

Marketing Strategies Implemented by Hotel Industry during COVID-19 in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of a new strain of virus named the Coronavirus or Covid-19 in short has impacted all countries around the globe. In Malaysia, a restricted movement order has been introduced by the government since March 2020 in the hope of suppressing the wild spread of the virus. Thus, any traveling between different states has been put on hold. With this, the tourism industry has been tremendously affected, and the hotel industry is one of them. Consequently, the hotel industry is forced to develop new marketing strategies that would provide a helping hand in sustaining their business. The creative and innovative ideas that resulted from the initiative ranges from offering sweet deal packages revolving around the concept of working from home and staycation offers aside from the surprising involvement in the food delivering industry allowing the general crowd. A study has been conducted revolving around the hotel establishment in Malaysia to provide insights on the marketing strategies implemented by them throughout the pandemic period. This study highlighted the variety of marketing strategies adopted by the establishments.

Keywords: Covid-19, Hotel Industry, Malaysia, Marketing, Strategies

JEL Classification: M00, L80, L83

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus disease 2019 or shortly known as COVID-19, causes difficulties in the human respiratory system. The transmission of the disease from one individual to another can easily be done when there is any contact, such as shaking hands and hugging when meeting. This pandemic is so dangerous that it leads to the brink of death if not prevented at an early stage. Since the virus was unknown, there were no known drugs to stop the disease or vaccines from protecting people against the virus. Thus, the health authorities focused their most significant effort on recommending distance and social isolation. Since its detection, the expansion of COVID-19 has been unstoppable and has reached practically all the world countries, affecting millions of people, and later resulting in death. The spread of the virus has not been homogeneous, nor has its intensity the same in all affected countries.

Research, in general, has focused on human resource management practices and the importance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace within the hotel industry (Reubel, Kee, & Rimi, 2020; Sundaraju, Kee, Lopez, Balakrishnan, & Sagadevan, 2019; Yusmani, Nejati, Kee, & Amran, 2020). Today, with the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic, more than 10% of the hotels in Malaysia were forced to close their operation to minimize the losses. Hence this paper aims to investigate marketing strategies implemented by the hotel industry in Malaysia during the global pandemic.

The enforcement of the Movement Controlled Order (MCO) has indirectly affected hotel business performance. This order consists of requirements for citizens to be self-quarantining and businesses to be closed throughout the period, and only those in the essential industry are allowed to be operating (Tang, 2020). Following this, it has unfortunately drastically impacted Malaysia's economy. In fact, losses amounting to as much as RM3.37 billion have been reported by the government of Malaysia within the first two months of 2020 (Dzulkifly, 2020). In the perspective of the stock exchange, as of March 27, 2020, a staggering drop of 20.52% since the start of 2020 has been the lowest it has been for the past ten (10) years for Bursa Saham Malaysia. Related to the Movement Controlled Order, outstanding travel and tour packages have been canceled cumulatively, impacting the hotel and airlines sector (Aldaihani & Ali, 2018). As of March 16, 2020, the updated report stated that the value of RM68 Million, which amounted to around 170,085 rooms was canceled. Thus, the hotel industry in Malaysia is the most impacted and will be the last to return to the "new normal." Regarding such a crisis, the hospitality sector has been forced to change its operating strategy. Hotels have expressed new techniques, steps, and initiatives to bounce back in their business. Amidst the unforeseen circumstances, the hospitality industry had to rack its brains into figuring out ways to stay afloat and survive.

