

Marketing Strategy and Marketing Mix Towards Recovery of Hospital Industry

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This study assessed the marketing strategy in terms of market share strategy, competitive strategy, and cost reduction strategy towards the recovery of the hospitality industry. It also described the marketing mix that can be employed towards the recovery of the hospitality industry in terms of 7Ps: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and process, and partnership. It was also revealed that there was a highly significant relationship between marketing strategies and the marketing mix based on employees' perception of the hospitality industry recovery. It was suggested that marketing strategy in terms of competitiveness could be an effective strategy for the recovery of the hospitality industry. Meanwhile, on marketing mix, physical evidence and process may be given importance towards the recovery of the hospitality industry during and after a crisis. Lastly, an action plan for the industry's recovery was proposed based on the employees' perception working in each hospitality sector.

Keywords – hospitality industry, crisis recovery, marketing strategy, marketing mix, Qatar

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INTRODUCTION

Playing an essential part in the global industry does not exempt the hospitality industry from the impact of any catastrophes. One out of ten jobs was attributed to the hospitality industry because it accounts for 10% of global GDP, 7% of international trade, and 30% of services, making hospitality one of the most important industries [1]. The hospitality industry is the most vulnerable to any uncertain event such as natural disasters, economic or political, terrorism attacks, epidemics and global crises that affect hospitality industry [2].

Many articles and journals were written regarding the impacts of global crises on the hospitality industry. There are sectors associated directly or indirectly with the hospitality industry. However, this paper focused on the three major

sectors directly connected to the hospitality industry: aviation, representing the airline industry; accommodation, which represents the hotel industry; and distribution that represents travel agencies. This paper determined the perception of their respective employees on the extent of economic recovery in terms of Marketing Strategies and Marketing Mix.

Over the last two decades, the journals and articles that discussed global crises can be classified into three categories: pandemic or epidemic-related, political, and economic [1] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9]. Political crisis occurs due to political disputes within the country, between countries or within the region including terrorist attack [10] and economic crisis which can be regional or global [11].

Major global crises that significantly impact the tourist and hospitality industry in the past two

decades are the 9-11 terrorist attack, SARS, the Global Financial Crisis, Mers-Cov, Ebola, Blockade, and Covid-19 outbreaks that noticeably impacted the Revenue Per Kilometer (RPK) which is the basis of the hospitality and tourism industry in measuring the year-on-year growth or decline of the industry.

Hospitality industries have strong linkages to other industries within national economies, generating significant indirect benefits. At the same time, it can increase trade opportunities, foreign investment, investments in private and public infrastructure, and local development. In Qatar, the strengthening of such sectors leads to non-oil GDP steadily rising: the current Amir, Shk. Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani prioritized Qataris welfare. He also invested in and established advanced healthcare and education systems. In anticipation of the 2022 World Cup, he expanded and developed the country's infrastructure. Those acts made him the most popular with the Qatari public. Despite good governance, Qatar also experiences and is still affected by a global and regional crisis. Nevertheless, Qatar surpassed the crisis and managed to rise above. Recently Qatar was listed as the wealthiest country with per capita income of 91,670 PPP dollars (2019).

The impact of those crises was felt globally, directly affecting everyone. However, only the hospitality and service industry was forced to change and adjust its policies. Throughout the decades, the hospitality sector has demonstrated its ability to weather crises and re-establish itself. Moreover, this time, even the extent of the impact could not be predicted, and the effect cannot be compared to other crises, the employees are still hopeful that this too shall pass. The hospitality industry will be back more vital than ever by strategically planning for economic recovery.

With the disasters brought by those crises to the hospitality industry for the past two decades, it now defines strategies towards recovery. The examination of the marketing strategies currently employed such as, market share strategy, competitive strategy, and cost reduction strategy can be the gateway to improve the status of the hospitality industry. Hence, marketing mix, which include, product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and process,

and partnership can be utilized on the recovery of the hospitality industry.

Considering the above premise, the researcher who is directly involved in the hospitality industry prompted to conduct a study on the crises brought by various disasters to fully grasp the impact described simply as the devastation of human lives and livelihood. Employees who are working in the service-oriented industry are not given enough attention and are often neglected. With this study, its findings can be used as a reference in the formulation of strategic plan for her company.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the marketing strategy and marketing mix as perceived by the employees towards recovery in hospitality industry.

