

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Hotel Industry and How Owners-Managers are Preparing for a Post COVID-19 Economy in Morocco

Manal Haddar

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Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

Prof. Dr. Ali Hakan Ulusoy
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in Tourism Management

Prof. Dr. Hasan Kılıç
Dean, Faculty of Tourism

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in Tourism Management

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mine Haktanır
Supervisor

Examining Committee

1. Prof. Dr. Ali Öztüren

2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mine Haktanır

3. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hale Özdoğaç Özgüt

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to identify the impact of the COVID-19 on the hospitality industry in Morocco, and how the managers and decision makers are willing to cope with it. The primary objective of this study is to understand the impacts of this crisis and therefore provide recommendations related to sustainable strategic solutions to be applied in Morocco since the primary source of income in Morocco is the hospitality industry.

This study has been conducted in Morocco having owner-managers and decision makers of hotels in Morocco as respondents. A purposeful sampling method was utilized and the distribution network was done via emails, social networking sites and text messages.

The results of the analysis revealed that the major challenges confronting the hospitality industry due to COVID-19 are; health and safety concerns, challenges in getting customers, and travel restrictions. According to the results, top management of hotels are preparing for a post pandemic period of operations by providing innovative new products to clients, stressing digitalisations, and by offering reduced rates for attracting more customers.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Post-covid-19, Crisis management, Morocco, Hospitality industry.

ÖZ

Bu tez, COVID-19'un Fas'taki konaklama endüstrisi üzerindeki etkisini ve yöneticilerin bu süreçle nasıl başa çıktıklarını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Fas ekonomisinin önde gelen gelir kaynağı olan konaklama sektörünün bu krize nasıl tepki verdiği ve çözümler ürettiğini bulmaktır. Bu çalışma, Fas'taki konaklama sektöründe uygulanabilecek sürdürülebilir stratejik çözümlerle ilgili değerli öneriler de sunmaktadır.

Araştırmanın alan çalışması Fas'ta gerçekleştirilmiştir, katılımcılar Fas'taki otellerin sahipleri, üst yöneticileri ve departman yöneticileridir. Kullanılan örnekleme yöntemi amaçlı örneklemedir ve dağıtım ağı e-postalar, sosyal ağ siteleri ve metin mesajları yoluyla yapılmıştır.

Analizin sonuçları, COVID-19 nedeniyle konaklama endüstrisinin karşı karşıya olduğu başlıca zorlukların; sağlık ve güvenlik endişeleri, müşteri edinmedeki zorluklar ve seyahat kısıtlamaları olduğunu belirlemiştir. Araştırmanın sonuçları, üst yönetime göre salgın sonrası bir döneme hazırlanmak için en etkili çözümlerin; fiyatları düşürmek, yeni ürünler geliştirmek ve dijitalleşmeye hazırlıklı olmak olarak belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Covid-19 pandemisi, Post-covid-19, Kriz yönetimi, Fas, Konaklama endüstrisi.

DEDICATION

My humble effort is dedicated to my beloved Family, to my dear Mother **Malika**

Abali; the inexhaustible source of tenderness, patience and sacrifice. Your prayer

and blessing have been a great help to me throughout my life.

To my sisters; **Fatima-Ezzahra Haddar, Sara Haddar, Leila Haddar and Hafssa**

Frindy; You're my source of inspiration and love. Thank you for being here during

the worst circumstances.

To my sweet friends, you were always by my side when I needed it, without you I

would never have arrived where I am, know that I am so grateful towards you. God

bless you

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview and Background

Morocco has always been a huge tourist attraction due to its eye-catching landscape, historical ancient roman and Islamic sites, and cultural history, coupled with special attractions at cheap prices. This has resulted in a high number of tourist's visitation over the years to the country. Additionally, the tourism industry has significantly helped in growing the economy and contributed to an improvement in the country's Gross domestic product, as well as provided employment for over 500,000 people in the nation (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013). Furthermore, in relation to the government's organization of the Travel and Tourism industry, Morocco is rated 5th worldwide (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013). Its government consistently funds different projects to see to the sustenance and development of its tourism industry (Ali, Arifin, & Hasi, 2012). However, despite how positive the prospects of Morocco's tourism industry are and how large its international market is, it is faced with a powerful enemy that has destroyed economies and lead to the death of millions of people globally.

On the 8th of December, 2019, a new type virus known as "COVID-19" spread to many countries across the globe and it was declared as a global pandemic when spread became cross-national (Bakar & Rosbi, 2020). COVID-19, which is an extremely contagious respiratory disease spreads through contact with an already infected person and its symptoms include cough, fever and breathing problems.

This virus can also be transmitted from asymptomatic people and about 40% of them remain that way (Yang, Zhang, & Chen, 2020). The spread of the virus left millions without jobs and economies with no assurance of recovering. Moreover, there were also growing fear of future waves of the virus, with a lot of pressure on put on the medical industry to tackle the problem (Tappe, & Luhby, 2020).

The hospitality industry all across the globe was severely compromised. The wide spread of the virus started affecting economies and social lives around February and March. And at the time, most hotels in the United States lost their room revenues due to the health concerns of the public that grew in the middle of February, 2020 (Sönmez, Apostolopoulos, Lemke, & Hsieh, 2020). Furthermore, about 6 out of 10 hotel rooms across the country weren't occupied dating back to 3rd of June 2020 (Asmelash & Cooper, 2020). Consequentially, close to half of hotel staffs were laid off in August, while 5 of 10 rooms are unoccupied (Ozili & Arun ,2020). On the 2nd of March, (2020), the first case of the COVID-19 virus was confirmed in Casablanca, Morocco. Soon afterwards, a second case was confirmed the very same day which involved an Italian woman who had returned to Morocco on the 25th of February from Bologna, Italy. As the cases began to rise, the government took actions by imposing lockdowns and restrictions and most importantly suspending international passenger flights into the country (Laaroussi, 2020).

As a result, the Tourism industry in Morocco was critically affected because of the pandemic of COVID-19. Due to the virus, there has been a huge adverse impact, both immediate and long term, on the hospitality industry in Morocco. From a global perspective, the immediate impact that was perceived by hotel management were interrupted cash flows, which was prompted by a closure of their businesses following

the full to partial lockdowns and restrictions imposed by the government (Hall & al., 2020). Initially thought to be a temporal problem, the problem seems to persist as it has led to the closure of businesses, affecting their longevity by reducing their revenues and compromising their supply chains for a long term (Nicola & al., 2020). However, the longer-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still unclear but have the tendency to manifest themselves with reduction in customer demand for the hospitality services because of health precautions and hygiene (Dube & al., 2020). Moreover, in relation to the stronger mandates given by the governments in battling this virus, in terms of maintaining social distancing protocols and mask wearing, the long-term profitability of the establishment will be compromised as well as the viability of the traditional business model and so, this will undermine the viability of the business making it less productive (Hancock, 2020; Gossling & al., 2020). Furthermore, there have been some theories suggesting that the hotel industry would significantly fit in its revenue due to the pandemic, consequently signalling a bleak prospect for future as well as present investments in the hospitality industry (Taylor, 2020). More adverse effects of the COVID-19 epidemic on the hotel industry includes irregularity or seasonal working patterns, reduced attractiveness of the occupation of hospitality and reduced pay for the hospitality workforce (Lee and Way, 2020; Wan & al., 2014).

Furthermore, the burden of corporate social responsibility (CSR) becomes weightier for hotel managers and owners as they not only have to conserve the environment in which their establishment is situated at, but also have to take care of their workers, guest and their communities locally (Levy & Park, 2011). In addition, they must conform to the health and safety regulations presented by the government in order to restrain the spread of COVID-19.

In all, the virus pandemic has negatively impacted the Tourism Industry in Morocco. Therefore, this thesis discusses the impact imposed on the hospitality industry in Morocco due to COVID-19 pandemic as well as how owners and managers are preparing for a post COVID-19 pandemic economy

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This thesis objective's is to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality industry in Morocco. Moreover, research will be conducted to investigate how the management (Owners-Mangers) are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic currently as well as in a post COVID-19 economy in the future. Furthermore, this thesis will investigate the key concerns expressed and the changes or adjustments that are being made by owners-managers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 Research Questions

In this thesis, these research questions will be addressed:

- a) What are the main challenges that confronts the hotel industry in Morocco as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic?
- b) Has the hotel industry in Morocco developed any new touristic product during the pandemic? And how do they aim to achieve product adaptation with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- c) What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with respect to adjustments/changes being made in the hotel industry in a post COVID-19 economy in Morocco?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The above thesis is noticeable as it reviews previous and rising literature in other to assist researchers and help professionals to make it easy to understand, manage and conceptualise the impact of COVID-19 in Tourism Industry. Following this, this thesis

is unique as it discusses on the challenges that faces owner and managers in the hospitality industry in Morocco as well as preparedness for future challenges with respect to the pandemic. This thesis identifies and pinpoints the institutions, the values and presumptions that tourism industry should tackle and advance in order to further increase the research in this field. It also discusses the major impacts the virus has on the Moroccan Tourism industry as well as providing data on the type as well as the magnitude of the problem confronting the hospitality industry. In all, this paper is significant as it aims to add to the body of knowledge in this research field and provide a practical approach on how managers-owners can better manage the growing problem of the pandemic in the Moroccan hospitality industry.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

The composition of this thesis consists of: the relevant discussions on the subject will be explored in the context of the Second Chapter in a literature review. The methods by which the research was carried out will be provided in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will focus on the necessary data and the results. Furthermore, more data on the results is provided in Chapter 5 and the paper concludes in the last chapter.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Background and Overview

As a result of the Covid-19 epidemic, almost all economies in the world have been on lockdown (UNWTO, 2020). This pandemic presented the hospitality industry with an uncommon crisis. The different strategies put in place to curb the COVID-19 spread such as lockdown of communities, social distancing, the stay home commands, restriction on travels has brought about the temporary shutdown of various hospitality organizations and evidently reduced the demand for businesses that were still permitted to carry out their functions (Bartik & al, 2020). There was a significant decline in the hotel industry and its revenues due to the travel restrictions and orders to stay at home implemented by the governmental authorities. Nonetheless, the process of reopening has gradually started and the authorities have begun lifting off the limitations on travelling both locally and internationally. Despite the pandemic which has led to hospitality businesses to change how they function; the hospitality industry is gradually building back up.

Morocco had up to 12.3 million tourists in 2018, which increased by 8% from the last year and the total number of tourists they recorded in the first 11 months of 2018 was 11.3 million and that resulted in an average of 1 million tourist per month and an 8.5% increment in comparison to 2017 (El-Menryari, 2020). In the period 2000-2018, Morocco experienced an average yearly growth of 6% in tourism arrivals which

doubles the development in the global tourism. After the easing of visa requirements, the number of Chinese tourists in Morocco increased tremendously within three years. This amounted to a tenfold increase in arrivals from 10,000 in 2015 to almost 180,000 in 2019. Marrakech which is referred to as the top destination for tourists in Morocco experienced the arrival of over 2.4 million tourists between January and November as well as 2.6 million hotel stays till the end of 2018 (OECD, 2020; Maroc, 2020). According to the 2019 Travel Risk Map, with relation to the travel precautions, in comparison to most American countries like U.S and Canada, Morocco is just as safe and therefore has a low risk level. Morocco is the only country in North Africa with low risk level because they were able to sustain the level for the period of three years and more. Egypt has a high-risk level, while countries such as Tunisia and Algeria have a medium risk level (Tarek, 2020).