Work-from-hotels-packages

Thus, a solution introduced by the hotels by considering the idea of working-from-home and revamping it into working-from-hotels in which they are offering their establishment to be used as a working space. The package offered by a five-star hotel in Gurney Drive, Pulau Pinang, included the use of their hotel room, facilities such as a swimming pool, gymnasium, and food credit. It is crucial to ensure the business's survival, considering the occupancy rate has dropped from 80-90% to 10-20% during the pandemic period (The Straits Time Asia, 2020). Additionally, another hotel within the Georgetown district also offered their suites to be used as meeting rooms instead with the rate of RM198 for four hours with the occupancy limit of six to eight people in one space. It is considered an ideal space as the suites were converted into co-working spaces and furnished with a projector screen, whiteboard, and high-speed internet (The Straits Time Asia, 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Break-out Package

In addition to the hotel packages, according to the Bernama article, the hotel Lacrista Melaka offers a 'break-out package' in Jalan Hang Tuah which could be a long-term accommodation for a double room at a special price and which includes free laundry services for its guests as well as credit facilities for food and drink in a coffee shop of the hotel. Datuk Rosthman Ibrahim, its director, stated that tourists had to stay at this hotel for at least seven nights to enjoy the amenities. This will ensure that the hotel can continue operational even while COVID-19 creates economic uncertainty. Datuk Rosthman Ibrahim also added that the hotel's amenities and rooms have been enhanced after management changes to make visitors more efficient. After the Movement Control Order was enforced, the hotel was closed on operations from 18 March to 10 June. Datuk Chuck Kassim, head of the Hatten Hotel Melaka, stated that providing packages for extended periods, especially following standard operating, is one strategy to improve the hotel's proportion (Bernama, 2020).

Display hotels' protection and cleanliness protocol in hotels' websites

In order to attract visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic, Hotels are displaying on their website regarding the hotel's covid-19 protection and cleanliness protocol by stating that they are considering deep cleaning and disinfection standards throughout all hotel areas including guests' rooms, lifts, cafe, gym, and fitness. Posting this on a hotel's website can change one booking intention as the hotels have a stringent procedure during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aside from that, hotels are creating Covid-19 FAQ pages and letting the guests understand better on hotels' Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Also, hotels are promoting their special offers on websites to catch visitors' attention and increase hotels' revenue. With this, hotels are connecting with their customers to stay preeminent in visitors' minds.

Make use of hotels' social media

During this pandemic, connecting with customers is still required to maintain a good relationship with them, so social media is an indispensable hotel marketing tool during this pandemic. Today, media consumption is changing as customers want to check on hotels' photos and videos on social media before making a booking. Hotels are intensively leveraging their social media to share stories on hotel updates to provide a safe environment and engage with customers by sending them heartwarming videos and making a virtual hotel tour via Instagram or Facebook live. Hotels also fully utilize their primary weapon, which is email, to communicate with customers and send updates via email consistently so that customers are aware of recent hotel packages and hot deals. Hotels keep sending them precious emails regularly and consistently and keep assuring their guests with catch slogans like "Check into another plane of existence."

Offer quarantine packages

In addition, various hotels ranging from budget hotels to five-star hotels are offering quarantine packages. This is to abide by the rule where people returning to Malaysia from overseas are required to undertake 14 days of quarantine in hotels or quarantine centers starting from July 24, 2020, as stated by Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, the Senior Minister of Defense (Bedi, Pfordten, Chung, & Chen, 2020). The packages are a collaboration with the Malaysian government to provide options for the returning individuals whether to quarantine in an allocated budget hotel or quarantine centers or pay extra for premium services in high-ranking hotels. For instance, Hotel Istana Kuala Lumpur makes its place as a quarantine spot and offers premium services for those who just came back from overseas. The packages offered by Hotel Istana range from RM295 up to RM2,500 depending on the room specifications, and all packages include

breakfast, lunch, and dinner aside from the accommodation and amenities themselves (Hotel Istana Kuala Lumpur, 2020).

Similarly, the hotel establishments are also offering packages that are specifically targeting individuals who are not traveling back from overseas but want to self-isolate in comfort or avoid the risk of infecting others, especially their families. The emergence of this idea is directly related to the government's move to allow asymptomatic patients to self-isolate due to the spike in the number of new cases that slow down the contact tracing efforts—taking an example of the 'Isolation Packages' offered by Eastin Hotel Kuala Lumpur, which stated the motivation to ensure that the customers can self-quarantine with comfort and enhanced security and cleaning protocols aside from the convenience of having their meals delivered to their room throughout their duration of stay (Malaysiakini, 2021). The packages are offered with the price of RM1,680 for 7 days or RM3,360 for 14 days, inclusive of meals and rooms.

