

**An Analysis of Intercontinental Phuket Resort's Crisis
Management Strategies in Response to COVID-19.**



**An Independent Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Business and Managerial Economics
Field of Study of Business and Managerial Economics
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS
Chulalongkorn University
Academic Year 2022
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วิเคราะห์กลยุทธ์การบริหารและการปรับตัวของธุรกิจโรงแรมช่วงการระบาดของโควิด-19 :
กรณีศึกษา Intercontinental Phuket Resort



สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
สาขาวิชาเศรษฐศาสตร์ธุรกิจและการจัดการ สาขาวิชาเศรษฐศาสตร์ธุรกิจและการจัดการ
คณะเศรษฐศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย
ปีการศึกษา 2565
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Independent Study Title An Analysis of Intercontinental Phuket Resort's Crisis
Management Strategies in Response to COVID-19.
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Field of Study Business and Managerial Economics
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Accepted by the FACULTY OF ECONOMICS, Chulalongkorn University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Master of Arts

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กรณีศึกษา Intercontinental Phuket Resort. (An Analysis of Intercontinental Phuket
Resort's Crisis Management Strategies in Response to COVID-19.) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก :
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บทความนี้วิเคราะห์กลยุทธ์การจัดการวิกฤตที่ดำเนินการโดยอินเตอร์คอนติเนนตัลภูเก็ตรีสอร์ทในช่วงการระบาดของ COVID-19 การศึกษานี้ใช้แนวทางกรณีศึกษาเชิงคุณภาพโดยใช้รูปแบบการจัดการวิกฤตของ Fink's model เป็นกรอบแนวคิดเพื่อประเมินประสิทธิภาพของกลยุทธ์การจัดการวิกฤตของรีสอร์ทในแต่ละขั้นตอนของการระบาด ผลการวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่ากลยุทธ์การจัดการวิกฤตของรีสอร์ทประสบความสำเร็จในการบรรเทาผลกระทบของการระบาดของโควิด-19 ต่อผลการดำเนินงานทางการเงิน ชื่อเสียงของแบรนด์ และความพึงพอใจของลูกค้า นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่ารีสอร์ทสามารถใช้กลยุทธ์สำคัญหลายประการที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการตอบสนองต่อการระบาดใหญ่ของรีสอร์ทรวมถึงความสำคัญของการสื่อสารที่มีประสิทธิภาพ ความต้องการความยืดหยุ่นในนโยบายและขั้นตอนการสร้างแบรนด์ผ่าน CSR และการใช้เทคโนโลยีเพื่อเพิ่มประสิทธิภาพการดำเนินงานและประสบการณ์ของผู้เข้าพักเพื่อตอบสนองต่อการระบาดหรือวิกฤตที่อาจเกิดขึ้นในอนาคต



สาขาวิชา เศรษฐศาสตร์ธุรกิจและการจัดการ
ปีการศึกษา 2565

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6484049429 : MAJOR BUSINESS AND MANAGERIAL ECONOMICS

KEYWORD: Crisis management strategies, COVID-19 pandemic, Fink's crisis management model

Pimchon Chotikiat : An Analysis of Intercontinental Phuket Resort's Crisis Management Strategies in Response to COVID-19.. Advisor: NIPIT WONGPUNYA

This paper analyzes the crisis management strategies implemented by Intercontinental Phuket Resort during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study adopts a qualitative case study approach, utilizing Fink's crisis management model as a conceptual framework to evaluate the effectiveness of the resort's crisis management strategies during each phase of the pandemic. The data collection methods include interviews, document analysis, and online reviews. The results indicate that the resort's crisis management strategies were successful in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on its financial performance, brand reputation, and customer satisfaction. Specifically, the study finds that the resort's flexibility, innovation, and proactive communication with stakeholders contributed to its success in adapting to the changing situation. Moreover, it finds that the resort can employ several key themes of strategies related to resort's responses to the pandemic, including the importance of effective communication, the need for flexibility in policies and procedures, branding through CSR, and the use of technology to enhance operational efficiency and the guest experience in response to potential future pandemics or crises.



Field of Study: Business and Managerial Economics

Academic Year: 2022

Student's Signature

Advisor's Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to the completion of this research project.

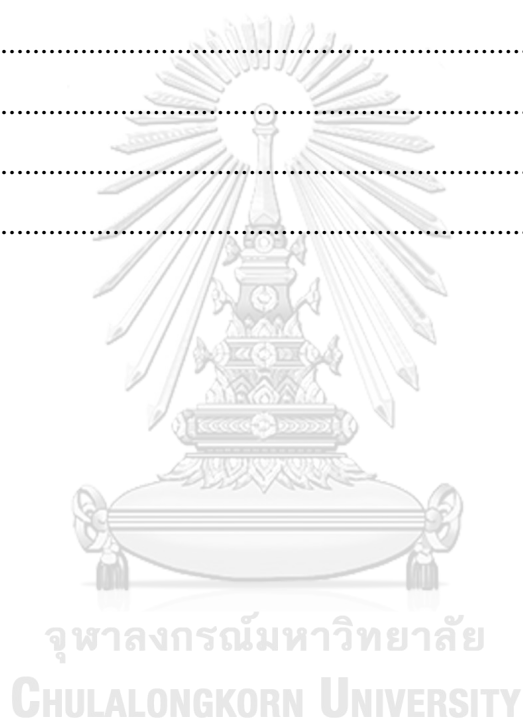
First and foremost, I would like to thank the management team and staff of Intercontinental Phuket Resort for their cooperation and support throughout the study. Their valuable insights and experiences have provided us with a wealth of information and data that has greatly enhanced the quality of this research. I am also deeply grateful to my advisors who have provided us with guidance and advice throughout the entire research process during our weekly meeting. His expertise and feedback have been invaluable in shaping the direction and focus of this study. Finally, I would like to thank our families and friends for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout the research journey. Their love and support have been a constant source of motivation and inspiration. Once again, thank you to everyone who has contributed to this research project. Your support and encouragement have been instrumental in making this study a success.

Pimchon Chotikiat

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Management Analysis:

An Analysis of Intercontinental Phuket Resort's Crisis Management Strategies in Response to COVID-19

การวิเคราะห์กลยุทธ์การบริหารและการปรับตัวของธุรกิจโรงแรมช่วงการระบาดของโควิด-19: กรณีศึกษา Intercontinental Phuket Resort

1. Introduction

The coronavirus 19 (COVID-19) pandemic is the result of a disease caused by a coronavirus. It was started in Wuhan, China in 2019 and spread rapidly. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a pandemic on January 30, 2020, and since then it has continued spreading all over the globe. However, during the past months of covid-19, vaccines have been developed. Borders between countries were closed and hospitality services, such as hotels, cruises, restaurants, and sightseeing activities were shut down. (Sebastian & Florian, 2020; Priya 2020). Thailand's hospitality industry was also hit badly by the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of 2019, starting early, almost at the same time as its outbreak in Wuhan.

