The standard deviation of 1.013 implies that there is a notable variation in respondents' opinions on this issue, with a wide spread of responses. The distribution of responses indicates that a significant proportion of respondents, 48.1%, remain neutral on this issue while 22.2% agree with the statement. Additionally, 18.5% strongly disagree, and 11.1% disagree. Wang (2022). indicated that the proactive approach is essential for crisis preparedness, as it allows for the identification of key precursors of crises, enabling timely intervention to mitigate their impact. These results collectively indicate a mixed perception among respondents regarding the Ministry's proactive planning for potential crises in the hospitality industry. This highlights the need for further investigation into the specific crisis management plans and strategies employed by the Ministry of Tourism, as well as an exploration of the factors influencing respondents' divided perceptions. Understanding the efficacy of crisis planning in the hospitality industry is crucial for enhancing preparedness and resilience in the face of unexpected events.

The insights of respondents towards the ministry of tourism measures to prevent drowning incidents, food poisoning, and harassment have a mean score of 3.48, slightly above the midpoint of the scale, suggesting that, on average, respondents tend to agree with the statement. This indicates that respondents generally believe that the Ministry of Tourism is taking necessary measures to prevent incidents such as drowning, food poisoning, and harassment. The standard deviation of 1.005 implies that there is some variation in respondents' opinions on this issue, with responses spanning a range of agreement levels. The distribution of responses indicates that a significant proportion of respondents, 48.1%, agree with the statement, while 11.1% strongly agree. Additionally, 22.2% remain neutral on this issue, and 14.8% express disagreement or strong disagreement. Wilks (2017). indicated that the lack of appropriate supervision in tourism settings, particularly in aquatic environments, is a persistent risk factor for drowning incidents. Gaida and Gaida (2016). highlighted the need for preventive measures to address drowning incidents in specific age groups, In the context of preventing harassment, perceived organizational support is considered important in preventing undesirable incidents such as sexual harassment (Demirdelen Alrawadieh & Alrawadieh, 2022). The tourism industry needs to take the results of sexual harassment research seriously and seek solutions to stop possible harm (Cheung *et al.*, 2018). These findings point to the importance of public confidence in the Ministry's commitment to safety and security within the hospitality industry. Further research could explore the specific measures and initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Tourism to address these concerns and evaluate their effectiveness.

The insights of respondents towards the Ministry of Tourism's management of the hospitality sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, whether it was ideal, has a mean score of 3.65, which is above the midpoint of the scale, indicates that, on average, respondents tend to agree with the statement, suggesting a generally positive perception of the Ministry's management of the hospitality sector during the pandemic. The standard deviation of 0.731 is relatively low, indicating a certain degree of agreement and consistency among respondents. This suggests that the responses are less varied and that there is a degree of consensus in their perceptions. The majority of respondents, 46.3%, agree with the statement, and 11.1% strongly agree, reflecting an overall positive view of the Ministry's management during the pandemic. Also, 38.9% of respondents remain neutral, while only 3.7% express disagreement, and none strongly disagree. Ammar *et al.* (2022). indicated that although Egypt has adopted some strategies and policies necessary to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism and hospitality sector, which had a positive impact in decreasing the effects of the crisis, the followed policies and strategies did not fully achieve the desired goals.

The insights of respondents towards the negative impacts of crises and accidents on the hospitality industry indicate that the majority of respondents in this survey 55.6% Strongly agree that crises and accidents have a negative impact on the hospitality industry, while 37.0% of respondents agree, this indicates a significant consensus among the participants about the negative effect of such events on the industry, it's worth noting that 7.4% of respondents chose the neutral option, indicating that a small portion of the participants neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The mean score is 4.48, which is relatively high on a scale that suggests, on average, respondents lean towards agreeing with the statement, reinforcing the idea that most participants believe crises and accidents negatively impact the hospitality industry. The standard deviation of 0.637 is relatively low. A low standard deviation indicates that the responses are clustered closely around the mean, suggesting a high level of agreement among the respondents. According to El Atiek and Goutte (2023). The Egyptian hospitality industry has indeed faced significant challenges due to various crises and accidents, the Russian airplane crash in 2015 and the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 have had a notable impact on the industry's performance and strategies. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has also severely affected the hospitality industry (Rodríguez-Antón & Alonso-Almeida, 2020). In summary, the data indicates a strong consensus among the respondents that crises and accidents have a negative impact on the hospitality industry. The low standard deviation suggests that this consensus is relatively consistent across the sample .