Despite the uncommon challenges encountered by the hospitality industry during the COVID-19 period, there's the need for adjustments in the hospitality industry in Morocco. Hospitality organizations are required to make major adjustments to the efficacy they had in the business under COVID-19 conditions so as to guarantee its workers safety and health of customers, and boost the clients' desire to support their business (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020). Therefore, this epidemic is expected to produce a remarkable effect on the survey of management scholars and hospitality marketing. The scholars of hospitality are required to adjust their attention on creating the industry's solutions. There's a necessity for scholars of hospitality to give solutions to a series of problems. Therefore, in relation to the Hospitality industries in Morocco, these questions are asked; what are the main challenges that confronts the hotel industry in Morocco due to the COVID-19 epidemic? In what means are the hotel industry in Morocco coping with the challenges? And what are the impacts of the

COVID-19 pandemic with respect to adjustments/changes being made in the hotel industry in a post COVID-19 economy in Morocco. In this chapter, previous literature on the tourism industry in Morocco, the challenges confronting the hospitality industry in the COVID-19 era and crisis management strategies to combat its negative impact in the hospitality industry will be discussed

2.2 Tourism Industry in Morocco

2.2.1 Introduction

In Morocco, one of the major sources of revenue in the economy is tourism. Morocco has various advantages that empowers its competition on the tourism market internationally (Porter & Ketels, 2008). Its cultural diversity is being impacted by Berber, Arab, other African nations as well as influences from Europe (Stanić & Plenković, 2013). Morocco is greatly endowed with eye catching sights as well as special attractions at cheap prices and this results in the high number of tourists present in the country. The tourist industry has significantly helped in improving the economy as well as having contributed to growing the GDP of a country (approximately 8% of the GDP) plus, it provides employment for over 500,000 people. In relation to the government's organization of the Travel and Tourist industry, Morocco is rated 5th worldwide (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013). Morocco is a stable destination for tourists, therefore, the Arab Spring revolutions had little or no effect. Its government is funding different projects to see to the sustaining as well as the development of its tourism industry (Ali, Arifin, & Hasi, 2012). The development of the tourism industry with respect to its impact on the local environment is very important because it enables the country to keep its attractiveness and permanence.

Therefore, this requires a long-term balance between the economy and the ecology (Ridderstaat, Croes & Nijkamp, 2016).

2.2.2 History of Tourism Industry in Morocco

Tourism in Morocco originally started after 1912 in the reign of the French Protectorate even though people already visited the nation in the 19th century. Morocco became a tourist location specifically for the French and this was a result of the colonial relationship. In 1953, they received approximately 250,000 tourists annually. They brought about different initiatives like the Tourism Central Committee in 1918, the Cherifian Office of Tourism in 1937 as well as the Moroccan National Tourism Office established in the year 1946. The impact of these initiatives on the tourism industry in that era was limited. Morocco officially became a part of the international tourism market through the creation of the Ministry of Tourism in the year 1965. In 1985, the ministry implemented various 3-year plans which helped the increment of tourists coming in to over 2.2 million (Steenbruggen, 2014; Porter & Ketels, 2008).

In 1999, shortly after King Mohammed VI took over the throne, he came up with a new plan on tourism called Vision 2010 (Roudies, 2010). This became officially effective in 2001 with 2 main goals which includes, serving as a guide for the tourism sector till 2010 and enabling healthy competition between the Moroccan tourism cluster and other clusters in the Mediterranean region. They had their aim at reaching 10 million visitors by the year 2010.

In addition to its other achievements, they experienced a significant boost in the number of tourists from 4.3 million in 2000 to 9.3 million in 2010 which signified 97% of the target reached. With respect to this increase in 2010, Morocco came up with a

new plan called "Vision 2020 for Tourism" that aims at the expansion of the appeal of the country to add various of the countryside which includes its deserts and mountains. This is sometimes regarded as the structure for strategic activity in the nation (Henkelman, 2013 & Roudies, 2010). The major goals of this new vision includes, (a) securing a spot in the 20 best destinations of the world, (b) making the size of the industry twice as before by providing over 470,000 jobs opportunities which results to the 2% rise in GDP through tourism and increase of the tourists to 140 billion MAD in 2020, (c) creating and putting to effect a policy which improves the offering that Morocco gives to tourists, (d) producing a fresh administration for arrangement institutionally and (e) encouraging development of sustainable tourism. Furthermore, a major aspect of the new aim is a policy based on territory with the addition of eight tourist territories as well as the structuring programs for a different product portfolio. In addition, they are financing the creation of new accommodations, training spaces, seaside resorts (the Azur Plan) as well as transport availability. Morocco's perspective is dependent on a new age of tourist products, a durable management of the ecosystem and local public involvement to be a representation of tourism sustainability in the Mediterranean region

2.2.3 Demographics and Tourism Statistics in Morocco

The population of Morocco is said to be approximately over 40 million with an area of 710,850 kmsquare. Morocco amongst other nations in relation to the world's population growth rise in 2011 to about 7 billion people have experienced an urbanization trend which shows that more than 50% of its people live in urban areas. In the 20th century, its urbanization rate was below 10% but increased to 29% in 1960 then moved up to 55.1% in 2004. They had more people living in urban areas than in the rural areas in the mid-1990s. The High Planning Commission estimated that 28.4

billion people will live in the cities (which makes up 68.5% of the population in Morocco) come 2030. While Casablanca is the largest city in Morocco, Rabat is referred to as the political capital of Morocco. Fez which is currently on the list of UNESCO's world heritage sites is also said to be the country's oldest royal city. It is regarded to as the symbolic heart of the country. Marrakech (the Red City) known for its originality in cultural practices as well as its importance among the imperial cities, gathers the highest number of tourists. Ranked number 68 in the world's most visited cities in 2011, Marrakech recorded approximately 2.05 million tourists in that year (Steenbruggen, 2014).

According to Demerdash (2009), "Marrakech dynamism is dependent on the tourism marketing and industry pattern it follows". In some part her article "Mapping the myths of the Medina", she delivers an analytical evaluation (according to history) on how "medina's myths are being endorsed, assigned, and renovated to meet the request of foreigners" in a way she referred to as "oriental brandscape". Consequently, she expressed that "Marrakech is now recognized as a product more than it is as a location". Moreover, Minca & Borghi (2009) stated that "tourists in Morocco can encounter some type of 'oriental exoticism'. One of the major and most important tourist coast city Agadir has presented the people with a blend of sand and sea tourism as well as beach resorts for luxury. Economic indicators for visits are different all around. Variables such as Arrival of tourists either by air, sea or land, Hotel rooms for staying the night as well as occupancy charge by bedrooms or revenue are commonly used.

We can come to a conclusion that Marrakech and Agadir are the most famous tourist destinations, with a total market share of 60%. Moreover, the number of tourists

received by Agadir within the first 11 month in 2018, numbered 1,038,769 i.e. an increase of 13% in comparison to the year before (Mtataes, 2020; Steenbruggen, 2020).

The foreign tourist share distribution is presented from the year 2017 to 2019. It can be seen that there is steady growth from over 5million to over 7million in 2019, having a total market share of 54% in 2019. Moreover, tourist from France represent the highest number of incoming tourists coming into the country. This is no surprise as Morocco served as a tourist location specifically for the French for years even during the colonial era. The next higher number is tourist from Spain representing 7% of the market share and then, the United Kingdom with 4% of the market share. However, as we will come to see in the section to follow, COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the number of incoming tourists coming into the nation of Morocco. Furthermore, the hospitality industry in Morocco has been greatly affected by this as contingency measure will need to be taken by all parties involved i.e. government and business owners to reduce its negative impact on the economy (Mtataes, 2020).

2.3 COVID-19 Pandemic and the Hospitality Industry

2.3.1 General Overview of COVID-19

The government of Wuhan, China on the 8th of December 2019, reported that the health ministers were treating a numerous number of new virus cases known to be Corona virus disease (COVID-19). This virus which is considered to be a new type of SARS (SARS-CoV-2) has widely spread to many countries across the globe and is therefore now regarded as a global pandemic (Bakar & Rosbi, 2020). COVID-19, a very contagious disease can be spread through contact with an already infected person and its symptoms include cough, fever and breathing problems. This virus can also be

transmitted from asymptomatic people and about 40% of them remain that way (Yang, Zhang, & Chen, 2020). Some other elements that promotes the infection includes: speed and efficiency of transmitting the virus, airborne capability, contact between a non-infected person and infected person, exposure to other health issues such as respiratory problems and diabetes, sensitivity to the elderly especially those above 65 and coming in contact with someone from a country with high cases reported (Davahli, Karwowski, Sonmez & Apostolopoulos, 2020). Many extreme measures such as travel restrictions, quarantine centers and social distancing orders have been imposed so as to reduce the spread of the virus. Some countries have shut down their borders partially while others implemented a complete shutdown of the borders as well as travel bans which has affected the world's population (Connor, 2020).

The spread of the COVID-19 virus left millions without jobs, economies with no assurance of recovering, there's also the fear of future waves of the virus, but in the midst of this the medical industry which was one of the first to be affected is predicted to be one of the last to recover (Tappe, & Luhby, 2020). The U.S reported its first active COVID-19 case on the 20th of January, 2020. The wide spread of the virus started affecting economies and social lives around February and March. Most hotels in the United States lost their room revenues due to the health concerns of the public that grew in the middle of February, 2020 (Sönmez, Apostolopoulos, Lemke, & Hsieh, 2020). About six of ten hotel rooms in the whole country weren't occupied dating back to 3rd of June 2020 (Asmelash & Cooper, 2020). Moreover, close to half of hotel staffs were laid off in August, while 5 of 10 rooms are unoccupied (Ozili & Arun ,2020). This data shows the detrimental impact has had in several economies and there are still rising cases all of the world with the only remedy to a back to normal society is the introduction of vaccines.

