

The Crisis Management Practices: The Case of Egyptian Hotels

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Abstract

This research attempts to assess crisis management practices used in 3- & 4-star hotels in great Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh. an integrated approach is implemented to enhance the crisis management system of the hotels. Moreover, the research aims to exploring the crisis management practices which applied and illustrate which practices managers consider important and which practices managers actually use during a crisis. Data collection technique for the research will be a questionnaire to collect data from different head of Departments or Assistants in 3 & 4-star hotels in great Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh. The questionnaire was sent to 450 participants Responses were received from 400 participants (89%). Obtained data will be analyzed using SPSS version 22.

The results of this research explain that 3 & 4 star hotels in great Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh must respond to internal and external hazards such as disease movement and terrorist attacks, Crisis management plan is important to promote hotels and tourist destinations to the guests and holiday advisors. Hotels invest a lot to install protective techniques, Practitioners propose disaster management frameworks using several measurements. Recovery from crisis and learning help business retention that minimizes negative impacts and prevent losses. Finally, effective crisis management plan C.M.P. and organized practices are very important to overcome the hazards and return to normal. It is suggested that knowledge management principles can improve crisis management and planning. To that extent, a conceptual framework is offered.

The research has provided hotels managers with some feedback on the overall perception of their CMP and the practices better to use in case of crises. The research has indicated That There is a positive significant statistical relationship between the crisis management practices using incase of crises and booth of the head of department's awareness about (the concept and functions) and (the Effects and Benefits) of the crises management plan (CMP).

Moreover, Most of respondents indicated that the most Practices may use in case of crisis is (Replacing high-tenure employees with line employees), followed by (Freezing pay rates), followed by (Firing employees to reduce labor force), which means that in case of any crisis the hotels industry lost a lot of experienced employees which very dangerous for the industry in case the crisis take a long term. And also, The results from the research indicated that an overall average of the Practices may use in case of crisis in Sharm hotels more than in Cairo hotels.

Keywords: Crises Management Plan, Practices, Head of Departments, Hotel, Egypt.

Introduction

According to Qoura and Ali, (2015) stated that the literature on crisis management in the hospitality industry has gone through significant developments in recent years. This was done due to the unfortunate circumstances in which many countries experienced different crisis situations (Marketa et al., 2019).

Only a small number of studies have focused on the hotel managers as a unit of analysis and investigated his day to day combat with crisis situations in his business. One of the studies that evaluated what managers do during or immediately after a triggered crisis was conducted by Israeli and Reichel, (2003).

This research also marks one of the first attempts to research crisis management of hotel managers in Egypt. Travel and tourism is a high-growth industry, forecast to increase its total economic activity by 4% worldwide in real terms over the next 10 years (WTTC, 2018).

The crisis in the Egyptian hotels industry (2011–2018) and in the Egyptian economy as a whole originates primarily from the instability of the Egyptian revolution 2011 and its adherents, also the instability in most of other Arabic countries regarding their revolutions. The most apparent outcome of this crisis is a sharp decline in the number of tourists arriving in Egypt (Abd El-zaher, 2019). In order to cope with this decline, the local hotels industry increases its reliance on the domestic market by offering a variety of package deals (Gamal & EL-Hussin, 2017).

Also, the hotel management used many practices to face this situation, the decrease in foreign visitors is compensated for by an increase in domestic tourism, resulting in a change of consumer proportions. As a result, while in 2010, number of arrivals was 14 million the number turned down in the next years to be the lowest in 2016 by 5.3 million arrivals, the same was in the Number of Hotels & resorts, Number of Rooms, Number of Nights, Number of Employees, Total income, total of salaries and the Number of beds.

Objectives of the research

- To explore the main practices using incase of crises in 3 & 4-star hotels in great Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh.
- To identify the relationship between the head of department`s awareness about (the concept and functions) and (the Effects and Benefits) of the crises management plan (CMP) and the main practices using incase of crises in 3 & 4-star hotels in great Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh.

