

Management of the Crisis during the COVID-19 Epidemic: Dead Sea Hotels in Jordan - Case Study

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Many investors and researchers couldn't have predicted the impact of COVID-19 and its negative impacts on the tourism sector in Jordan and the Dead Sea sites across the region. Within three months, Jordan's visitors and the domestic tourism economy programs cancelled package travel and transport services; from the Ministry of Health, the average occupancy rate of hotels declined, reducing the level of accommodation in Dead Sea hotels by more than 83%, compared to the tourism industry average. The hotel industry in Jordan and tourism groups were largely caught unawares. They had to swiftly make creative solutions to solve problems arising from the crisis, find ways to reduce damage and total costs, and finally, increase revenues. In this paper, we recognise the impact, the consequences of COVID-19 on Dead Sea hotels in Jordan, and the relevant human resources procedures utilised to tackle the economic crisis. Conclusions show that unpaid vacation and layoff programs were the most common among popular Dead Sea hotel manager's decisions.

Key words: *COVID-19, Hotels Tourism Sector, Human Resources Management Policies, Crisis Management*

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 broke out in China in 2019; it then spread to the world and reached its peak in Jordan in November 2020. The percentage of Jordan people infected with the disease reached 24%. destroying Jordan's tourism sector. The first cases of covid-19 were diagnosed in Jordan in 2019, and the trend has been constantly upward and transmission has been highly infectious. The disease was announced in Jordan in February 2020 and expanded to both main cities and all-regions (Kang et al. ,2020, World Health Organisation, 2020).

COVID-19 has generated a scare not only in Jordan's population but also in tourists and potential tourists. On March 12, the World Health Organisation (WHO) issued an emergency guidance advisory for travellers and airlines to all countries because of the epidemic outbreak of COVID-19. This early warning has severely impacted the Jordan tourism industry and associated retailer tourist agencies. For example, since March 2020, the number of visitors in Jordan tourism destinations to the Dead Sea, Petra, Wadi Rum (one of Jordan's premier attractions) decreased by as much as 83 percent (World Health Organisation, et al., 2020, Beh et al., 2021 and Doan, 2021).

The facility recorded a low occupancy rate below 86%. The result is therefore a net loss of USD 83 million a month, broadly in line with expectations, and the losses of the Jordanian tourism sector are estimated at one billion dinars (Hindi, 2020). According to the Jordan tourism board, Queen Alia International Airport's retail business process dropped by more than 88 percent. Since early March 2019, travellers have been rare in the Jordan trade exhibition for industry, either having postponed or cancelled for five months. Nonetheless, in the wake of the disaster, the hotel occupancy ratio has crashed to less than 5 percent at the desert tourism sites, from as high as 83 percent in early March. In late March, hotel occupancy plummeted to as low as two percent. Therefore, we have a rough estimate of how much separative measurement Jordan will lose, about USD three billion, and 55 percent of jobs that are tourism-related, as a result of COVID-19 (Jordan Tourism Board, 2020).

As expected, given the effect of COVID-19, hotels and other accommodation providers had to take urgent measures to redress the situation and to contain the Covid-19 epidemic and manage the immediate crisis for a strategy for organisational survival. Thus, developing the project's research questions and methodology included: (1) How, and to what extent, has the global disease outbreak of COVID-19 affected the Jordan hotel industry? (2) What were the methodology for the strategies response of the hotels and accommodation providers to sustain their various aspects of sustainability and the economics of survival? (3) What were the human resources strategies to be adopted by most large Jordan hotels after gross operating profits and profit margins? Therefore, this article concentrates on analysing the methodology of the effects of the COVID-19 disease outbreaks, specifically in the hotel sector in Jordan, and reviews updated methods of the hotel's crisis management in terms of human resources, structures and procedures, in order to best respond to the challenge of the pandemic. (WHO, 2020, Tawaha & Alabdallat, 2021, Chen et al., 2021 and Ertaş et al., 2021).