2.3.2 Impact of COVID-19 on Hospitality Industry

According to Polemis (2020), “in view of the COVID-19 epidemic hospitality industries must take charge of a dual crisis i.e declining request and hiked prices for their services putting at risk the level of profit in the industry”. Moreover, Jiang & Wen (2020) stated that, “The COVID-19 epidemic has inflicted quite a number of notable, detrimental, instant and prolonged period effects on the international hotel sector”. Likewise, Hall, Scott, & Gössling (2020) argued that “the recent aftermath has become well evident and revealed in the limited circulation of cash caused by immediate shut down of businesses as a result of the governmental lockdown orders”. According to Nicola & al. (2020), “these lockdowns have jeopardized the business durability of many hotels by cutting down their revenues and dissolving their conventional supply chains”. In a recent survey carried out by Sharma & Nicolau, (2020), on the implementation of a design based on market for measuring the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic contrasting different tourism and travel industries worldwide as well as the hotel section. They did find out that every examined industry has encountered a major fall in its value owing to the epidemic crisis with no precise estimation. In a different research, Tsionas (2020) assessed the issue confronting post-COVID-19 cautionary resumption in the hotel industry and found out that reopening in an attempt to meet up with similar rate of profit to pre-COVID-19 time, was more complicated and would require a capacity reduction of 33%. Moreover, he concluded that this initiative will be more feasible when appropriated state aid systems are provided (e.g. subsidies, exemptions of tax, etc).

Furthermore, Dube, Nhamo & Chikodzi (2020) stated that, “the prolonged period effects of COVID-19 are yet unexpressed but are expected to be demonstrated by the decreased consumer request for hospitality services in the expected future because of

health and hygiene insurances”. Additionally, Hancock (2020) stated that, “the decreased operational capacity is in a bid to conform to the newly-established social distancing rules”, leading to a reduction in long-term profitability of hotels, and consequently, overlooking the number of traditional business models available (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020). Interestingly, some have come up with theories that say that the hotel section will diminish evidently as a result of the epidemic, therefore defining bleak expectations for the workers, recent and future investors (Taylor, 2020). One of the major destructive consequences of COVID-19 in a long run for businesses will probably be the reduction in the appeal of hospitality occupied places (Baum & Hai, 2020). Improper working styles (Lee & Way, 2010) in the face of contracts of zero-hours (Filimonau & Corradini, 2020) and in addition, lower wages (Wan & al., 2014) have dissuaded many expected workers from hotel jobs in previous times. Such a situation has made the employment of staffs and retaining them a main problem for management of hotels in a pre-pandemic environment (McGinley & al., 2017). Furthermore, the pandemic will worsen this situation by undermining the hotel businesses future causing professional workforce to go searching for jobs in the remainder of the economic sections (Mao & al., 2020). It is a requirement that many hotels place their workers on a layoff plan (with respect to many developed nations) and make them expendable (with respect to many developing economies).

Likewise, during this period of the pandemic, hotel jobs might be introduced as being unstable as placing employment in hotel sections will be vulnerable to interference from external influences (Sogno, 2020). This foreseen fragility and insecurity may have a negative impact the recruitment of hotel staff in the future (Mao & al., 2020).

2.4 Crisis Management

2.4.1 Overview of Crisis Management

Crisis management can be defined as a method or way to take the right measures and communicate during breakdown situations so as to prevent harm or reduce its effects. Crisis management most importantly serves to maintain everything the community has profited from customer service, marketing and other daily operations. Furthermore, emergency management helps to protect the society by organizing and taking measures necessary to prepare, maintain and upgrade the ability to diminish the present crisis such as the COVID-19 (Blanchard & al., 2007).

2.4.2 Phases of Crisis

According to Eder & Alvintzi, (2010) and Coombs (2007) there are three crisis levels, that every company can face. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below :

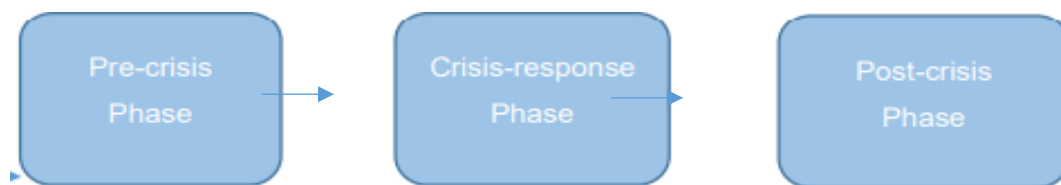


Figure 1: Phases of crisis (Eder & Alvintzi, 2010; Coombs, 2007)

- a) Pre-crisis Phase: Coombs (2007) states that, the first process which occurs before the major problem itself is known as the Pre-crisis phase, it consists of preparation: Preparation involves appropriating problem management tactics, building a team to manage the crisis, distributing ideas and methods all through the industry, and reproducing theoretical problem situations (Pearson & Clair, 1998). Moreover, Coombs (2006) stated that preparation requires the creation of the crisis management plan by choosing and educating the chosen team. Also, exercises and simulations should be carried out to evaluate the feasibility

of the plan. The author having searched deeper into the topic, discovered that the creation of escalating rules for employees was an essential part of the précises phase. Additionally, prevention will help to minimize the risks that could lead to disaster. In relation to restaurant operations and COVID-19, the steps taken include self-isolation and quarantine of the workers suspected for being infected, enlightening the customers as well as the workers about the virus through awareness programs, including brochures and pamphlets ideally in the native language or a situation of airport's restaurant, there's the availability of hand sanitizers for the customers (Khadka, Hashmi, & Usman, 2020).

- b) Crisis-response Phase: The response to crisis phase consists of 2 major aspects (Eder & Alvintzi, 2010) i.e. Detection (identifying the crisis at hand) and Mitigation (actions to be taken to reduce the impact of the crisis on businesses and people). This phase to respond to the crisis includes identifying the tendency of evolving threats for early warning, alarming or creating a mechanism that responds when data is needed to be reported (Arpan & Roskos-Ewoldsen, 2005). Also, Thompson and Louie (2006, 17) argued that, “the crisis response phase also determines the thresholds for actively collecting additional information, and utilizing opportunities to automate surveillance and early warning systems as much as is technologically feasible”. Additionally, problem responders are supposed to get the necessary data concerning a crisis as precise, clear, flexible and quickly as possible. In the same, data presentation should also be flexible and adjustable. Users need to get the necessary data on a problem situation quickly, so that they can identify which data is necessary and which data are not, due this kind of data varies from individual to

Individual and at different phases of the management of the crisis (Eder & Alvintzi, 2010). Coombs (1995) states that there exist three methods that must be executed in the response phase: shape characteristics of the problem, change opinions of the organization in problems and the last is to curd the negative effect that emerged from the crisis.

- c) Post-crisis Phase: There's supposed to be necessary steps taken by company managers for instance, restaurants which helps to provide quick recovery from a problem like creation of the Business Continuity Plan (Eder & Alvintzi, 2010). Nielson (2006) stated that, the Business Continuity Plan is a documented and reliable operation which permits an organization to continue its business procedures in the occurrence of a catastrophic event affecting its activities. More research is carried out in this chapter

2.4.3 Crisis Management Cycle

Management crisis theory gives rise to cycle of crisis management that allows the team of managers to analyse and take detailed resolutions. Moreover, the crisis management cycle can also be known as a cycle which reveals the elements and phases of crisis management as well as helping to differentiate the phases where the current accident happened (Pursainen, 2018). This approach creates a pattern to crisis management team, where decisions are made, commands are issued and roles are shared (Rosenthal & Pijenburg, 1991). Moreover, the European Union (EU) places focus on phases preparedness and prevention not the response as highlighted in Commission of European Communities report in 2009, which is very applicable in Moroccan hotel industry (EU Commission, 2009). An illustration of the crisis management cycle by Pursainen (2018) is shown in the Figure 2.

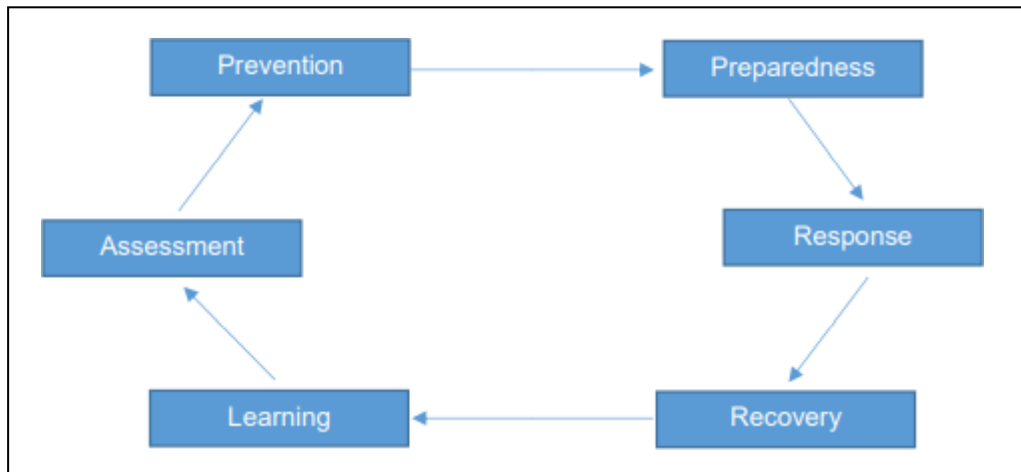


Figure 2: Crisis management cycle (Pursainen, 2018)

2.4.4 Crisis Management Strategies in the Hospitality Industry during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In this study, Ritchie & Wang (2010) discussed that the hotel service specially requires functional distress administration since the industry is considered to be a part of the most delicate with respect to the crisis such as bird flu, SARS pandemic as well as worldwide financial troubles between year 2008 up until 2009 explored by the scientists and of course, the COVID-19 epidemic. This particular occurrence reduces hotel's revenues as well as increases the predicted risk of investments in the hotel industry (Chen, 2011). Every hotel could encounter the detrimental effects of COVID-19 in a distinct nature; hence, such approach to manage the difficult situation is dependent on the way by which the hotel is influenced by the disaster (Ivanov, Sypchenko and Webster, 2017; Oaten, Le Quesne, & Segal, 2015).

The result depends primarily on what the capacity of the hotel is as well as the class of such hotel. Furthermore, microscale establishments owned by families distinguished through an insufficient comprehension often cease to envision the distress in addition to the effect on the hotel (Okumus, Altinay & Arasli, 2005).

Usually, Hoteliers pay more attention to quality and brand image, which helps them control crisis easily (del Mar Alonso-Almeida & Bremser, 2013). Noteworthy, hotels functioning in locations where their costs are relatively cheap for local tourists are not as affected by the distress in comparison to those in a different location (Song & al., 2011). Leung & Lam (2004) realized that the hotel industry lacked equipment and tools required to survive through a crisis; thus, managers have a very important role to play. They bear the responsibility for bringing up plans, new strategies and instructions for staff or communication (Leung & Lam, 2004) and for restoring creativity and innovation, seeking new ideas for promotion (Alananzeh, Tarhini, & Algudah, 2018). Furthermore, the crisis might disclose a new change for hotel organizations looking for new competitive advantages (Wang & Ritchie, 2010; Mauri, 2013).

Dzhandzhugazova & al. (2015), Napierała, Leśniewska-Napierała, & Burski, (2020), Kimes (2009) & Lund (2020) stressed that such hotel service encountering the distress should efficiency through:

- a) Conveying, grasping and cooperating with major domestic and foreign associates.
- b) Reshuffling or diminishing the total expenses which includes cancellation as well as renegotiation of contracts with dealers as well as distributors- specific recognition should be accorded online travel companies which are known as a very important feature with respect to a tourism distribution network.
- c) Creation of advanced profits origin and advanced trade divisions.
- d) Revaluating every departmental role in the establishment.
- e) Reconstruction of all departmental schedules in relation to new assignments linked to the crisis.
- f) Giving assistance to the staff to survive the reality of the crisis.