Literature review

Okumus and Karamustafa (2005) agreed with Israeli and Reichel (2003) to present the process of creating a consistent list of practices for evaluating crisis management. The list of practices comprises four themes: marketing, infrastructure (or hotel) maintenance, human resources and governmental assistance. In each of the themes, moreover, Eugenio & Campos (2014) and Nikolaos (2018) added one theme which Information Technology. On other hand Candemir & Zalluhoglu (2011) add more one theme which is Cooperative Initiatives, practices relevant to the crisis in the hospitality industry was listed.

Table 1: The main practices used in case of crises

| Category | Practices | Author |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Human resources | Firing employees to reduce labor force. Using unpaid vacation to reduce labor force. Decreasing number of working days per week. Freezing pay rates. Replacing high-tenure employees with line employees. Increased reliance on outsourcing. Reduced our budget for training our employees. | Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006 Nikolaos,2018 Pearson et al., 2007 Kouzmin, 2008 Cretu & Alvarez, 2010 Candemir & Zalluhoglu, 2011 Okumus & Karamustafa, 2005 |
| Marketing | Marketing to domestic tourists and local merchants. Marketing to domestic tourists with focus on specific attributes of the location. Price drop on special offers. Reducing list price Marketing to foreign tourists with specific focus on the location's distinctive features and relative safety | Naidoo, 2010 Ukakturk, Bekmenzci, & Ukakturk, 2011 Wang & Ritchie, 2012 Eugenio & Campos, 2014 Falk, 2013 |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--|
| | Marketing and promoting new products or services (family events, catering) Marketing to new segments. Created awards from employee's ideas to reduce costs and/or to increase sales. Reduced the prices used to sell rooms | Jia, Shi, Jia, & Li, 2012. Seeger et al., 2003. Mitroff et al., 2001. Wang & Ritchie, 2012. |
| Information Technology | Use systematic links to further information | Nikolaos, 2018. |
| | Use multiple value-added features (key facts, maps, itineraries, distances, news, photo gallery, GPS, etc) | Eugenio & Campos, 2014. |
| | Itineraries, distances, news, photo gallery, GPS. | Candemir & Zalluhoglu, 2011. |
| | Increased the use of social media in our marketing and promotion strategy. | Okumus & Karamustafa, 2005 |
| | Increased the use of social media to better known customers' needs and desires. | Nikolaos,2018 |
| | Make an effort to properly answering to positive and negative comments uploaded online | Eugenio & Campos, 2014 |
| | Entered into strategic partnership and alliances with other companies to offer joint services | Eugenio & Campos, 2014 |
| | Entered strategic partnership and alliances to make co-marketing activities | Candemir & Zalluhoglu, 2011 |
| | Entered strategic alliances with other companies to jointly manage the buying process of product and services (gasoil, official materials etc) with the aim exploiting economies of scale | Nikolaos,2018 |
| | Entered into tourism consortia | Seeger et al., 2003 |
| Maintenance | Cost cuts by limiting hotel services | Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006 |
| | Cost cuts by postponing maintenance of the building | Ukakturk, Bekmenzci, & Ukakturk, 2011 |
| | Cost cuts by changing suppliers | Wang & Ritchie, 2012 |
| | Extending credit or postponing scheduled payments | Eugenio & Campos, 201 |
| Government | Organized protest against the lack of government support. | Candemir & Zalluhoglu, 2011 |
| | Industry-wide demand for governmental assistance with current expenses | Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006 |
| | Industry-wide demand for a grace period on tax payments | Seeger et al., 2003 |

Research methods

Population and sample

The current research is based on a quantitative-qualitative approach to achieve its aim. Data collection technique for the research will be a questionnaire to collect data from different head department managers at four & three-star hotels in Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh which counted to 172 hotels Egyptian Hotel Guide (2019). Obtained data will be analyzed using SPSS version 22. The population of the research is the managers who counted (1548 nearly) about 9 H.O.D`s in each hotel, The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, (2019). So according to Khalifa and Ali (2017), the sample will be calculated according to the following formula:

N = Research Population= 1548

Z= 0.95 = 1.96

d = 0.05

$$n = \frac{N \times p(1-p)}{\left[\left[N - 1 \times (d^2 \div z^2) \right] + p(1-p) \right]} \times N$$

p = 0.50

n = 387

The total number of the questionnaire was 450 copies, distributed on four & three-star hotels H.O.D. `s. or/and assistants as a random stratified sample, 400 were returned. The response rate reached 89%.