Specifically, this study sought to assess the marketing strategy employed in the hospitality industry in terms of market share, competitive, and cost reduction; describe the marketing mix that can be employed in terms of product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence and process, and partnership; test the significant relationship between marketing strategies and the marketing mix; and, propose an action plan towards the recovery of the hospitality industry.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study used descriptive data analysis to interpret the data collected through an online survey questionnaire using Google form as a tool. Descriptive analysis is a technique for describing the essence and magnitude of sensory characteristics objectively. It was a ground-breaking development at the time, putting sensory evaluation on a scientific footing by allowing objective, statistically analyzable data to be generated. The data was collected using survey questions. Therefore, a descriptive analysis is the most appropriate research design to obtain the data and answer the research questions.

Participants

The study respondents were grouped into three according to the hospitality sectors, aviation or airline, accommodation or hotels and distribution or

travel agencies. Because the research subject specifically mentioned employees' perspective, it was considered that respondents should work in the hospitality industry. The researcher made sure there are respondents in all three specified sectors. To get the ideal number of a minimum respondents based on the population's maximum size, the researcher referred to the Raosoft system. An online sample size calculator suggests the recommended sample size with the approval of the research panel.

Table 1

Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile

Highest Educational Attainment	f	(%)
Senior High School / High School	18	5.7
Diploma	46	14.6
Bachelor Degree	197	62.3
Masteral	39	12.3
Doctoral	4	1.3
Others	12	3.8
Nationality		
Filipino	203	64.2
Non - Filipino	113	35.8
Age		
20 – 30 years old	59	18.7
31 – 40 years old	137	43.4
41 – 50 years old	102	32.3
51 years old and above	18	5.7
Civil Status		
Single	116	36.7
Married	190	60.1
Divorced	3	.9
Widower	7	2.2
Hospitality Sector		
Accommodation / Hotel Industry	132	41.8
Distribution / Travel Agencies	115	36.4
Aviation / Airline Industry	69	21.8
Role in the Company		
Senior Management (President, VP, CEO, COO, General Managers, Directors)	18	5.7
Supervisor or Team Leader	63	19.9
Managers / Department Head	84	26.6
Staff	151	47.8
Years in Service in the Industry		
0 – 5 years	91	28.8
6 – 10 years	99	31.3
11 – 15 years	69	21.8
16 years and above	57	18.0

The demographic distribution of the respondents is being displayed in Table 1 with a total number of 316. The majority of the hospitality employees in Qatar completed a bachelor's degree, which represents 62.3% of the total respondents.

Meanwhile, most of them are Filipino Nationals which consist of 64,2% of total respondents while respondents that age group falls on 31-40 are 43% of a total sample population. Furthermore, 41.8% of respondents are working in the hotel industry.

Most of the respondents from the sample population are working as staff, which consists of 47% of the total sample population. The majority of the respondents works in the industry for a minimum of six years.

Instrument

A self-structured questionnaire was submitted to the adviser for validation and then forwarded to the statistician for reliability testing.

On that basis, the reliability test result revealed that nine out of ten indicators passed the reliability test. Eight of those items have a verbal interpretation of good indicators equivalent to less than point eight (>.8). The items are enumerated in chronological order: people with 0.897, physical evidence and processes of 0.890, product 0.880, price 0.872, partnership 0.843, competitive strategy 0.840, place 0.829, and market share 0.800. However, the only promotional item with the lowest score of 0.764 still passed the reliability test.

On the other hand, only the item cost reduction strategy with a score of 0.542 is equivalent to the verbal interpretation of poor did not pass the reliability test. The researcher amends the items and conducts another reliability test for cost reduction strategy only. The result was passed with a score of 0.809, which is equivalent to good in verbal interpretation.

After getting the reliability test results, the researcher created an online survey questionnaire through Google Form as the main instrument to gather data in this study. The online survey was divided into three parts: the first part is the letter of request, the second part is the demographic profile, including highest educational attainment, nationality, age group, hospitality sector, role in the company, number of years in the industry; and the last part is questionnaire section, which pertains to the marketing strategy and the marketing mix dimensions. The respondents were asked to rate the statement using the four-point Likert scale, four (4) as Strongly Agree,

three (3) as Agree, two (2) as Disagree, and one (1) as Strongly Disagree.

The electronic link of the Google Form was rolled out to different social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp and Viber. In this way, the researcher gathered feedback from respondents that focus on the employees' perception of the economic recovery regarding marketing strategy and marketing mix.