The insights of respondents towards the sharp decline in demand and the occupancy rates after the occurrence of an accident or crisis in the tourism destination indicate that the majority of respondents, 54.0%, strongly agree. Additionally, 40.7% of respondents agree with the statement. This indicates a strong consensus among participants regarding the negative impact of accidents or crises on the hospitality industry in a tourism destination, while a small portion 7.4% of respondents selected the neutral option, implying that a minority of participants neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The mean score of 4.44 is quite high, indicating that, on average, participants are leaning towards agreement with the statement. This suggests that most respondents believe that accidents or crises have a detrimental effect on hotel demand and occupancy rates. The standard deviation of 0.634 is relatively low, suggesting that the responses are tightly clustered around the mean. This indicates a high level of agreement among the participants. According to Lai and Wong (2020), this decline is evident in the reduction of hotel room rates and occupancy percentages, as observed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact of crises on tourism is

substantial, resulting in reduced travel and hotel occupancy rates (Tothova et al., 2022). Previous crises, such as the financial crisis, have also similar effects on tourism demand, indicating a recurring pattern (Yacoub & ElHajjar, 2021).

5. Conclusion and Implications

The study's findings demonstrate the respondents' complex perspectives on the Ministry of Tourism's policies and its handling of incidents, crises, and issues in the Egyptian hospitality industry. Initially, the respondents have differing opinions regarding the Ministry's endeavors to prevent the migration of skilled hotel workers to other industries. They emphasize the necessity of assessing the precise measures implemented by the Ministry to tackle this problem. Furthermore, the Ministry's impartial stance on the safeguarding of hotel staff rights within the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates a thorough examination of the efficacy of the measures implemented by the Ministry during times of emergency. Respondents exhibit a robust conviction in hotels' adherence to cautious measures in combating the coronavirus. This favorable opinion is consistent with literature that highlights the significance of safety and sanitary measures during emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. However, worrisome is the lack of enthusiasm towards the Ministry's proactive measures in planning for potential disasters in the hospitality business. This underlines the importance for a detailed study of the Ministry's crisis management plans and tactics, as well as an understanding of the factors contributing to respondents' split viewpoints. Respondents concur that the Ministry is implementing essential efforts to mitigate events such as drowning, food poisoning, and harassment. Nevertheless, the study indicates the relevance of public confidence in the Ministry's commitment to safety, suggesting a need for further investigation into particular policies and efforts implemented to address safety issues.

The positive opinion of the Ministry's management of the hotel sector during the COVID-19 pandemic is remarkable. Finally, there is a solid consensus among respondents regarding the detrimental impact of crises and accidents on the hospitality industry, resulting to declines in demand for hotels and occupancy rates. This coincides with literature indicating the major effects of numerous crises, underscoring the significance of comprehensive crisis management systems.

6. Recommendation

- The Ministry of Tourism should develop and implement clear, transparent policies that specifically address the protection of hotel staff rights during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. This would not only help clarify the ministry's actions and intentions but also foster greater trust and confidence among industry stakeholders regarding the government's commitment to safeguarding workers' rights.
- The Ministry of Tourism should continue to strengthen and promote compliance with health and safety protocols in hotels by providing ongoing training and resources for staff with the cooperation of the Egyptian hotel association. This will not only maintain the positive perception of hotels' adherence but also ensure that these standards are consistently upheld, fostering greater guest confidence in the hospitality sector.
- The Ministry of Tourism should develop and communicate a comprehensive and transparent crisis management plan specifically tailored for the hospitality industry. This plan should include clear strategies for various potential crises, engage stakeholders in its formulation, and provide regular updates and training to industry

professionals. By doing so, the ministry can enhance confidence in its proactive measures and improve overall preparedness and resilience in the sector.

- The Ministry of Tourism should enhance and expand its preventive measures against drowning incidents, food poisoning, and harassment by implementing targeted awareness campaigns and training programs. These initiatives should focus on educating both staff and the public about safety protocols and preventive practices. By fostering a culture of safety and accountability, the ministry can further increase public confidence in its commitment to protecting tourists and ensuring a safe environment within the hospitality industry.
- The Ministry of Tourism should conduct a comprehensive evaluation of its management strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic to identify strengths and areas for improvement. This evaluation should include feedback from industry stakeholders, allowing the ministry to refine its approach and develop more effective policies for future crises .
- The Ministry of Tourism should prioritize the development of a comprehensive crisis management framework specifically tailored for the hospitality industry. This framework should include proactive strategies for risk assessment, response planning, and recovery protocols to mitigate the negative impacts of crises and accidents.
- The Ministry of Tourism should develop and implement a robust crisis communication strategy to address and mitigate the decline in demand and occupancy rates following accidents or crises. This strategy should focus on quickly disseminating accurate information, showcasing recovery efforts, and emphasizing safety measures to restore traveler confidence.

