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Surviving the Storm: Marketing Strategies for Hotels in Crisis-Stricken Countries

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Abstract. This research aims to explore how do hotels operating in conflict affected areas adjust their marketing strategies, sales management practices, prices, promotional tactics, distribution channels, products and services, to adapt to the situation uncertainties and maintain operations. To address these questions, a qualitative research was carried out through interviews conducted with managers of seventeen hotels, holding different managerial positions, from commercial directors, to marketing executives, sales and marketing managers, cluster directors of sales, and directors of communications. Data was analyzed using thematic coding to extract the main themes and subthemes revealed by the participants. The findings highlighted by this study show that there is a strong relationship between Marketing Strategies and Sales Approaches, and hotels' adaptation in conflict situations. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of hotels' crisis-management strategies in conflict-affected regions.

Keywords: Crisis, Hospitality, Marketing Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality sector faces many challenges in conflict affected regions due to many factors like political problems, economic instability, and security threats. Hotels must adapt to the changes caused by these conflicts through the shift to new marketing strategies and sales approaches to survive (Baker & Cameron, 2008). Many literatures emphasize the importance of adaptive strategies for businesses continuity in conflict regions (Teece, 2007), but there is still a gap in the focus on the specific tactics adopted by hotels to attract customers amidst uncertainties (Pforr & Hosie, 2008; Lee & Koo, 2015). The purpose of this research is to fill this gap, by studying the sales approaches and marketing strategies employed by hotels in countries in crisis to maintain revenue generation and sustainable competitive advantage. This study aims to examine hotel marketing and sales approaches in conflict-affected regions (Pizam & Mansfield, 2006). Its main purpose is to highlight the relationships between the environmental factors, hotel marketing strategies, sales management practices and the navigation to the uncertainties of the conflict, while maximizing their profits and market shares. Moreover, this research aims to examine the strategies used by hotel managers to ensure booking rates during political instability and economic crisis. The exploration of these strategies helps to gain insights on crisis-management in the hotel sector (Baker & Cameron, 2008; Pforr & Hosie, 2008), which can provide theories and practices on hotel marketing during conflicts. The value of this study is highlighted by the insights it provides into how hotels in conflict-affected areas can adapt their marketing strategies to maintain operations and resist the challenges posed by the conflicts. While many existing literatures have focused on crisis management during natural disasters (Ritchie, 2004; Faulkner, 2001), few have given attention to the specific marketing strategies adopted by hotels for addressing the challenges.

The research questions outlined below are developed based on the problematic previously discussed:

RQ1: What specific marketing strategies do hotels in economically unstable regions employ to navigate the challenges of operating in conflict-affected areas?

RQ2: What sales management practices do hotels in economically unstable regions employ to navigate the challenges of operating in conflict-affected areas?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORIES

The exploration of tourism in conflict affected areas is an emerging branch in the field of tourism research (Alvarez & Campo, 2014). In recent times, the tourism sector has proven to be not only a flexible industry, but also a key component of resistance in crises (Korstanje & Ivanov, 2012). However, the increasing level of knowledge, coupled with an increase of conflicts affecting tourism around the world, led to the necessity of the development of marketing strategies for conflict situations (Smith, 2020). While much research has been conducted on trendy tourism destinations, less have paid attention to regions affected by conflict, which face significant obstacles in attracting tourists. Numerous studies (Buhalis, 2000), within tourism marketing and management, stress the critical importance of destination marketing and management programs, urging the expansion of the current body of knowledge to better address the unique challenges of managing tourism in conflict-affected areas (Fyall, Garrod and Wang, 2012). Many regional conflicts are situated in the 'emerging regions' (Cohen & Cohen, 2015) and the Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict, for example, has noticed 414 conflicts worldwide (HIIK, 2015). Many investigations have been carried out into the connection between politics and tourism. Much of the research on this relation have focused on economic, business, and managerial

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perspectives, such as examining political risks in tourism development (Poirier, 1997), political crisis management, the role of government in tourism management (Sönmez, 1998), tourism planning at political border destinations (Timothy, 2006), political marketing of destinations (Beirman, 2002), and the effects of terrorism on tourist motivation (Bhattarai, Conway, & Shrestha, 2005). However, there are much less research considering the challenges and consequences of tourism and hospitality in conflict-affected areas.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Adaptive Marketing Capabilities Theory

Organizational adaptation emphasizes the crucial harmony of the internal dynamics of an organization with the ever-evolving external environment (Burns & Stalker, 1961). Organizational adaptation perspective highlights that organizations must strive for equilibrium while maximizing their ability to adapt to prevailing environmental conditions (Venkatraman and Camillus, 1984), it also stresses the necessity of nurturing adaptive capabilities within organizations to increase their existing competencies, shifting the organizational focus from an inside-outside perspective to an outside-inside approach. Many studies have highlighted the beneficial effects of adaptive capabilities on firm's performance and explain how institutional capital and managerial networks influence the international performance of entrepreneurial firms (Lu et al., 2010), finding that this relationship is positively mediated by the firm's adaptive capabilities. In addition, recent research (Miocevic & Morgan, 2018) suggests that adaptive capabilities act as a moderating factor in the link between the rate of leveraging international opportunities and the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in emerging markets. Additionally, it has been demonstrated that adaptive capabilities moderate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and financial performance, underscoring the importance of organizational flexibility in driving superior performance outcomes (Adomako et al., 2018). Adaptive capabilities represent an outside-inside perspective, aiming to enhance firms' current capabilities while acquiring new ones. Marketing capabilities are very important in enhancing firms' performance (Day, 2011), particularly addressing the gap between available and required resources. Vigilant market learning involves interpreting volatile market conditions through a sense-and-respond approach, while adaptive marketing experimentation encourages small-scale experiments to understand consumer expectations in dynamic markets. Open marketing emphasizes the management of an interconnected network, facilitating collaboration among partners with diverse capabilities. The implementation of these practices enables firms not only to enhance their current marketing capabilities but also to acquire new ones, demonstrating a high level of marketing adaptation. Empirical studies support this assertion, demonstrating the positive effect of Adaptive Marketing Capabilities on various performance indicators. Particularly in environments characterized by high instability, such as market volatility, intense competition, and technological advancements, the connection between Adaptive Marketing Capabilities and company performance is strengthened (Guo et al., 2018). Businesses respond to the instability of the market by utilizing Adaptive Marketing Capabilities (AMCs), allowing them to understand both current and future customer expectations. Studies suggest that Adaptive Marketing Capabilities (AMCs) enhance this dual capability by enabling firms to both explore and exploit market opportunities. This is accomplished by continuously learning from the market, engaging in adaptive market experimentation, and utilizing open marketing strategies (Ali et al., 2021).