Due to the current pandemic situation, an online survey question is now the best way to gather data and information from the respondents for the health and safety of both parties. The questionnaire is self-structured that is based on online researches through published books, articles and journals.

Data Analysis

All data were treated using a statistical software named PASW version 18 to further interpret the research work outcomes. Statistical measures, such as frequency distribution, determine the occurrence of the responses. Weighted mean was used to determine the central tendency or the average on responses, and the Spearman's Rho to test the relationship among variables.

Ethical Considerations

The first part of the survey includes concise information of the researcher, university, dean and adviser, including the title of the research, objectives, and the most important clause: the assurance of the confidentiality of the respondents. It was also mentioned that the data collected, mainly the participants' personal information, will be managed with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic research purposes only. Before proceeding to the actual questionnaire, the respondents were asked of their willingness to participate in the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 exhibits the Marketing Strategy summary revealing that all indicators are acceptable for the economic recovery of the hospitality industry after crises. A composite mean of 3.39 clearly shows that all indicators are acceptable for the economic recovery of the hospitality industry after crises.

Table 2

Summary Table on the Marketing Strategies on the Economic Recovery after Crisis

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Market Share	3.44	Agree	2
2. Competitive	3.50	Strongly Agree	1
3. Cost Reduction	3.22	Agree	3
Composite Mean	3.39	Agree	

Legend: 3.50–4.00=Strongly Agree; 2.50–3.49=Agree; 1.50–2.49=Disagree; 1.00–1.49= Strongly Disagree

The competitive strategy leads the rank with a weighted mean score of 3.50, followed by Market Share and Cost reduction with a weighted mean score of 3.44 and 3.22, on the second and third rank, respectively. From the researcher's perspective, the competitive strategy took the first place because there is no better way to recover in any crisis than to be competitive in all aspects. Moreover, the company's competitiveness should not only come from the owners, shareholders, and managers.

Nevertheless, it should also involve all the employees. Everybody should be aware of the company's strengths and weaknesses. Each employee should be motivated enough to take the responsibility of being a company's brand ambassador or ambassadress. Another critical indicator of the competitive strategy on which the company should focus is the website. The modern time is the internet era, which means that the internet became an essential part of our lives, both work and personal. Everyone relies on the information stored on the internet. It is advantageous for all businesses, particularly those in the service and hospitality industries, to have a well-organized and easily navigable website. Because digital marketing affects customer behaviour, according to a study conducted by Leite, et al. [12] this behaviour influences the hospitality industry's management and marketing strategies. Being competitive requires many factors to consider. After understanding the customers' needs and ensuring that all employees are fully aware of their competitive strategy, they should focus on their competitors. It is vital to keep updated on their activities and take advantage of the new development's new development.

It is still a relevant indicator for the economic recovery based on the respondents' perception because the cost should be proportionate to the revenue of any company. If the revenue is low because of whatever reason, the company must find ways to reduce the operational cost.

The company's marketing strategy should effectively survive and remain competitive, especially during a crisis recovery process.

Table 3
Summary Table on the Marketing Mix for the Economic Recovery after Crisis

Indicators	WM	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Product	3.55	Strongly Agree	2
2. Price	3.41	Agree	6
3. Place	3.52	Strongly Agree	3
4. Promotion	3.39	Agree	7
5. People	3.51	Strongly Agree	4
6. Physical Evidence and Process	3.56	Strongly Agree	1
7. Partnership	3.47	Agree	5
Composite Mean	3.49	Agree	

Legend: 3.50–4.00=Strongly Agree; 2.50–3.49=Agree; 1.50–2.49=Disagree; 1.00–1.49= Strongly Disagree

Table 3 summarizes the result for the Marketing Mix, which represents 7P's indicators with a composite mean score of 3.49. It shows that all indicators are acceptable for the economic recovery of the hospitality industry after crises. Four out of seven items fall under the highest range with the verbal interpretation of strongly agree. Physical Evidence and Process ranks first with a weighted mean of 3.56, followed by Product with a weighted mean of 3.5 and ranked second; Place with a weighted mean of 3.52 as third, and People with a weighted mean of 3.51 on the fourth rank. The remaining items are Partnership with a weighted mean of 3.47 ranked fifth, Price with a weighted mean of 3.41 ranked sixth, and the least is a Promotion with a weighted mean of 3.39.