Thailand's tourism industry has played a crucial role in the country's economy, culture, and society for a long time. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Thailand was a top global destination, with millions of tourists visiting each year and experiencing diverse and unique attractions such as cultural landmarks, natural scenery, beaches, cuisine, and more. According to data from the World Bank, the tourism industry was also a major source of employment and contributed about 21% to the country's GDP in 2019, with Bangkok serving as a hub for domestic and international travel. The northern city of Chiang Mai was popular for cultural immersion, while the southern islands of Phuket and Krabi were renowned for their beaches and limestone formations. Thailand's cuisine, hospitality, and warm reception were also significant draws for tourists. Although the pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry, Thailand remains a popular destination, and its unique attractions and warm hospitality continue to make it an appealing place to visit. The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted Thailand's tourism industry, causing a sharp decline in international visitor numbers and affecting businesses and communities that rely on tourism. During the pandemic, Thailand has implemented strict measures to prevent the spread of the virus, including border closures, quarantine requirements, and restrictions on public gatherings. As a result, tourism numbers have fallen drastically, with the number of international arrivals dropping from almost 40 million in 2019 to just over 6 million in 2020 (World Bank). Despite this, Thailand has continued to promote domestic tourism and encourage residents to explore their own country. Many hotels, attractions, and tour operators have also pivoted to focus on the domestic market, offering packages and promotions to attract Thai travelers. This has helped to keep some businesses afloat, but it has not been enough to replace the lost revenue from international tourists (Figure 1).

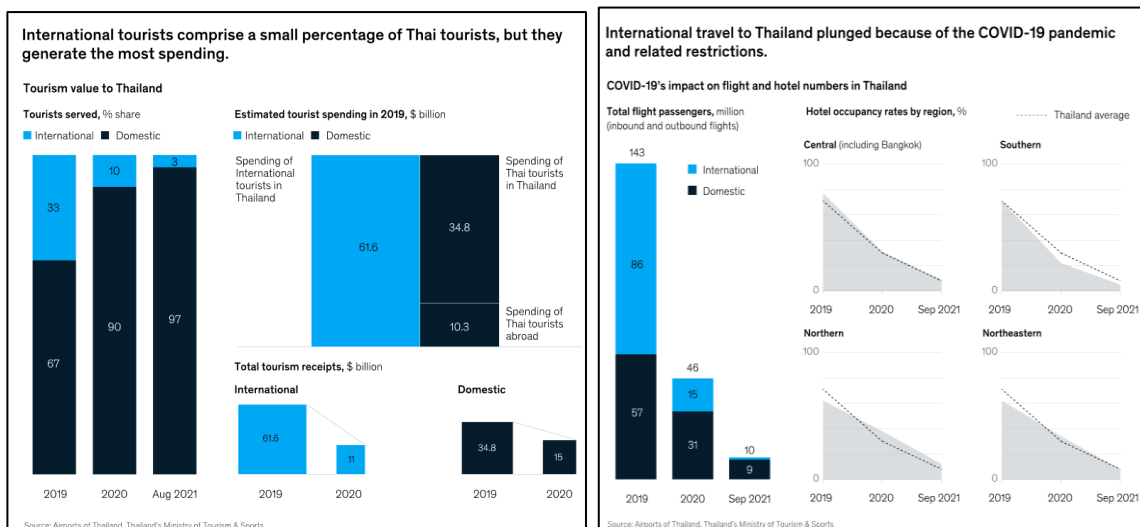


Figure 1: Covid-19's impact on flight & hotel numbers and Tourism value in Thailand.
(Steve Saxon, Jan Sodprasert, and Voramon Sucharitakul; November, 2021)

However, signs of business recovery have been observed since July 2020 (Prachachat, 2020). The Thai government's attempt to boost domestic travel took the form of providing subsidies for hotel stays and flights for travelers (Travel together). The government also rolled out measures to stimulate international travel to Thailand's beach destinations and attract high-end travelers from international markets (Phuket Sandbox) because international tourism is a major contributor to Thailand's economy and Phuket is one of the landmarks especially for international tourists. One of Phuket's newest resorts, it grand opened on 11 January 2020, but was only open for a few months before Covid-19 forced the island into lockdown. The InterContinental Phuket reopened in June 2020 for domestic tourists following the initial shutdown and adapted their strategy to appeal to both domestic travelers as well as local residents and the change of international customer target group which mostly come from Australia, India and Middle east.

This study covers COVID-19 management frameworks of Intercontinental Phuket, including principles and strategies of business adaptation management during the pandemic. The study has significant practical implications that could help recover businesses from the COVID-19 crisis, and that contribute to stimulating and revitalizing the industry in the post-epidemic era.

2. Research Question

The research question is how Intercontinental Phuket Resort coped with uncertainties during the covid-19 pandemic and changes in consumer trends. Thus, the Individual study of Intercontinental Phuket will be studied in order to deeply analyze what were the crisis management strategies implemented by Intercontinental Phuket Resort in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how effective were these strategies in mitigating the impact of the crisis.

3. Research objective

This report is a component of Individual study in the management analysis part that will analyze the strategic management in terms of Intercontinental Phuket's adaptation strategy during covid-19.

- 1) To identify the crisis management strategies implemented by Intercontinental Phuket Resort in response to COVID-19.
- 2) To evaluate the effectiveness of the crisis management strategies in mitigating the impact of the crisis.
- 3) To Indicate the opportunities and challenges in strategic choice toward Intercontinental adaptation strategy in the future.