2.1.2. Resource-Based View Theory

The resource-based view (RBV) represents a strategic managerial approach that places a central emphasis on harnessing internal organizational resources to attain a competitive edge (Barney, 1991). In a rapidly changing external environment, RBV advocates for firms to explore and leverage their internal resources and capabilities as the primary drivers of profitability (Wernerfelt, 1984). RBV recognizes that resources and capabilities are not uniformly distributed among firms, with variations that may persist over time (Barney, 1991). It acknowledges that while certain factors of production may exhibit elasticity in supply, some resources and capabilities necessitate long-term development efforts, making their short to medium-term strategies less straightforward. Additionally, RBV highlights that certain resources and capabilities resist conventional market transactions, implying a level of inelasticity in their supply (Dierickx & Cool, 1989; Barney, 1991). Within the strategy of a firm, while resources hold inherent importance, their presence does not guarantee exceptional performance (Wernerfelt, 1984). Organizational capabilities must be cultivated over time to achieve strategic objectives. Consequently, companies may combine their resources into capabilities that serve as the foundation for attaining a competitive advantage (Penrose, 1959).

2.1.3. Dynamic Capabilities Theory

This theory complements the resource-based view strategy by embodying the firm's capacity to integrate, construct, and adapt internal and external competencies to navigate rapidly evolving environments (Teece et al., 1997). This concept unfolds through two primary avenues of logical progression. Firstly, it encompasses the notion of "dynamism", signifying the capacity for competencies to evolve and enable the firm to consistently convert inputs into uniquely valuable outputs. Secondly, dynamic capabilities encompass models focused on

"overt learning" (Winter, 2000), which denote intentional organizational endeavors to alter operational methods, refine routines, enhance capabilities, and optimize competencies. The understanding of dynamic capabilities encompasses a spectrum of factors including their inherent nature, specific function, contextual relevance, genesis, diversity, effects, and objectives (Barreto, 2010). The resilience of dynamic capabilities depends on the agility and extent of adjustment a firm demonstrates in response to external environmental changes (Teece, 2018).

2.2. Research Context

In recent times, there has been significant advancement in understanding crisis management within the hospitality industry (Faulkner, 2001), largely driven by global events such as terrorist incidents, notably since the aftermath of 9/11. The impact of these events resonates across the travel and tourism sector (Ritchie, 2004), with notable repercussions spanning regions like Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East. It's important to recognize that crises, especially those related to terrorism, often persist and may even overlap, with subsequent events triggered by preceding ones before the initial crisis concludes (Ivanov, Webster, 2013). Literature reviews on terrorism crisis management in hospitality predominantly focuses on analyzing, categorizing, and understanding various terror incidents (Aziz, 1995), (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1996), as well as exploring the political and economic implications of counter-terrorism efforts.

2.2.1. Marketing Strategies Employed by Hotels in Conflict-Affected Regions

During times of crisis, the task of efficiently identifying potential customers becomes even more challenging for the marketing and sales departments. This challenge is intensified when a hotel tends to reduce the budget allocated to these functions (O'Neill & Mattila, 2004). This study aims to underscore the sales and marketing function as a pivotal asset during crises by highlighting the opportunities hotels can seize if they allow these departments to operate effectively. One of the primary challenges a hotel faces when attempting to cut costs is maintaining the same level of service and product quality offered to customers. Simultaneously, there's a risk of compromising return on investment, as well as brand image and equity. Therefore, it is crucial for the hotel's strategy and action plan to carefully consider these factors, as they can be challenging to recover once the crisis has passed. There are four marketing initiatives crucial for hotel marketing plans to drive a positive increase in demand. These initiatives consist of hosting events, rewarding loyal customers, enhancing online visibility, and forming strategic partnerships. Such initiatives energize interest and draw both existing and potential customers to the venue, offering hotels opportunities to boost sales and secure reservations (Pritchard & Morgan, 2004). Rewarding loyal customers not only fosters a sense of exclusivity but also encourages them to advocate for the hotel (Baker, 2008). In the current digital era, having a strong online presence is essential, given the significant role of social media and online platforms in sales generation, both locally and globally. Moreover, partnering with reputable brands can broaden the customer base, leverage additional resources, and enhance the hotel's reputation, provided the partner possesses a strong brand image. Turning to the digital landscape, a hotel digital marketing system developer describes a procedural approach to guide marketing endeavors effectively (Chaffey D., 2019). Defining the hotel's identity as the first step, facilitating targeted audience selection as the subsequent stage. This clarity in focus clears the way for establishing a robust and strategic online presence, enabling the hotel to employ inbound and outbound marketing strategies to engage both existing and potential customers (Buhalis, Law 2008). Additionally, tracking return on investment becomes paramount for evaluating success, understanding demand shifts, and customizing strategies to align with evolving customer needs. However, it is imperative for hotels to devise robust adaptation plans capable of responding to market or business environment changes, which may influence the hotel positively or negatively (Shaw & Williams, 2009). There are many online marketing strategies, emphasizing the utilization of prominent websites catering to recreational activities, tourism, and travel recommendations (White, 2014). Recommended platforms include TripAdvisor, Fodors, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Lonely Planet, Travelocity, or general online booking agencies. These strategies, among others, must be meticulously implemented to deliver enhanced quality and value to customers, consequently yielding higher profit margins for hotel owners. Inefficiency or ineffectiveness in execution may intensify challenges during crises, making it more difficult for hotels to navigate turbulent situations.

2.2.2. Hypotheses Development

2.2.2.1. Relationship between Economic Stability and Hotel Marketing and Sales Strategies

Hotels in regions with higher economic stability are expected to have more resources and a conducive business environment, enabling them to implement effective marketing and sales strategies compared to regions facing economic instability. Historically, hotels enjoyed consistent revenue growth, averaging around a four percent increase annually. Heading into the recession, an upward trend in room supply clashed with dwindling demand and room rates (Smith, 2009), a detrimental mixture fostering heightened market competition with diminishing business prospects. A robust marketing plan must complement revenue management efforts to counteract decreased demand effectively. Recognizing the pivotal role of the hotel sales department, estimated to constitute thirty-five percent of a hotel's customer base, underscores its potential to stimulate demand even

amidst economic downturns (Kotler et al., 2006). Consequently, fostering synergy between the sales and revenue management departments can significantly enhance revenue per available room (RevPAR) by four to twelve percent, ensuring competitive positioning and eventual triumph over market challenges (Mainzer, 2009). As the revenue management team adapts strategies to align with evolving market dynamics, acknowledging the sales team's contributions and rewarding loyal customers become paramount for sustaining business resilience (Kines, 2009).