To sum up, everything that has been stated so far, Coronavirus disease 2019, shortly known as COVID-19, has had a destructive impact on the economy in Malaysia, and one of the most affected industries is the hotel industry. This actively demonstrates the hotel industry's struggle to stay afloat has resulted in them thinking out of the box in ways to turn the situation around and adapt to the current phenomena. It is proven that COVID-19 is not a dead-end to these industries, as many solutions have been taken to overcome this problem. To summarise, hotel industries are starting to take new initiatives to attract customers, such as break-out packages, working from hotels, and other surprisingly fresh and creative ideas. Although it seems hard at first as time passes, hotel industries are slowly able to overcome and adapt to the current situation of the pandemic.

RESEARCH METHOD

Case study research is through reports of past studies, and it is complex because they generally involve multiple sources of data, may include numerous cases and scenarios, and produce large amounts of data for analysis. Case studies should be evaluated in terms of the adequacy of the theoretical inferences that can be generated (Bryman, 2008). Researchers from many disciplines use the case study method to build upon theory, to produce new theory, to dispute or challenge theory, to explain a situation, to provide a basis to apply solutions to situations, to explore, or to describe an object or phenomenon (Soy, 1997). The case study research method is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984).

Multiple data sources for this study are needed, and a collection of news clippings and websites are gathered. The population that is to be studied in this research is limited to the marketing strategy implemented by the hotel industry during Covid-19 in Malaysia. Information was analyzed to identify, examine, and interpret the patterns of marketing strategy implemented during Covid-19. The marketing strategy of Malaysian hotels is chosen to be a case study for the research method to understand how Malaysia handles the hotel industry during Covid-19, where the outbreak of Covid-19 has had a destructive repercussion on Malaysia's economy, particularly the travel and tourism sector. It is reported that all hotels around Malaysia face losses due to room cancellations due to travel fears and restrictions, which amounted to RM 75,692,028 with 193,057 room cancellations as of March 2020 (Hassandarvish, 2020).

RESULTS

Working from hotel and break-out package

During the Covid-19 pandemic, hotels in Malaysia introduced work-from-hotel packages to stay afloat amid the Corona Virus outbreak. Seeing everyone stuck indoors and having to work from home, hotels in Malaysia came up with a concept of staycation that doubles up as workspace for a more extended period. Many hotels promote their establishment as a working space to create a new and safer environment for the guests. And so, the hotel industry in Malaysia came up with the idea of offering such a package to remain productive in the market. For instance, a beach hotel that reopened after a temporary closure during the pandemic offers working space with an option for customers to choose their desired spot either inside the hotel or nearby the beach. In addition, the following offer comes up with a deal of set lunch or dinner promotion on an a la carte menu followed with a free flow of coffee and tea. Not only that, but the beach hotel also offers the use of a hotel pool, fitness center, and free high-speed Wi-Fi. Thus, employees who are under work-from-hotels could make themselves comfortable and carry out their routine without any disturbance.

Apart from that, West Malaysia also comes up with a work-from-hotel package. For example, Grand Margherita Hotel in Kuching promotes a cheaper deal with an extensive amount of availability. The Grand Margherita Hotel offers its hotel lobby workspace area that comes with a free-flow coffee, tea, or soft drink and complimentary parking space (Chalil, 2020). Moreover, this hotel also provides high-speed Wi-Fi for the guests so that their work from the hotel is not disrupted during a video conference and so on. The Grand Margherita Hotel is also equipped with a terrace, lobby, lounge, and not to forget about their Orchid Garden Coffee House. This establishment helps guests stay calm and enjoy the scenery in the Orchid Garden while having their tea to relax after a tough day of work. As a wrap, this work-from-hotel measure is taken to ensure that the hotel industry in Malaysia is still under operation via work-from-hotel packages as one of their marketing strategies implied throughout the pandemic period.