Relevant background information

A Review of covid-19

In December 2019, the Chinese President announced that the coronavirus COVID-19 is an infectious disease transmitted between humans; Jordan had not recorded any new infections until March 15, 2020. On March 17, the number of confirmed cases with the disease reached

40. Royal Jordanian, the official airline company in Jordan, cancelled all flights to Jordan, and the government closed all borders (Panayotakis, 2021).

Since the start of the coronavirus pandemic and as of March, there have been 155,669 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Jordan. Of these, there have been 1998 deaths and 90,267 recoveries. According to the WHO, Jordan peaked in the epidemic in November 2020, with the number of new Coronavirus cases recorded (Sachs et al., 2021).

De (2011) and Cruickshank (2021) have argued that it was the psychological pressure and impact from COVID-19 rather than the coronavirus itself that damaged Jordan's tourism and accommodations industry, that there may be several possible reasons why COVID-19 is a matter of mass anxiety to the central and local government agencies and tourism sector. First, disease infection can be deadly, although the death rate is disagreed upon between government agencies. This estimate is based on reports received by WHO, with the rate of about 12 percent, while Jordan health Epidemiology Committee consultants suppose it should be closer to 10 percent (Oducado et al., 2021). Second, an efficient vaccine against COVID-19 is unavailable for the disease Until 2021, only less than 0.005% of the population received the vaccine.. Medical experts at the Ministry of Health in Amman, Jordan, think that a vaccine maybe three years away until 2021 there. However, some have said vaccines entered the final human testing stages last week (Rogers, 2021). Third, the disease has already spread far beyond the borders of the countries (Israel, Iraq, Syrian, Arab Gulf States and Egypt) to all regions through unknown sources, and this means that the virus has become an international epidemic, and is spreading fast. Fourth, based on the latest available data indicating that the covid-19 is not being controlled (Aljarrah et al., 2021).

COVID-19 is a real threat that has aroused deep concern among workers in Jordan's travel and hospitality sector. As stated by a spokesperson for the Jordan Society of Tourism and Travel Agents (JSTA), the expansion of COVID-19 could cost the Mediterranean region of Jordan US\$1.6 million daily. The comprehensive ban causes tour cancellations for the peak periods of the tourism season, from both international tourism and domestic tourism. The pandemic continues to decimate our agents' tourism, seriously threatening many small business travel agents, apartments, motels, hotels, retail outlets and airlines (Nofal et al., 2020). The chairman of the Jordan Society of Tourism and Travel Agents (JSTA) calculated that with the epidemic outbreak of COVID-19, the Jordan tourism industry is facing massive job and revenue losses of about US\$1.6 million a day (Faour at al., 2021). The JSTA has encouraged the government and medical agencies to identify all possible steps to combating COVID-19.

The Ministry of Health has declared that the new epidemic covid-19 has tremendously impacted the hotels, catering and tourism sectors. The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jordan Hotel Association announced that less than three of the more than 100 people who had made reservations at a five-star hotel in Dead Sea hotels confirmed their reservation in 2019-2020. As for the occupancy rate of hotels in the Dead Sea, since the outbreak, the market

share is in the single digits; five-star hotels recorded a growth rate of only 5% on a typical day in 2020, equivalent to nine hotel rooms (Ministry of Health,2020 and Alqassieh et al.,2020). During the first week of March 2020, the average daily business turnover rate measured in terms of value in the Queen Alia International Airport dropped more than 86 percent, and by 94 percent in the following month. Jordan Aviation had carried an average of 450,000 passengers a month, for the first quarter of 2020 had to cancel more than 85 percent of its capacity, and Air Arabia also had to decrease its weekly capacity by 88 percent (Tawalbeh et al.,2021). The extreme drop in visitors to Jordan, the coronavirus disease, and severely reduced profitability index among companies within the tourism industry has meant that hotels, travel agents,and airlines have had to adopt several temporary cost-saving measures. Job-related training costs were the most significant targets for cost reduction (Khalifa et al.,2021).

