



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



Factors Influencing Hotel Guests with the Hotel Booking Decision: Post Pandemic COVID-19

Nurul Nabilah Kamarul Ariffin, Aisyatul Adawiyah Romli, Khazainah Khalid, Mushaireen Musa, Jazira Anuar

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i5/17027>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i5/17027

Received: 06 March 2023, **Revised:** 08 April 2023, **Accepted:** 20 April 2023

Published Online: 04 May 2023

In-Text Citation: (Ariffin et al., 2023)

To Cite this Article: Ariffin, N. N. K., Romli, A. A., Khalid, K., Musa, M., & Anuar, J. (2023). Factors Influencing Hotel Guests with the Hotel Booking Decision: Post Pandemic COVID-19. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 13(5), 377 – 391.

Copyright: © 2023 The Author(s)

Published by Human Resource Management Academic Research Society (www.hrmars.com)

This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen at: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Vol. 13, No. 5, 2023, Pg. 377 – 391

<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/IJARBSS>

JOURNAL HOMEPAGE

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at
<http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/publication-ethics>



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES



www.hrmar.com

ISSN: 2222-6990

Factors Influencing Hotel Guests with the Hotel Booking Decision: Post Pandemic COVID-19

Nurul Nabilah Kamarul Ariffin, Aisyatul Adawiyah Romli,
Khazainah Khalid, Mushaireen Musa, Jazira Anuar

Universiti Teknologi Mara Terengganu, Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management, 23000
Dungun Terengganu, Malaysia

Corresponding Author's Email: khaza088@uitm.edu.my

Abstract

As the world thriving into modern era especially after Post Pandemic COVID-19, the businesses in service industry have been competing to give the best service quality to the guest. These stiff competitions are focus on attracting guests' attention, recover the business again as well as satisfying demanding guests. The changes scenario of technology dominating hospitality industry from digital online review can influence guests with regards to their decision on choosing hotels. In line with the intense competition from hoteliers, every hospitality organization has their own strategy to develop uniqueness and influence guests to come and stay at the hotel. This purpose of this study is to determine the understanding of factors influencing guests with regards to their booking decision at the hotel post Pandemic COVID-19. Findings indicated that most literatures highlighted on value for money, cleanliness and sanitization and safety & security as crucial factors for guests when booking a hotel post pandemic COVID-19. Suggestions for future research were given in order to enhance the topic further.

Keywords: COVID-19, Hotel Booking Decision, Value for Money, Cleanliness, Sanitization, Safety, Security

Introduction

Several countries with magnificent vacation sites benefit greatly from the tourism and hospitality industries, which, as service sectors, contribute significantly to the growth of their economies and the reduction of unemployment rates in such countries. When it comes to generating Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and strengthening any country's economy, the tourist and hospitality sector as well as hotel industry makes a substantial contribution. It encompasses a wide range of service industries. Malaysia is one of those nations where the tourist and hospitality sector makes a significant contribution to the country's overall GDP development. Until 2019, the hotel sector was at its peak. The SARS-CoV-2 (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona Virus 2) pandemic that began in Wuhan (China) and spread quickly across the city before spreading to other parts of the globe (Hasruk, 2020) was a complete surprise. Since the COVID-19 outbreak, individuals' travel habits are significantly impacted by the epidemic owing to health hazards (Cao et al., 2009). COVID-19 has had a

significant impact on the lives of individuals and communities all around the world. In all, 214 nations throughout the globe have been affected by this epidemic at this point. On 11th of March, 2020, the World Health Organization announced it to be the COVID-19 Pandemic (Hao et al., 2020). As a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak, the travel and hospitality sector has suffered significantly (Hao et al., 2020). As a precautionary step, the World Health Organization (WHO) advises individuals to avoid close contact with those who are infected with COVID-19 and to use hand sanitizer, stay isolated, and wear masks (WHO, 2020a). As a precautionary step, the World Health Organization (WHO) advises individuals to avoid close

contact with those who are infected with COVID-19 and to use hand sanitizer, stay isolated, and wear masks (WHO, 2020a). Because of this, there will be instability in many aspects of life, the most notable of which are health and finances (Tull et al., 2020). As a result of the individual's sense of danger, this anxiety manifests itself. During a pandemic, anyone who believe the COVID-19 poses a danger to their health or finances may voice their concern (Steyn et al., 2021). It is critical for hotel owners to understand the shift in travel behaviour, demands, and expectations of consumers in the post-COVID-19 era, as this will eventually aid in repairing and regaining the passengers' trust. Given the pandemic's unprecedented influence on the global hotel business, it is evidently important for academics to identify effective strategies for assisting industry participants in overcoming obstacles. The purpose of this research is to ascertain changes in consumer expectations about hotel features or to ascertain the traits that may inspire trust in customers to return to hotels in the post-COVID era.