Display Information in Website (Hygiene and SOPs)

Hotels display information on their websites about their Covid-19 protection and cleanliness procedure, claiming that they are considering intensive infection prevention and control standards in all hotel spaces. Since hotels have a very strict protocol during the Covid-19 pandemic, posting this on their website can change one's booking intention. Apart from that, hotels are publishing Covid-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sections to help clients better grasp the hotel's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

For instance, Parkroyal Penang Resort strictly set out answers to questions such as "What are the precautionary measures being taken by Parkroyal Penang Resort?" and "What are the precautionary measures all guests should note?" in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section to fight the deadly virus and relieve guest's worried mind (Pan Pacific, 2020). Park Royal Penang resort stated on their website that precautionary measures had been taken, including strengthening the disinfection of public areas and guestrooms; employees also take their temperatures twice a day as a precaution and are regularly reminded to practice good personal hygiene. This actively demonstrates that Parkroyal Penang Resort attracts more guests as it would be a comfortable and stress-free stay during the pandemic.

Next, the researchers looked through 5-Star Lexis Suites Penang's website. They put up headlines on the websites saying *Safe & Sound at #MYLexis #LexisCares* and as they assure that guest's health and safety is their priority at Lexis Hotel Group. Lexis Hotel Group set out detailed precaution steps from employee and guest health to employee's

responsibilities, then the guest's journey upon guest arrival, cleaning products and protocols, physical distancing required by the local health authority, and department-specific sanitization policies (Lexis Suites Penang, 2020). By means, Lexis Suites' guests are assured that they will acquire a peaceful and safe stay with them during these unprecedented times as promised by Lexis Hotel Group in the websites.

Lastly, moved to the next superior hotels that attract guests by displaying precautionary measures. Sunway Hotels & Resorts, located in 3 countries (Malaysia, Cambodia, and Vietnam), have put up a piece of ideal detailed information for their guests to read before booking a room. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, all Sunway Hotels & Resorts have adopted "new standards" best practices and procedures to improve hygiene and protocols. The Sunway Safe Stay program, which consists of five (5) pillars of protection and hygiene and nearly 30 protocols of enhanced cleaning procedures, assurance, and well-being requirements, is part of this initiative (Sunway Group, 2020). The website also stated that these procedures were already in effect when the outbreak began in early January 2020. They will continue to be followed throughout all Sunway assets, adhering to the current Ministry of Health and World Health Organization guidelines and SOPs. This actively demonstrates that Sunway Hotels & Resorts put their best efforts to make sure for pleasant and cozy stay for the guests during the pandemic and does not put guest's health in danger.

Connecting with the customer using social media

Hotels have come up with ideas, such as promoting the concept of working from a hotel rather than working from home. Many hotels in Penang and Klangtal are trying to stay afloat by promoting their facilities as workspaces. A five-star hotel on Gurney Drive has set up a collaboration area in its place where people can work and socialize (The Straits Time Asia, 2020). Customers can freshen up in the gym and by the pool and can also efficiently work side by side. This extraordinary experience in a video form on any social media platform can encourage customers to explore the hotel services. The great thing about being on social media is that there are so many ways to connect with customers. Statistics show that having a solid social media presence is just as important as a video marketing strategy. Due to different platforms in digital media, the creative potential of the hotel is much more significant and allows them to connect with more customers.

During this pandemic, connecting with clients remains the crux of the strategy. If you want to hold an excellent relationship with them, social media is a vital platform for hotels to advertise their services and connect with their customer at some point of this pandemic. Today, media intake is converting as clients need to verify hotel images and videos on social media before making reservations. Hotels are intensively leveraging their social media to percentage testimonies on resort updates in phrases of presenting secure surroundings and attractive with clients via way of means of sending them a heart-warming video and creating a digital resort excursion through Instagram or Facebook live. Hotels additionally make use of their primary weapon is email, to engage with customers and ship updates through email continuously so that clients are conscious of the latest resort applications and warm deals. With this, hotels are trying to connect with their customers to stay preeminent in their minds.