4. Literature Review and related theories

4.1 Literature review

Since 2020, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, unexpected and drastic changes, Thailand's tourism sector has been severely affected, as since the beginning of February 2020, and still ongoing, even worsening, new policies were put in place, not allowing citizens (and tourists) to travel, since Thailand does not allow international flights to come in at its airports (Richard, 2020; Thai website, 2020). These serious challenges have caused high suffering in Thailand's hotel industry, and in its stakeholders (Fei et al., 2020; Ikrar, 2020). Due to travel bans, social distancing, and common practices to eradicate the virus around the world, the number of tourists has significantly decreased, because of cancellations of travel plans, and hotel bookings, thereby affecting the hotel staff's income. This has caused a slowdown in the expansion of the domestic hotel groups (Elena, 2020; Fei et al., 2020; ITR, 2020). As a result of the outbreak, many hotel owners had to temporarily close or transfer their property. More than 20 provinces came up with directives on closure, and some properties were required to close immediately, if there were no guests. However, out of need, hotels started to challenge these difficulties by identifying ways on how to operate in the "new normal". Hence, the coronavirus (COVID-19) forces all businesses to adapt themselves to the new normal. Obviously, lots of hotels try to adapt to the change by remodeling its business to comfort with the healthcare trend – hotels in San Francisco swiftly build the momentum of hotels' medical service and health support for supporting the demand for isolation and quarantine (Fuchs et al., 2021). As being a hotel, several hotels have their own kitchen to serve their customers during pre-COVID. Nonetheless, that model underperformed during the pandemic; hence, switching from dining-in to delivery service is the light at the end of tunnel for food units during pandemic (Lau, 2020). However, at the initial phase, some hotels immediately pull back their investment (in order to eliminate the risks), try to maintain (or reduce) working capital, improve the business efficiency (such as revenue and cost management), and postpone non-critical renovations (Dung Le and Giang Phi, 2020). In management field, there are four key factors that positively affect the occupancy rate of the hotel (one of hotels' revenue source) which are labor management, innovative & differentiated, market reorientation, and information (Hidalgo, Barroso, Nunez-serrano, Turrion and Velazquez, 2022). Corporate social responsibility (CSR) seems to be unnecessary during COVID-19. But surprisingly, CSR helps international hotels be more resilient to all disasters buoyed by brand image, customers, and employees' loyalty (Filimonau, Derqui and Matute, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to the hospitality industry worldwide, with many businesses struggling to adapt to the rapidly changing landscape. Fink's (1986) crisis model provides a useful framework for understanding how hospitality businesses have adapted to the pandemic. The first stage in Fink's crisis model is the pre-crisis stage, which involves taking steps to prepare for potential crises. Prior to the pandemic, many hospitality businesses did not have plans in place to deal with a crisis of this

magnitude. However, some businesses that had experience with previous crises, such as natural disasters, were better equipped to handle the challenges presented by COVID-19. The second stage is the acute crisis stage, which involves responding to the crisis as it unfolds. During this stage, many hospitality businesses had to quickly adapt their operations to comply with government regulations and ensure the safety of their guests and employees. This involved implementing measures such as social distancing, enhanced cleaning protocols, and contactless check-in and payment options. The third stage is the chronic crisis stage, which involves managing the aftermath of the crisis. As the pandemic continued, many hospitality businesses faced ongoing challenges, such as reduced demand for travel and increased competition for fewer customers. To address these challenges, businesses had to be creative and flexible in their approach to operations and marketing. For example, some hotels shifted their focus to serving local residents, offering staycation packages and hosting events for small groups. The final stage is the resolution stage, which involves learning from the crisis and making changes to prevent or mitigate future crises. Hospitality businesses can learn from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic by developing more comprehensive crisis management plans and investing in technology and infrastructure to support more flexible and adaptable operations. Additionally, businesses can prioritize sustainability and social responsibility to build resilience in the face of future crises. The pandemic also went through a lifecycle with numerous sequential stages as stated by Fink's model (Chirchir Matthew Kimelili, Letangule Leiro Solomon, 2022) and the study by Dung Le and Giang Phi (2021) aims to develop a refined pandemic crisis management framework for the hotel sector in the context of COVID-19 by relied on Fink's model and they identified several key themes related to hotels' responses to the pandemic, including the importance of effective communication, the need for flexibility in policies and procedures, and the use of technology to enhance operational efficiency and the guest experience. Thus, Fink's crisis model provides a useful framework for understanding how hospitality businesses have adapted to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. By taking a proactive and strategic approach to crisis management, businesses can better prepare for and respond to future crises.

4.2 Related theories

4.2.1 Adaptation strategies

Adaptation strategies refer to the measures and tactics employed by organizations, communities, or individuals to adjust to changing conditions, such as natural disasters, technological advancements, or epidemics like COVID-19. These strategies can include modifying operations, developing new products or services, diversifying the supply chain, or implementing safety measures and protocols to minimize the impact of the crisis. Adaptation strategies are often used by organizations to manage their risk and to build resilience in the face of uncertainty. The goal is to find a new equilibrium and to minimize the negative impacts of the crisis, while also finding new opportunities for growth and development. In the context of COVID-19, adaptation strategies have been crucial for hospitality services, such as hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions, to survive and recover from the pandemic. Some common adaptation strategies used by hospitality services include implementing new health and safety protocols, offering new services or products, and investing in technology and digital platforms to reach customers and manage operations.

4.2.2 Crisis management

Crisis management is the process by which an organization deals with a major unpredictable event that threatens to harm the organization, its stakeholders, or the general public. The goal of crisis management is to minimize the negative impact of the crisis and to

protect and enhance the reputation of the organization. This involves creating a crisis management plan, which outlines the procedures and protocols to be followed in the event of a crisis and practicing and testing the plan regularly to ensure its effectiveness. The key steps involved in crisis management are preparation, response, recovery, and lessons learned. Preparation involves developing a crisis management plan and conducting regular risk assessments to identify potential crisis scenarios. Response involves activating the crisis management plan and implementing the procedures and protocols to address the crisis. Recovery involves restoring normal operations, addressing the root causes of the crisis, and implementing measures to prevent future crises. Finally, lessons learned involve evaluating the effectiveness of the crisis management plan, documenting the response and recovery efforts, and making improvements to the plan based on the experience. Effective crisis management requires effective communication, both internally to all employees and externally to stakeholders and the public. This requires having a clear and consistent message, using all available communication channels, and being transparent about the organization's actions and decisions. Overall, crisis management is an ongoing process that requires organizations to be proactive, prepared, and flexible in their approach. The success of crisis management efforts depends on the organization's ability to anticipate, prepare, respond, recover, and learn from crises.

4.2.3 Fink's Crisis Model



The article "The 4 Stages of Crisis and How to Navigate Them" by AlertMedia (2022) outlines the different stages of a crisis and provides strategies for managing them. The four stages identified in the article include the pre-crisis stage, the crisis stage, the post-crisis stage, and the recovery stage.

During the pre-crisis stage, organizations should focus on preparedness and prevention by identifying potential risks and developing plans to mitigate them. This includes establishing communication protocols and training employees on crisis management procedures. The crisis stage is characterized by the onset of the actual crisis, and organizations should focus on responding to the crisis by implementing their pre-established plans. Effective communication is key during this stage, both internally and externally, to ensure that accurate information is being disseminated and stakeholders are informed. The post-crisis stage involves assessing the impact of the crisis and implementing measures to stabilize the situation. This includes evaluating the response to the crisis, addressing any lingering issues, and restoring business operations. The final stage, the recovery stage, involves learning from the crisis and implementing changes to prevent similar crises from occurring in the future. This includes conducting a post-crisis analysis and updating crisis management plans to reflect any lessons learned. The AlertMedia article emphasizes the importance of effective communication throughout all stages of a crisis, as well as the need for a coordinated and strategic approach to crisis management. By following these guidelines, organizations can navigate crises more effectively and emerge stronger in the aftermath. Overall, the AlertMedia article provides valuable insights into crisis management and serves as a useful resource for organizations looking to improve their crisis preparedness and response capabilities.