7. Limitation and Future Research

The research was conducted in October 2023, targeting the tourism specialists at various job levels of the Ministry of Tourism. This may be a limitation to the time the research took place, which captures only a snapshot of perceptions held during any given period, not allowing for possible fluctuations or longer-term changes within the hospitality sector due to different strategies for each minister. Complexity in the hospitality industry is its nature and very much influenced by a series of external variables, such as changes in economic conditions, political stability, environmental conditions, and global health crises that crucially affect performance and resilience.

It will be better to proceed with longitudinal research that collects data over a few or several time points to observe changes and trends of response. Furthermore, best practices from other countries can enhance the research. Further research could also try to indicate specific measures and steps undertaken by the Ministry of Tourism as a reaction to crises and challenges, as well as the level of public trust in the Ministry's devotion to aiding the revival of the hospitality industry. In order to be able to develop resilient and adaptive strategies in the face of future challenges.

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دراسة فعالية استراتيجيات الحكومة في مواجهة الحوادث والأزمات في قطاع الضيافة المصري

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معلومات المقالة	المخلص
<p>الكلمات المفتاحية</p> <p>جائحة كورونا؛ التسمم الغذائي؛ وزارة السياحة.</p> <p>(JAAUTH) المجلد ٢٧، العدد ١، (٢٠٢٤)، ص ٢٣٣-٢٥٥.</p>	<p>يحقق البحث في استراتيجيات إدارة الأزمات والحوادث التي تنفذها وزارة السياحة لمواجهة التحديات في قطاع الضيافة، بما في ذلك التسمم الغذائي، والتحرش، وحوادث الغرق، والإرهاب، وتأثيرات جائحة كوفيد-١٩. باستخدام نهج كمي، يقيم البحث فعالية هذه الإجراءات ويحدد المجالات التي تحتاج إلى تحسين لتعزيز القدرة على مواجهة الأزمات المستقبلية، بهدف تعزيز ممارسات إدارة السياحة في مصر وخلق قطاع ضيافة مستدام ومنافس عالمياً. استهدف البحث المتخصصين بمختلف المستويات الوظيفية داخل وزارة السياحة ممن يتمتعون بصفة الضبط القضائي في المناطق الرئيسية (القاهرة، الإسكندرية، جنوب سيناء، البحر الأحمر، الأقصر، وأسوان). وحقق البحث نسبة استجابة بلغت ١٠٠٪ من ٥٤ مشاركاً عبر استبيان جوجل في أكتوبر ٢٠٢٣. أظهرت النتائج حيادية فيما يتعلق بفعالية الوزارة في منع تسرب القوى العاملة المدربة في الفنادق وآراء متباينة حول حماية حقوق موظفي الفنادق خلال جائحة كوفيد-١٩. ومع ذلك، كان هناك اتفاق قوي على التزام الفنادق بإجراءات الوقاية من كوفيد-١٩ وتوافق عام على أن الوزارة تمنع بفعالية الحوادث مثل الغرق والتسمم الغذائي. وأظهرت الآراء تبايناً حول تخطيط الوزارة الاستباقي للأزمات. يؤكد البحث على الدور المحوري لوزارة السياحة وبيبرز ضرورة وجود سياسات واضحة تهدف إلى حماية حقوق موظفي الفنادق خلال الأزمات، بالإضافة إلى توفير تدريب مستمر لضمان الامتثال لمعايير الصحة والسلامة. علاوة على ذلك، تدعو الدراسة إلى تطوير خطة إدارة أزمات مخصصة لقطاع الضيافة. هناك أيضاً حاجة ملحة لتعزيز التدابير الوقائية ضد مشكلات السلامة، وإجراء تقييم شامل لاستراتيجيات الإدارة السابقة للأزمات، وتأسيس إطار عمل قوي لإدارة الأزمات. أخيراً، يعد تنفيذ استراتيجية قوية للتواصل في أوقات الأزمات أمراً ضرورياً لإعادة بناء ثقة المسافرين في ظل انخفاض الطلب ومعدلات الإشغال.</p>