Crisis Management

Since the confirmation of the first COVID-19 cases, crisis management (CM) has become one of the research subjects and the hot topics in Jordan. Yin (2021) and Sosa and López (2021) assert that the tourism industry is prone to crisis economies and that disaster plans must also focus on treatment and must be planned for and managed. Unfortunately, economists and business scholars are traditionally focused on the effective prevention of disaster management; very few studies have investigated post-event consequences, the effect of epidemic mitigation or disaster (Maruf, 2021). The main objective of crisis management aims to be well prepared for a crisis; in the case of the outbreak of COVID-19 in Jordan, it is to support the hotel and national tourism organisations combat the outbreak of infectious COVID -19 disease and survive in the competitive current market crash. If they fail to reduce customers, employees, stakeholders, manage anxiety during coronavirus, post updates to customers.(Jawabreh,2020)

Alotaiby (2020) and El Sawy (2020) state that organisational behaviour is for managers of the organisation very much affected by the mindset that influences the beliefs and behaviour of the group's members of the organisation concerned. They suggested that effective crisis management can improve organisational performance; managing a crisis requires changes to an organisation's culture, structure, and management mentality. Tao (2020) proposed a 'Future Research Directions in Organisational Turnaround', which includes strategic leadership, reorientation, adaptive learning, and the role of stakeholders.

Involuntary Separations

The Ministry of Health (MOH) had dealt with the pandemic well. The tourism and hospitality industries have had to cut off their relationships with labourers because it is an economic necessity for all countries involved in pandemics and the international community. In this particular case, there was a need for mandatory separation of staff to achieve the desired reduction of staff costs. These strategies have to be well designed and correspond to local realities. When a manager decides to terminate an employee, a decision to terminate a



continuing appointment will constitute an administrative decision, legally defensible involuntary separation resulting from corrective action. Therefore, downsizing usually involves reductions in personnel (Oh et al., 2021), of staffing redundancies. Layoffs also happen when a firm requires cancelling some positions (Abuelnasr, 2020). The cost of employees is enormous; to reduce staff costs decreasing the number of hotels can reduce the hotel industry labour operations costs. Although it has to be said that layoffs have kept increasing not only in the tourism sector but also in all sectors during the economic crisis, workers are laid off faster and with fewer opportunities of being employed again (Korniienko & Barchi, 2020). The savings are insufficient, and other advantage plans, including health insurance, wellness benefits, and wellness benefits. Mobbs (2020) said Can long-term benefits more than the total costs of legal separation payments computation dole and other expenses payments may arise that related jobs with the most layoffs? That said, domestic workers and co-workers lose their jobs clearly will significantly impact Dead Sea hotels. Employee morale is being threatened and subjected to various organisational changes when job security is the topic in question (Lazim & Wahab, 2020). Thus, employee separation sensitive issue for many firms; management must have to be handled with great care.

METHODOLOGY

The instrumental case study uses a particular case. The Dead Sea Hotels, Jordan, was chosen because its tourism industry has been known for making a carried out effort to target foreign tourists, and Dead Sea hotels have been among the most valuable sectors. Dead Sea hotels are chosen because the workers' sector received the hardest blow due to covid-19 when the Ministry of Health in Jordan decided: that these hotels were quarantine areas for persons exposed to patients. Within a few weeks, the occupancy rates of tourist hotels plummeted by approximately 87%. Interviews with directors of the hotels were applied in collecting information and qualitative data. Sampling was pulled from several directors and Boards staff of Dead Sea hotels. In this study, due to the limited availability of managers and the nature of the studied population, and different response rates, Our study had several limitations. The issue selection was partially judgmental, and the judgmental sample is the hotels' staff. The sample was not very large, and the possible role of epidemic Key informant interviews are in-depth interviews with directors who know what the procedures are, truths in the tourism sector, Respondents in this study, didn't randomly sample There is no pre-stated quota sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in this study. While the managers were asked in an open-ended question format, concentrating on the hotels' sector after the epidemic spread of COVID-19 in Jordan in late March 2020 and to the human resource management strategy utilised by the hotels to handle the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. The Tape-Recorded Interview has been an essential resource, Reliability, and validity in an article based on tapes and transcripts, and the narratological process of turning transcripts into truths with the agreement between the interviewer and researcher. Content analysis a widely used as a qualitative research technique, and Interpretive methodologies were used in this research. To deal with The issue of subjectivity is of significant worry in philosophy across business disciplines. In the