Sampling type

According the Egyptian Hotel Guide (2019) there are 18 four-star hotels and 40 three-star hotels in great Cairo, on other hand there are 62 four-star hotels and 52 three-star hotels in Sharm El-Sheikh.

In this study the researcher used a random stratified (staging) sample to collect data from the hotel department heads and Assistants in Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh. This staging sample includes four stages as follows:

1. Stage one: 42 questionnaires from 4-star hotels in Great Cairo
2. Stage two: 93 questionnaires from 3-star hotels in Great Cairo.
3. Stage three: 144 questionnaires from 4-star hotels in Sharm El Sheikh.
4. Stage four: 121 questionnaires from 3-star hotels in Sharm El Sheikh.

Table 2: sample stages

| Hotels category | Cairo | | Sharm El Sheikh | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| | No. of Hotels | No. of questionnaires | No. of Hotels | No. of questionnaires |
| 4 * | 18 | 42 | 62 | 144 |
| 3 * | 40 | 93 | 52 | 121 |

Great Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh City we have been chosen as the prime case research area because:

1. It is the most dominant social, political, economic, etc. center in Egypt.
2. According to the Chamber of Tourist Establishments (2019) and Egyptian Hotel Association (2019), Greater Cairo City and Sharm El Sheikh City include the biggest number of hotels in Egypt.

The researcher selected a sample of 400 four & three-star hotels H.O.D.`s. and assistants for more validity. The research used a questionnaire for data collection. A modified questionnaire was designed to explore the levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices among the head of departments and assistants that have a crisis effect on hotels' operation in Great Cairo and Sharm El sheikh. An investigation of developing H.O.D.`s and assistant`s performance in case of crisis and catastrophes were carried out using multiple sources of data, including a questionnaire, observations of the business environment, and a review of documentation.

A questionnaire form was designed and distributed to the head of departments and assistances in the selected sample during the period between September 2019 – January 2020.

Testing Validity and Reliability For validity concerns, the survey was piloted on a sample of 30 hotels department heads and 3 academic professional`s persons to check its face and content validity. The comments of questionnaire were considered in the final form, for reliability of constructs, Cronbach`s Alpha Coefficient is used, which should have a value equal to or greater than (0.7).

Table 3: Reliability analysis for sub-domains

| Variable | No. items | Reliability | Validity |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| CMP concept and Functions | 6 | 0.747 | 0.864 |
| CMP Effects and Benefits | 15 | 0.895 | 0.946 |
| Practices may use in case of crisis | 17 | 0.710 | 0.846 |

The results show that the questions have a validity and reliability which exceeded (0.70) for all respondents.

Questionnaire Design

The practices were used to build a questionnaire that was made up of three parts. The first part collected demographic information from the respondents. The second part examined the awareness of booth of the head of department`s awareness about (the concept and functions) and (the Effects and Benefits) of the crises management plan (CMP).

using a Likert scale of 1—least important to 5—most important. The third part examined the level of importance managers assigned and the level of actual use for each of the 17 crisis management practices using the same Likert scale ranging from 1—extensively used to 5—rarely used.

The questionnaire was sent to 450 participants who included middle-level managers, department heads and other senior managers of different 3 & 4-star hotels in Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh. Responses were received from 400 participants (89%). The sample group demographics are presented in Table 2. The majority were men. Ages ranged between 20 and 40, and all of them held management positions.