Currently, Malaysia's hotel sector is suffering from an unprecedented crisis brought on by the COVID-19 outbreak. The influence of COVID 19 differs from industry to industry. Face-to-face interactions such as hotel and restaurant reservations, plane travel, and tourist services would be disproportionately impacted. In hotel industry, there are some changes in terms of hotel operations and understanding how hotels are operating in the post-COVID age requires an understanding of customer's viewpoints. This is because due to COVID-19 outbreak, it makes people changes their lifestyles where there will be different perspective of needs and desire from hotel operation than before and because of this, hotel must change and update their operation according to passage of time. Customers' concern of the COVID-19 outbreak has hampered the hotel industry's ability to generate income (Kumar, 2020). Hotels had to make operational modifications and upgrade their service standards in order to comply with government and WHO regulations, as well as to ensure that guests felt safe and secure throughout their stay (Chan et al., 2021). As an example, the new procedures include temperature testing at check-in, verifying for correct usage of surgical masks, documenting previous travel histories and symptoms, etc. (if any). In addition, a rapid response code is used to monitor client trip history. As a bonus, hotels that use service innovation, such as offering hygiene supplies and enhancing sanitization methods, in addition to social innovations such as QR code scanning and staff rotations, are less likely to encounter complaints.

Following the first outbreaks of COVID-19, the movement either came to a standstill or slowed significantly throughout the nation, owing to the lockdown effect. Flights and trains are being cancelled, and many locations are experiencing a temporary stoppage of mobility, which has a severe effect on the hotel and tourist industries. The issue has been recreated multiple times as a result of the lockdown being reinstalled again, which contributed to the increase

in instances. The government has imposed stringent rules for controlling the disease's spread. Maintaining social distance and taking cautious precautions such as wearing a face mask and routinely using hand sanitizers have been prescribed, and individuals are expected to adhere to the rules scrupulously.

Hoteliers are responsible for adhering to these requirements and ensuring the safety and security of hotel guests while the hotel is in operation. As people nowadays focus on online booking and seek information about the hotel beforehand, thus several factors can influence their decisions. For example, before they place a booking at a hotel, the customers would have their own characteristic on what they are looking for in an establishment that could fulfil their desires, needs and wants. Back then, people focus on location, price, image of the hotel and status when do a hotel booking. But, nowadays, they have narrowed their preference which the value for money, safety and

security, and cleaning and sanitization are on top and their priority when choosing a hotel. So, this results the customer difficult in deciding to book a hotel. Besides, when the ambiguity they have while making decisions makes them more likely to take risks, which may have both positive and bad effects on their lives. Unexpected and unpleasant results of goods purchases are the source of perceived risk (Bauer, 1960; Rehman et al., 2020). The fear of contracting the disease will deter many travelers even after the outbreak is contained. The hotel as well should furnish an easy access to give the information about the new norm, new Standard Operating Procedure and etc.

The industry anticipates significant changes to operating procedures as a result of the COVID-19 recommendations. The hotel industry must successfully implement reforms to ensure the safety and security of its clients. This may assist industry participants in gaining the approval and patronage of potential hotel guests (Gössling et al., 2020). In light of the sector's significant changes as a result of COVID-19, researchers as stakeholders in this business must devise a strategy for its recovery. Given that the hotel sector is through a difficult period and industry operators are striving to control operational costs in order to stay in business, demand must be increased. In this crucial situation, researchers must play a significant role in determining how to reclaim the client by analysing behavioural changes and assessing alterations in their wants. Hence, researchers believed that this study is evidently important to be carried out based on research objectives as below:

RO1: To determine factors affecting guests with the hotel booking decision post Pandemic COVID-19.

RO2: To determine the most significant factor influencing guests with the hotel booking decision Post Pandemic COVID-19.

This study will be looking on three variables as most literatures highlighted on value for money, cleanliness and sanitization and safety & security as crucial factors for guests when booking a hotel post pandemic COVID-19. The following model illustrates the relationship between factors influencing guests with the hotel booking decision Post Pandemic COVID-19. Academically, this study can contribute to a new body of knowledge in Hospitality Management literatures specifically on Customer Behaviour. Additionally, it will serve as a foundation for future academicians or researchers that would like to explore on attributes or

factors that influence guests with their booking decision at hotels as this study will give better understanding on guests' preferences and demand. This can also assist people in Hospitality Management to know the change in needs of guests after COVID-19 outbreak. On the other

hand, this study will assist the industry players/ hospitality operators/ hotel managers to understand better on what influences guests with the hotel booking decision in the hotel industry. Thus, they can strategize their marketing strategies to woo and wow guests Post Pandemic COVID-19. These in a long run can encourage their guests to stay loyal with their establishment and increase the hotel reputation and image. It can suggest methods for better strategic management for the hotels along with deep understanding on what people seek in hotel before they make a booking after Coronavirus pandemic appear.