2.2.2.2. Relationship between Political Environment and Hotel Sales Management Practices

Political stability is a fundamental prerequisite for success across all industries. Within the hotel sector, political factors have considerable influence over the influx of tourists, encompassing both tourists and corporate travelers, to a country through direct and indirect channels (Elbe, 2010). This political backdrop constitutes a vital aspect of the external business environment, specifically pertaining to the political climate in countries where International Hotel Chains conduct their operations. Governmental actions, whether at the local, regional, national, or international level, shape the operational landscape for businesses. Given the diverse external environments in which International Hotel Chains operate, they are vulnerable to the repercussions of changes in the political, ecological, social, technological, and legal (PESTEL) landscape.

2.2.2.3. Relationship between Socio-Cultural Dynamics and Adaptation of Hotel Marketing and Sales Strategies

Hotels in regions with strong socio-cultural resilience are expected to adapt their marketing and sales strategies more effectively to changing market conditions and customer preferences compared to regions with weaker socio-cultural dynamics. To develop a thorough understanding of cultivating customer relationships, it is essential to acknowledge the influence of cultural dynamics (Usunier, 1993). Many scholars have underscored the significant impact of cultural differences on various facets of business operations, including marketing, management, leadership, and decision-making processes (Hofstede, 1984).

2.2.2.4. Relationship between Product Differentiation and Hotel Competitive Positioning

Hotels that successfully differentiate their products and services are expected to achieve a stronger competitive position, leading to higher occupancy rates and increased revenue compared to hotels with less differentiated offerings. In a stable operational environment, companies often leverage their historical strengths to maintain their position. However, surviving and thriving in a dynamic and fiercely competitive landscape necessitates the adoption of diverse strategic approaches (Van Dierdonck, 1990). When analyzing sources of competitive advantage, particular attention must be paid to capabilities. While traditional means of building competitive advantages, such as financial, strategic, and technological capabilities, are crucial, they only capture a portion of what managers need to consider (Ulrich & Lake, 1991).

2.2.2.5. Relationship between Pricing Strategies and Hotel Revenue Generation

Hotels implementing strategic pricing strategies are expected to generate higher revenues by attracting customers while maintaining profitability compared to hotels with less strategic pricing approaches. The proactive expansion of hotel chains through aggressive marketing strategies has prompted many hoteliers to reassess their established business approaches and reconsider the true positioning of their establishments (Bowie D.; Buttle F., 2004). Presently, it is evident that all pricing decisions are rooted in the economic fundamentals of supply and demand dynamics. Specifically, the relative demand for available accommodation within a given timeframe dictates the pricing of hospitality services. This fundamental tenet of market theory holds true across both manufacturing and service sectors. Undoubtedly, the array of marketing tactics employed by modern hotel enterprises can sway demand in various directions. Nevertheless, pricing remains the primary driver of revenue generation and profitability (Kimes, 2003).

2.2.2.6. Relationship between Distribution Channels and Hotel Market Penetration

Hotels utilizing diversified distribution channels are expected to reach a broader customer base, leading to increased market penetration and brand visibility compared to hotels relying on limited distribution channels. The proliferation of the Internet has revolutionized the distribution of products and services, including within the realms of tourism and hospitality (Berne et al., 2012). Traditionally, travelers depended on intermediaries like travel agencies and global distribution systems (GDS) to access offerings from suppliers such as hotels and airlines (Grønflaten, 2009); (Kracht & Wang, 2010). However, with the advent of the Internet, travelers can now bypass these intermediaries and directly engage with suppliers through their websites, a phenomenon known as disintermediation (Kaewkitipong, 2010). This shift has resulted in the development of several online intermediary models, like Online Travel Agencies (OTAs), last-minute inventory platforms, and flash sale websites, providing travelers with plenty of options beyond the constraints of the offline environment (O'Connor, 2008). The decision of hotels to adopt online booking services is influenced by customer demand, managerial strategies, and the characteristics of the hotel itself, with newer establishments and those targeting the upscale market being more

inclined towards online distribution channels (Carvell & Quan, 2008). However, the advent of mobile technologies since 2010 has further reshaped the landscape (Christodoulidou et al., 2010), providing yet another avenue for tourism suppliers to connect with consumers, thereby diminishing the reliance on traditional intermediaries (Grønflaten, 2009).

2.2.2.7. Relationship between Promotional Tactics and Hotel Brand Engagement

Hotels employing effective promotional tactics are expected to engage customers more effectively, leading to higher brand awareness, customer loyalty, and repeat business compared to hotels with less effective promotional efforts (Hassan & Soliman, 2023). Customer engagement refers to the depth of interaction and connection between individuals and the offerings and initiatives of an organization, whether initiated by the customer themselves or by the organization (Vivek, Beatty & Morgan, 2012). This engagement encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes (Brodie et al., 2011). Various metrics, such as page views, click-through rates, and social media interactions like "liking", "sharing", and "commenting", are commonly used to measure customer engagement (Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013).

2.2.2.8. Relationship between Adaptation Strategies and Hotel Business Sustainability

Hotels demonstrating adaptive strategies in response to market challenges are expected to achieve higher levels of business sustainability, resilience, and long-term viability compared to hotels with less adaptive strategies. The assessment of marketing performance adaptability pertains to an organization's capacity to adjust to changes in its surroundings. Previous research generally suggests that environmental factors significantly impact performance outcomes. Within the framework of adaptability in marketing performance, a company's success is contingent upon aligning its strategies with the prevailing environmental conditions (Bryant and Wilson, 1998), echoing the structure-conduct-performance paradigm in industrial organization theory. Walker and Ruekert (1987) identified adaptability as one of the principal constructs of performance, indicative of an organization's capability to evolve in response to emerging opportunities and threats. Conventional organizational theory traditionally views the environment as a deterministic force driving organizations to adapt their strategies, structures, and processes accordingly (Dawson, 2003). However, a reinterpretation of this perspective challenges the notion of organizations as passive-reactive entities. Drawing from observations, research, and extensions of business policy and corporate social responsibility literature, scholars argue that organizations possess the agency to implement strategies aimed at reshaping their external environments (Morrison, 2015). Therefore, it is proposed that organizations are not merely reactive but actively engage in initiatives to influence and adapt to their surroundings.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Methodological Choice

In this study, a qualitative research approach has been adopted since the research aims to explore the experiences and perceptions of hotel marketers in countries in crisis, and qualitative methods are suitable the most to understand the sales approaches and marketing strategies adopted by hotels to resist to the conflict situation. Qualitative research aligns with the interpretivist research philosophy used for this study, which focuses on the importance of understanding the participants' own perspectives (Schwandt, 2000). It aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences of hotels' marketers and capture lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). It allows the exploration of complex themes that may not be explored through quantitative variables (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Primary data were collected by conducting interviews with hotel managers. Many challenges were posed during data collection due to many factors. The sensitivity of the context and the socio-political situation, which made access to participants really challenging. Getting the approvals of hotel managers was difficult due to the political instability and security concerns in the region. Before each interview, all participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, and the nature of their participation. Also, they were informed that their participation was voluntary, and that they could stop the interview at any point without facing any negative consequences.