Moreover, Fink's Crisis Management Model is a widely used framework in the field of crisis management. This model was first proposed by Steven Fink in his book "Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable" in 1986. The model consists of four stages: prodromal, acute, chronic, and resolution. The prodromal stage is the initial stage where the crisis is brewing, and there are early warning signs. The acute stage is when the crisis has

erupted, and immediate action needs to be taken to contain it. The chronic stage is when the crisis has stabilized, but the impact is ongoing, and long-term solutions are needed. The resolution stage is when the crisis is resolved, and efforts are made to prevent future occurrences. The Fink model has been widely used in various industries, including healthcare, hospitality, and government, to manage crises effectively. It is a comprehensive framework that emphasizes the importance of preparation, communication, and collaboration. Effective crisis management requires organizations to anticipate and plan for potential crises, have clear communication channels, and work closely with stakeholders to minimize the impact of the crisis. Many studies have utilized the Fink model to evaluate the effectiveness of crisis management strategies. These studies (Marlene de L. Koen and Jeremy Yorgason (2015), Dung Le and Giang Phi (2021), H. J. de Bruijn and P. van der Duin (2019) and K. C. Karunaratne and D. P. Karunaratne (2017)) have found that organizations that have adopted a proactive approach to crisis management, including the use of the Fink model, are better equipped to handle crises and recover more quickly. The Fink model has also been found to be useful in crisis management training and exercises, allowing organizations to test their crisis management plans and identify areas for improvement. Overall, the Fink Crisis Management Model is a valuable tool for organizations to manage crises effectively. It provides a clear framework for crisis management, emphasizing the importance of preparation, communication, and collaboration, and has been widely adopted across various industries.

4.2.4 Proactive and Reactive strategies

Proactive strategy

A proactive strategy is a business approach that focuses on anticipating and preparing for potential challenges or changes in the market, rather than simply reacting to them (Nanda van Leeuwen Boomkamp & Nicole Vermolen (2021)). This approach involves actively seeking out and addressing potential problems or opportunities, rather than waiting for them to emerge. In contrast to a reactive strategy, which involves responding to changes after they occur, a proactive strategy emphasizes taking a proactive approach to identifying and addressing potential challenges before they become major issues. This often involves developing contingency plans, conducting market research, and engaging with customers to understand their needs and preferences. A proactive strategy requires a deep understanding of the market, industry trends, and customer preferences. It involves ongoing analysis and monitoring of the business environment to identify potential opportunities and risks. Proactive strategies often involve investing in research and development to create new products or services, identifying potential growth markets, and building partnerships and collaborations to strengthen the business ecosystem.

In summary, a proactive strategy is a forward-looking approach to business management, with a focus on anticipating and preparing for changes in the market. This approach requires a strong understanding of the business environment and a commitment to ongoing analysis and research to identify potential opportunities and challenges. By taking a proactive approach, businesses can position themselves to succeed in the face of a rapidly changing business landscape.

When should the hotel use proactive strategy?

According to Dung Le & Giang Phi (2020) and Çoban & Özel (2021), a proactive strategy is useful for businesses in the hospitality industry that want to stay ahead of the curve

and prepare for potential challenges or changes in the market. A proactive strategy can be especially effective in the following situations:

1. In highly competitive markets: In a highly competitive market, businesses must be proactive to maintain their competitive edge. By anticipating and addressing potential challenges, businesses can stay ahead of the competition and develop a strong market position.
2. During times of uncertainty: When the business environment is uncertain, a proactive strategy can help businesses prepare for potential challenges and adapt to changing conditions. By taking a proactive approach, businesses can identify potential risks and opportunities and take action to mitigate the risks and capitalize on the opportunities.
3. In emerging markets: In emerging markets, a proactive strategy can help businesses establish a foothold and gain a competitive advantage. By investing in research and development and building partnerships, businesses can position themselves to capitalize on the growth opportunities in these markets.
4. In customer-driven markets: In markets where customer preferences are rapidly changing, a proactive strategy can help businesses stay ahead of the curve and deliver innovative products and services that meet customer needs and preferences.

In summary, a proactive strategy is a useful approach for businesses in the hospitality industry that want to stay ahead of the competition and prepare for potential challenges or changes in the market. By anticipating and addressing potential risks and opportunities, businesses can position themselves for long-term success.

Reactive strategy

A reactive strategy is a business approach that involves responding to changes or challenges in the market after they occur, rather than taking proactive steps to anticipate and prepare for them (Nanda van Leeuwen Boomkamp & Nicole Vermolen (2021)). This approach typically involves a more passive and defensive posture, with a focus on addressing problems as they arise. In contrast to a proactive strategy, which involves anticipating and addressing potential challenges before they become major issues, a reactive strategy is focused on responding to changes after they occur. Reactive strategies often involve adjusting existing products or services, changing marketing strategies, or investing in new products or services to meet changing market conditions. Reactive strategies are often used in situations where a business is facing sudden or unexpected challenges, such as changes in market conditions, economic downturns, or unforeseen events such as natural disasters or pandemics. While reactive strategies can be effective in addressing immediate problems, they can also be less effective in the long run and may not provide a sustainable solution to ongoing challenges. Businesses may use a reactive strategy when they are facing a crisis or sudden change in the market, or when they are unsure of how to proceed in a rapidly changing environment. However, to maintain a competitive edge and succeed in the long term, businesses must also adopt a more proactive approach to anticipate and prepare for potential challenges or changes in the market.

In summary, a reactive strategy is a business approach that involves responding to changes or challenges in the market after they occur, rather than taking proactive steps to anticipate and prepare for them. While reactive strategies can be effective in addressing immediate problems, they may not provide a sustainable solution to ongoing challenges and may be less effective in the long run.

When should the hotel use reactive strategy?

According to Dung Le & Giang Phi (2020) and Çoban & Özel (2021), a reactive strategy may be used by hotels in situations where there is a sudden and unexpected change in the market or business environment. Hotels may use a reactive strategy in the following situations:

1. During a crisis: In the event of a crisis such as a natural disaster, terrorist attack, or pandemic, hotels may need to take reactive measures to address immediate problems and ensure the safety of their guests and staff.
2. When facing unexpected changes in demand: Hotels may need to adopt a reactive strategy when faced with unexpected changes in demand, such as cancellations or changes in travel patterns. In such situations, hotels may need to adjust their prices, marketing strategies, or service offerings to meet changing demand.
3. In response to changes in the competitive landscape: Hotels may adopt a reactive strategy when facing new or aggressive competition, such as the entry of a new hotel in the market or the expansion of an existing competitor.
4. In response to changes in regulations: Hotels may need to adopt a reactive strategy in response to changes in regulations or government policies that impact their business operations.