Literature Review

Factors Affecting Guests with Hotel Booking Decision

The characteristics of a particular lodging establishment help shape their mental picture of their stay (Zeithaml et al., 1993). Hotel qualities must be re-evaluated because of a pandemic's shift in demand and the adjustment in priority from a potential customer's point of view. Individuals' purchasing decisions are influenced by a wide variety of psychological processes that are difficult to pin down. Customers' minds have been portrayed as black boxes that reveal the interplay of stimuli and consumer attributes, as well as their decisions and reactions (Sandhusen, 2000). There's no way to know what's going on in the brains of customers, but it can monitor what goes in and what comes out. The consumer's qualities, including as attitudes, motivation, perceptions, personality, lifestyle, and the decision-making process, are included in the black box and determine the consumer's reaction. 'A mental orientation describing the customer's approach to choosing decisions' is how (Sproles and Kendall, 1986, as cited in Decrop & Snelders, 2005) describe the decision-making process of a consumer. They also give empirical evidence that decision-making processes are generally unaffected by cultural contexts. As Solomon et al (1999) point out; customers have to make judgments about what items and services they want all the time. In the course of rational problem-solving and decision-making, customers seek and utilise product and service information. With regard to hotel selection, this data is based on aspects of a product or service, such as value for money and the features offered. It's important for buyers to consider which of these characteristics is most relevant to their own particular beliefs, requirements, and preferences before making a purchase.

Value for Money

According to Goi (2011), a price is the amount of money charged for a certain commodity or service. When it comes to making a purchasing choice, one of the most crucial factors to consider is pricing. A company's or organization's income is generated only by the price of its products or services. If the price is either too high or too low, the firm or organisation may suffer a revenue loss as a result of the decision. The "value for money" feature has been highly regarded by earlier academics. The utility gained from using a product or service in exchange for both short-term and long-term expenditures is what is referred to as "value for money" (Cengiz & Kirkbir, 2007). Tourists use it as a predictor of their preferences (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). As soon as visitor inquiries about a hotel's pricing and features, the value for money is an important factor to consider (Lockyer, 2002). When it comes to reserving a hotel, price is a key factor to consider (Asaputra, 2019), therefore it's only natural for guests to pick for the

most affordable alternative (Pappas, 2017). The establishments that charge a reduced rate for their hotel services are more popular (Mao & Lyu, 2017). Before making a purchase, the buyer

always checks the advertised price to the reference price. To put it another way, consumers are satisfied with their hotels because they know they are getting good value for their money, based on the comparison of their hotel's pricing with other hotels in their area.

Safety and Security

One of the most important aspects of everyday living is security, which has a strong connection to tourism (Delafontaine, 2017). The prevention of health hazards, the reduction of robbery and other property crimes, and the unauthorized use of data are all part of hotel security (Zehrer et al., 2005). Natural hazards, economic crises, terrorist acts, and pandemics owing to new viruses are all factors that have a negative influence on tourism and the money it generates (Rodrguez-Antón et al., 2020). COVID-19's devastation of the tourist industry and its lingering ramifications have been on display lately for the whole world to see. Guests' safety and security is essential to the long-term viability of tourism. Health and safety are crucial considerations for travel and lodging. Similarly, (Untaru and Han, 2021; Shin and Kang, 2020). Among the hotel's many safety concerns is safeguarding its guests from harm caused by mishaps that may occur both within and outside the hotel's walls (M. H. Chen et al., 2007). Protection from burglary and theft, terrorism and legal or political consequences, privacy concerns for consumers, disaster protection, personal data protection, environmental security, health and sanitation, authentic information, quality assurance, etc. are all part of the security concerns (Kvári & Zimányi, 2011). These are just a few examples. For the safety and security of its visitors, hotels have made every effort to add electronic lockers, CCTV cameras, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers as well as sprinkler systems (Nagaj & Uromskaite, 2020) To avoid transmission during the COVID-19 pandemic, industry participants have been tasked with going the extra mile. The hotel does not care about the severe measures since they impact the quality of the vacation. Tourist safety and security may be improved by the use of newer, more advanced technology-based soft security measures (Uromskait & Nagaj, 2018). It is equally crucial for hotel visitors to have their personal information protected from unauthorised access by the hotels themselves (Nagaj & uromskait, 2020).

Cleaning and Sanitation

Since contamination is a major source of disease transmission in the COVID-19 scenario (World Health Organization, 2020a), a hotel's ability to maintain high standards of cleanliness and sanitization is critical (WHO, 2020; Chen et al., 2020). Plus, cleanliness is one of the elements that influence the choosing of lodging services since the danger of infection by different viruses and germs persists even if the hotel premises are well cleaned (as opposed to other criteria) (Zemke et al., 2015). Besides, strength and health may be achieved via cleanliness. A Muslim society that is both healthy and capable of comprehending and implementing God's message, as well as distributing it across the globe, is needed by Islam (Mazlan, 2015). The importance of the hotel staff and the guest should be given by making the area secure and safe by implementing intense safety health standards of cleaning and strictly maintaining physical distancing between staff members and guests during the delivery of food, beverage, room service, and other products, stated (Scandice, 2020). The cleanliness

of an accommodation's facilities has a direct correlation to client pleasure (OA, 2017). When a visitor is deciding on where to stay, this is the most important consideration (Wilkins et al., 2007). Hygiene, safety protocols, and housekeeping standards need to be adhered to with the greatest dedication

during the SARS flu epidemic (Hung & Yuen, 2018). For hotels, understanding that cleaning and sanitizing might help to stop a pandemic's spread can be used as a marketing tool both during and after the outbreak. For the additional cost of cleaning and disinfection, clients are more than willing to pay (Marie et al., 2015).