interpretation and reduce it, bias and reactivity, informant feedback or respondent validation were handy tools to verify the accuracy and credibility of resources of the information.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Dead Sea Hotels has 2200 rooms, resorts with a full range of amenities and activities, and an exceptional Spa, including a The hotels have a Coffee Shop, Meeting Rooms, Lounge Bar, Tea Lounge, Banquet Hall, American Restaurant, Health Club, Swimming Pool and Shop, Jordan's Restaurant, Banquet Hall, .21,000 people full-time employees before March 2020. Then, in March 2020, Jordan's Ministry of Health announced that the COVID-19 patients sent to isolation area at the hotels in June 2020, Up to 8000 patients can be accommodated, and that a specialized medical team: doctors, nurses, physiotherapists organised by the Ministry of Health will take care the patients. Ministry of Health said the decision would help hospitals return to focusing on patients with non-coronavirus-related conditions. The news frightened all of the hotel's residents and possibility clients. Table 1 shows that the occupancy rate of hotels dropped from an average of 77.23% in March 2020 to 11.00% in May and further dropped to 7% in July. Total food department and accommodations revenue were significantly affected in April 2020, which slumped more than 84.84 in June compared to March. During the following months, hotel occupancy in the Dead Sea has decreased by more than 80% compared to the previous month's by 7.00% in July, due to the continuous decline in occupancy rates and revenues. In addition to the above, F&B revenues decreased by more than 84% in May compared to the months before.

There is a significant gap in terms of employment rate; it was found that there was a cut in employee numbers in May 2020. It was found that there was a cut in hotels that cut employee number, pay in response to the corona-19 pandemic. In an Interview for a Hotels General Managers, they concentrated that HR practices adopted by management are perceived or attributed and other strategies to reduce labour costs like Use overtime, Use a business optimization tool, Have the right people in the right place at the right time, Engage your employees without laying off employees.

Hoteliers share how they've responded to the economic epidemic crisis in the past, in response to the crisis, hotels reactions to the COVID-19 crisis. First, Hotels have finalized sterilization and disinfection to ensure that they were virus-free. Hotels have finalized sterilization and disinfection to ensure that they were virus-free. Second, both the employees who have been serving on.

Table 1. The Dead Sea Hotels Statistics from March to Jul 2020

Items	March	April	May	June	July
Hotel Room Occupancy (%)	87.23	15.60	11.82	7.91	7.0
Room Revenues as Comparison between the month before (%)	-	-80.88	-88.47	-90.63	-96.18
F&B Revenues as Comparison between the month before (%)	-	-78.70	-82.22	-84.84	-84.22
No. of full-time employees	22.000	16.532	11.200	6500	4300

Source: Interview with senior managers of the **Dead Sea Hotels** Hotel, **Jordan**.

First, ensuring physical distancing and enhancing hygiene. Second, The Jordan Hotels Association cares for the interests of its members who have been serving on the hotels where the index patient had stayed, and the other hotels' workers were asked to make medical examination covid-19 check-ups. Third, the health protocols and The Inspection Administrative Procedure was inspected to help slow the spread of coronavirus disease Fourth; special instructions were issued by the Dead Sea Region Medical Officer of Health staff members, health team members, other emergency responders to prevent healthcare-associated infections. To fix the tourism sector's *damaged hotel reputation*, the Dead Sea Hotel designed a platform to send health instructions message on its website about a safe and comfortable environment. The message cited the Jordan Ministry of Health's evaluation that it was 100% safe and secure and "virus-free" as a testimonial to improve the sector reputation for honesty and reliability as a tourism business. A short period of time Business tourism was expected. The effects of the global pandemic and tourism crisis, such as reducing tourism from leading sources Arab, USA, and Europe, contributed to sluggish economic growth. Until the Coronavirus was brought kept the situation under control in Jordan, the Dead Sea hotels marketing & Events Executive a tourist agency determined to pull all its society promoting campaigns. After March, The hotel itself has an essential function as a conference center in the dead sea to lower annual operating costs. The hotels themselves operated functions such as arranging the meetings and events, which had initially been outsourced. The slump in economic activity cuts across tourism sectors in-room and restaurant revenues; requirements for facilities, services, and equipment were examined with the hotel directors. The HR department has to hire Human Resources leadership, management, policies, Effective measures to lessen the labour burden of hotels affected by epidemic, reduce Perquisites or voluntary benefits, and we can hope, but we have to prepare for the worst *scenarios*.

