



*Ushering in the Age of Endemic*

**THE 11TH INTERNATIONAL INNOVATION,  
INVENTION & DESIGN COMPETITION  
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**EXTENDED ABSTRACTS BOOK**



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## SUSTAINABILITY OF HOTELIERS' STRATEGIES DURING ENDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

The arrival of COVID-19 has greatly affected real estate growth, especially commercial properties. Thus, hotel properties which were successful in providing high returns before, now have to find the best strategy to strengthen their business operations. Although it has entered the endemic era, visitors are still careful in choosing the best hotel for their accommodation. Accordingly, this study aims to examine the best strategy for the continuation of their business agenda. This study involves a questionnaire that focuses on seven main strategies (MS) along with 31 sub strategies (SS) which are distributed to 50 hoteliers throughout Malaysia. The research data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. All 31 SS have employed reliability test, followed by the mean score observation to see the current strategies practiced by the hoteliers. The reliable strategies were reviewed through significant status and an indication of the correlation value. The results of the study show that only eight strategies contribute to the hoteliers' efforts to sustain their business operations in this endemic era.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Endemic, Sustainability, Strategy, Hotelier

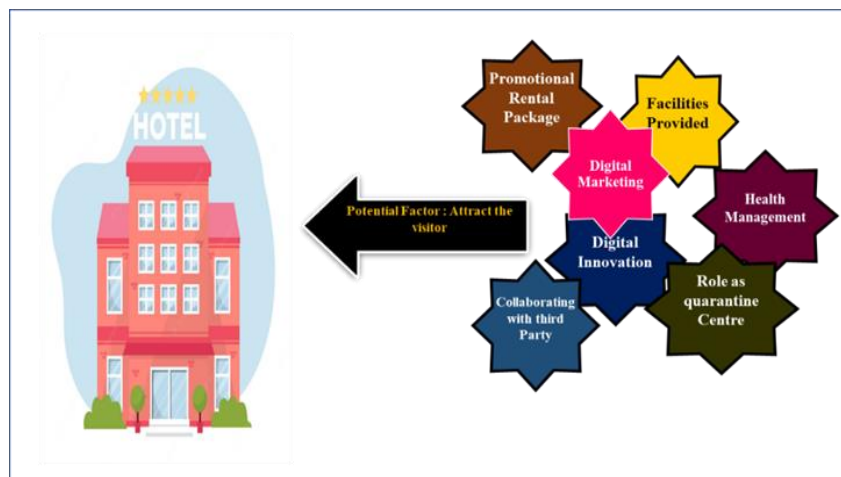
### 1. INTRODUCTION

Hotels are important properties that help boost the tourism industry. However, the COVID-19 issue that hit Malaysia in the early of 2020 has affected the hospitality industry due to the enforcement of MCO. According to Foo et al. (2021), a total of 170,085 hotel reservations were forced to cancel during the first phase of Movement Control Order (MCO), effecting a revenue loss of RM 68,190,364. As a result, most hoteliers were required to allocate the best strategy to stabilize their business operation (Aiello et al., 2022). Even though the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, the endemic era still requires an effort from the hotel management to create a sense of confidence among visitors in the safety and services offered by the hotel. Generally, there are various strategies employed by the hotel to remain competitive and resilient in the hospitality industry.

According to Ewurum et al. (2015), the available facilities at hotels such as swimming pools, restaurants, gymnasiums, spas, free wi-fi and parking space have become part of the strategy to attract visitors. However, after the outbreak of COVID-19, visitors' choices are more focused on safety aspects. Besides that, health and sanitation strategies have become an important strategy to reduce virus exposure (Puspita et al., 2021; Hoang et al., 2021). Each hotel involved needs to go through several procedures to ensure that all visitors are in a safe condition (Chan

et al., 2021). The provision of masks, hand sanitisers, gloves, vitamins, and infrared thermometers for checking body temperature has become a precaution (Chan et al., 2021) that may encourage more visitors to visit the hotel (Hoang et al., 2021). Besides that, the hotel's involvement as one of the quarantine centers previously also became an important strategy that allowed it to survive in the industry (Chan et al., 2021). This is because visitors will feel that the hotel has always followed the correct procedures to maintain their customers' safety.

The strategy also involves digital marketing which is much related to social media applications. This strategy can enhance engagement with the customer as it is necessary for customer constancy and preservation. However, emails are still a relevant medium to be used in promoting current offers by the hotel (Hoang et al., 2021). The applications of digital technology which lead to digital innovation (Iranmanesh et al., 2022) have also become effective platforms which can be implemented by hoteliers (Puspita et al., 2021). Hoteliers can also collaborate with a third party to reduce their expenditures. Through the collaboration, the hotelier may get a well-known restaurant to serve their meals in the hotel's cafe (Puspita et al., 2021). However, food deliveries from outsiders would be strictly controlled by the hotel. As such, Figure 1 shows seven potential strategies that help to sustain the hoteliers' business operation.



**Figure 1** Seven Main Strategies

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study involved a questionnaire as a research instrument with responses from 50 hotel operators throughout Malaysia. It involves seven main strategies developed together with 31 sub-strategies. All of this data was subjected to a reliability test to assess the reliability of each strategy. Next, the study looks at the extent to which this strategy is being applied by the hotel operators at this point. Each strategy is checked for its significant status before referring to the correlation value between the selected strategy and the visitors' preferability of choosing the hotel.