Methodology

In order to collect and evaluate the necessary data to arrive at a solution, researchers make a series of logical decision-making choices while planning their study. Secondary data gathering is used to meet the study's goals. Researchers analysed all previous studies related to the topic be it qualitative or quantitative study. Researchers than summarizing the discussion in chapter four, findings and discussions, adding researchers own perspectives. Through an in-depth literature search from previous study, it is promising for rigorous exploration of many important but difficult-

to-study issues of interest to organizational researchers in areas as diverse as business policy and strategy, managerial and organizational cognition, organizational behaviour and human resources. The evaluation of every variable in this study is deliberately searched through online database such as Ezaccess, Emerald Premium, and Google Scholars. Researchers applied for Research Ethics Consideration with PJIA office UiTMCT.

Findings

Factors Influencing Guests with their booking decision

Based on reviews of previous findings, it is evident that since the COVID-19 outbreak, people' travel choices have been severely influenced by the pandemic due to health risks (Mao et al., 2009). COVID-19, as noted in the introductory chapter, has had a profound influence on the lives of people and communities worldwide. During a pandemic, anyone who believes the COVID-19 poses a risk to their health or finances is free to express their concerns (Steyn et al., 2021). People's travel habits may be directly affected by epidemics (Mao et al., 2010). Large-scale travel restrictions and the spread of COVID-19 threaten the worldwide hospitality and tourist business. Approximately "50 million jobs worldwide" are at stake because of the epidemic according to Gloria Guevara, the President and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council. The COVID-19 worldwide health catastrophe, according to the letter, is putting the travel and tourist industry "already facing collapse" and "in a struggle for existence" (Guevara, 2020). In the event of a decline in tourism and travel, hotels are particularly vulnerable (Hoisington, 2020). The COVID-19 has had a devastating effect on companies, workers, and consumers in the tourist and hospitality sector, which is heavily invested in hotels, tour agencies, and airlines (Bahar & Ilal, 2020). Changes in hotel management may be influenced by COVID-19's effect on the industry (Choirisa & Situmorang, 2020). For hotels, COVID-19 is a disruptive force that has prompted considerable modifications in their offers and operations to meet a new set of standards. Since the first verified instance of COVID-19 was found in December 2019, hotels have been remodeled.

Besides that, due to the spread of COVID-19, visitors have changes in their preference and perspective of what kind of hotel they are look into before they decided to place a booking. Following the unanticipated COVID-19 epidemic, hotels must address shifts in customer

demand and regain visitors' faith. As a result, firms must have a thorough understanding of their visitors' broad variety of traits, which enables them to understand the driving causes, attitude, and values that shape customer views when making booking decisions (Nininen et al., 2006). Hence, it is critical for hotel owners to understand the shift in travel behavior, demands, and expectations of consumers in the post-COVID-19 era, as this will eventually aid in repairing and regaining the travelers' trust. The hotel business is changing and knowing how hotels are functioning in the post-COVID era requires an awareness of consumer perspectives. This is because the COVID-19 pandemic causes individuals to alter their lives, resulting in a new viewpoint of requirements and desires from hotel operations than previously, and as a result, hotels must modify and update their operations as time passes. It is evident that this epidemic has had a significant effect on the hospitality and hotel industries.

This study has answered the first Research Objective that is to determine factors influencing guests with the hotel booking decision post Pandemic COVID-19. It is interestingly discovered that literatures have heavily discussed three variables that influenced guests with their booking decision namely: value for money, safety and security, and the cleanliness and sanitization. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 epidemic, each of these factors brings a unique perspective to the table when it comes to determining how guests will choose to book hotels. It is mentioned that hotel selection attributes are defined as characteristics of a product or service that influence a customer's decision between two or more lodging options (Lewis, 1984). The qualities of hotel selection have long been a focus of research since they provide a key indicator for gaining market share (Shanahan and Hyman, 2007, Tsai et al., 2011, Yu et al., 2021).

Literatures has highlighted that value for money is one of the factors that influenced hotel guests with the hotel booking decision post pandemic COVID-19. Value for money can be defined as customers who are willing to part with money in exchange for a desired product or service as well as the utility gained from using a product or service in exchange for both short-term and long-term expenditures (Cengiz & Kirkbir, 2007). It is also regarded as the best predictor for tourists (Eid & El-Gohary, 2015). As soon as a visitor inquiry about a hotel's pricing and features, the value for money is an important factor to consider (Lockyer, 2002). It is very usual for a visitor to pick the greatest value for money choice when reserving a hotel room. (Asaputra, 2019; Pappas, 2017). Additionally, COVID-19 has a detrimental effect on individual customers. Individuals' values, preferences for food, and behaviour may all be influenced by COVID-19 (Gursoy & Chi, 2020; Kim & Lee, 2020; Sigala, 2020), and the severity with which they perceive the illness danger will determine how much of an effect it has (Kim et al., 2020). COVID-19 has been shown to boost customers' desire for more costly products because of their perception of the danger. This is because customers are more concerned about their safety when the danger of COVID-19 is high (as opposed to low), which impacts their decision to book a costlier hotel. If an option relates to heightened safety, desire for that choice will grow as perceived danger increases since it might enhance one's feeling of security. Indeed, individuals connect high-quality items with lesser danger (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). When customers believe they are in more danger from COVID-19, they are more likely

to choose higher quality/price options, such as higher-end hotels when making hotel reservations. This is according to researcher.