The research has two main hypotheses for analyzing crisis management.

h1: There is a positive significant statistical relationship between the crisis management practices using incase of crises and the head of department`s awareness about the concept and functions of crises management plan (CMP).

h2: There is a positive significant statistical relationship between the head of department`s awareness about the CMP Effects and Benefits and the crisis management practices using incase of crises.

Results

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents

| Variable | Frequency No(n=450) | Percent % |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Gender | | |
| Male | 391 | 97.8 |
| Female | 9 | 2.3 |
| Age | | |
| 20:30 | 45 | 11.3 |
| 30:40 | 212 | 53.0 |
| 40:50 | 108 | 27.0 |
| 50:60 | 34 | 8.5 |
| >60 | 1 | .3 |
| Hotel Area | | |
| Cairo | 139 | 34.8 |
| Sharm | 261 | 65.3 |
| category: | | |
| 3 stars | 220 | 55.0 |
| 4 Stars | 180 | 45.0 |

According to table 4:

- 1- Most of respondents were males (97.8%) and very few were females (2.3%) which means that the hotels field not attracted for the female employees or there are not continued to be a manager.
- 2- Most of respondents ages between 30 to less than 50 years old 30:40 (53%) followed by 40:50 (27%) and very few over 50 years old (8.8%) which means that the filed lost his

experienced managers and also most of them changed their carrier before the fiftieth years' old

Table 5: Descriptive for the concept of crisis and crisis management plan

| The concept of crisis and crisis management plan | Range | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------|-------|----------------|
| A crisis is any situation that has the potential to affect long-term confidence in an organization or a product, or which may interfere with its ability to continue operating normally. | 2-5 | 3.888 | 0.742 |
| CMP is a tool to consider every kind of possibility and give advice in case a crisis happens. | 2-5 | 3.898 | 0.830 |
| CMP is a tool for the quick response to a possible threat | 2-5 | 3.815 | 0.805 |
| CMP is a tool to organize the performance in case a crisis happens. | 2-5 | 3.963 | 0.638 |
| CMP is a tool to minimize losses or damages. | 3-5 | 4.075 | 0.762 |
| it is a written document outlining the official procedures applying in case of crisis | 3-5 | 4.418 | 0.574 |

According to table 5, the concept (it is a written document outlining the official procedures applying in case of crisis) was highly respond, followed by the concept (CMP is a tool to minimize the losses or damages), which agreed with (Jie, 2018), (Wang & Ritchie, 2012) and (Hartmann,2011)

table (6): - Descriptive for CMP Effects and Benefits

| CMP Effects and Benefits | Range | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------|-------|----------------|
| 3/1- Minimize hotel loses | 2-5 | 3.888 | 0.841 |
| 3/2- Maximize hotel secure | 2-5 | 3.988 | 0.941 |
| 3/3- Minimize staff turn over | 1-5 | 3.063 | 0.900 |
| 3/4- Maximize staff loyalty | 2-5 | 3.410 | 0.658 |
| 3/5- Increase staff motivation | 2-5 | 3.383 | 0.723 |
| 3/6- Improving staff performance | 2-5 | 3.610 | 0.836 |
| 3/7- Team work building | 2-5 | 3.730 | 0.737 |
| 3/8-Maximize hotel profits | 2-5 | 3.283 | 0.972 |
| 3/9- Reorganize manning guide | 2-5 | 3.605 | 0.745 |
| 3/10- Hotel reputation improvement | 2-5 | 3.518 | 0.994 |
| 3/11- Increase hotel market share | 2-5 | 3.828 | 0.710 |
| 3/12- It is a competitive advantage for hotel | 2-5 | 3.523 | 0.950 |
| 3/13- Minimize of customers complaints | 2-5 | 3.480 | 0.819 |
| 3/14- Minimize of fines and compensations | 3-5 | 3.835 | 0.692 |
| 3/15- Not to withdraw licenses temporarily from the hotel | 3-5 | 4.363 | 0.618 |

According to Table 6, the most CMP Effects and Benefits is (Not to withdraw licenses temporarily from the hotel) with mean (4.363), followed by (Maximize hotel secure) with mean (3.988), followed by (Minimize hotel loses) with mean (3.888), The Effect Or Benefit (Minimize staff turnover) seemed the least important factor with total mean (3.063).