These exceptional measures included:

- overcoming structural barriers and promoting human resources specific measures to enable the potential of all employees to take their annual unpaid vacation from April 2020

- The facility has a written procedure *requiring employees* to stay home if they have symptoms of the pandemic from April 2020;
- The 2300 total laid-off employees come from all hotels functions, accounting for 12% percent of the of the hotel's total labour force of dead sea hotels, in April 2020; and
- Closing down many Operations Functions, Small service businesses such as bars, restaurants, food services, wedding parties in April because the Hospitality industry faces some of the ever lowest employee retention rates in history. All employees in this function, all staff of the accommodation because of the low business turnover and The high turnover of staff in the hotel business, are a reality and eventually; new staff members on probation during the coronavirus crisis in April were fired.

The disease will not start stabilizing until mid-2021. The WHO will not lift its advisory against travel to Jordan with the highest numbers of confirmed coronavirus cases, noting that the MOH has recently set up an agency for covid-19 for this purpose. Doctors are fighting a battle against the disease that wasn't being contained in all Jordan regions. However, The Government has acknowledged that the high pandemic of covid-19 rates undermines efforts to increase tourism and improve the Jordan economy much in March. They say that many people have been affected by covid-19 and closed their tourism business. Many people have been taking "You can only circle" In sum, it maintained a diligent, responsible, and consistent attitude towards vesting Jordan. Other regional and interregional of featured various industrial tourism sectors of Available credible *information suggested that It might take* a while about 3years before travellers to *recover the confidence* of investors and travellers in Jordan; we must help societies and markets recover their vitality.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, systematic strategic planning for the tourism sector in Jordan should be made to address the tourism and health problems; thus, several recommendations relevant to the tourism sector were made. First, Different departments take different approaches to internal crisis knowledge sharing, mostly not systematic. However, it seemed that such a hotel would not be equipped to act as contingency facilities and plans to deal with such a crisis. Well, there's a perfectly reasonable way to handle this pandemic situation to assert that Whatever the crisis reasons, crises become increasingly complicated and that The nature and impact of the measures taken on the implementation of the selected recommendations will differ. It would be useless and unrealistic to hope for a successful outcome to the crisis management process; with few scientific leads, they would have to rely on local crisis management knowledge, and There is no single method for manage all crises; this, however, has inherent difficulties and limitations. Decision makers also need to analyse potential interrelationships between crisis policies so that one policy does not reduce preparation efficiency. However, owing to the current health crisis, preparations for that new status would be somewhat delayed. Uncertainty on the issue impacts preparations for the crisis can be three-fold: This requires continued monitoring and preventive action; reactive approach to dealing with deficiencies; and recovery-

oriented programs and to share that evidence of a crisis. Other tactics can greatly affect the quality and increased promotion; tactics can be in two ways: incident-specific areas for crisis fact-finding and the Jordan tourism workers in specific corporations and institutions. Table 2 shows these strategies and tactics that help illustrate; there are abundant opportunities to strengthen attention Facilities for handling the COVID-19 epidemic in the hotel sector. Second, the human resources manager's orders from the defense ministry have a crucial role in these efforts in the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the one hand, we have people that say, Ad hoc reports on human resources in response to requests from measures such as all they layoffs involving over 2300 people, and unpaid leave of three months has to be executed so that hotels can find a way to *survive the crisis*. without their money. On the other hand, several challenges remain; crisis management must be a holistic process to handle all pre-disaster phases to post-disaster phases effectively. Human resources management has to be alert to the legal and moral, ensure minimum health and safety standards to all workers, personal commitment and concrete actions, and issues of recruitment, deployment, promotion, motivation, morale, and employee performance. Under such circumstances, the hotels were faced with a layoff; This has been a *very difficult decision*.