Moreover, safety and security are one of the factors that influenced hotel guest with the hotel booking decision post pandemic COVID-19. Generally known, security is one of the top objectives for our everyday lives which is closely related with tourism, Lafontaine (2017) (Delafontaine). The coronavirus illness (COVID-19) is resulted in a crucial worry about service safety and altering the service operations into a new style of practices for improved reparability and lower interaction (Berry et al., 2020). The World Health Organization, for example, presented operational considerations for hotel COVID-19 management and preventative measures to ensure that guests have a safe and comfortable hotel stay. Hotel experts have not only fulfilled with these sorts of precautions, but they also launched varied techniques to make certain that the hotels are protected from coronavirus. Likewise, Marriott International expressed their commitment toward clean and frictionless services for travel with trust at COVID-19 (Marriott, 2020). The safety and security concerns of the visitors have to be considered for the maintenance of tourism. This is because safety and security will be their priority in hotel selection before they place a booking. Among the hotel's many safety concerns is safeguarding its guests from harm caused by mishaps that may occur both within and outside the hotel's walls (Chen et al., 2007). The security concerns include various components which include protection from theft and burglary, terrorism, legal or political effects, privacy concerns, consumer protection, disaster protection, personal data protection, environmental security, health, and sanitization, getting authentic information, quality assurance, etc (Kóvári & Zimányi, 2011).

During the COVID-19 epidemic, industry participants were required to go above and above in terms of transmission prevention. In addition to social distance and the use of masks, gloves, and sanitizers, additional preventative strategies include (WHO, 2020; World Health Organization, 2020b; World Health Organization, 2020a; UNWTO, 2020). The security measures have a higher influence than those of pricing from the traveler's standpoint, (Gupta, 2009). There are two sorts of security measures named "hard & "soft". For a hotel, the hard measures are irrelevant since they degrade the guest experience (Nagaj et al., 2018). Soft security measures employing current technologies have a significant role in terms of providing soft security measures and safeguarding the visitors, (Nagaj et al., 2018). Natural hazards, economic crises, terrorist acts, as well as pandemics caused by new viruses are all factors that have a negative influence on tourism and the cash it generates (Rodríguez-Antón & Alonso-Almeida, 2020), despite the fact that security is one of our main objectives. We have all been a part of it. Recently, the savagery and aftermath of COVID-19 and its impact on tourism. For the long-term viability of tourism, visitors' safety and security must be given first priority. Accidents both within and outside the hotel may result in death or injury, and the hotel is concerned about safeguarding its guests from these incidents (Chen et al., 2007). There are a variety of security problems. Theft and burglary protection, terrorism protection, legal or political effects, privacy concerns, consumer protection, disaster protection, personal data protection, environmental security, health and sanitation, authentic information, quality assurance, and so on are all examples of these components (Kvári & Zimányi, 2011). Aforementioned, safety and security have little bearing on one's health, and as a result, hotel visitors seldom consider them while making a reservation.

Nevertheless, one of the crucial attributes/factors that influenced guests with their booking decision is cleanliness and sanitization which also the most sought-after accommodation demand amid the COVID-19 scenario (World Health Organization, 2020a) since the illness is disseminated due to contamination, (WHO, 2020; Chen et al., 2020). The amount of contentment of the visitor also corresponds with the level of hygiene an accommodation unit maintains (OA, 2017). Lockyer (2005) identified that cleanliness and sanitization of a hotel's common areas are important considerations for guests. Health will also play an important role in the tourist and hospitality industry's recovery after the COVID-19 epidemic (Wen et al., 2020), because of the persistent dread connected with this pandemic and comparable illnesses. SARS epidemic in 2003 heightened attention to the need of hotel cleaning and sanitization practices (Kim et al., 2005). Moreover, cleanliness and sanitization have been frequently explored in terms of the hotel sector recovery (Chien and Law, 2003; Henderson and Ng, 2004; Lo et al., 2006). It demonstrates that consumers are impacted by hygiene and cleanliness conditions while making purchasing choices in a service setting (Choi, 2019; Hecht and Martin, 2006; Hoffman et al., 2003; Vilnai-Yavetz and Gilboa, 2010; Zemke et al., 2015). Being able to disseminate COVID-19 by touching surfaces that have been infected with the virus has made hotel cleanliness and sanitization an even more critical issue in recent months (WHO, 2020b). Hotel surfaces are likely to be unclean, have greater microbial counts and offer potential sources of illness transmission (Park et al., 2019). Yu et al (2021) examined the individuals' perception of the hygiene attributes of a hotel during the COVID-19 outbreak, and they proposed that the hygiene of customer used space, the personal hygiene of the staff, and the workspace hygiene as the underlying dimensions of the hygiene attributes of a hotel. Furthermore, according to the new standard standards, hotel cleaning and sanitization have risen as COVID-19 may be spread by contacting the virus-infected surface (WHO, 2020b). More germs, dirt, and disease-carrying vectors are present on hotel surfaces, which makes them a more probable source of transmission (Kim et al., 2019). Increasing cleaning and sanitization to minimize disease transmission may be marketed as a selling point during and after the pandemic, given the increased demand for hotel hygiene during the COVID-19 epidemic (Jiang & Wen, 2020).