- g) Implementing a very adjustable reversal strategy.
- h) Customizing steps, patterns and resources to function during the distress productively.
- i) Reviewing functional and financial of data, research and estimating to take care of the distress often unoccupied by hotel organization (Okumus, Altinay & Arasli, 2005).

Furthermore, Chun, Lee, & Kim (2005) talked about the effect of the SARS epidemic with respect to the hotel service, realized that the most effective method to cope with the distress was the application of prohibition methods which were previously put in place by the management. According to Okumus & Karamustafa (2005), proactive management approach is required. Additionally, employees require special systems, educational initiatives regarding health awareness as well as advanced hygiene resource which will be employed even following COVID-19 outburst. Moreover, hotel industry and other sectors tied to mass travelling usually maintain social distancing protocols as the purposed reaction to epidemics (Tomes, 2010).

Karakas & Tatar (2015) stated that in recent times, developments in line with the hotel service happen too speedily as a result of globalization, technological advancement or increased competitors; thus, the directors of hotels are required to alter their industry strategies routinely. Zare & Dolnicar (2020). highlighted that, within several nations, the sudden appearance of the coronavirus has brought about a short-term advanced niche trade with respect to peer-to-peer settlement as well as various Airbnb assets are accessible in line with the quarantine of native citizens who come back to their nations. Napierała, Leśniewska-Napierała, & Burski (2020) discussed that, several projects are put in place all over the world in connection to the hotel service; managers of hotels

as well as hotel machinery suppliers both take part in or construct an ecommerce programme or linking resources directly, providing medical assistance, for example, laundry or beds facilities for healthcare practitioners as well as clinics/hospitals. These projects enable them to make rooms available for free although other times it helps to make up for specified expenses. Therefore, the crisis management strategy discussed in this section will be instrumental in diminishing the detrimental consequences associated with the COVID-19 epidemic in hotel industries.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will cover the research methodology that has been employed. The research design, sample size and the data collection method will be illustrated.

3.1 Research Methodology

In this thesis, a quantitative research methodology is employed through the use of an online survey. According to Williams (2011), quantitative research methodology is described as a holistic step that a researcher employs when carrying out a research and so, this method deals with the quantification as well as the analysis of variables in order to arrive at a result. Moreover, in this methodology, the operational mechanism revolves around the usage and analysis of numerical data using specific statistical methods in order to answer questions such as what, how much, where, how many, where etc. Furthermore, Aliaga & Gunderson (2002) expatiated on what quantitative research entails, where it stems as a tool for explaining a phenomenon through data acquisition and mathematical modelling utilising statistics.

In a survey, a combination of both a questionnaire and an interview can be carried out. Moreover, questionnaires and interview forms might look similar in construct, but differ in approach. This is because in a questionnaire, the respondent must answer the questions by him or herself, without the interference of the interviewer (Vehkalahti 2008, p. 12). The advantage of the questionnaire approach of data collection is that it is a very easy way of collecting a wide amount of material for study by asking a several

people, or in this case, several establishments at the same time. And so, once the data has been accumulated, it can be saved in a computer and analysed using a software application (Hirsjärvi & al., 2007, p. 188.). Questionnaires can be in the form of a printed format or a web-based format. As technology is evolving and more individuals and businesses are more technologically inclined, web-based questionnaires are becoming much more popular. In a web-based questionnaire, responses can easily be collected fast and information can easily be dispersed (Heikkilä, 2008, p. 18). Moreover, the results can be easily saved and there aren't many problems when compared to using a paper-based questionnaire. However, there are some disadvantages to the use of a web-based questionnaire. One of the drawbacks is that many respondents fail to type in their responses in open-ended questions and moreover, the precision of the responses can be compromised due to the unmonitored nature of the questionnaire (Heikkilä, 2008, p.20). Furthermore, the results usually acquired from questionnaires are often moderate and superficial. This is due to the fact that it cannot be guaranteed that the respondents took the survey seriously. Additionally, misunderstandings can take place in trying to understand the questions, especially if the respondents don't have a thorough knowledge on the subject matter. According to Hirsjärvi & al. (2007), this problem can be avoided or limited by planning carefully the questionnaire and administering the questions accurately, in order for the success of the survey to be strengthened. Likewise, it is important to have a covering letter at the beginning of the questionnaire, which states the purpose of the data collection and gives a good first impression to the respondents. Information such as the authors, content of the survey, selection processes and usage of the results should be stated (Vehkalahti, 2008).

In this thesis, a web-based questionnaire was chosen as the preferred research methodology due to the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in Morocco. Moreover, it was chosen to maximise the number of responses that can be accumulated to increase the amount of data used for our analysis. Furthermore, anonymity and time constraints amongst hotel representatives was another obstacle that needed to be overcome. This web-based questionnaire or online survey was designed to assess the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel industry and management preparations for a post COVID-19 economy.

The web-based questionnaire utilised for the data collection was adopted from a list of sources (Davahli, Karwowski, Sonmez, & Apostolopoulos, 2020; Morvay, Karakas & Tatar, 2015; Alonso & al., 2020; Milojevic & Katsadze, 2020; Bakar & Rosbi, 2020). The questions that were chosen for this research were done to reflect scales such as the hotel management challenges. The research was carried in Morocco to ascertain the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel industry and management preparations for a post COVID-19 economy.

3.2 Research Design

In this thesis, two types of question formats were utilised in the questionnaire i.e. the open ended questions which included the blank box where the hotel representatives or respondents type in their personal response in their own words and a closed ended or scalar based question, which included list of options that the representatives can choose from (Dillman, Smyth & Christian, 2009). The questionnaire was subdivided into three sections. The first section covers the general profile of the hotel. The second section covers the hotel management routine and plans. And finally, the third section covers the impact assessment and management preparations for post COVID-19

economy. Altogether, there are 21 questions, where there are 12 open ended questions, and 9 multiple choices. These multiple-choice questions are numbered predefined options that give the respondents the opportunity to choose a preferred opinion that most suitable to the question asked. Multiple choice questions can be easily analysed via the use of a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the Excel Spread Sheet (Hirsjärvi & al., 2007).

In one of the questions, a likert scale was employed to assess how important certain key factors such as post COVID-19 crisis management, post COVID-19 marketing strategies, electronic interfaces for post COVID-19 crisis, employees' motivation, employees' career development and employees' turnovers, are important on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 meaning less important and 5 meaning very important (Nemoto & Beglar, 2014). This scale-based question affords the respondents the ability to rate a factor on the predefined likert scale (Hirsjärvi & al., 2007, p.195)

3.3 Sample Size and Population

According to (Oxford Business Group, 2019), the number of licensed hotel establishments operational in Morocco were 4037 in 2018, which was made up of 260,448 beds and 121,171 rooms. From this number the operational hotels in Morocco currently are 663 hotels in the major cities in Morocco. The 15 cities that are Marrakech, Larache, Asilah, Tetouan, El Jadida, Houceima, Nador, Casablanca, Tangier, Agadir, Essaouira, Rabat, Essaidia, Quazazate, and Fez. 29 hotels only could be reached from 15 of the cities and 10 were specifically contacted from Marrakesh, due to the high number of Tourist coming into the city.

The sampling method that was utilised is the purposive sampling method as my sample was highly qualified top management (Food and Beverage Managers – Directors of Revenue management – General Manager – Front office Managers – Human resources Managers and Sales Managers) who are the decision makers able to answer my question properly in a professional manner , and the distribution network was done via emails, social networking sites and text messages.

The respondents (sample size) that participated were 81 department heads as mentioned in the previous paragraph, the distribution network comprised of 6 people that had experience with tourism field in Morocco and the hotel management. These 6 people were the Director of the Higher Institute of Tourism in Tangier which is the institute where I got my bachelor's degree, 4 friends working in the field of Tourism and Hospitality management in Morocco. These friends collaborated with me in contacting the aforementioned hotel establishments. In addition of my sister who's a Director of Revenue Management who has contacts in the same field of work.

3.4 Operationalization of Construct

In this section, the list of the constructs that are utilised in the questionnaire is highlighted. Moreover, the measures that are tied to the constructs is also presented with respect to the reference that is connected to it. The questions were gotten from the respective authors in Table 1 and adapted for this particular thesis in order to investigate and analyse the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality industry.

Table 3.4: List of constructs and measures utilised

No.	Constructs	Measures	References
1.	Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Your Establishment is in activity since? b) What is the legal form of your establishment? c) Who are your target clients? d) Where mainly do your international tourists come from? 	Davahli, Karwowski, Sonmez, & Apostolopoulos (2020); Filimonau, Derqui, & Matute (2020).
2.	Human Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Does your establishment plan to target international tourists in the near future? b) Do you keep your business operating? c) What are the months during which your establishment is in high season? d) During the past twelve months, what was the total number of employees in your establishment including yourself? e) How many of these employees were full time? f) In the past twelve months, have you hired new people? g) In which month (s) of operation did you have the maximum number of employees, which should correspond to your high season? h) Are you required to recruit extra employees during high season? 	Sharma (2019); Madera, Dawson, Guchait, & Belarmino (2017); Davahli, Karwowski, Sonmez, & Apostolopoulos (2020); Morvay, Karakas & Tatar, (2015); Alonso & al., (2020)

		<p>i) Does your establishment open on demand outside its operating months?</p> <p>j) Has your establishment developed a new product or service?</p> <p>k) For what main reason (s) did you develop this product (s) or service (s)?</p>	
3.	Post COVID-19 and Crisis Management	<p>a) How important are the following issues to your institution (currently or potentially)?</p> <p>b) Do you think that your touristic product needs to be adapted for post Covid19 crisis?</p> <p>c) Did the Moroccan Government provided you with any kind of support during and post the pandemic?</p> <p>d) If yes, please state what kind of support did you receive? And do you think that it is enough for your institution to move forward the pandemic?</p> <p>e) What the main challenges for the post pandemic era in your opinion?</p> <p>f) In case of there would be another pandemic or crises, would you think that you are going to be prepared for it? Do</p>	<p>Hao, Xiao, & Chon, (2020); Mikulić, Sprčić, Holiček, & Prebežac (2018); Lai & Wong (2020); Lee, Yeo & Na (2020); Milojevic & Katsadze (2020); Bakar & Rosbi, (2020).</p>

		<p>you think you do have the necessary financial, managerial, and human resources necessary tools and strategies to face it?</p> <p>g) If you have to the choice to join another industry rather than the hospitality one, would you do it?</p>	
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3.5 Research Procedure

Data collection commenced in the month of January, 2021. And a team of 6 was set up to ease the process of data collection. This team worked with me to carry out the distribution of the questionnaire online to the emails of most of the major hotel brands across the nation. This team was strategic to follow up with the filling process and provide detailed instructions on what was required from them. Due to the inconsistency of filling of the data by some of the respondents, from the 95 answered questionnaires, 15 were discarded. The team began contacting the hotels as early as November, however, the data collection process really began in the month of January as most respondents were simply too busy to reply calls or emails. Some of the respondents were hesitant to give information as they didn't want to share confidential information, they also wanted to make sure that the study was a legitimate research or if there was an ulterior motive to it. Nonetheless a good sample size of 80 reputable hotels representatives in Morocco was obtained from 15 of the major cities. The estimated time for filling in the online survey was between 10-15mins. The entire

process took three weeks, the data collected was organised and prepared for the analysis process.