While a reactive strategy can help hotels address immediate problems, it may not provide a sustainable solution to ongoing challenges. To maintain a competitive edge and succeed in the long term, hotels must also adopt a more proactive approach to anticipate and prepare for potential challenges or changes in the market.

In conclusion, proactive and reactive strategies are two approaches within the broader framework of strategic management. Strategic management involves the process of setting goals, making decisions, and allocating resources to achieve a company's objectives. Proactive and reactive strategies are two complementary approaches within strategic management. A proactive strategy involves taking a forward-looking approach to business management, anticipating, and preparing for potential challenges or changes in the market. A reactive strategy, on the other hand, involves responding to changes or challenges in the market after they occur. Both proactive and reactive strategies have their strengths and weaknesses, and they can be used in different situations depending on the specific challenges and opportunities facing a business. However, to be successful in the long term, businesses must also take a more comprehensive approach to strategic management that combines both proactive and reactive strategies. This involves ongoing analysis and monitoring of the business environment, as well as the development of contingency plans and the implementation of ongoing improvements to stay ahead of the competition and adapt to changing market conditions.

5. Methodology

5.1 Methodology

Based on literature review, this research is qualitative design, and investigates how Intercontinental Phuket has responded to the COVID-19 crisis and assesses its crisis adaptation management. The qualitative research methodology chosen for this study was a case study approach (Pamela Baxter & Susan Jack, 2008) with using of a Fink's crisis management model (Figure 2). The qualitative case study is an approach to research that

facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. It enables the researcher to answer “how” and “why” type questions, while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated. The case study approach will enable a detailed examination of the specific strategies used by Intercontinental Phuket Resort during the pandemic, and how they impacted the hotel's financial performance, guest satisfaction, and employee engagement.

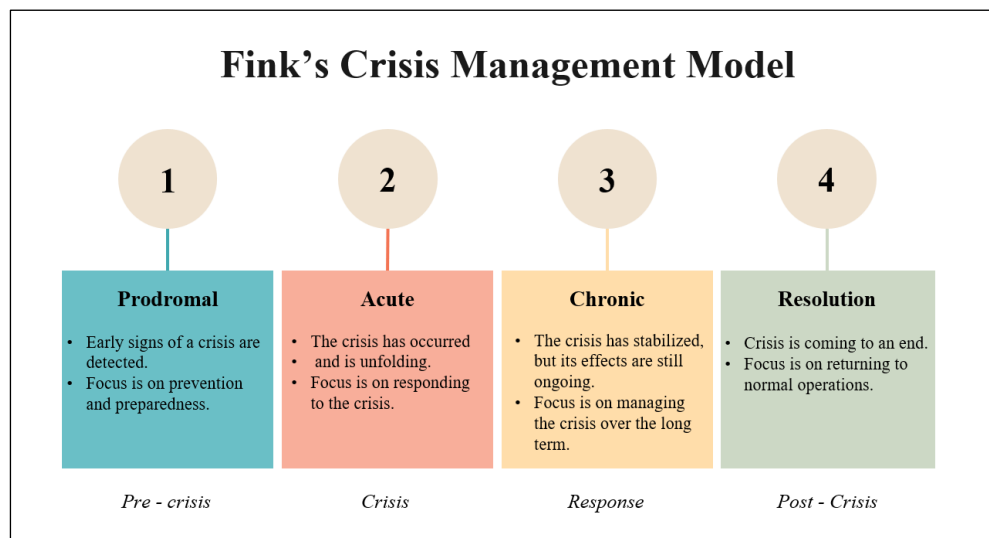


Figure2: Fink's crisis management model
Crisis Management: Planning for the Inevitable, Steven Fink (1986)

5.2 Data collection

Based on Methodology, the study will use both primary and secondary data sources for data collection. Primary data will be collected through 3 hours of semi-structured interviews with the resort's management and staff, including the general manager, the marketing manager, and other key employees on 27 October 2022, which were audio recorded, and later transcribed and checked for accuracy. Moreover, this paper will utilize secondary information gathered from several reliable sources such as the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) official website, Thai Embassy official website, the Ministry of Sports and Tourism official website, Bank of Thailand official website, and The World Trade Organization (UNWTO), industry reports, academic literature, news articles, and IHG financial reports.

- Mr. Bjorn Courage | General Manager, InterContinental Phuket Resort.
- Mr. Frederik Wisselink | Director of Food & Beverage
- Khun. Marisa Ayu Zainol | Director of Human Resources
- Khun. Kulthida Anuchachat | Learning and Development Manager

5.3 Data coding

The data was initially coded by identifying key themes related to the business adaptation and coping strategies employed by the hotel during the pandemic. Examples of codes included: Hygiene and safety measures, Staff training and support, revenue diversification, customer engagement and satisfaction and Government collaboration and support.

5.4 Data analysis

Based on literature review and methodology, the study will use thematic analysis as the data analysis method to further categorize and analyze the coded data. Thematic analysis could be used to identify and analyze the different strategies employed by the hotel during each phase of the pandemic, as well as any challenges and opportunities that arose during this time.

6. Findings

6.1 Phuket context



Phuket, being a major tourist destination in Thailand, has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The island's tourism industry, which is heavily dependent on international visitors, has seen a significant decline in tourism numbers since the outbreak of the pandemic. In response to the decline in tourism, the government of Phuket has implemented various measures to revive the tourism industry. These include the introduction of a "Phuket Sandbox" program which allows for a limited number of foreign tourists to visit the island without the need for quarantine, and the "Phuket Model" program which promotes domestic tourism. The Phuket Sandbox program allows for the resumption of tourism activities, such as hotel stays and island tours, while still maintaining strict health protocols and monitoring procedures. The program is currently open to tourists from certain countries and regions that have a low incidence of COVID-19. The "Phuket Model" program promotes domestic tourism by offering discounts and other incentives to Thai tourists who visit the island. The program aims to boost the local economy and keep the island's tourism-related businesses afloat. It's worth noting that the situation is dynamic, and the situation in Phuket may change as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. The government will continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as necessary. It's also worth mentioning that the industry is also looking at the long-term change in their strategy for the future, such as focusing on sustainable tourism, health and safety, and responsible tourism.

6.2 Tourism in Phuket, Thailand

Tourism in Phuket, Thailand is a major contributor to the country's economy and plays a crucial role in the development of the island. According to the Thailand Tourism Authority (2021), Phuket welcomed over 12 million tourists in 2019, generating a revenue of over 120 billion Thai Baht. Phuket's popularity as a tourist destination can be attributed to its tropical climate, stunning beaches, and rich cultural heritage. The island offers a range of activities and attractions, including water sports, historical sites, and shopping centers. Additionally, Phuket is home to a variety of accommodation options, from budget-friendly guest houses to luxurious resorts. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry in Phuket, with visitor numbers plummeting and businesses struggling to stay afloat.