Thus, hotel guests, aware of the importance of sanitation in preventing the transmission of illness, have an increased desire for hotels to provide the highest level of hygiene as a marketing tool for selling rooms during and after a pandemic. Cleanliness and sanitation and protective equipment for personnel, visitors, and facilities are part of the routines. Disinfectant providers have teamed with one of the world's most well-known hotel groups to supply amenities for its establishments. They guarantee staff and visitors frequently facilitate hand sanitizer, masks, and other sanitary equipment. Hygiene and cleanliness difficulties have been explored in pandemic outbreaks as a culprit of illness (Alan et al., 2016). Thus, while forecasting the hotel industry's recovery post-COVID-19, hygiene and cleanliness must be key themes given the devastating consequences of this pandemic and hotel guests' heightened safety-related expectations during travel.

This study has also answered the second research objective that is to determine the most significant factor influencing guests with the hotel booking decision Post Pandemic COVID-19. It is interestingly discovered that literatures have heavily discussed cleanliness and sanitization more compared to safety and security and value for money. The ability to spread COVID-19 via contact with contaminated surfaces has made hotel sanitation and cleanliness

an even more pressing concern in recent months (WHO, 2020b). Cleanliness and sanitization is evident as COVID-19 may be spread from person to person (Chan et al., 2020) as well as if they have been advised to reduce personal contact and increase physical distance (WHO, 2020a). Simply avoiding contact with the public will not enough, since the corona virus may transmit via contact with the surface and will remain there for up to five days. As a result, the general public will be adversely impacted over time. Chen et al (2007) found that during the 2003 SARS epidemic, public health-care institutions played crucial roles in pandemic prevention and containment. As COVID-19 has resulted to more than 3 million illnesses and 215,000 fatalities (Miller, 2020), hotel-based health-care services can comfort visitors in the event of an emergency while vacation. More severe cleanliness and hygiene rules are established by practically every hotel in order to provide a healthy atmosphere and varied contactless services are utilized at hotels in order to create an untack environment, which are strategies to travel the path to recovery. In other words, more rigorous room cleaning is undertaken with an emphasis on high-touch places, such as door and furniture knobs, and the hotel employees may no longer guide visitors to the rooms. Also, hotels provide the supply of equipment and other instruments, and they use new procedures in order to restrict the spread of coronavirus. For example, Hilton hotels have stations where visitors may clean the elevator buttons before pushing them, and the hotels also place a room seal on the doors to show customers that their room has not been visited once it has been fully cleaned (Moreland et al., 2020). As a result, consumers' perceptions of the most significant hotel selection qualities have altered since the COVID-19 outbreak and have been reconstructed during the course of the coronavirus pandemic. In the event of a flu pandemic caused by a virus derived from SARS variant viruses, there should be a high level of dedication to maintaining high standards of hygiene, safety procedure, and housekeeping while renting a hotel (Hung & Yuen, 2018).

As long as the hotel's cleanliness and sanitization standards are maintained and in compliance with government regulations, prospective guests will feel secure booking their stay there, knowing that their health is guaranteed and that the hotel places a high value on these practises. In addition, it was discovered that customers who visit hotels for a purpose have certain expectations regarding the cleanliness and sanitization of the surrounding area, the establishment of social distance, the observance of community guidelines, the mandated use of masks and gloves by service staff, and the provision of effective employee training for the implementation of health and safety protocols (Gursoy & Chi, 2020). When surfaces that are often touched by customers are rapidly clean and sterilize, the corona virus cannot survive. As visitors place a high value on travelling safely, this may assist industry participants obtain the approval and patronage of potential hotel consumers (Gössling et al., 2020). Due to the increased fear of travelling caused by COVID-19, consumers are less likely to do so. It is now evident to everyone that cleanliness is a need for visitors. Guests are most impacted by a brand's reputation for quality and reliability, and this extends to the physical spaces in where they stay. To ensure that guests have a pleasant stay, hotels must emphasize cleanliness, disinfection, and infection control.

In addition, the hotel should constantly maintain its Standard Operating Procedure in order to engage the visitor. A good example of this is ensuring compliance with the hotel's health and safety policies, which mandate that all guests and employees adhere to them such as all the staff and guests who about to spend their stay at the hotel must be fully vaccinated.