3.6 Analysis of Data

In this research, the hotel data accumulated from the respondents in Morocco was assembled and then evaluated with respect to the previous studies to obtain a logical deduction. The numerical analytic tool that was utilised for the graphing, observation as well as the creation of tables was done using the IBM SPSS software. In this thesis descriptive statistics was employed as well as correlation analysis. This helped in arriving at a conclusion on how COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the hotel industry in Morocco and management preparations for a post COVID-19 economy.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this chapter, an illustration of the data analysis and findings will be done. The information covered in this chapter includes the demographic data of the hotels, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation as well as a reliability test that was carried out.

4.1 Demographic data of the Hotel in Morocco

In this section data on the demographics of the hotel in Morocco as given by the respondents will be presented.

Table 4.1: Your establishment is in activity since?

		Frequency Value	Percentage Value	Percentage (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	2 to 5 years	17	21.0	21.3	21.3
	5 to 10years	23	28.4	28.7	50.0
	10 to 20years	29	35.8	36.3	86.3
	20 to 30years	6	7.4	7.5	93.8
	30 or more	5	6.2	6.3	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.1 above, the years of establishment for the different hotels is presented. From the response from the hotel respondents, it can be seen that 10 to 20years corresponds to n=36.3%, 5 to 10years corresponds to n=28.7%, 2 to 5 years corresponds to n= 21.3%, 20 to 30years corresponds to n=7.5%, and finally, 30 or more corresponds to n=6.3%.

Table 4.2: What is the legal form of your establishment?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percentage (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	International Chain hotel	46	56.8	57.5	57.5
	National Chain hotel	19	23.5	23.8	81.3
	Franchise hotel	6	7.4	7.5	88.8
	Partnership	6	7.4	7.5	96.3
	Others	3	3.7	3.8	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.2 above, the legal form of the establishment is presented. From the response from the hotel respondents, it can be seen that 57.5% were international chain hotels, 23.8% are national chain hotels, 7.5% are Franchise hotels, 7.5% are Partnership hotels and the remaining 3.8% of the respondents filled others.

Table 4.3: Who are your target clients? (Local)

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	From 1 to 25%	38	46.9	47.5	47.5
	From 25 to 50%	22	27.2	27.5	75.0
	From 50 to 75%	19	23.5	23.8	98.8
	From 75 to 100%	1	1.2	1.3	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.3 above, the local target client's Frequency, percentage and cumulative percentage distribution is presented. From the response from the hotel respondents, it can be seen that 47.5% stated 1 to 25%, 27.5% stated 25 to 50%, 23.8% stated 50 to 75%, and 1.3% stated 75 to 100% of their targeted clients are local.

Table 4.4: Who are your target clients? (International)

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	From 1 to 25%	6	7.4	7.5	7.5
	From 25 to 50%	11	13.6	13.8	21.3
	From 50 to 75%	34	42.0	42.5	63.7
	From 75 to 100%	29	35.8	36.3	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.4 above, the International target client's percentage distribution is presented. From the response from the hotel respondents, it can be seen that 7.5% stated 1 to 25%, 13.8% stated 25 to 50%, 42.5% stated 50 to 75%, and 36.3% stated 75 to 100% of their targeted clients are International.

Table 4.5: Who are your target clients? (Business)

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	From 1 to 25%	32	39.5	40.0	40.0
	From 25 to 50%	27	33.3	33.8	73.8
	From 50 to 75%	14	17.3	17.5	91.3
	From 75 to 100%	7	8.6	8.8	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.5 above, the Business target client's percentage distribution is presented. From the response from the hotel respondents, it can be seen that 39.5% stated 1 to 25%, 33.3% stated 25 to 50%, 17.3% stated 50 to 75%, and 8.6% stated 75 to 100% of their targeted business clients.

Table 4.6: Where mainly do your international tourists come from?

	Country	Frequency Value	Percentage Value	Cumulative Percent
French Tourists	France	45	25	25
Spanish Tourists	Spain	16	9	34
British Tourists	UK	20	11	46
German Tourists	Germany	21	12	58
Italian Tourists	Italy	10	6	63
European Tourists	Europe	26	15	78
Other Tourists	Others	39	22	100
	Total	177	100	

In Table 4.6 above, the international tourists' distribution of hotels is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 25% of their Tourists are from France, 9% are from Spain, 11% are from Britain, 12% are from Germany, 6% are from Italy, 15% are from Europe, and 22% are from other countries.

4.2 Hotel Resource Management in Morocco

In this section, data on the hotel resource management in Morocco as given by the respondents will be presented.

Table 4.7: Does your establishment plan to target international tourists in the near future?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	No	21	25.9	26.9	26.9
	Yes	56	69.1	71.8	98.7
	Unsure	1	1.2	1.3	100.0
	Total	78	96.3	100.0	
Absent	Data	3	3.7		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.7 above, the plans for the establishment's international tourist in the near future is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 26.9% of the respondents said no, 71.8% of the respondents said yes, and 1.3% of the respondents said they are unsure.

Table 4.8: Do you keep your business all year round?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	All year rounds (12 months)	62	76.5	77.5	77.5
	Seasonal Basis	18	22.2	22.5	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.8 above, the hotel business yearly operation is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 77.5% of the respondents said all year round and 22.5% of the respondents said they were open on a seasonal basis.

Table 4.9: What are the months during which your establishment is in high season?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	Jan to April	15	18.5	18.8	18.8
	March to August	41	50.6	51.2	70.0
	Sept to Dec	24	29.6	30.0	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.9 above, the high season of the hotel establishment is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 18.8% of the respondents said Jan to April,

51.2% of the respondents said March to August and 30% of the respondents said Sept to Dec.

Table 4.10: During the past twelve months, what was the total number of employees in your establishment including yourself?

No. of Employees	Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
10 to 40	11	13.58	14.10	14.10
41 to 80	13	16.05	16.67	30.77
81 to 120	21	25.93	26.92	57.69
121 to 160	12	14.82	15.38	73.08
161 to 200	5	6.17	6.41	79.49
201 to 240	6	7.41	7.69	87.18
241 to 300	2	2.47	2.56	89.74
301 to 400	4	4.94	5.13	94.87
401 to 500	2	2.47	2.56	97.44
501 to 600	1	1.23	1.28	98.72
601 to 1200	1	1.23	1.28	100.00
Total	78	96.30	100.00	
Absent Data	3			

In Table 4.10 above, the total number of employees in the hotel is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 16.05% of the respondents said they had a total of 41 to 80 employees, 25.93% of the respondents said they had a total of 81 to 120 employees and 14.82% of the respondents said they had a total of 121 to 160 employees.

Table 4.11: How many of these employees were full time?

No. of Employees (Full-time)	Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
1 to 40	20	24.69	25.97	25.97
41 to 80	19	23.46	24.68	50.65
81 to 120	16	19.75	20.78	71.43
121 to 160	8	9.88	10.39	81.82
161 to 200	5	6.17	6.49	88.31

201 to 240	3	3.70	3.90	92.21
241 to 300	1	1.23	1.30	93.51
301 to 400	2	2.47	2.60	96.10
401 to 450	1	1.23	1.30	97.40
451 to 500	1	1.23	1.30	98.70
501 to 800	1	1.23	1.30	100.00
Total	77	95.07	100.00	
Absent Data	4			

In Table 4.11 above, the total number of employees that work full time is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 24.69% of the respondents said that 1 to 40 of their employees work fulltime, 23.46% of the respondents said that 41 to 80 of their employees work fulltime, 19.75% of the respondents said they had a total of 81 to 120 of their employees work fulltime.

Table 4.12: In the past twelve months, have you hired new people?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	No	60	74.1	75.0	75.0
	Yes	20	24.7	25.0	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent Data	1	1.2			
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.12 above, the total number of employees hired in the last 12months is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 75% of the respondents said no and 25% of the respondents said yes.

Table 4.13: Are the hired workers currently working?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	No	70	86.4	87.5	87.5
	Yes	10	12.3	12.5	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.13 above, the hired employees currently working in the establishment of the respondents is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 87.5% of the respondents said no and 12.5% of the respondents said yes.

Table 4.14: In which month of operation did you have the maximum number of employees, which should correspond to your high season?

Months		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	Jan	6	7.4	7.5	7.5
	Feb	3	3.7	3.8	11.3
	March	13	16.0	16.3	27.5
	April	1	1.2	1.3	28.7
	May	1	1.2	1.3	30.0
	June	2	2.5	2.5	32.5
	July	13	16.0	16.3	48.8
	Aug	26	32.1	32.5	81.3
	Sept	11	13.6	13.8	95.0
	Nov	2	2.5	2.5	97.5
	Dec	2	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.14 above, the maximum number of employees that corresponded to its high season. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 32.5% of the respondents stated August was their high season, 16.3% stated July was their high season, 16.3%

stated March was their high season, and 13.8% stated that September was their high season.

Table 4.15: Are you required to recruit extra employees during high season?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percentage (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	No	43	53.1	53.8	53.8
	Yes	37	45.7	46.3	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.15 above, the data on the recruitment of extra employees in the establishment the respondents are presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 53.1% of the respondents said no and 46.3% of the respondents said yes.

Table 4.16: If yes, what is the number of the seasonal employees in relation to your full-time employees?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	0	46	56.8	58.2	58.2
	5	2	2.5	2.5	60.8
	10	7	8.6	8.9	69.6
	15	2	2.5	2.5	72.2
	20	2	2.5	2.5	74.7
	25	1	1.2	1.3	75.9
	30	7	8.6	8.9	84.8
	40	1	1.2	1.3	86.1
	45	1	1.2	1.3	87.3
	50	4	4.9	5.1	92.4
	60	4	4.9	5.1	97.5
	80	1	1.2	1.3	98.7
	95	1	1.2	1.3	100.0
	Total	79	97.5	100.0	
Absent	Data	2	2.5		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.16 above, the number of the seasonal employees in relation to your full-time employees is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 58.2% of the respondents stated that they had 0 seasonal employees. 8.9% stated they had 30 seasonal employees, and 8.9% stated they had 10 seasonal employees.

Table 4.17: Does your establishment open on demand outside its operating months?

	Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
No	20	24.7	25.0	25.0
Yes	60	74.1	75.0	100.0
Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Data	1	1.2		
Total	81	100.0		

In Table 4.17 above, the data on the respondents' establishment being open on demand outside its operating months is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 25% of the respondents said no and 75% of the respondents said yes.