Quarantine packages

After international travel, the purpose of quarantine is that one may be exposed to COVID-19 during his travel time, especially those who came back from high-risk countries like France, Germany, Italy, and India. As everybody knows, viruses do not travel, but people do. In fact, although the number of tourist arrivals has decreased by a large margin, 4.33 million is still a massive number of tourists arriving in Malaysia (Tourism Malaysia, 2021). So, instinctively, the researchers expected that physical

space limitation would be adequate to put an end to COVID-19 infection. The concept of quarantine is radically embedded in local and global health practices and culture. The WHO defines quarantine as the restriction of activities or separation of people who are not ill but may have been exposed to an infectious agent or disease to monitor their symptoms and ensure early detection of cases (Mccall, 2020).

Thus, to avoid the spread of the virus of COVID-19, the Malaysia government set a precaution step by ordering everyone who just came back from overseas are required to undertake the mandatory fourteen (14) days of quarantine in hotels or quarantine centers starting from July 24, 2020, as stated by Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (S. Bedi & Pfordten, 2020). Still, on December 13, 2020, Tan Sri Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah has announced that the quarantine period for overseas travelers entering Malaysia has been shortened from 14 to 10 days. Due to this order, many hotels provide quarantine packages or Q packages to all travelers to self-isolate themselves before meeting their family, friends, and colleagues. The packages are a collaboration with the Malaysian government to provide options for the returning individuals whether to quarantine in an allocated budget hotel or quarantine centers or pay extra for premium services in high-ranking hotels. Travelers need to book their hotel preferences and make room selections. Room selection is subject to the availability of rooms.

Once travelers reach Malaysia airport, travelers need to head straight away to their chosen hotel to proceed with their quarantine process for 14 days. Upon arriving at the selected hotel, guests are escorted to their assigned room, and from day 1, no one can leave their room until they complete their quarantine on day 10. During quarantine time, hotel management will prepare their everyday meal, which is three meals per day, and foods will be sent to their door according to the time set by hotel management. Aside from food, hotel management will also reload guests' necessities and be placed them outside their doors. All hotels will not provide room service to their guests during the quarantine period to avoid direct contact with them.

Hotel Istana Kuala Lumpur provided a special offer for travelers with a premium Q-stay package and stated on its website, "Make yourself comfortable during the ten days Q-stay with us, with upgraded meals." The room rates are divided into two, which are for single and double, with three types of room: deluxe room, club suite, and presidential suite (Hotel Istana Kuala Lumpur, 2020). The packages offered by Hotel Istana range from RM295 up to RM2,500 depending on the room specifications, including upgraded set breakfast, lunch, and dinner. One of their terms & conditions is continuous minimum stays of 9 nights (minimum six nights stay if the guest had taken the Covid test three days before departure to Malaysia and provided documentation is shown as proof and approved by Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (Ministry of Health of Malaysia) upon arrival.

Aside from hotels that provide premium quarantine packages with higher prices, some hotels offer premium quarantine packages for travelers who prefer lower prices. For instance, Swiss-Garden Hotel Bukit Bintang Kuala Lumpur, whose price range is RM 177 - RM 314 based on average rates for a standard room including breakfast, lunch, and dinner (Tripadvisor, 2019). Guests are given a particular option to choose whether they want Western, Local, or 'Chef' options for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Even though the hotel is just a 3-star hotel, they still offer a massive portion of meals to their guests during the quarantine period and equip their room with a fridge and television with Fox movies, AXN, and Disney channel.