Enhancing cleanliness and providing alcohol-based hand sanitizer minimize the transmission of disease and provide clients a sense of security. Encourage the hotel personnel to always use masks and gloves while dealing with guests, as well as moreover, be open and honest about the cleaning methods you use. Guests want to know what the hotel is doing to ensure everyone's safety. Guest trust in a hotel's cleanliness may be bolstered by a clear explanation of its cleaning operations, and this might encourage them to place a booking. When it comes to hotel cleanliness and sanitation, it's apparent that visitors place a high value on their health and well-being while on the road. Proper sanitation and hygiene standards must be adhered to in accordance with government regulations. Due to the decline in regular customers, hotels must focus on partnering with hospitals or medical officials and offering quarantine amenities that may assist them in surviving through difficult days (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021).

Findings from previous researchers has highlighted that hand sanitizer is one of the best ways to help hotels to prevent the spread of infections of COVID-19 and decrease the risk of guests getting sick by providing a hand sanitizer at the open areas such as front desk, restaurant, halls, and guestrooms. This can be taken as good suggestions for the hotels to keep on moving post Pandemic COVID-19. Alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water are preferable for hand disinfection (WHO, 2020b). The key ingredients in the alcohol-based hand rubs are ethanol, propan-2-ol, and propan-1-ol. Additional ingredients such triclosan, polyhexanide, hydrogen peroxide, and peracetic acid are present in some hand sanitizers (Kampf, 2018). Hand sanitizers with alcohol deactivate the virus (Kratzel et al., 2020). Moreover, mechanical remover is followed by disinfection using sanitizing agents in the hand sanitization procedure, by dissolving the lipid membrane and exposing the intracellular material, cleaning substances like alcohol and soap render the virus inactive (Jing et al., 2020). There are 5 different kinds of hand sanitizers that hotels can use in their hotels as listed: (i) gel, (ii) foam, (iii) cream, (iv) spray, and (v) wipes.

Furthermore, by cleaning the facilities and common areas such as front desk check-in counters, bell desks, door handles, public bathrooms, elevators and elevators button, vending machines, room key cards, gym equipment, pool areas, dining surfaces, and all seating areas. By eliminating pollutants, cleaning with soap or detergent will reduces the number of germs on surfaces and helps in decreases the risk of infection towards COVID-19 issue. Other than that, by cleaning once per day is typically sufficient to eradicate any virus that may be present on surfaces if no one with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 has been in the hotel's areas. This contributes to the facility's continued health. Some hotels also have made sure that they clean and disinfect all the specific types of surfaces such as carpet, rugs, towels, linens, electronics such as keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines to make sure that they already provide a highly hygiene and sanitization to their guests.

Conclusion

In conclusion, three factors that heavily highlighted in the literatures that influence hotel guests with hotel booking decisions post pandemic COVID-19 are value for money, safety and security, and cleanliness and sanitization. This is because of the fact that the aforementioned aspects have a good chance of playing a role in the decisions that hotel customers make just before they make a reservation. Findings of this study suggest that industry professionals should gain an understanding of how guests evaluate the quality of the important selection attributes they consider when making hotel reservations, as well as how they evaluate the

importance of the attributes they consider when making hotel reservations (Chu and Choi, 2000, Kim et al., 2019). The research concluded that guests are less likely to book a hotel based on the hotels cleanliness and sanitation provided by hotels. Future research can explore from hoteliers' perspectives on how they conduct business Post Pandemic COVID-19.

References

- Awan, M. I., Shamim, A., and Ahn, J. (2021), "Implementing 'cleanliness is half of faith' in re-designing tourists, experiences and salvaging the hotel industry in Malaysia during COVID-19 pandemic", *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 543-557. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIMA-08-2020-0229>
- Cao, B., Li, X. W., Mao, Y., Wang, J., Lu, H. Z., Chen, Y. S., ... & Wang, C. (2009). Clinical features of the initial cases of 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in China. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 361(26), 2507-2517.
- Chan, E. A., Liu, J. Y. W., Fung, K. H. K., Tsang, P. L., & Yuen, J. (2018). Pre-departure preparation and co-curricular activities for Students' intercultural exchange: A mixed-methods study. *Nurse education today*, 63, 43-49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2018.01.020>
- Chan, M., Han, S. C., Kelly, S., Tamimi, M., Giglio, B., & Lewis, A. (2020). A case series of Guillain-Barre Syndrome following Covid-19 infection in New York. *Neurology: Clinical Practice*.
- Fung, K. K., Chan, Y. C., & Hung, S. L. (2023). Working from the Ground Up and Participatory Action Research: An old urban neighbourhood in Hong Kong. *Journal of Community Practice*, 1-19.
- Gossling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 29(1), 1-20.
- Gupta, V., & Garg, R. (2009). Probiotics. *Indian journal of medical microbiology*, 27(3), 202-209.
- Gursoy, D., & Chi, C. G. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality industry: review of the current situations and a research agenda. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 29(5), 527-529.
- Hasmuk, K., Sallehuddin, H., Tan, M. P., Cheah, W. K., Ibrahim, R., & Chai, S. T. (2020). The long-term care COVID-19 situation in Malaysia. *International Long-Term Care Policy Network*.
- Jiang, Y., & Wen, J. (2020). Effects of COVID-19 on hotel marketing and management: a perspective article. *International journal of contemporary hospitality management*, 32(8), 2563-2573.
- Jing, J. L. J., Pei Yi, T., Bose, R. J. C., McCarthy, J. R., Tharmalingam, N., & Madheswaran, T. (2020). Hand Sanitizers: A Review on Formulation Aspects, Adverse Effects, and Regulations. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(9), 3326. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17093326>
- Kaushal, V., & Srivastava, S. (2021). Hospitality and tourism industry amid COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives on challenges and learnings from India. *International journal of hospitality management*, 92, 102707. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102707>
- Kim, T. Y., Cable, D. M., & Kim, S. P. (2005). Socialization tactics, employee proactivity, and person-organization fit. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(2), 232.
- Kampf, G. (2018). Efficacy of ethanol against viruses in hand disinfection. *Journal of Hospital Infection*, 98(4), 331-338.