Before the pandemic, Phuket was a bustling hub for tourism, attracting millions of visitors every year. The island was particularly popular among international tourists from Europe, Australia, and the United States, as well as domestic travelers from other parts of Thailand. The island's beaches, nightlife, and cultural attractions were a major drawcard for tourists, and the tourism industry was a key contributor to the local economy.

During the pandemic, Phuket was hit hard by the loss of tourism revenue. The Thai government implemented strict measures to prevent the spread of the virus, including border closures and quarantine requirements, resulting in a significant decrease in the number of tourists visiting the island. Many businesses in Phuket were forced to close or operate at reduced capacity, and thousands of workers in the tourism industry lost their jobs. According to the Phuket Hotels Association (2021), the occupancy rate of hotels in Phuket dropped from an average of 85% in 2019 to just 20% in 2020. To address the economic impact of the pandemic, the Thai government introduced a range of measures to support businesses and workers in the tourism sector. This included financial assistance and subsidies, as well as plans to reopen the island to international travelers under a "Phuket Sandbox" scheme. The scheme allows fully vaccinated tourists to enter Phuket without the need for quarantine, provided they follow certain guidelines. Since the introduction of the Phuket Sandbox scheme, Phuket has started to see a slow but steady return of tourists. However, the number of visitors is still far below pre-pandemic levels, and many businesses are still struggling. To attract more visitors, Phuket has been promoting itself as a safe and attractive destination, with a focus on natural attractions such as beaches and national parks, as well as cultural activities and experiences. Looking ahead, Phuket is cautiously optimistic about the future of its tourism industry. The success of the Phuket Sandbox scheme is seen as a positive sign, and the government has plans to expand the scheme to other parts of the country. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Phuket's hospitality industry has adapted by implementing various measures to ensure the safety of tourists and staff. Hotels and resorts have implemented enhanced cleaning protocols, contactless check-ins, and social distancing measures. The Thai government has also launched several initiatives to support the tourism industry, including the "Thailand Plus" program, which aims to stimulate domestic and international travel by offering discounts and promotions.

In conclusion, Phuket's tourism industry has been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but the island's hospitality sector has been proactive in responding to the challenges posed by the pandemic. With the rollout of vaccines and the gradual easing of travel restrictions. With careful planning and a focus on safety and sustainability, Phuket's tourism industry is poised to recover and grow in the coming years.

6.3 Competition of hotels in Phuket

Phuket, Thailand is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world and is home to many hotels, resorts, and accommodations. The hotel industry in Phuket is highly competitive and offers a range of options to meet the needs of different types of travelers. To be the number one hotel in Phuket, a hotel needs to differentiate itself from its competitors by offering unique and memorable experiences, providing excellent customer service, and continuously improving its offerings to stay ahead of the competition.

One way for a hotel to stand out is by focusing on creating unique and personalized experiences for its guests. This can involve offering unique activities or services, such as cooking classes, cultural tours, or spa treatments. The hotel can also differentiate itself by having a strong brand identity, with a consistent and memorable design, and a memorable logo. Another key to success is providing exceptional customer service. A hotel should strive

to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere, with attentive and helpful staff who are always willing to go the extra mile to ensure guests have a positive experience. The hotel should also have a responsive and effective customer service team that can quickly resolve any issues or complaints. Finally, a hotel can improve its offerings and stay ahead of the competition by continuously updating its amenities and services to meet the changing needs of travelers. This can involve incorporating new technology, such as digital check-in, or offering new and innovative dining experiences.

In conclusion, to be the number one hotel in Phuket, a hotel must differentiate itself from its competitors by offering unique experiences, providing excellent customer service, and continuously improving its offerings. By doing so, the hotel will be able to attract and retain guests and stand out as the top hotel in Phuket.

The difference between hotels that can survive during the COVID-19 pandemic and those that cannot is often determined by several factors, including:

- **Financial stability:** Hotels with strong financial reserves, cost-cutting measures, and flexible contracts with suppliers may be better equipped to weather the financial impact of reduced occupancy levels.
- **Innovative management strategies:** Hotels that quickly adapt to changing market conditions by offering new services, such as remote work or quarantine packages, may be more likely to survive.
- **Strong brand reputation:** Hotels with a well-established reputation and loyal customer base may be better equipped to weather the storm, as customers may be more likely to book with them in the future.
- **Effective communication:** Hotels that communicate effectively with their employees, customers, and stakeholders about the measures they are taking to address the pandemic may be more likely to maintain customer confidence and avoid negative publicity.
- **Government support:** Hotels in jurisdictions with supportive government policies and financial relief programs may be better positioned to survive the pandemic.

Overall, the ability of a hotel to survive during the COVID-19 pandemic depends on a combination of these and other factors and will vary from case to case. However, it is difficult to make a blanket statement about the difference between hotels in Phuket that survived versus those that didn't during the COVID-19 pandemic, as it would depend on a multitude of factors such as the size of the hotel, its target market, its location, its level of preparedness, and the severity of the impact of the pandemic on the local economy, among others. However, in general, hotels that were able to quickly adapt to the changing circumstances, for example by offering alternative revenue streams, implementing flexible cancellation policies, and adopting measures to ensure the health and safety of guests and employees, were more likely to survive the pandemic.

6.4 Impact of COVID-19 Outbreak in Phuket's Hotel Industry

According to data from the Ministry of Tourism show that the number of tourists visiting Thailand was 38.28 million in 2018 and up to 39.80 million in 2019. Tourism

industry is the most important industry for the Thai economy. The National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDB) mentioned in February 2019 that tourism accounted for 18.4%, or almost one fifth of the country's GDP. Thailand is still expecting to generate continuous income from the tourism sector (Richard, 2020; Thai website, 2020; Jui & Kusumalee, 2020). However, before the pandemic struck Phuket received 14.54 million tourists, local and foreign, and raked in 471 billion baht in tourism revenue in 2018.