The marketing mix always prioritizes products followed by price, place and promotion. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, the survey results based on the hospitality employees'

perspective somewhat changed their perspective in life. Each crisis process can have a unique outcome. Tourism businesses must adopt various strategies depending on the market conditions and opportunities in which they operate

A leaner and more efficient corporate mindset is required during a crisis. Businesses must exit markets where they are underperforming to strengthen markets where they are market leaders or competitors. In times of crisis, the goal of marketing strategy must revert to meeting consumer demands and needs. When tourism businesses act with this awareness, they can boost sales and profits by adjusting their marketing mix appropriately. Consumer behaviour must be examined appropriately to be successful. Strategies should incorporate long-term decisions and actions, and implemented systems should be evaluated periodically.

Additionally, managers must choose the appropriate marketing strategy for their business, considering future marketing requirements, competitive factors, environmental factors, and the tourism business's strengths and weaknesses. Following that, a marketing strategy must be determined, and a marketing approach must be implemented following the strategy [13].

Table 4 displays the association between marketing strategies and marketing mix on the recovery after a crisis. It was observed that the obtained rho-values indicate a solid direct correlation, and the computed p-values were all less than 0.01 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and shows a significant relationship exists between variables which means that the better the marketing strategies, the better the marketing mix. In addition, the marketing mix is affected by the marketing strategies employed and vis-à-vis employees' perspective on the economic recovery after the devastation.

The economic recovery process after a crisis depends on the extent of damage to the industry and economy. It is unprecedented in the case of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis because it is still impacting worldwide. However, based on the employees' perception, the economic recovery in terms of marketing strategy and marketing mix is highly significant, as suggested by p-value.

Table 4
Relationship between Marketing Strategies and Marketing Mix on the Economic Recovery after Crisis

Market Share Strategy	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Product	0.718**	0.000	Highly Significant
Price	0.673**	0.000	Highly Significant
Place	0.680**	0.000	Highly Significant
Promotion	0.666**	0.000	Highly Significant
People	0.607**	0.000	Highly Significant
Physical Evidence and Process	0.624**	0.000	Highly Significant
Partnership	0.623**	0.000	Highly Significant
Competitive Strategy	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Product	0.729**	0.000	Highly Significant
Price	0.695**	0.000	Highly Significant
Place	0.666**	0.000	Highly Significant
Promotion	0.669**	0.000	Highly Significant
People	0.636**	0.000	Highly Significant
Physical Evidence and Process	0.624**	0.000	Highly Significant
Partnership	0.631**	0.000	Highly Significant
Cost Reduction Strategy	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Product	0.570**	0.000	Highly Significant
Price	0.598**	0.000	Highly Significant
Place	0.551**	0.000	Highly Significant
Promotion	0.706**	0.000	Highly Significant
People	0.600**	0.000	Highly Significant
Physical Evidence and Process	0.524**	0.000	Highly Significant
Partnership	0.579**	0.000	Highly Significant

Legend: Significant at p-value < 0.05

There is a special relationship between marketing strategy and marketing mix. There is no marketing mix if there is no marketing strategy, and there is no marketing strategy if there is no marketing objective. Since marketing mix supports marketing strategy, the marketing team's preoccupation should be to keep discovering ways to ensure that the effectiveness of the marketing mix is maximized to support marketing strategy.

If the marketing mix changes to a point where it does not support marketing strategy, there is a significant problem. There is a need to change the marketing strategy to fit the team's marketing mix. Salman et al. [14] suggest that challenging situations during the transition process require an effective crisis management strategy to enhance the tourism and hospitality industry. However, if a marketing

team runs a programme to counter an immediate competitive threat, this will be a different story. In such a case, the team will have to evaluate the damage or adverse effect that will create on the momentum built by the marketing mix to support the marketing strategy. The cost can be very high depending on the scale of the changes and the brand value in question.

According to UK Essay in 2016, tourism is an industry that operates on a massively broad scale: it embraces activities ranging from the smallest sea-side hotel; to airlines, multi-national hotel chains and major international tour operators. Tourism companies are confronted with the demand to find new ways and methods for achieving sustainable competitive advantage. Tourism researchers have given much attention to identifying advertising effectiveness and return on investment. Much

experimentation has been made with aided recall designs, adding tracking mechanisms, and experimental designs to assess each investment's effectiveness in generating sales and profits. Finally, finding the optimal combination of the marketing mix elements is the key to success.

Moreover, the significant relationship between the two independent variables suggests that with the proper implementation of marketing strategy alongside the indicators of the marketing mix, economic recovery can be achieved. Marketing is the critical factor during the recovery process. Therefore, the owners and managers must realize that they have to approve an additional marketing budget to support

its marketing activities, especially trying times and recovery [15].