- Kratzel, A., Todt, D., V'kovski, P., Steiner, S., Gultom, M., Thao, T. T. N., Ebert, N., Holwerda, M., Steinmann, J., Niemeyer, D., Dijkman, R., Kampf, G., Drost, C., Steinmann, E., Thiel, V., & Pfaender, S. (2020). Inactivation of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 by WHO-Recommended Hand Rub Formulations and Alcohols. *Emerging infectious diseases*, 26(7), 1592–1595. <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid2607.200915>
- Kim, B., Kim, S., King, B., & Heo, C. Y. (2019). Luxurious or economical? An identification of tourists' preferred hotel attributes using best–worst scaling (BWS). *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 25(2), 162–175. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766718757789>
- Kumar, V. (2020). Indian tourism industry and COVID-19: present scenario. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Education*, 10, 179-185.
- Cao, B., Li, X. W., Mao, Y., Wang, J., Lu, H. Z., Chen, Y. S., ... & Wang, C. (2009). Clinical features of the initial cases of 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus infection in China. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 361(26), 2507-2517.
- Miller, M. (2020). 2019 Novel coronavirus COVID-19 (2019-nCoV) data repository: Johns Hopkins University center for systems science and engineering. *Bulletin-Association of Canadian Map Libraries and Archives (ACMLA)*, (164), 47-51.
- Mogelonsky, L. (2020), "Win guests by knowing their post-coronavirus travel behaviours", HospitalityNet, www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4098304.html
- Moreland, A., Herlihy, C., Tynan, M. A., Sunshine, G., McCord, R. F., Hilton, C., ... & Popoola, A. (2020). Timing of state and territorial COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and changes in population movement—United States, March 1–May 31, 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(35), 1198.
- Nagaj, R., & Žuromskaitė, B. (2020). Security measures as a factor in the competitiveness of accommodation facilities. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 13(5), 99.
- Ray, A., Ma, L. (2021). Operational Changes and Performance Outcomes: Analysis on Hotels of Five Asia–Pacific Countries. *JGBC* 16, 77–88 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42943-021-00041-9>
- Rauch, B. and Andersen, S. (2020), "Hotel industry 2020 – the new normal", HospitalityNet, www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4098461.html
- Rodriguez-Anton, J. M., & Alonso-Almeida, M. D. M. (2020). COVID-19 impacts and recovery strategies: The case of the hospitality industry in Spain. *Sustainability*, 12(20), 8599.
- Sandhusen, R. L. (2000). *Marketing Básico-Série Essencial*. Saraiva Educação SA.
- Sigala, M. (2020). Tourism and COVID-19: Impacts and implications for advancing and resetting industry and research. *Journal of business research*, 117, 312-321.
- Shin, H., & Kang, J. (2020). Reducing perceived health risk to attract hotel customers in the COVID-19 pandemic era: Focused on technology innovation for social distancing and cleanliness. *International journal of hospitality management*, 91, 102664. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102664>
- Tull, M. T., Edmonds, K. A., Scamaldo, K. M., Richmond, J. R., Rose, J. P., & Gratz, K. L. (2020). Psychological outcomes associated with stay-at-home orders and the perceived impact of COVID-19 on daily life. *Psychiatry research*, 289, 113098.
- Vilnai-Yavetz, I., & Gilboa, S. (2010). The effect of servicescape cleanliness on customer reactions. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 31(2), 213-234.
- Zain, N. A. M., and Shehu, F. (2018), "The concept of cleanliness in the perspective of Abrahamic tradition: textual analysis", *AL-Itqan Journal of Islamic Sciences and Comparative Studies*, No. 1, pp. 95-115.
- Zehrer, A., Pechlaner, H., & Holzl, B. (2005). The development of a destination management system (DMS) in South Tyrol. *Anatolia*, 16(2), 147-161.

- Zemke, D. M. V., Neal, J., Shoemaker, S., and Kirsch, K. (2015), "Hotel cleanliness: will guests pay for enhanced disinfection?", *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 690-710.
- Wu, H., Hao, Y., & Ren, S. (2020). How do environmental regulation and environmental decentralization affect green total factor energy efficiency: Evidence from China. *Energy Economics*, 91, 104880.
- World Health Organization. (2020). *Mental health and psychosocial considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak, 18 March 2020* (No. WHO/2019-nCoV/MentalHealth/2020.1). World Health Organization.