Which agreed with (Chen, 2011), (Papatheodorou & Arvanitis, 2014), Smeral, 2010), (Naidoo et. al., 2010) and (Marketa et. al., 2019).

Table 7: explained the ranking of The Practices may use in case of crisis from the higher to lowest with their means.

| The Practices may use in case of crisis | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|-------|----------------|
| 6/5- Replacing high-tenure employees with line employees | 4.64 | 0.597 |
| 6/4-. Freezing pay rates | 4.503 | 0.553 |
| 6/12 Marketing and promoting new products or services (family events, catering) | 4.355 | 0.711 |

| The Practices may use in case of crisis | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--|-------|----------------|
| 6/1- Firing employees to reduce labor force | 4.32 | 0.836 |
| 6/3- Decreasing number of working days per week | 4.213 | 0.79 |
| 6/9- Price drop on special offers | 4.19 | 0.895 |
| 6/16 Cost cuts by changing suppliers | 4.145 | 0.656 |
| 6/6- Increased reliance on outsourcing | 4.063 | 0.993 |
| 6/13 Marketing to new segments | 4.023 | 0.713 |
| 6/10- use online customer service and support (FAQs, site map, site search engine, chat, Skype, avatar, etc.) | 4.02 | 1.087 |
| 6/2-. Using unpaid vacation to reduce labor force | 4.008 | 1.073 |
| 6/15 Cost cuts by postponing maintenance of the building | 4.008 | 0.767 |
| 6/17 Extending credit or postponing scheduled payments | 3.963 | 0.733 |
| 6/14 Cost cuts by limiting hotel services | 3.948 | 0.694 |
| 6/8- increased the use of social media in our marketing and promotion strategy and to better known customers' needs and desires. | 3.925 | 0.675 |
| 6/7- Marketing to domestic tourists and local merchants | 3.57 | 1.176 |
| 6/11- Marketing to foreign tourists with specific focus on the location's distinctive features and relative safety | 3.185 | 1.041 |

According to tables 7, the most practices may use in case of crisis is (replacing high-tenure employees with line employees) with mean (4.64) , followed by (freezing pay rates) with mean (4.503), followed by (Marketing and promoting new products or services (family events, catering)) with mean (4.355) , followed by (firing employees to reduce labor force) with mean (4.32) , The Practices may use in case of crisis (Marketing to foreign tourists with specific focus on the location's distinctive features and relative safety) seemed the least important factor with total mean (3.185). Which agreed with (Pearson et al., 2007), (Kouzmin, 2008), (Cretu & Alvarez, 2010), Nikolaos (2018) and (Mansfeld & Pizam, 2006),

Table 8: Correlation co-efficient between methods which applied to develop the performance and scores of research sample (n=400)

| Correlations | | Practices may use in case of crisis | |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| CMP concept and Functions | r | 0.683 | |
| | p | <0.001** | |
| CMP Effects and Benefits | r | 0.739 | |
| | p | <0.001** | |

Statistically significant correlation at P. value <0.01

According to the table 7:

H1: There is a positive significant statistical relationship between the crisis management practices using incase of crises and the head of department`s awareness about the concept and functions of crises management plan (CMP) (r=0.683) and p. value<0.01.