Similarly, the hotel establishments are also offering packages that are specifically targeting individuals who are not traveling back from overseas but want to self-isolate in

comfort or avoid the risk of infecting others, especially their families. The emergence of this idea is directly related to the government's move to allow asymptomatic patients to self-isolate due to the spike in the number of new cases that slow down the contact tracing efforts—taking an example of the 'Isolation Packages' offered by Eastin Hotel Kuala Lumpur, which stated the motivation to ensure that the customers can self-quarantine with comfort and enhanced security and cleaning protocols aside from the convenience of having their meals delivered to their room throughout their duration of stay (MalaysiaKini, 2021). The packages are offered with the price of RM1,680 for seven (7) days or RM3,360 for fourteen (14) days, inclusive of meals and rooms.

DISCUSSION

The hotel industry in Malaysia implements work-from-hotel packages and break-out packages as their marketing strategy throughout pandemic to increase their reputation ongoing. The packages are introduced to combat the increasing number of room cancellations and losses of revenue occurring as an after-effect of the pandemic and the government's ruling on Movement Controlled Order (MCO) (Hassandarvish, 2020). It is also directly related to the increasing amount of travel fears aside from the travel restrictions (Hassandarvish, 2020). This marketing strategy also helps to raise Malaysia's economy as the hotel industry is still under operation; meanwhile, the Covid 19 pandemic is still on track, and profits are still gained thoroughly. Inevitably, social media platforms are believed to be vital tools in fighting and revitalizing the industry after the following pandemic. The prevalent engagement on social media can play an essential role in spreading positivity to revive pandemic discrimination and negative perceptions about affected destinations and tourism businesses (Khan & Hashim, 2020). Prioritizing social media and other digital platforms (such as blogs) as a source of inspiration has been effective in accelerating the tourism industry's recovery in the post-pandemic era (Romagosa, 2020). For example, a community-based tour operator (CBT) in Malaysia known as "Miso Walai Homestay" is preparing for a long-awaited recovery period for the coming year by making a video of the current actions; demonstrate building maintenance and renovation, employee retraining in cleanliness and safety, and upgrading of their website. Local authorities and government agencies can use such videos to show how local initiatives and efforts can encourage others to prepare for challenging times in the post-pandemic tourism industry (Hamzah, 2020).

As a result, hotels in Malaysia use their website platform to ensure that their main priorities are the guest's hygiene and follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). In addition, hotel industries can add on a few ideas to enhance guest satisfaction during this downturn, such as examining the current action plan and cleaning routine, and management needs to consider increasing hotel deep cleaning efforts. Not to deny that website can attract more guests during the pandemic as they might feel more confident with all the precaution measures that the hotel's management stated on the website. Moving on, the hotel industry in Malaysia implemented break-out packages as one of their marketing strategies during the pandemic. As an example, Hotel Lacrista in Melaka offers a 'Break-out Package,' which may be a long-term accommodation at a special price that includes free laundry service for its guests and credit facilities for those eating and drinking at the hotel's coffee house (Bernama.com, 2020). The facilities and rooms at the hotel are modified to provide a more effortless stay for guests and to enjoy the facilities, and guests should occupy the hotel for a minimum of seven nights. The hotel management of Hotel Lacrista takes this step to make sure the hotel can remain in business despite the economic uncertainty influenced by COVID-19 and spice up the hotel's percentage. Besides that, Hard Rock Hotel, which is situated at Penang Island, launches a break-out meeting package specifically for those guests who wish to take a break from their routine and break away to a tropical paradise island (TTR Weekly,