3.2. Sample Selection

Sample selection is the process in which researchers choose the participants for their study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In qualitative research, the criterion for choosing the participants depends on the participants who provide rich, detailed information that serve the research questions (Patton, 2015). It should represent the different perspectives related to research study. A purposive sampling was used as primary technique, since it ensures the selection of participants who have direct relation with the research problem and have the experience needed to answer the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). For this purpose, the targeted population was individuals holding managerial positions within the sales and marketing departments of hotels, as they are responsible of the application of these strategies (Patton, 2015). The sample selected for this study is seventeen managers, from Director of Sales and Marketing, to Commercial Directors, to Marketing Executives in five different countries witnessing crisis (Table 1). These job positions were selected due to their responsibility of applying the sales and

marketing strategies within the hotels and adapting these strategies to meet the challenges posed by conflict situation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Most of the interviews were conducted virtually. The interview format used was semi-structured, beginning by asking specific questions to the participants, then allowing them to continue their conversation in a flexible way while listening to them and ensuring that they provide key themes that meet the research objectives (Patton, 2015). Purposive Sampling was the primary technique that played the biggest role in exploring the factors that influence decision-making of the appropriate sales approaches and marketing strategies within the hotel industry during crisis, It allowed the exploration of these factors through interviews with key decision-makers in the hotels (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). But in addition to the Purposive Sampling, also Snowball Sampling had a role in this research paper, since many of the participants were referred to by other participants who can serve the research objectives.

Table 1: Profile of Participants.

Participant	Location	Star Ratings	Job Title
Participant A	Egypt	5	Director of Sales & Marketing
Participant B	Jordan	5	Director of Sales & Marketing
Participant C	Jordan	5	Sales Director
Participant D	Egypt	4	Commercial Director
Participant E	Lebanon	5	Cluster Director of Sales
Participant F	Lebanon	4	Commercial Director
Participant G	Algeria	5	Commercial Director
Participant H	Lebanon	5	Marketing Executive
Participant I	Lebanon	4	Sales & Marketing Manager
Participant J	Algeria	5	Director of Communications
Participant K	Egypt	5	Director of Sales & Marketing
Participant L	Egypt	4	Marketing Manager
Participant M	Jordan	5	Hotel Manager
Participant N	Algeria	4	Marketing Manager
Participant O	Algeria	4	Hotel Manager
Participant P	Lebanon	5	Marketing Manager
Participant Q	Jordan	5	Sales & Marketing Director

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected by conducting seventeen interviews based on semi-structured questions. The choice of semi-structured questions allows the participants to express their views and talk about their practices and experiences while ensuring that they cover the themes related to the research questions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The interviews included open-ended questions and inspired ones to depth more into the managers' experiences, challenges, and strategies within the hospitality sector (Kvale, 1996). After the completion of the interviews, all the notes documented through detailed notetaking were transcribed. This included every significant theme, non-verbal signals, and every factor that could help in understanding the participants' responses and relate it to the research questions. The transcript of the detailed notes ensured the authenticity and trueness of the participants' intended messages. Once the data was transcribed, initial codes were generated through open coding, which involved reviewing the transcriptions in detail and identifying key words related to the research questions or themes (Charmaz, 2014). These generated codes were then grouped into categories, which were organized through axial coding that helped identify relationships between the initial codes and accelerated the formation of other themes related to the research objectives (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For the analysis of the collected data, qualitative thematic analysis was conducted. This approach is very efficient to identify, analyze, and report themes for the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is very suitable to understand the views and experiences of hotel managers who are battling to survive during these challenging times. Themes were extracted from the coded data, where recurring ideas related to the research questions were grouped together (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The thematic analysis was conducted manually based on the insights provided by the participants. It provides an overview of the major categories emphasized by the participants, along with the corresponding themes and subthemes.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. Hotel Marketing and Sales Strategies

During periods of heightened security concerns, businesses shift their focus to crisis-responsive strategies, such as targeting local markets or adjusting their offerings and promotions as per the demand fluctuations. For hotels, this means rearranging pricing strategies, offers and promotions, distributions channels and promotional tactics to attract guests both locally and internationally amidst the challenging situation. Participants in the interviews highlighted how marketing strategies shifted to adapt to the conflict situation, with participant Q noting, *"We focus on the local tourism market. We put our efforts to attract guests from the local market by making attractive packages and highlighting the leisure activities at our hotel and we try to attract international guests by making marketing campaigns for the outside where we focus on showing the beauty of our country amidst the conflict situation"*. Additionally, participants O and J emphasized on the strategy of shifting to the local market with participant E noting, *"We focus on promotions for the residents, we drop our rates in a way that fits the local market due to the economic*

challenges and conflict situations. We focus on attracting local guests and domestic tourists since the demand from the international and regional markets is very low due to the hard situation our country is passing through". Same idea was mentioned by other participants:*" We shifted to targeting the local market and domestic tourists. We try to generate revenues from our resort, pool, spa, F&B, lounges. We offer attractive packages and promotions on rooms and restaurants to attract residents since it's difficult to attract international guests in these conflict situations"*. Besides local targeting, digital and social media were highly mentioned by many participants since it became critical tools of communication and visibility with limited access to traditional marketing channels. As participant K shared, *"We emphasized on social media campaigns and on digital campaigns to boost our website and social media channels. Also, we enhanced our visibility through SMS campaigns, PR events, influencers and food bloggers"*. The shift to targeted campaigns on platforms like Facebook and Instagram helped many hotels to overcome the challenges posed by the conflict. As participant H pointed out strong digital presence, *"Through social media marketing, targeted ads, and engaging content, we continuously promote the hotel as a luxurious yet safe escape, attracting both domestic and international guests"*.