Table 4.18: Has your establishment developed a new product or service?

	Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
No	36	44.4	46.2	46.2
Yes	42	51.9	53.8	100.0
Total	78	96.3	100.0	
Absent Data	3	3.7		
Total	81	100.0		

In Table 4.18 above, data on new product or service development in the establishment is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 46.2% of the respondents said no and 53.8% of the respondents said yes. From the respondents that stated yes, an open-ended question on the main reason for developing the product and services was enquired. From Figure 3, it can be seen that 19% of the respondents (the

majority of the respondents) stated that the main reason for developing the product and services was to get customers, 14% stated that COVID-19 health and safety standard was top priority, 10% stated adaptation (better services), 10% stated generating revenue in pandemic, 9% stated survival, 6% stated meeting client's expectation and 3% stated no more services.

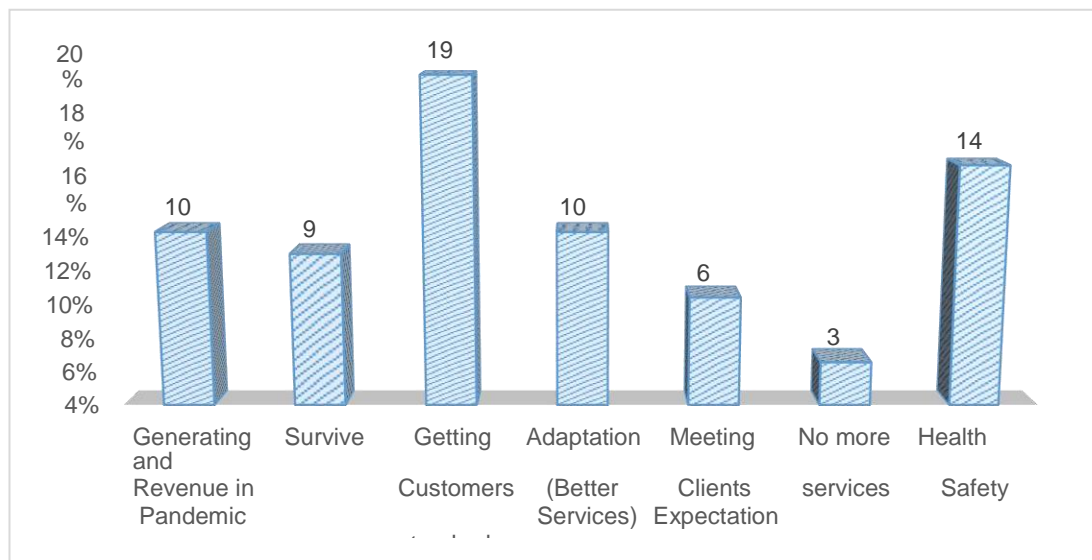


Figure 3: Main reasons for the development of the product or services.

4.3 Post COVID-19 and Crisis Management

In this section data on the post COVID-19 plans as well as crisis management strategies as given by the respondents will be discussed.

4.3.1 Rated Factors

In Table 4.19, five factors with respect to post COVID-19 and Crisis management is ranked on a scale of 1 to 5 from not at all important to very important. These five factors are Post COVID-19 Crisis management, Post COVID-19 marketing strategies, Electronic Interfaces Post COVID-19 crisis, Employee Motivation, Employee Career Development, and Employee Turnovers.

Table 4.19: Five rated factors:

	Post Covid19 crisis mgt.	Post Covid19 marketing strategies	Elect. Interface post Covid19 crisis	Employee Motivation	Employee Career dev.	Employee Turnovers
Mean Ranking	4.641	4.604	4.53	4.32	4.197	3.839
Total	376	373	367	350	340	311
Percentage	17.76%	17.62%	17.34%	16.53%	16.06%	14.69%

From Table 4.19, it can be seen that Post COVID-19 Crisis management was ranked by the respondents as the most important factor having a mean ranking of 4.641 and percentage of 17.76%. Following this, the other important factors is Post COVID-19 marketing strategies with a percentage of 17.62%, Electronic Interfaces Post COVID-19 crisis with a percentage of 17.34%, Employee Motivation of 16.53%, Employee Career Development of 16.06%, and Employee Turnovers of 14.69%.

4.3.2 Product Adaptation

Table 4.20: Do you think that your touristic product needs to be adapted for post Covid19 crisis?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	No	19	23.5	23.8	23.8
	Yes	61	75.3	76.3	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.20 above, data on the tourist product adaptation for post COVID-19 pandemic crisis is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 23.8% of the respondents said no and 76.3% of the respondents said yes. From the respondents that stated yes, an open-ended question on how they are willing to achieve

product adaptation was enquired. From Figure 4, it can be seen that 30% of the respondents (the majority of the respondents) stated that their product adaptation strategy will be to improve the service delivery, 25% stated that COVID-19 health and safety standard was their strategy, another 25% stated innovating new product and services was their strategy, 23% stated target market research was their strategy (this meant research into the international and local market to understand the current needs and opportunities), 10% stated exploring newer markets, 9% stated survival, 14% stated price reduction, 8% stated digitization (such as online marketing, incorporating more digital products in their establishment, social media etc.) and 3% stated they were uncertain.

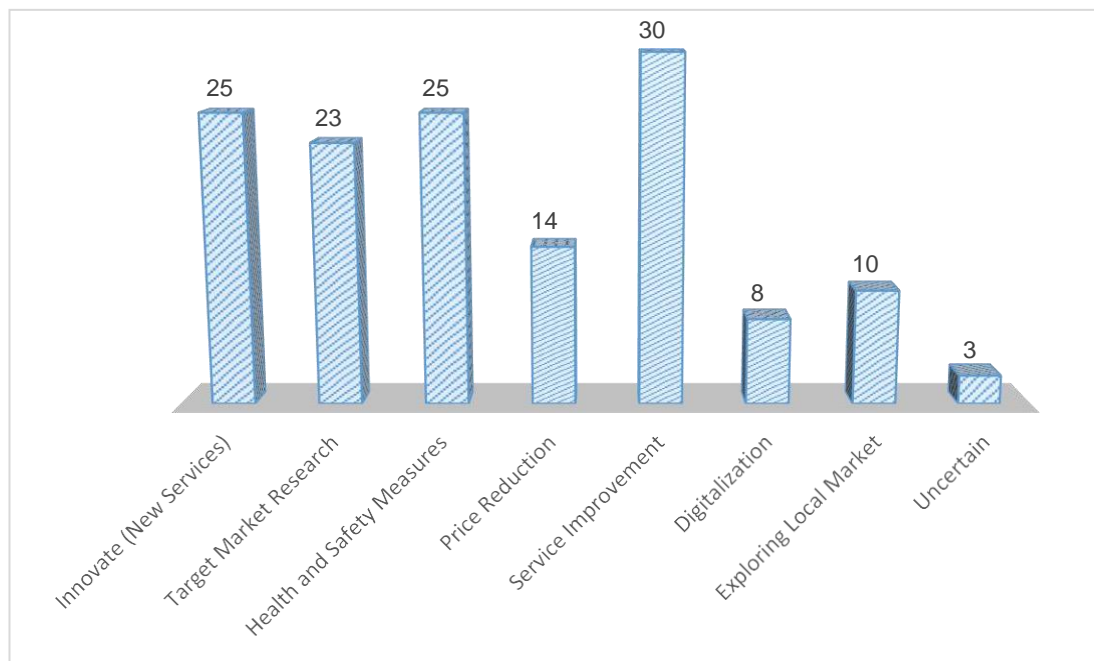


Figure 4: Product adaptation strategy

4.3.3 Moroccan Government Support

Table 4.21: Did the Moroccan Government provide you with any kind of support during and post the pandemic?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	No	27	33.3	33.8	33.8
	Yes	53	65.4	66.3	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Absent	Data	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.21 above, data on the Moroccan Government provision of support during and post pandemic is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 33.8% of the respondents said no and 66.3% of the respondents said yes. From the respondents that stated yes, an open-ended question on what kind of support is given by the government to the hotel was enquired. From Figure 5, it can be seen that 60% of the respondents stated CNSS support (Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale, also known as the Moroccan National Social Security Data, helps in providing benefits to families, loans, pension relief, social security, additional aid to insured parties etc.) was what was given, 26% stated that whatever funding was given was insignificant, 10% said publicity, 13% said the local markets, 4% stated their hotels were repurposed as a quarantine centre (For the Foreign nationals entering into the country, with the government covering the expenses) and finally, 4% said no help at all was offered by the government.

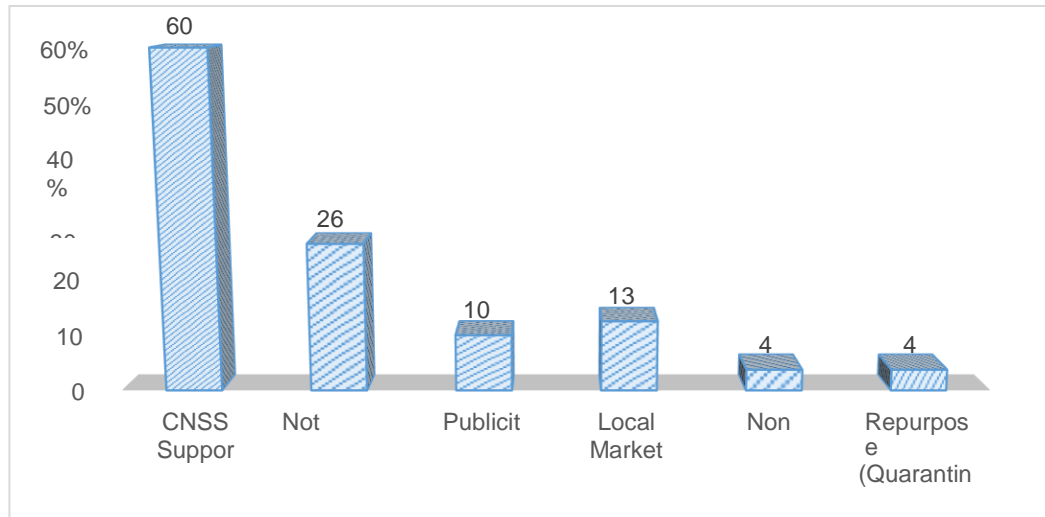


Figure 5: Kind of support received by the Moroccan government

4.3.4 Main Challenges (Post Pandemic Era)

In Figure 6, a graphical illustration of the response from the respondents on the the main challenges for the post pandemic era is presented. From the data accumulated from the open ended questions, 41% of the respondents stated that their major challenge is health and safety concerns, 34% of the respondents said getting customers was the challenge, 23% said airline operations for tourist (this has to do with the availability of the airline for international flight), 20% said budget reduction (This has to do with the disposable income of the customers as the pandemic would have compromised their finances), 19% of the respondents stated occupancy drop as the problem, 15% stated job security, 15% infrastructural deterioration (this has to do with wearing of the hotel facilities due to inactivity), 15% said meeting targets (could be financial goals, project development) and finally, 15% said they were uncertain.