The marketing strategy, particularly the market share strategy, competitive strategy, and cost reduction strategy, has a highly significant relationship to Marketing Mix's 7Ps in economic recovery. The marketing strategy and marketing mix components of a detailed marketing plan are inextricably linked. While marketing strategy is concerned with determining the direction of a business's products or service lines, the marketing mix is primarily tactical. It is used to execute the overall marketing strategy. Both are critical components of the economic recovery strategy.

Table 5

Action Plan on the Economic Recovery after Crisis in terms of Marketing Strategies and Marketing Mix

KEY RESULT AREA	ACTIVITIES AND STRATEGIES	PERSON'S INVOLVED
Marketing Strategy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Awareness of employees on company and industry strengths and weaknesses ➢ Well organized contents of the company website ➢ Well-trained and motivated employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Conduct regular meetings, seminars, training and product update to ensure employees are getting correct information on the company's status and the industry in general. ➢ Invest in the latest technology and hire the best digital marketing manager to ensure that the website is well organized and constantly updated ➢ Conduct regular Training Needs Assessment of employees. ➢ Hire a dedicated Training Manager that will conduct regular training for all employees. ➢ Make a "drop-box" where employees can put their "innovative" suggestions to increase employee motivation. ➢ Consider point system and incentive-based learning for all employees. ➢ Include the attendance of employees in seminars/training in periodic performance appraisal of employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisor Operations Manager Marketing Manager General Manager H.R. Manager Chief Financial Manager Chief Executive Officer IT Manager Marketing Manager General Manager Chief Executive Officer HR Manager Finance Manager General Manager
Marketing Mix		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Evidence and Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Easy to remember and navigate website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Strengthen online platforms. Focus on the enhancement and development of the company's website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing Manager Operations Manager Sales and Marketing Manager

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Safe Online Payments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Collaborate with a local and international bank that feature layers of security checking in all online transactions ➤ Connect to an online system of provider that offers automatic services to monitor and intercept fraudulent transactions ➤ Assign a dedicated digital Marketing Manager that will look into processes involved in the online system. 	<p>Business Development Manager General Manager</p> <p>Chief Finance Officer Chief Executive Officer President</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Highly reliable website, quick log-in and effortless access to internal links. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend to all queries and complaints. ➤ Establish a back-office support team to monitor all online transactions. 	<p>Operations Manager Sales and Marketing Manager General Manager Operations Manager Sales and Marketing Manager Business Development Manager Operations Manager Sales and Marketing Manager</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Satisfactory company reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Invest in business intelligence reporting tools to identify key performance indicators for continuous improvement. ➤ Assign a dedicated Digital Marketing Manager that will look into the processes involved in the online system to ensure that customers will not have any issues from the start of booking until the after-service transactions. 	<p>Marketing Manager Operations Manager General Manager</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Highly efficient booking process thru quick and accurate response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain cleanliness of off-line offices by assigning regular cleaner even if employees are in Work From Home Scheme 	<p>Operations Manager General Manager</p>

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study, the employees' perception of the economic recovery in terms of Marketing Strategy revealed that employees' awareness of the company and industry strengths and weaknesses and maintaining a well-organized content of the company website are the ideal and practical strategies to be implemented during the recovery process. Physical Evidence and Process of Marketing Mix suggest that a company website that is easy to remember and easily navigated can be considered during the economic recovery process. There is a highly significant relationship to economic recovery after the crisis between the marketing strategy,

specifically market share, competitiveness and cost reduction and the 7Ps of the marketing mix such as product, price place, promotion, people, physical evidence and process, and partnership. The plan of action was proposed towards economic recovery after the crisis in the Hospitality Industry.

The researcher recommend that the owners and stakeholders may always look after the well-being of their employees even during the crisis. They have to implement measures that will motivate employees consistently. The industry may always be flexible in adapting to the new changes brought by the crises and strategically planning the steps for recovery. Employees may be appropriately oriented about their

role in the business process to ensure complete understanding and engagement in work. The Hospitality industry may develop innovative ideas that will involve all employees as they direct customers' direct contacts. The Action Plan may be presented during round table discussions. The strategies may be implemented towards recovery from the crisis. Further research focusing on the travel agency sector to understand the exact requirements of the specific sector of the hospitality industry may be conducted.

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