Phuket, a popular island destination in Thailand, has seen a significant impact on its tourism industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The hospitality services in Phuket have been greatly impacted and had to adapt to the new reality of the situation. Before the pandemic, Phuket was a bustling hub of international tourists, with a vibrant hospitality industry that supported its economy. The island was known for its beautiful beaches, rich cultural heritage, and diverse range of activities and attractions that cater to tourists of all ages and interests. The hospitality sector in Phuket was thriving, with many high-end resorts, hotels, and restaurants that offered world-class services and facilities.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought an unprecedented halt to the flow of international tourists, causing a significant decrease in the number of visitors to Phuket. The tourism industry was among the hardest hit, with many hotels and resorts forced to shut down temporarily or operate at reduced capacities due to declining demand. In response to the crisis, the hospitality services in Phuket had to adopt various adaptation strategies in order to survive and remain operational. Some of these strategies included pivoting to domestic tourism, offering discounts and promotions, implementing strict hygiene and safety protocols, and offering flexible cancellation policies. Additionally, many hotels and resorts also adapted their services to cater to the changing needs and preferences of customers, such as offering more spacious and isolated rooms, and providing more outdoor activities and attractions. In recent months, with the gradual easing of restrictions and the rollout of vaccines, Phuket's tourism industry is slowly recovering. However, it is still facing challenges in attracting back international tourists and regaining its pre-pandemic levels of activity. Nevertheless, the hospitality services in Phuket are optimistic about the future and are continuing to adapt and evolve in response to the changing situation.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the tourism industry in Phuket, but the hospitality services in the island have been able to adapt and survive through the crisis by using various strategies and tactics. As the world continues to grapple with the pandemic, it is likely that Phuket's hospitality industry will continue to evolve and adjust to the new reality, with the goal of providing a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable experience for visitors.

Chain hotel

A chain hotel is a type of hotel that is part of a larger hotel brand or chain, which operates multiple hotels under the same brand name. Each hotel in the chain typically has the same or similar design, decor, and amenities, and may offer similar services and experiences to guests. Examples of well-known hotel chains include Intercontinental Group (IHG), Marriott, Hilton, and Accor, among others. Chain hotels are often favored by travelers who prefer consistency and predictability in their accommodations, as they can expect a similar level of service and quality at each hotel within the chain. Chain hotels may also offer loyalty programs that allow guests to earn points or rewards for their stays, which can be redeemed for future stays or other benefits. From a business perspective, chain hotels can benefit from economies of scale, as they can centralize certain functions such as marketing, branding, and

procurement, and leverage their brand recognition to attract customers. However, individual hotels within a chain may face challenges in differentiating themselves from other hotels in the chain and may have limited flexibility to make independent decisions about their operations and services.

A chain hotel is a hotel that is part of a chain or brand managed by a larger hospitality corporation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these hotels typically had access to resources and support from their parent company to help them respond to the crisis. On the other hand, independent hotels, which are not part of a chain or brand, may have faced greater challenges in adapting to the changing landscape of the hospitality industry during the pandemic. They may have had limited resources and support to navigate the crisis and make necessary changes to their operations and procedures to ensure the safety of their guests and staff. The response of chain and independent hotels during the COVID-19 pandemic would have varied depending on factors such as their location, size, and financial stability.

However, there are several pros and cons of being part of a chain hotel. Here are some of the main ones:

Pros:

1. **Brand recognition and reputation:** A chain hotel is often part of a well-established brand with a recognized reputation for quality and service, which can help attract guests.
2. **Standardization:** Chain hotels often have standardized policies and procedures, which can help ensure consistency across locations and make it easier for employees to transfer between properties.
3. **Access to resources:** Being part of a larger organization can provide access to resources and support, such as marketing and advertising, training, and development, and purchasing power.
4. **Loyalty programs:** Many chain hotels offer loyalty programs that reward guests for repeat business, which can help build customer loyalty and encourage return visits.

Cons:

1. **Lack of flexibility:** Chain hotels often have strict brand standards and policies that may limit the flexibility of individual properties and their ability to respond to local market conditions and customer preferences.
2. **Limited control over pricing:** Chain hotels may have limited control over pricing, which may be set by the brand or the franchisor, which may impact the profitability of individual properties.
3. **Royalty fees and restrictions:** Being part of a chain hotel often requires paying ongoing royalty fees and adhering to strict brand standards, which can impact the profitability of individual properties and limit their ability to make independent decisions.
4. **Bureaucracy:** Being part of a larger organization can sometimes mean dealing with more bureaucracy and administrative processes, which may be time-consuming and detract from the focus on delivering high-quality service to guests.

In summary, being part of a chain hotel can offer several benefits, such as brand recognition, standardization, and access to resources, but may also come with limitations such as lack of flexibility and control, royalty fees, and bureaucracy. The decision to be part of a

chain hotel or operate independently ultimately depends on the individual business and its goals and priorities.

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG)

InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) is a global hotel company that owns, manages, and franchises a portfolio of hotel brands. During the COVID-19 pandemic, IHG has implemented various strategies to adapt to the changing business environment and to ensure the safety of guests and employees.

- Health and safety protocols: IHG has implemented enhanced health and safety protocols, such as increased cleaning and sanitation, social distancing measures, and contactless check-in and check-out. They have also introduced the "IHG Clean Promise" which is a set of measures to help guests feel safe and secure when staying at their hotels.
- Flexible cancellation and booking policies: IHG has introduced more flexible cancellation and booking policies to give guests greater peace of mind when making reservations. They have also extended the expiration date of their rewards program, Priority Club, to give members more time to redeem their points.
- Digitalization: IHG has been investing in digital technology to enhance the guest experience, such as mobile check-in, digital key, and virtual tours, and to drive revenue through online channels.
- Marketing and promotions: IHG has been promoting their hotels through targeted marketing campaigns and offering promotions to attract guests.
- Collaboration with Governments and health authorities: IHG has been working closely with local and national governments and health authorities to ensure that their hotels are in compliance with all relevant regulations and guidelines related to COVID-19.
- Implemented loyalty program: IHG ONE REWARDS program, which allows members to earn and redeem points for stays at IHG properties. Members can also receive exclusive benefits such as room upgrades, late check-outs, and free internet. The program is designed to encourage customer loyalty and repeat business at IHG hotels.

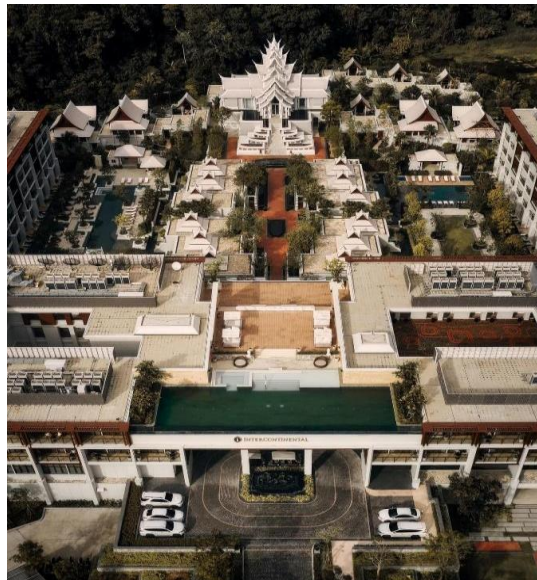
In post-pandemic, it is expected that the hotel industry will continue to adapt and evolve, with a focus on health and safety, flexible booking and cancellation policies, and digitalization. IHG will also likely continue to focus on marketing and promotions to drive demand for their hotels, as well as adapting to any changes in travel patterns or consumer preferences.