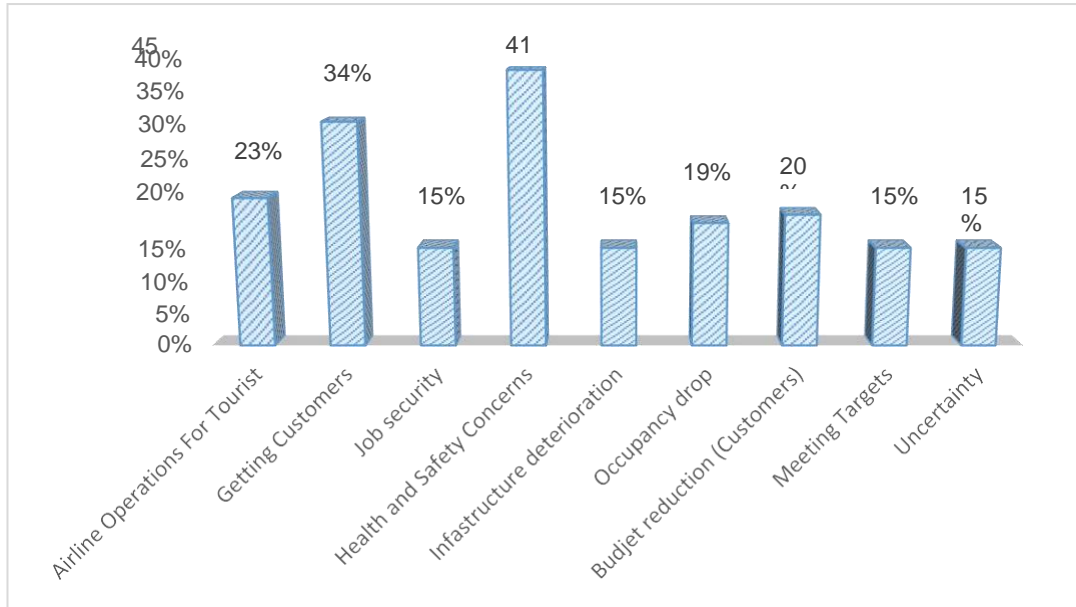


Figure 6: Main challenges of a post pandemic era

4.3.5 Preparedness for Another Pandemic

In Figure 7, a graphical illustration of the response from the respondents on the preparedness of the hotel for another pandemic in the future is presented. From the results, 45% of the respondents (i.e. most of the respondents) stated that their establishment isn't ready for another widespread pandemic in the future. According to most of the respondents, the COVID-19 pandemic really affected their business and led to a huge loss in profit and so, having another pandemic might be the end of their business. Moreover, 23% of the respondents said that they are ready both financially and managerially, 18% said that they are ready but solely managerial, and finally, 15% said they aren't certain for sure the outcome of a second pandemic.

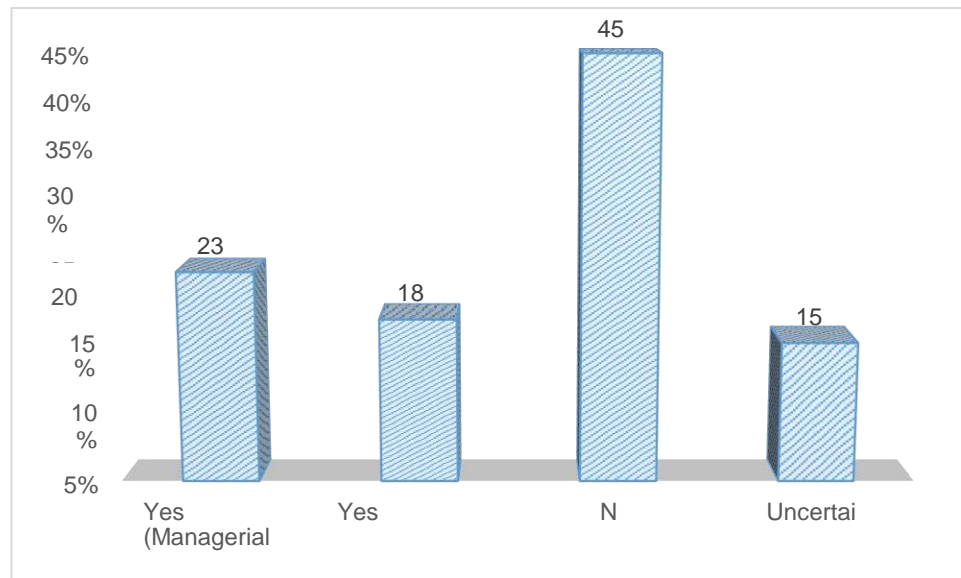


Figure 7: Preparedness for another pandemic or crisis

4.3.6 Another Industry Choice Aside Hospitality

Table 4.22: If you have the choice to join another industry rather than the hospitality one, would you do it?

		Frequency Value	Percent Value	Percent (Valid)	Cumulative Percent
	No	11	13.6	13.8	13.8
	Yes	69	85.2	86.3	100.0
	Total	80	98.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.2		
Total		81	100.0		

In Table 4.22 above, the data on the choice of another industry due to the severity of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is presented. From the respondent's response, it can be seen that 13.8% of the respondents said no and 86.3% of the respondents said yes. This data shows that a good number of hotels respondents aren't satisfied with the hotel industry and if given the opportunity will move on other types of businesses.

4.3.7 Preparation for a Post COVID-19 and Action Plan Execution

In Figure 8, a graphical illustrations of the response from the respondents on the preparedness for a post COVID-19 , and the action plans are presented below. From the data accumulated from the open ended questions, 35% of the respondents (majority) stated that revising payment plan for customer is their strategy, 25% of the stated innovating newer products, 25% said digitalization, 23% said flexibility (This has to do with making the services more accessible and flexible), 21% of the respondents stated revising service delivery, 20% stated increasing customer service, 15% health and safety, 10% local market and 4% stated training of the service.

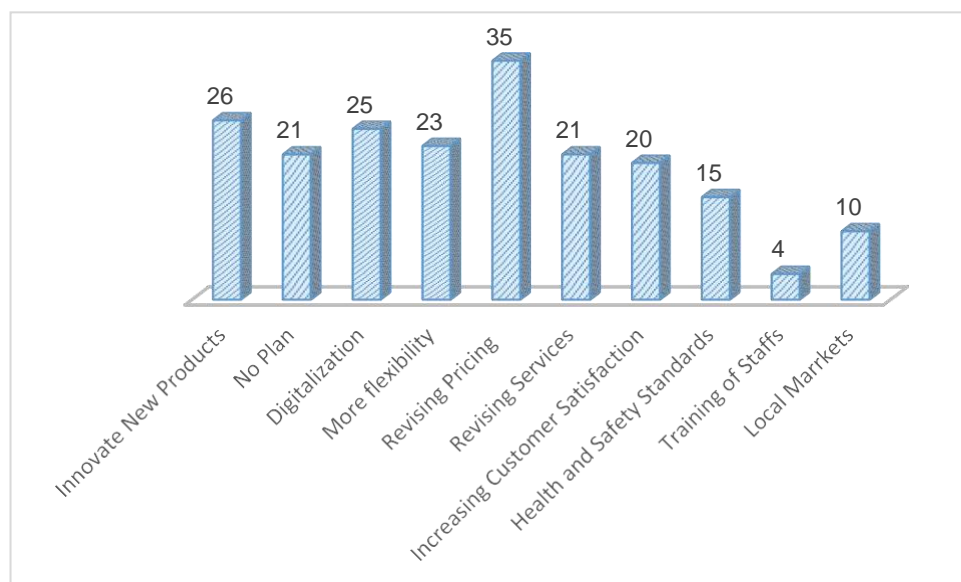


Figure 8: Preparation for a post COVID-19 and action plan

4.4 Pearson Correlation

Pearson correlation serves an important analytical tool that test the relationship (i.e. linear) between two compared variables within a given set. The values that are utilised for the measures are the p-value and the r-coefficient which ranges from -1 to +1. According to Cohen (1988), a correlation is said to exist between variables if there is a significance tied to the two compared variables. Moreover, when an r-coefficient of

0.1 is the minimum value, 0.3 is said to medium and then, 0.5 as the value is said to the high value.

Table 4.23: Pearson correlation of the rated factors

		Post Covid 19 crisis mgmt	Post Covid 19 mrkt strategies	Electro Interface for post Covid19 crisis	Employees motivation	Employees career development	Employees Turnovers
Post Covid19 crisis mgmt	Pearson Correlation	1					
Post Covid19 market strategies	Pearson Correlation	.606**	1				
Electro Interfaces for post Covid19 crisis	Pearson Correlation	.316**	.367**	1			
Employees motivation	Pearson Correlation	.589**	.550**	.303**	1		
Employees career development	Pearson Correlation	.380**	.369**	.110	.638**	1	
Employees Turnovers	Pearson Correlation	.332**	.051	.268*	.380**	.454**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

In Table 4.23, a Pearson correlation matrix is presented. From the result, we can see all variables have a significant positive correlation except Post COVID-19 marketing strategies and Employee Turnovers, which is insignificant, having an r-coefficient of

0.051. This value is less than the minimum value of 0.1 as stated by Cohen (1988).

However, there is a high significant positive correlation between Post COVID-19 marketing strategies and Post COVID-19 Crisis management having an r-coefficient of 0.606, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Moreover, there is a high significant positive correlation between Employees Motivation and Employee Career Development having an r-coefficient of 0.638, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Also, this is a high significant positive correlation between the Post COVID-19 crisis marketing strategies and Employees motivation, having an r-coefficient of 0.589, which is significant at the 0.05 level. Finally, there is a high significant positive correlation between Post COVID-19 marketing strategies and Employees motivation having an r-coefficient of 0.550, which is significant at the 0.05 level.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

In order to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel industry in Morocco and how management (Owners-Managers) are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to tie in the results from the analysis in chapter four and relate it to the research questions to arrive at a conclusion.

5.1.1 What are the Main Challenges that Confronts the Hotel Industry in Morocco as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic?

From the data accumulated from the open-ended questions, the major challenges confronting the COVID-19 pandemic were health and safety concerns, challenge in getting new customers, absence of airline operations for tourist, budget reduction of customers, occupancy drop, job security, infrastructural deterioration, meeting targets, and finally, uncertainty. From the result, three major challenges were identified by majority of the respondents. This includes health and safety concerns by 41% of the respondents, getting customers by 34% of the respondents and 23% said the absence of airline operation for tourist. There has always been a certain level of risk involved in travel and tourism, however, due to the pandemic, tourists are now having growing concerns on contracting this virus or having their health compromised due to exposure (Kozak & al., 2007) This result ties into the research carried out by Longwoods International in 2020, in April, where according to the survey that was carried out 48% of Americans in the US cancelled their trips and 43% of them changed

their travel plans due to the perceived risk of contracting the virus abroad. Moreover, when asked about their decision to travel in the coming months, 66% stated that this will affect their decision to travel in the coming 6months (Longwoods international, 2020). The results obtained ties also into previous statement saying that longer-term effects of COVID-19 are still unclear but have the tendency to manifest with the reduction in customer demand for the hospitality services because of health precautions and hygiene (Dube & al., 2020). From this result, it shows that reduction in the health risk associated with the pandemic in the hotel will help in attracting customers into the hotel.