2020). This package is the freshest idea in the market, which was implemented by the hotel management. The introduction of the break-out package is to hit those guests looking for innovative music-inspired meetings. This break-out package comes up with a special offer of complimentary participation of one extra guest with every ten persons booked, which means "Pay 10 Free 1". To conclude, Hard Rock Hotel initiated to give the best for their guests, although the pandemic is going on endlessly. Therefore, when hotels choose to implement a quarantine package during the COVID-19 pandemic, they can at least generate income and gain profit instead of shutting down their business. People will still choose to stay at a hotel even though they are not booking a room for quarantine because they have been just staying at home for a long time now without going on a vacation. So, they will surely book the nearest hotel to spend time with family and release stress after working day and night without having a decent rest. Although the income and profit are not as much as they used to be, hotels still gain something by the visit of people in their state and travelers who just came back from overseas.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this paper revolves around the research into the devastating situation of the hotel industry in Malaysia due to the pandemic revolving around the emergence of the new virus, Coronavirus 2019, since early 2020. The operation of the hotel industry was put on a halt since the announcement of the Movement Controlled Order (MCO) by the government in March 2020. This paper also highlighted the impressive and fresh marketing ideas and strategies that the industry implemented. The findings of this research resulted in five types of new strategies consisting of; 1) Working from hotel and break-out packages. 2) Displaying information on websites (hygiene and SOPs). 3) Connecting with customers using social media. 4) Quarantine packages. These lists of marketing strategies are backed with legitimate resources from websites and articles that include various examples of the name of hotels that applied them to their organization's operation.

The first finding on the list is the introduction of working from hotel and break-out packages. In general, it was found that various hotels in the industry came up with packages that allow only a specific time duration spent in the hotel rooms to work or a long-term duration that also enables a team of an organization to make use of it as a meeting place or working space. This plan was influenced by the factor that a large percentage of companies and organizations in Malaysia have concluded that they will operate remotely with their employees working from home to abide by the Movement Controlled Order (MCO). Secondly, the hotels have come to consistently update their websites regarding the hygiene processes and the standard of procedures that has been taken into action by them. This is to provide a sense of relief and trust among the customers. It allows them to put their complete trust in the establishment in terms of the seriousness of combating the virus and ensuring their guests will be in a top hygiene environment.

Thirdly, the hotel industry is also actively updating its social media with positive messages and the latest information regarding their establishments. Aside from that, it is also being used to promote the packages or promotions that they have come up with amidst the pandemic and Movement Controlled Order (MCO) situation. They have decided to go with this path since a large percentage of citizens are actively using social media in their daily life; thus, allowing the information to reach a large number of audiences in a short amount of time. The finding also shows that the hotels also introduced quarantine packages where it allows the guests to opt for self-isolation either because the guests just arrive in Malaysia from overseas or are asymptomatic patients. This is due to the ruling of having to self-isolate for fourteen (14) days for individuals who

arrived from outside of Malaysia and the slow tracing of asymptomatic patients resulting from the spike in the number of cases.

This research paper is directed towards the general audience to understand and review the type of strategies and ideas that have been applied and implemented by the hotel industry to adapt to the current situation that is said to be the new normal to allow them to continue operating while ensuring the safety of their guests are guaranteed and taken into serious consideration. Furthermore, it is to provide relief with proven methods and efforts in the customers' minds that the industry is pouring out all the efforts and knowledge into providing the best service and establishment. It can also be used as a research idea by the hotel management in finding out the type of suitable marketing strategies to be done in a situation that requires changes and adaptation. Finally, it can also help the industry better understand the best ways to implement when things seem to be turning grim and the types of products or activities that can be offered to ensure the industry's survival during challenging times.

This study relies heavily on resources available on the internet. Most of the information and data are taken by sources of websites and articles either by the government body, news article, or the hotel page itself. There are limitations of the extent of the data that can be gathered. For instance, there is limited information on the complete list of hotels that offer quarantine packages as they collaborate directly with the Malaysian government. The governments will provide the list directly to the related individuals, such as travelers, as an example. There is also a lack of data from legitimate sources regarding the relationship between the marketing strategies and their effectiveness in the room occupancy rate and the number of guests throughout the pandemic period, 2020. Further research in the future is necessary when there are more relevant data regarding both the marketing strategies, their effectiveness, and their impact on the hotel industry. The pandemic is still ongoing in Malaysia; thus, there are probabilities of more incoming ideas and data to be coming forward.

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