4.2. Product Differentiation

In challenging periods, hotels focus on product and service differentiation to generate revenues and stay competitive within the market challenges. Product differentiation allows the hotels to create a unique value proposition which plays a essential role in attracting customers (Porter, 1985). This strategy involves creating unique offerings, service customization, tailored packages, and localized experiences. Participant C, who is a sales director explained, *"We differentiate by offering high-end, unique local experiences that combine luxury with authenticity. Also, we have exclusive and personalized services, such as customized wellness experiences, and private events, which make customers feel valued and pampered, even amidst conflict situations."* Additionally, many participants explained the strategies used to differentiate their products and services to respond to the challenging situation. The commercial director, participant G stating, *"We have to change our strategy to make sure that our hotel continues to attract guests in light of the persistent economic difficulties and the disruptions brought on by the regional wars. We distinguish our goods and services in several ways, emphasizing localized experiences and providing a genuine experience by fusing regional cuisine, customs, and culture"*.

Another differentiation tactic involved luxury experiences and reputation as a trusted reliable choice for both local and international visitors in conflict-related disruptions, as Participant B, who is a director of sales and marketing shared *"We are an iconic hotel, the most luxurious hotel in the city, also we have history, one of the oldest in town since we opened in 1961. Our hotel's reputation and heritage position it as a trusted and reliable choice for both local and international visitors in the economic challenges and conflict-related disruptions"*. Many participants in the interviews spoke about offering exceptional services or creating tailored packages to meet the shift in needs of customers in response to the crisis. Participant L emphasized, *"We differentiate by offering exceptional service quality, modern amenities, and unique experiences such as exclusive dining options and personalized concierge services. Our focus is on creating memorable stays that justify the value amidst economic challenges"*. Overall, the interviews confirmed that hotels in conflict situations apply a variety of product differentiation strategies, from unique offerings including local experiences and luxury experiences, to service customization including tailored packages and personalized services, aiming at addressing the challenges posed by the market situation and changing of consumer priorities.

4.3. Pricing Strategies

Hotels often shift to dynamic and competitive pricing as a tool to navigate market uncertainties and maintain a sustainable competitive advantage. Several hotel managers discussed how they adapted their prices to the changing market conditions. As participant M explained, *"We surely had to adjust our prices comparing to other high season by applying low season rates for the rooms to be able to attract clients being in a competitive environment especially affected by an economic instability"*. This dynamic pricing strategy allowed the hotel to maintain operations even with low market demand. Additionally, participants F, N and C shared how adapting prices to real-time and market demand, insured continuous revenue generation to the hotels:*" We have adapted our prices based on the situation and the low demand. We made affordable prices without compromising value. We offer discounted long-term stay rates, seasonal promotions, and staycation deals tailored to local guests… Due to the economic instability and conflict, we offer flexibility in upgrades and shift the prices from high season prices to low season because there is no demand"*. Moreover, many participants emphasized value-based pricing as a tool to align price with value, especially for customers who are seeking cost-effective stays. Participant H shared, *"Instead of cutting prices significantly, we focus on adding value through complimentary experiences like spa treatments or dining offers, enhancing guest satisfaction"*. Also, participant I explained, *"We did not change prices due to the low demand. Instead, we focus on giving promotions and special offers like upgrades to clients, suits instead of rooms and free breakfast. This strategy ensures that guests feel they are receiving great value for their investment, even when the economic environment is uncertain"*. These flexible and value-driven pricing strategies allowed the hotels to meet market needs and ensure sustainable revenues generation even in difficult times. The interviews showed that hotels adopted dynamic pricing to adapt to the market uncertainties caused by the conflict situation and economic instability, ensuring continuity while meeting customers' shifting demands.

4.3.1. Distribution Channels

Interviews revealed that the modern distribution channels are essential in maintaining visibility when market demand declines, with limited access to traditional marketing channels. As participant B explained: *"We make deals and partnerships with travel agencies, also we focus on paid ads through online platforms engines, b2b business browser like Booking.com, Expedia, Google, Agoda… To reach potential customers, particularly in conflict-affected areas with limited access to traditional marketing channels, we focus on the trendy marketing channels like the influencers, bloggers, collaborations with celebrities from different domains"*. The common idea between all the interviews is the emphasis on the importance of flexible and modern distribution channels, which play a key role in maintaining revenues and adapting to the shifting demands of customers in conflict-affected regions. Participant M confirmed this theory by stating, *"Our hotel relies on different channels of booking, number one being the travel agencies and online booking platforms like Expedia and booking.com which is making it halfway there and easier for us to grab clients, also our online marketing is helping us a lot being active on social media"*. Participant J also emphasized on the same idea by saying, *"We make partnerships with travel agencies, online (OTAs) like Booking.com, Agoda, Expedia… in addition to local travel agencies. Guests can get the same prices if they book through them or through the hotel directly. Also, we reach corporate customers by making contracts with Embassies, NGOs, Media agencies, pharmaceutical companies etc. Digital marketing is our most effective distribution channel to reach potential customers. We guide people to navigate through our updated website where they find attractive content. Also, we use various social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Google ads to promote our hotel"*.

4.4. Promotional Tactics

Some hotel managers emphasized word-of-mouth as efficient promotional tactics during conflicts, as participant E, the cluster director of sales at a unique resort, highlighted. Another hotel manager explained the importance of emphasizing safety and value as efficient promotional tactics which plays a crucial role in attracting guests who are cost-sensitive and for those who are worried about their safety, especially during the period of conflicts. Participant C stated, *"The tactics that have been effective in raising awareness are the hotel focuses on promotions that emphasize safety and value, such as offering discounted rates for local and regional travelers and special all-inclusive packages. Social media and influencers partnerships that show the hotel's secure environment and luxury experiences were also very effective in raising customers' awareness. Highlighting safety procedures and transparent communication helped to reassure potential guests during uncertain times"*. Same idea was highlighted by participant M explaining, *"We emphasized safety and comfort in our messaging, showing the peaceful environment and security of our hotel. These campaigns through social media help us to reach maximum visibility during periods of heightened security concerns and increased accommodations rates. In addition, our staycation offers and packages are effective promotional tactics which helped us to attract local residents seeking a safe and affordable getaway"*.

The biggest part of interviewees highlighted the concept of branding and visibility through online presence and partnerships with influencers and media as a very effective promotional tactic during these difficult times. Furthermore, some hotels make corporate partnerships with international organizations or local businesses such as NGOs, embassies, and international companies to promote their services. Overall, interviews with hotel managers revealed that, during conflicts, hotels adapt their promotional tactics by focusing on online platforms and targeted promotions to reassure customers about safety and service value.