5.1.2 Has the Hotel Industry in Morocco Developed any New Touristic Product During the Pandemic? And How Do They Aim to Achieve Product Adaptation with Respect to the COVID-19 Pandemic?

When asked about the development of a new touristic product during the pandemic, 53.8% of the respondents said yes, while the remaining said no. The majority of the respondents said yes as a result of the need to stay in business even in difficult situations and so, from being enquired about the reason behind the development of the services and product, it was seen that 19% of the respondents (which was the majority) said attracting newer customers was their top priority. Interestingly, 14% stated conforming to COVID-19 health and safety measures was the reason for the development. These results agree with the statement that says that room rates at many 5-star hotels in the world will dramatically reduce their normal cost, with rates at 4-star hotels falling even more. Feiran & al. (2020).

When asked about how they aim to achieve product adaptation with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, 30% of the respondents (the majority of the respondents) stated that their product adaptation strategy will be to improve the service delivery, 25% stated that COVID-19 health and safety standard was their strategy, another 25% stated innovating new product and services was their strategy. Some of the improvement in services as stated by the respondents incorporating social distancing between rooms, take out delivery services, thorough cleaning protocols, utilizing more protective equipment's in the establishments and employing digital technology. This result is similar to a study carried out by Bagnera & al. (2020), where they investigated the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on hotel operations as well as the recommended series of actions that needed to be taken by the hotel owners and management. From the results, it showed that reducing the capacity of the hotels, intensifying the cleaning schedule, encouraging more take out delivery services, improving the welfare and protection of their staff by employing the use of protective equipment, communicating more clearly the cleaning protocols that needed to be followed with respect to the guidelines given by the government and implementing protocols for certain guest that were exposed to the virus by subjecting them to quarantine. Moreover, it is also very important that hotel management adapts their products to the specific country their establishment is situated, in order for the solution to be country specific. And so, what works in the hotel industry in Western or European countries, might not work so well for African nations like Morocco.

5.1.3 What are the Plans or Adjustments/Changes Being Made in the Hotel Industry in a Post COVID-19 Economy in Morocco?

From the ranked factors, the result showed that post COVID-19 crisis management was ranked by the respondents as the most important factor having a mean ranking of 4.642 and percentage of 17.76%. This indicates that COVID-19 crisis management is a very important factor that the hotel management considers. Moreover, from the Pearson correlation, it was seen that there is a high significant positive correlation between Post COVID-19 marketing strategies and Post COVID-19 Crisis management having an r-coefficient of 0.606. This means an effective crisis management strategy will result in an effective marketing strategy. Furthermore, a high significant positive correlation between the Post COVID-19 crisis marketing strategies and Employees motivation was also found, having an r-coefficient of 0.589. This suggest that an increase in post COVID-19 Crisis management plan will increase the motivation of the workforce to offer more improved services. From the data accumulated from the open-ended questions on action plan and preparedness for a post COVID-19 economy, 35% of the respondents (majority) stated that revising payment plan for customer is their strategy by rates (prices) reduction, 25% of the stated innovating newer products and 25% said digitalization. This is due to a reduction in the customer booking pattern that has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. And so, hotel management won't be able to offer the same experience as in the past and would need to tailor their pricing strategy to work for their current market size. This finding is consistent with research carried out by the Feiran & al. (2020), where a study was carried out to analyze the room rates with respect to the districts, star ratings, and the overall trends in Hong Kong. From the data accumulated from the hotels studied, it was seen that there was a significant decline in the price after the pandemic in Hong Kong. And so, this trend

points towards the fact that the hotel industry in Hong Kong responded by lowering the prices of their rooms. This lightened the burden of the customers by making it easier for hotels to still be occupied during the pandemic. As time went on, however, the prices rebounded to a more stable value. Interestingly, some of the hotel management responded by improvement in digital technology, which attracted more customers to the establishment.

5.3 Conclusion

One of the major setbacks on how the hospitality industry is built is its dependency on travel. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a ban and restrictions on travel as the cases keep rising on a day to day basis, with millions of people dead already. This has adversely affected the hospitality sector, leading to a drop in revenue and occupancy. This thesis aimed to investigate the impact of COVID-19 in the hospitality industry in Morocco as well as the management plans that are being put in place to tackle the problem. From the research, three of the main challenges that confronts the hotel industry in Morocco as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic was enquired, has the hotel industry in Morocco developed any new touristic product during the pandemic, and how do they aim to achieve product adaptation with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that the main challenges confronted by the Hospitality market in Morocco are health and safety concerns, getting customers and the absence of airline operation for tourists. Following this, when asked how they aim to achieve product adaptation with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic, majority of the respondents stated that their product adaptation strategy will be to improve the service delivery, others stated that COVID-19 health and safety standard was their strategy, another group stated innovating new product and services was their strategy. Finally, on action plan and preparedness for a post COVID-19 economy, most of the

respondents (majority) stated that revising payment plan for customer is their strategy, others stated innovating newer products and more said digitalization. In all, it is important to put together an effective management plan to identify and pinpoint as well as control the impact of the virus on the establishment.

5.4 Further Research and Research Limitation

This research was carried out to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel industry in Morocco and how management (Owners-Managers) are coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. The research was carried out during a pandemic, meaning there were a lot of obstacle that needed to be overcome in order for the research to move forward. The restrictions and lockdowns were one of the major issues making difficulties as the contacts acquired from their websites weren't operational. In addition, the contact with the respondents was complicated, since they claimed being all the time busy and I had to elicit repeatedly a response from them. As well as the short time limitation, it was so stressful waiting for the data to be collected taking in consideration that the chosen respondents had to be well qualified to be able to give relevant and non-biased answers. And finally, the lack of previous relevant papers and researches made in the same field of study covering the same area, I believe that this issue was related to the fact that the topic is a novel one and didn't have much time to be discussed and covered by various studies and research papers.

However, efforts were made and I managed to attain some personal contacts and sent the survey to them directly with information on what the survey entails. In this research, I managed to explore properly the crisis phases of the pandemic as well as the post pandemic crisis management plan put together by the hotel management. However, the strategies pinpointed by the hotel management are only feasible for short

term period and so, won't be applicable for future complicated problems. Once the government schemes are over, however, there will still be growing problems with respect to the bookings, difficulty with respect to their employees and many more problems. Hotel management might face more problems where they are still unable to function optimally as government support schemes like the CNSS (caisse nationale de la sécurité sociale) might not always be available. Therefore, more research is needed in Morocco to explore in greater details to explore the post-lockdown more thoroughly, in order to properly research on what the strategic solutions for the hotel's lockdown periods would be and how to efficiently as well as optimally manage their workforce and focus on social sustainability of their establishment.

Once the lockdown and restrictions have been lifted, more research can be carried on ground to ascertain the final results with respect to the how effective the strategic plans are in dealing with the crisis to get a broader comprehensive picture of the action plans.

It is also crucial for companies to adapt to new customer requirements and review the pricing strategy taking into consideration purchasing power. I also recommend hotels to remain present on social networks and electronic platforms to keep their place in the market as well as their customers. Hotel must also promote contactless exchanges during check-in, access to rooms and social distancing in their POS to guarantee a healthy and safe journey to their guests and encourage them to revisit their place.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Hotel Industry and Management Preparations for Post COVID-19 Economy.

Dear Respondents,

Good day, please I am conducting a research on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Hotel Industry and How Owners-Managers are preparing for a post COVID-19 Economy in Morocco. Therefore, I kindly request you participate in this survey as your response will be instrumental in acquiring the necessary data for the research. I want to assure you that the data acquired from this survey will be used majorly for the purpose of research. Thank you.

Section A: Demographics

1. Your Establishment is in activity since?

- 2 to 5 years
- 5 to 10 years
- 10 to 20 years
- 20 to 30 years
- 30 or more

2. What is the legal form of your establishment?

- International Chain hotel
- National Chain hotel
- Franchise business
- Partnership

3. Who are your target clients?

- Local touristic

- From 1 to 25%
- From 25 to 50%
- From 50 to 75%
- From 75to 100 %
- International touristic
 - From 1 to 25%
 - From 25 to 50%
 - From 50 to 75%
 - From 75to 100 %
- Business peoples
 - From 1 to 25%
 - From 25 to 50%
 - From 50 to 75%
 - From 75to 100 %

4. Where mainly do your international tourists come from?

.....

Section B: Human Resource Management

5. Does your establishment plan to target international tourists in the near future?

.....

6. Do you keep your business operating?

- All year round (12 months)
- On a seasonal basis

7. What are the months during which your establishment is in high season?

- January to April
- May to August

- September to December

8. During the past twelve months, what was the total number of employees in your establishment including yourself?

We mean here the employees under your payroll; this excludes volunteers, unpaid interns or unpaid community workers.

.....

9. How many of these employees were full time?

.....

10. In the past twelve months, have you hired new people?

- Yes
- No

If yes how many of them are still working with your organization?

- Yes
- No

11. In which month (s) of operation did you have the maximum number of employees, which should correspond to your high season?

.....

12. Are you required to recruit extra employees during high season?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what is the percentage of the seasonal employees in relation to your full time employees?

.....

13. Does your establishment open on demand outside its operating months?

14. Has your establishment developed a new product or service?

- Yes
- No

If yes, was the product developed internally or using external consultants?

- Yes
- No

15. For what main reason (s) did you develop this product (s) or service (s)?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Section C: Post COVID-19 and Crisis Management

16. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not at all important and 5 is very important, how important are the following issues to your institution (currently or potentially)?

Post Covid19 crisis management

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Post Covid19 marketing strategies

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Electronic Interfaces for post Covid19 crisis

- 1
- 2

- 3
- 4
- 5

Employees' motivation

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Employees 'career development

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Employees 'turnovers

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

17. Do you think that you touristic product needs to be adapted for post Covid19 crisis?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how are you willing to achieve this product adaptation?

18. Did the Moroccan Government provided you with any kind of support during and post the pandemic?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please state what kind of support did you receive? And do you think that it is enough for your institution to move forward the pandemic?

.....
.....

19. What the main challenges for the post pandemic era in your opinion?

.....
.....

20. In case of there would be another pandemic or crises, would you think that you are going to be prepared for it? Do you think you do have the necessary financial, managerial, and human resources necessary tools and strategies to face it?

.....
.....
.....
.....

21. If you have to the choice to join another industry rather than the hospitality one, would you do it?

.....
.....
.....
.....

22. Could you please tell us how will you be prepared for a post COVID-19 , and what are the action plans you'll adapt ?

.....
.....
.....