Table 2. It is recommended that the hotels consider Strategies and Tactics Measures in this respect. It's a handy tool for handling the delicate nature of these cases of the COVID-19 crisis.

	Incident-procedures	Corporation- procedures
Preventive measures and concrete actions	1.follow WHO standard procedures for internal control of Security, hygiene, and health in the workplace	5.A new sense of crisis maturity with developing the radar system to scan the PESTLE ENVIRONMENT
	2.Establish the health standard of internal control and accountability within the hotel industry in Jordan.	6.Many directors reported that their capacities to prepare for the crisis were insufficient to deal with rare resources and an uncertain environment. Therefore the hotels need efficient management of human, financial, physical resources.
	3.An alert crisis system to inform of the launching of new update of pandemic	7.prepares detailed generic technical and proposals for the contingency plan to support the existing dead sea hotels
	4.needs imposing on the rest of the hotels a persistent sense of crisis and uncertainty in the environment	

<i>reactive</i> measures	8. Proposed the Occupational Safety, Health, and regulations protect workers, visitors from work hazards, and covid-19 infectious in the tourism sector.	11. The government will have to take measures in the and socio-economic fields to stem the outflow of skilled workers, financial resources from the dead sea region
	9. To provide specific training for professionals, assistants, and national staff members about hygiene, covid-19 disease	12. Promote business turnover, improve and promote business flexibility, domestic tourist travel, and investment confidence.
	10. meet with staff and praise their work, which he acknowledged was accomplished with limited resources and gave assurances of the government's support by the Law on Defense.	13. Establish policies and programs that will develop anticipated redundancies or layoffs that may occur to ensure that Jordanian is the last to be effected
Recovery-oriented	14. That people who live in the dead sea region and Jordanian tourisms need a more positive message right now to motivate them to visit and stay at hotels	16. <i>Review</i> and update the hotels' contingency <i>plans</i> to ensure their completeness and adequacy.
	15. Provide financial support for the hotel's workers or Provide financial and moral incentives to those working in the epidemic.	

Employees, in particular, *the job market is* just terrible right now., as in Jordan. Dealing with the pandemic poorly could cause severe damage to all hotels. The following three-step procedure is proposed:

- As a minimum, all employees involved in informed in advance about one month before starting the employee service termination procedure;
- Layoff principles, standards such as measuring performance capabilities, There are certain rules that *should be made clear* to all concerned so that the layoff procedures is considered fair, equitable, and non-selective manner.;
- Finally, you have to Positive and legal and factual grounds should be *delivered to all those who* need them most will be laid off. The others who kept their job will face stress and trauma among disaster and have low morale and low productivity among staff. The hotels should



provide protection, including providing services and counseling in legal issues, human resources management procedures.

Third, it acknowledges that human resources management must play a main, vital strategic partner, comply with international and Jordanian Ministry of health standards, Jordanian tourism Industrial Standards procedures, and international norms and standards. Hotel management has to understand the importance of review labour law in the Ministry of Labour, consultations with staff on the pandemic, and establish proper internal hotel governance rules and general human resources guidelines that can be applied.

In an international pandemic crisis, it is unjustifiable to act as one pleases of hotel managers and its top management can do about a epidemic crisis such as the spread of COVID-19. It is obviously beyond the capacity of the hotel industry to work out a settlementing to the covid-19. There are, however, creative initiatives that can be acted on with institutional crisis management in the sector. Perhaps it might be helpful contributions to crisis management experts' cooperation, who founded a program to overcome the crisis.

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