4.5. Sales Management Practices

According to the interviews with hotel marketing managers and sales director, these hotels shift their sales approach to prioritize cost-effective stays, value for money, low-risk clients, such as business stayers, embassies employees, and NGOs, while reducing dependance on leisure tourism, which may be more difficult during crises. One hotel commercial director, participant G explained, *"Expand into corporate clients. Hosting conferences and business events to generate stable revenue, since tourist numbers are low. We target regional business guests in the Middle East or international companies, in this way our hotel can maintain occupancy rates during downtimes"*. In addition, many hotels shift to the approach of customer relationship management, to sustain their businesses during conflicts situations, by employing more personalized sales tactics, such as direct messages to loyal customers or corporate clients. As participant E noted, *"We focus on maintaining good relationships with our customers and corporate clients like NGOs, UN, Pharmaceutical companies, international embassies, production companies, event planners… we employ the strategy of personalized customer service, by offering tailored experiences to our guests, and by providing flexible booking options, or we give free upgrades to sea view for our first-time visit guests"*.

Besides expanding into corporate clients and customer relationship management, one of the main approaches adopted by the hotels to ensure business continuity is their emphasize on team structure and performance. By performing sales training such as crisis-management training and sales strategy training, and through performance analysis metrics like key performance indicators (KPI), and by setting revenue targets. In this regard, participant C stated, *"Our sales team is structured with dedicated roles, divided by corporate sales, leisure travel, and group bookings, each team ensure focus on key segments. We also set performance metrics that include occupancy rates, revenue per available room (RevPAR), and conversion rates. Our sales team is responsible of reviewing booking progress,*

allowing quick adjustments based on market conditions… To ensure efficiency and effectiveness in navigating complex markets, especially in conflict-affected areas, we structure our sales team and set performance metrics as follows: Clear Objectives: Each team member has clear, individualized objectives aligned with each one of their segment overall sales goals. This includes targets for bookings, revenue generation, and client acquisition. Regular Training and Support: We provide ongoing training and support to keep the team updated on market trends, sales techniques, and crisis management strategies, ensuring they are well-equipped to handle challenges. Performance Metrics: We use a range of metrics to assess performance, including sales volume, conversion rates, client satisfaction, and ROI on sales activities. Adaptability and Communication: Our team is encouraged to adapt quickly to market changes and maintain open communication channels. This allows us to respond effectively to emerging opportunities and challenges".

Thematic Analysis Table

This table represents the main thematic elements discussed by all participants regarding the relationship between Marketing Strategies, Pricing Strategies, Differentiation of Products and Services, Distributions Channels, Promotional Tactics, Sales Management practices and the adaptation of hotels within the conflict situation and the economic crisis.

Table 2: List of Themes and Subthemes.

Category	Themes	Subthemes
Marketing Strategies in Conflict situation	Targeted Promotions	Discounts and Special Offers
		Value Proposition Messaging
	Localized Messaging	Tailored for Local Market
		Cultural Sensitivity
	Crisis-Responsive Marketing	Communicating Safety Measures
		Social media & Digital Media
Adjustments to Pricing Strategies	Dynamic Pricing	Flexible Pricing
		Discounts for Key Segments
	Competitive Price	Price Matching
Differentiation of Products and Services	Unique Offerings	Local Experiences
		Luxury Experiences
	Service Customization	Tailored Packages
Sales and Distribution Channels	Online Platforms	Use of OTAs
		Hotel Website Optimization
	Local Partnerships	Collaborations with Travel Agencies
	Offline and Direct Marketing	Corporate Partnerships
Promotional Tactics	Branding and Visibility	Online Presence
		Influencer and Media Partnerships
	Promotional Events	Event Sponsorships
		Referral Programs
Sales Management Practices	Team Structure and Performance	Performance Metrics
		Sales Training
	Customer Relationship Management	Loyalty Programs
		Customer Engagement
Assessing Marketing Effectiveness	ROI and Analytics	Customer Engagement Tracking
		Revenue Monitoring
	Brand Visibility	Media Exposure

This table provides an overview of the major themes emphasized by the participants, along with the corresponding themes and subthemes. It is finalized through the thematic analysis conducted on the interviews done with the participants holding managerial positions within the hotel sector, each contributing unique insights related to their specific roles and expertise.

5. DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Relationship between Hotel Marketing and Sales Strategies and Adaptive Marketing Strategy

The findings of this research highlight the importance of flexible marketing strategies employed by hotels in the adaptation and survival in conflict affected environments. This has been proven through the interviews conducted with the hotels managers, who adapted by shifting their marketing and sales strategies to, targeted promotions, localized messaging to target the local market, crisis-responsive marketing and dynamic pricing. These strategies align with dynamic capabilities theory, which emphasizes the need for firms to shift their resources and response to changing environments (Teece, 2007). The findings contribute to existing literature by highlighting the importance of digital media in crisis-responsive management (Govers et al., 2017). The findings validate previous studies on crisis response and emphasize the validation by showing how digital marketing and

social media can play a crucial role in maintaining business continuity during times of conflicts (Jiang & Ritchie, 2017). The study confirms that hotels must continue to adapt their marketing strategies and sales approaches by integrating flexibility, social media & digital media, targeted promotions and localized messaging into their strategies to ensure business continuity and revenue generation. This study contributes to the literature on hospitality marketing in conflict affected areas and offers insights for hotel managers who are looking to enhance crisis-responsive marketing strategies in situations of uncertainty.

5.2. Relationship between Product Differentiation and Adaptive Marketing Strategy

The findings revealed a strong relationship between product differentiation and adaptive marketing strategies employed by hotels to navigate through conflict situations. Interviews highlighted that hotels differentiate their products and services to align with the shifting needs of customers and with the volatile market environment. This included offering unique services, luxury experiences, service customization like tailored packages and personalized services, exceptional local experiences. This approach aligns with the adaptive strategies outlined in the dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, 2007). The findings confirm that differentiation strategies allowed hotels to adapt within a competitive and uncertain market, ensuring occupancy rates and revenue generations even in conflict situations. This supports research which highlighted the importance of marketing differentiation in insuring sustainable competitive advantage during uncertain times (Govers et al., 2017). Furthermore, the study found that product differentiation allowed hotels to adapt their offerings with the local market needs specially by emphasizing the communication on safety measures (Jiang and Ritchie, 2017), reinforcing the findings who highlighted the role of differentiated products and services in crisis management. This study also enhances the literature by showing how adaptive marketing strategies, when combined with product differentiation, provide a method of sustainability in the hotel industry during difficult circumstances. The findings assume that hotels adopting differentiation were able to respond to the crisis and were also able to reassess their market positioning in the long-term. This contributes to the growing body of knowledge on adaptive strategies in hospitality management (Okumus & Koseoglu, 2019).