### 3. FINDINGS

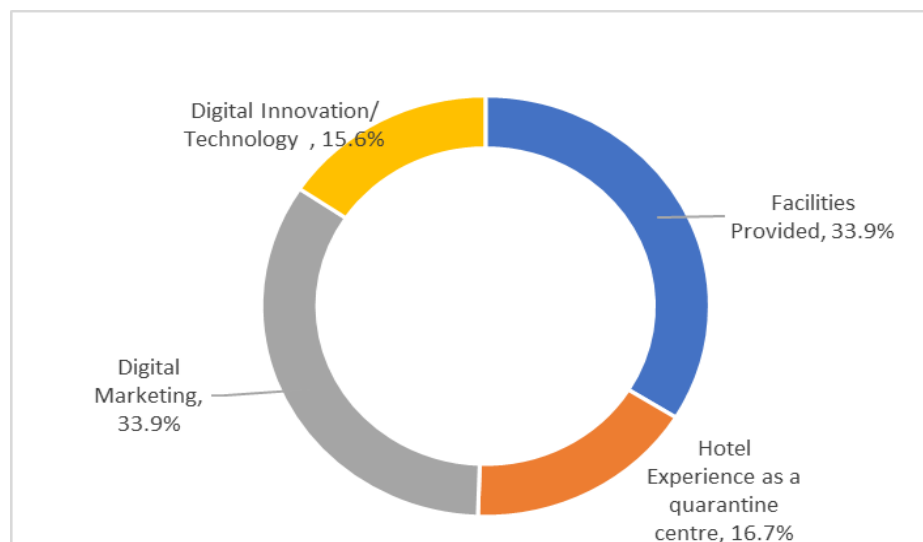
MS	SS	Cronbach's Alpha	Mean score	Sig. (1-tailed)	Pearson correlation value
<b>Facilities Provided</b>	Swimming Pool	.690	2.10	-	-
	Restaurant	.706	2.94	-	-
	Gymnasium	.673	1.82	-	-
	Spa	.701	1.80	-	-
	Free Wi-Fi	.716	4.48	.000	.623a
	Parking Space	.737	4.32	.000	.618a
<b>Health and Sanitation Service</b>	Providing hand sanitisers for the visitors	.543	4.92	-	-
	Obligation of wearing a medical face mask for hoteliers and visitors	.531	4.90	-	-
	Using infrared thermometers to check body temperature	.403	4.22	-	-
	Filling out the declaration form for body temperature > 37 °C	.423	3.98	-	-
	Practice social distancing within 2 metres	.507	4.80	-	-
	Wearing masks and gloves for Chef and kitchen staff.	.710	3.34	-	-
<b>Hotel's Role as a Quarantine Centre</b>	Regularly sanitize rooms and public areas.	.869	4.40	.002	.408a
	Has been a quarantine centre during COVID-19	.881	4.32	.032	.264a
	Strictly control the food delivery from an outsider	.909	4.08	.034	.261a
	Prompt action in contacting the hospital if a new COVID-19 case detected	.916	4.30	.028	.272a
<b>Digital Marketing</b>	Social media advertising	.781	4.60	.000	.607a
	Build a good network with visitors	.615	4.54	-	-
	Update offers and promotions through customer email	.836	4.24	.060	-
<b>Digital Innovation/ Technology</b>	Online process for check-in and check-out	.816	4.70	.026	.277a
	Online bill payment	.815	4.64	.116	-
	Online feedback/ response from the visitor	.804	4.30	.246	-
	Online reception service	.873	4.28	.072	-
<b>Promotional Packages</b>	Apply the "work from hotel" concept	.531	4.18	-	-
	Offer package "booking first and pay later	.404	4.04	-	-



	Given discount for rental rate	.610	3.64	-	-
<b>Third-Party Collaboration</b>	Advertise the hotel room	.334	4.56	-	-
	Hotels utilise various websites to reach the customer	.324	4.60	-	-
	Third-party to provide a variety of pricing	.296	4.50	-	-
	Collaborate with an outside restaurant in serving food and beverages	.610	2.78	-	-
	Collaborate with the grocery store to fulfill customer needs	.483	2.70	-	-

**Table 1** Results of Reliability Test, Mean Score, Significant Status and Correlation Value

Table 1 shows the overall results of the study. The results show that only 14 strategies passed the reliability test which indicates  $>0.7$  of Cronbach's Alpha value. While only 12 of them recorded a high score rate of more than 4 which indicated a value of 4.04 to 4.48. It shows that these 12 strategies have become strong initiatives which have been carried out by hoteliers over the years. However, only eight of them have recorded a significant status with a record of  $< 0.05$ . Besides that, eight of them displayed positive correlation values of between 0.261a to 0.623a.



**Figure 2** The Most Sustainable Strategies for Hoteliers During Endemic

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results, eight sub-strategies are the most sustainable strategies among the seven main strategies namely the Digital Marketing (33.9%) and Facilities Provided (33.9%) which are presented by free wi-fi and parking space. This is followed by the Digital Innovation Technology (15.6%) and Hotel Experience as a quarantine centre (16.7%) which contribute to

regular sanitising activities, food delivery control from outsiders and prompt action in contacting the hospital if a new COVID 19 case is detected. This shows that visitors are still concerned about personal safety, especially regarding health aspects in choosing a hotel even during the endemic period.

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Tarikh : 20 Januari 2023

Prof. Madya Dr. Nur Hisham Ibrahim  
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Kelulusan daripada pihak tuan dalam perkara ini amat dihargai.

Sekian, terima kasih.

**"BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA"**

Saya yang menjalankan amanah,

**SITI BASRIYAH SHAIK BAHARUDIN**  
Timbalan Ketua Pustakawan

*nar*

*Setuju.*

*27.1.2023*

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