H2: There is a positive significant statistical relationship between the head of department`s awareness about the CMP Effects and Benefits and the crisis management practices using incase of crises(r=0.739) and p. value<0.01.

table (9): - Comparison between scores related to hotel area of research sample (n=400)

| Variable | Max Score | Cairo | | Sharm | | Total | | P. value |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|----------|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| CMP concept and Functions | 30 | 23.32 | 2.53 | 24.45 | 2.74 | 24.06 | 2.72 | <0.001** |
| CMP Effects and Benefits | 75 | 52.86 | 7.41 | 55.38 | 7.83 | 54.5 | 7.77 | 0.002** |

| Variable | Max Score | Cairo | | Sharm | | Total | | P. value |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|------|----------|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| Practices may use in case of crisis | 85 | 67.73 | 4.31 | 69.79 | 5.03 | 69.08 | 4.89 | <0.001** |

- independent t-test* Significant difference at p. value<0.05, ** Significant difference at p. value<0.01

- The respondents from SSH Hotels have more awareness about the CMP concept and Functions with mean of (24.45) while the respondents from Cairo hotel have less awareness with mean (23.32) with Significant difference at p. value<0.01.
- The respondents from SSH Hotels have more awareness about the CMP Effects and Benefits with mean of (55.38) while the respondents from Cairo hotel have less awareness with mean (52.86) with Significant difference at p. value<0.01.
- The respondents from SSH Hotels more applied for the Practices may use in case of crisis with mean of (69.79) while the respondents from Cairo hotel less applied for the Practices may use in case of crisis with mean of (67.73) with Significant difference at p. value<0.01.

Table (10): - Comparison between scores related to category of research sample (n=400)

| Variable | Max Score | 3 stars | | 4 Stars | | Total | | P.value |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|------|---------|------|-------|------|----------|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| CMP concept and Functions | 30 | 22.04 | 1.59 | 26.52 | 1.49 | 24.06 | 2.72 | <0.001** |
| CMP Effects and Benefits | 75 | 48.25 | 4.34 | 62.14 | 2.25 | 54.5 | 7.77 | <0.001** |
| Practices may use in case of crisis | 85 | 65.97 | 3.73 | 72.87 | 3.15 | 69.08 | 4.89 | <0.001** |

- independent t-test** Significant difference at p. value<0.01

- The respondents from four-star Hotels have more awareness about the CMP concept and Functions with mean of (26.52) while the respondents from three-star hotels have less awareness with mean (22.04) with Significant difference at p. value<0.01.
- The respondents from four-star Hotels have more awareness about the CMP Effects and Benefits with mean of (62.14) while the respondents from three-star hotels have less awareness with mean (48.25) with Significant difference at p. value<0.01.
- The respondents from four star Hotels more applied for the Practices may use in case of crisis with mean of (72.87) while the respondents from three star hotels less applied for the Practices may use in case of crisis with mean of (65.97). with Significant difference at p. value<0.01.

Conclusion and limitations

This research investigated the practices which used in the Egyptian hotels industry in case of crises. The research has tested one hypothesis of how these factors (CMP concept and functions awareness,) affecting the dependent variable (practices which used in case of crises). The research has used a questionnaire to collect data from 400 Managers to perceive their opinions on the factors affect Egyptian hotels. The research has revealed very useful results in the way it evaluated the perceptions of managers on the hotels and described the factors that hotels have succeeded to offer in their CMP. Meanwhile, the research has provided hotels managers with some feedback on the overall perception of their CMP and the practices better to use in case of crises. The research has indicated that Most of respondents in booth Cairo and SSH indicated that

the most Practices may use in case of crisis is (Replacing high-tenure employees with line employees), followed by (Freezing pay rates), followed by (Firing employees to reduce labor force), which means that in case of any crisis the hotels industry lost a lot of experienced employees which very dangerous for the industry in case the crisis take a long term. And also The results from the research indicated that an overall average of the Practices may use in case of crisis in Sharm hotels more than in Cairo hotels.

Limitations and future research

According the research results the authors recommend the following:

1. The need to Issue a role to hire managerial levels employees to be have a minimum of qualifications and experiences required
2. The need to prepare a training courses for the hotels manager to train them how to manage the crises
3. The need to take an action against any unreason firing for employees.
4. The need to take an action against any stopping of salaries increase.
5. The need to prepare a role to organize the minimum experienced managers in each hotel
6. We need more research about the Egyptian hotels salary scales compared with other careers and countries.

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