5.3. Relationship between Pricing Strategies and Adaptive Marketing Strategy

The findings of this study revealed a strong relationship between pricing strategies and adaptive marketing strategies adopted by the hotels during conflict situations. The market challenges that hotels are facing due to economic crisis and political conflicts, caused shifts in customers' priorities and reduced international demand which oblige the hotels to adjust their prices as an approach of their adaptive strategies. As revealed by the interviews conducted, many hotels implemented dynamic pricing strategies which included flexible pricing, demand-fluctuations pricing, flexible booking policies, discounts for key segments, aligning prices with competitors and low periods promotions. These approaches are consistent with dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, 2007). This theory highlights the importance of firms' ability to shift their resources and strategies in response to changes, such as the case in this study. The findings support the idea that pricing strategies are a crucial tool in adaptive marketing, allowing hotels to maintain occupancy rates and stay competitive amidst conflict situations. By adjusting their prices as per the market demand, hotels could manage adaptation to the volatile environment. This aligns with (Govers et al., 2017), who confirmed that pricing flexibility is critical during times of crisis, allowing businesses to adjust their prices as per consumer's situations and market conditions. Moreover, the study revealed that hotels integrated flexible pricing with other marketing tactics such as localized offers and targeted promotions, which aligns with (Jiang and Ritchie, 2017) framework on crisis marketing. This study developed literature by showing how pricing strategies contribute to the adaptation of hotels and their continuity during crises. Study has proven that hotels who adjusted their pricing while focusing on value proposition messaging were able to reinforce their market positioning, insuring both short-term and long-term sustainability amidst uncertainty.

5.4. Relationship between Distribution Channels and Adaptive Marketing Strategy

The findings of this research showed a significant relationship between distribution channels and adaptive marketing strategies adopted by the hotels during conflicts. Due to the difficulties in reaching traditional distribution channels, hotels adapted their distribution channels to target local customers and digital media customers. This involves using online platforms such as OTAs, social media and hotel websites. It also involved collaborations with travel agencies, and offline and direct marketing like corporate partnerships. These adaptive strategies align with dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, 2007), which highlights the ability of firms to allocate their resources in response to changing market demands. By shifting their distribution channels, hotels were able to avoid the risk associated with the economic crisis and conflict situation the country is going through. The findings support the theory made by (Govers et al., 2017), that flexibility in distribution channels is essential during crises, enabling businesses to reach different segments using alternative channels. Furthermore, the study revealed that digital media channels, such as OTAs and social media campaigns like Instagram promotions and Facebook campaigns, were essential in maintaining visibility and customer engagement during difficult circumstances. This aligns with (Jiang and Ritchie, 2017) study, which focuses on the important role of digital

media in managing distribution channels for the hospitality industry. This study improves existing literature by demonstrating how multi-channel approach constitutes important marketing strategies that contribute to the adaptation of hotels during conflict situations and ensures sustainable competitive advantage. Study has proven that hotels who adapted to local market conditions and adopted multi-channel approach, were able to reinforce their market positioning, insuring both short-term and long-term sustainability amidst uncertainty.

5.5. Relationship between Promotional Tactics and Adaptive Marketing Strategy

The findings of this study revealed the strong relationship between promotional tactics and adaptive marketing strategies applied by hotels during conflict situations. Faced with shifting in customers' priorities and demand fluctuations, hotels adapted their promotional tactics by optimizing brand visibility through online presence, influencers and media partnerships, events sponsoring and referral programs. These adaptive strategies align with dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, 2007), which focuses on the importance of shifting marketing resources and tactics in response to the emerging situation. The findings suggest that promotional tactics, such as working with local influencers, media sponsorship, hosting special occasions, offers for loyal customers, flexible booking policies, and highlighting safety measures, were crucial in maintaining customer engagement and attracting visitors during periods of instability. This approach supports the theory of (Govers et al, 2017), arguing that flexibility in promotional tactics is important during crisis, allowing businesses to adjust their messaging and offers to address the shifting needs of customers. In addition, the study reveals that digital media channels played an important role in delivering personalized promotions to customers, aligned with (Jiang and Ritchie, 2017) theory, who highlighted the role of digital promotions in crisis management. This study improves existing literature by demonstrating how adaptive promotional tactics constitute important marketing strategies that contribute to the adaptation of hotels during conflict situations and ensures sustainable competitive advantage. Hotels that adapted their promotional tactics to align with shifting consumer priorities and economic conditions were better able to resist the challenges posed by the conflicts in the country, ensuring both short-term and long-term survival.

5.5.1. Relationship between Sales Management Practices and Adaptive Marketing Strategy

The findings of this study show a significant relationship between sales management practices and adaptive marketing strategies implemented by hotels during conflict situations. Since international tourism demand was reduced due to external factors such as political instability and economic downturns, hotels shifted their sales approaches to focus on local and regional markets. The shift in sales management practices includes team structure and performance such as dividing the sales team into segments, and setting performance metrics, in addition to conducting sales training and crisis-management training. It also includes customer relationship management such as customer incentives and loyal customers' rewards. These changes align with the principles of dynamic capabilities theory (Teece, 2007), which focuses on the importance of firms' ability to adapt their resources, such as sales and marketing practices, in response to market emerged conditions. The findings suggest that the ability of sales teams to adapt their strategies such as offering tailored packages or emphasizing safety and flexibility in bookings was essential in maintaining revenue generation during crisis. This supports the study by (Kotler et al., 2017), who argue that adaptive sales management practices, which include customer relationship management and team structure and performance, are essential for sustaining competitive advantage in difficult times. Furthermore, the study shows that hotels that integrated sales management with adaptive marketing strategies, such as customer engagement and key performance indicator (KPI), could better navigate shifts in demand of customers. This is consistent with (Baker and Saren, 2016), who emphasizes the role of data-driven decision-making and customer-centric sales strategies in uncertainties resistance. This research develops the literature by demonstrating how sales management practices, when aligned with adaptive marketing strategies, enhance a hotel's sustainable competitive advantage during conflicts. Hotels combining adaptive sales management practices with targeted marketing promotions were able to defend their market positioning and secure customer loyalty in an uncertain environment.

6. CONCLUSION

The key findings and results of this study have addressed the research questions presented at the beginning of this paper. As a recap, two research questions were formulated after the examination of existing literature. The first question was 'What specific marketing strategies do hotels in economically unstable regions employ to navigate the challenges of operating in conflict-affected area'. The question was answered that hotels suffering from the challenges of the conflict situation, adapt their strategies to align with the shifts in needs and priorities of customers. They differentiate their products and services to attract guests, such as special promotions and tailored packages. They also follow a dynamic strategy in pricing which is based on market demand. In addition, they shift their distribution channels from traditional channels to modern ones, such as online platforms, local and corporate partnerships. Adding to that, they adapt their promotional strategies to crisis-responsive tactics, such as branding and visibility through the online presence and influencers' partnerships. Also, they sponsor and host special events, promote loyalty programs to ensure occupancy rates and continued revenues during periods

of low demand. The second research question formulated in this study was *'What sales management practices do hotels in economically unstable regions employ to navigate the challenges of operating in conflict-affected areas'* This question was answered that, first, they adapt their teams' structures and performance by applying crisis-management strategies to navigate through the volatile market situation. This is achieved by setting performance metrics like key-performance indicators and sales targets to each team segment. Also, hotels adopt sales training on crisis-management, and sales strategies training during conflict situations. Secondly, another important sales management practice adopted by the hotels during the conflict is customer relationship management. Knowing the essential role of customer attraction and retention in the business survival, hotels focus on maintaining their relationships with their customers and all their stakeholders. They offer them loyalty programs and customer incentives to retain the already existing clients and motivate them to come back, amidst the bad situation of the country. They also engage their customers in their hotels activities by sending them personalized emails and the hotels' latest offers. Also, they make their guests feel valuable by sending them feedback surveys and getting directly in touch with them to evaluate their experiences during their stays at the hotel and get suggestions for future improvements. Overall, the results of this study have highly addressed the research questions. It provides a convincing understanding of the topic.

6.1. Theoretical Implications

The key findings of this research contribute to the theoretical frameworks about marketing strategies in conflict-affected regions. The results confirmed the hypothesis that adaptability in marketing strategies has a positive effect on the hotels' sustainability during the conflicts. Hotels adjust their pricing strategies, promotional tactics, distribution channels, products and services and sales management practices in response to political conflicts, economic instability and security threats. The study has shown that, following these adjustments, hotels were able to survive and maintain operations amidst the hard situation in the country. The study findings support Layder's adaptive theory presented in the literature review, who conducted qualitative research to understand how individuals respond to social changes and situations in a dynamic environment. The idea of this theory is that individuals and organizations adapt to changes in their environment. The challenges posed by these changes drive them to adapt and be flexible to survive. The same idea was applied by the hotel managers who adapted their marketing and sales strategies in response to the political conflicts and economic crisis. Moreover, this study aligns with the adaptive marketing capabilities theory (Venkatraman; Camillus, 1984), mentioned in the literature review, which focuses on how organizations develop their capabilities to adapt their marketing strategies in response to changing situations. This theory explains that businesses must adapt their capabilities to respond to external threats. The results of this study confirm this theory, since it revealed that hotels facing challenging situations and volatile environments adapt their marketing strategies and sales approaches to ensure long-term sustainability. Another literature review theory proven by this study is dynamic capabilities theory (Teece et al., 1997), which emphasizes on the firm's ability to adapt to change by reallocating its resources and capabilities. This theory aligns with the results of this study which revealed that hotels could achieve sustainability and competitive advantage in a uncertain environment by adapting their resources and capabilities, and creating differentiated experiences, which enable them to respond to the market challenges. This study contributes to the theoretical implications related to its subject, by confirming existing theories and, also by introducing an understanding of how adaptive marketing strategies and sales approaches play a big role in a hotel's sustainability in conflict-affected areas.

6.2. Practical Implications

The findings generated by this study contribute to real-world business operations. It shows how the hotels need to adapt their marketing strategies and sales approaches during conflict period. It gives a clear explanation about the tools needed to adapt to crisis. For example, hotels need to change their strategies from targeting an international market to focusing on the local market. Also, they need to apply flexible pricing strategies and apply a crisis-responsive messaging approach by communicating the safety measures taken by the hotels. In addition, the research reveals to businesses how the focus of the hotels managers on adapting to real-time market demand allowed them to maintain operations, for example by adjusting their offerings to appeal to the market situation, and by giving discounts and special promotions. Also, by following the trend in promotional tactics and distribution channels using online platforms. This research could lead to a big impact on the practices of the businesses working in the hotels industry specifically and in the hospitality industry in general. It will lead the hotel managers to shift their marketing strategies to conflict-responsive strategies and work on the long-term rather than the short-term sustainability. It will highlight the importance of adapting rapidly to change as per the real-time situation to ensure the hotel's continuity. For example, by focusing on the local market rather than only depending on the international one.

6.3. Contribution of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore the marketing strategies and sales approaches adopted by hotels in conflict situations. The research objective was to explore how the hotels resist the conflict situation surrounding the hotel sector due to political and economic challenges. This exploration included the following, exploring how

hotels adapted their offerings, prices, promotional tactics, distribution channels and sales management practices to appeal to customers. Exploring the marketing strategies adopted by the hotels to maintain competitive advantage during the conflict period and providing recommendations for hotel managers and the hospitality sector. This research has made many contributions to the hospitality industry, it provides insights into how hotels adapt their marketing strategies to resist changes in the environment. It focuses on the important role of digital media, tailored promotions, shift in target segments, flexible prices, and customer engagement in maintaining businesses. It highlights the best practices adopted by the hotel managers to improve their capabilities to adapt during the hard situation. This study has a unique aspect, since it focuses on the impact of conflict, specifically on the hotel sector, while many existing studies are conducted in the hospitality sector in general. This research consists of added value on the academic level since it contributes to the literature on hospitality crisis-management and hotels' resistance to environmental changes.

6.4. Limitations of the Study

The reliance on qualitative study only for the data collection, through the interviews conducted with the hotel managers, could create biases which could affect the objectivity and accuracy of the data. Also, the study did not contain observations of the changes over a long period of time, which limits the research to the conflict period when the study was conducted. The collection of data was not easy since it was executed during difficult times. The interviews were faced with many rejections which limited the speed of the process.

6.5. Further Research and Perspectives

While this study provides added values and insights on the hotels' strategies in conflict affected regions, further research and perspectives could be identified in many areas to expand the understanding of how hotels could adapt to unstable conditions. Also, there is a need for studies observing changes over a long period of time which will provide understanding of how the hotels adapt over time and not only during a specific period of conflicts. Future research could dive more into the study of the impact that digital marketing and social media have on hotel's sustainability and resistance to conflicts, knowing the big role this concept is playing in shaping today's businesses.

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