6.5 InterContinental Phuket Resort

InterContinental Phuket Resort is a luxury resort located in Phuket, Thailand. It is known for its spacious guest rooms and suites, which feature balconies and stunning views of the Andaman Sea. The resort offers a range of recreational activities and facilities, including multiple swimming pools, a private beach, a fitness center, a spa, and several restaurants and bars. In addition, InterContinental Phuket Resort provides guests with easy access to a variety of local attractions, including shopping and dining areas, as well as cultural and historical sites. Overall, the resort offers a truly upscale and unforgettable experience for guests who are looking for luxury, comfort, and a breathtaking tropical paradise.

InterContinental Phuket Resort is positioned as a luxury resort, offering premium amenities and services to its guests. Their target customers are typically travelers who are seeking a high-end and upscale experience, such as those who value quality, comfort, and luxury. This may include business travelers, couples, families, and those who are looking for a relaxing, high-end holiday. InterContinental Phuket Resort offers a wide range of facilities and services, such as high-end restaurants, a spa, a fitness center, and a private beach, which are designed to appeal to a wide range of customers who are seeking an upscale and premium experience.

InterContinental Phuket Resort is situated on an expansive area of land extending from the beachfront to the hillside of Kamala. With 221 luxury pool villas, rooms, and suites are heavenly havens of modern opulence. Each abode is decorated with rich hues and warm wood tones, creating elegantly chic spaces brought to life by charming touches of the locale. All guest rooms offer breathtaking views of the ocean, the lagoon or the surrounding hills and the very best in luxurious amenities. A unique Phuket experience awaits, whether you opt for a villa with a private pool, a classic mountain view room, or a beachside suite. Our resort in Kamala Beach offers a variety of activities to help you get to know the local surroundings, explore physical and mental wellness, enjoy time together with family and friends, and savor the delectable flavors of local and international cuisine. Furthermore, many of our luxury Phuket accommodation options, including the private pool villas, come with Club InterContinental privileges. This special experience provides guests with butler service and exclusive access to the Club InterContinental lounge and pool area. This includes complimentary breakfast at two unique venues. Club InterContinental guests can also enjoy afternoon tea and cocktails at sunset, with specialty refreshments and snacks served. With a spectacular Kamala backdrop, various luxury room options, including private pool villas, exciting activities and high-quality amenities, there is something for everyone at InterContinental Phuket Resort.



6.6 Service charges

Service charges are important to the hotel industry because they provide a source of additional revenue. Service charges are fees added to a guest's bill for services provided, such as housekeeping, room service, and bellhop service. These fees can help increase revenue for the hotel and can also provide an incentive for staff to provide high-quality service. The funds from service charges can also be used to improve hotel amenities, facilities, and services. In this way, service charges are an important part of the financial management strategy for many hotels and contribute to the overall success of the industry.

Moreover, Service charges in the hotel industry can provide incentives to staff by directly linking their performance to the financial performance of the hotel. By tying a portion of the service charge collected to individual performance, the hotel can incentivize staff to provide high-quality customer service and increase customer satisfaction, which can lead to increased revenue for the hotel. For example, a hotel may choose to distribute a portion of the service charge collected from each guest stay to the front desk staff, housekeeping staff, and restaurant staff based on their performance. This type of incentive can motivate staff to work harder and provide better customer service, which can result in increased customer satisfaction and repeat business for the hotel. Service charges in the hotel industry are typically added to guests' bills and are used to compensate hotel staff, such as servers and housekeeping staff, for the services they provide. The method of collecting service charges varies from hotel to hotel and can include: (1) Adding a percentage or flat fee to guests' bills as a service charge. (2) Including the service charge in the total bill at checkout. (3) Offering guests, the option to leave a gratuity for staff. The exact method of collecting service charges can depend on local regulations and the hotel's policies. Additionally, the type of service charge collected and the percentage it represents can vary depending on the level of service provided by the hotel and its staff.

Hotels can improve their services to positively impact service charges by consistently providing high-quality service and exceeding guest expectations. Some ways to improve services include:

- Employee training and development to ensure staff are knowledgeable, friendly, and professional.
- Improving facilities and amenities to enhance the guest experience, such as upgrading the room furnishings or adding new recreational activities.
- Incorporating technology, such as digital check-ins and personalized in-room controls, to make the guest experience more convenient and efficient.
- Personalizing the guest experience by gathering information about their preferences and tailoring their stay accordingly.
- Solicit and act on guest feedback to continuously improve services and address any issues.

By implementing these strategies, hotels can increase guest satisfaction, which in turn can increase the likelihood of guests leaving a service charge, resulting in increased revenue for the hotel.

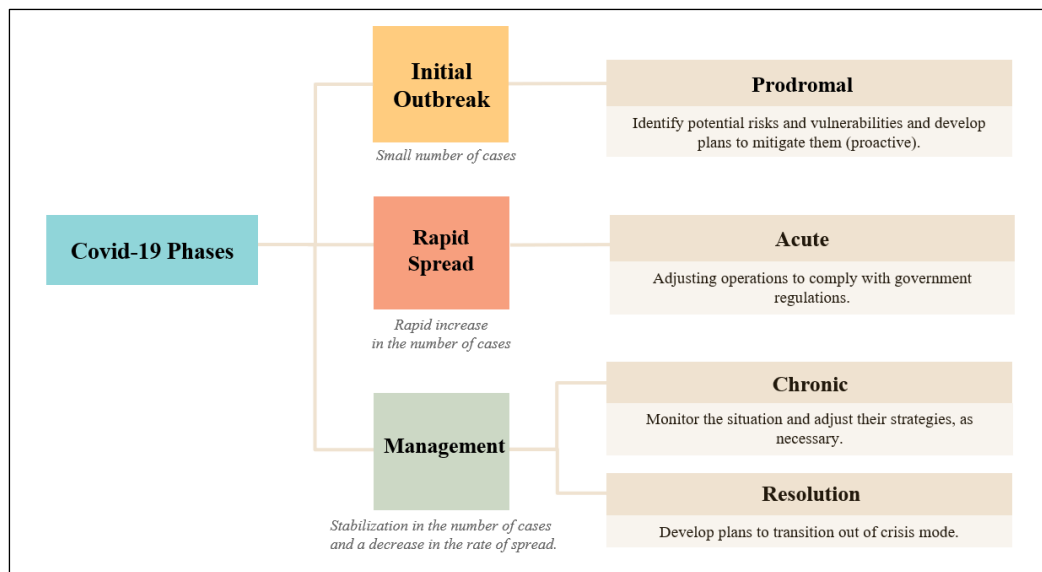
7. Discussion

7.1 Crisis phase of Covid-19.

As there is no standard classification of phases of COVID-19. The situation related to the pandemic has been evolving and changing rapidly, making it difficult to classify into a set number of phases. Generally, the pandemic has been characterized by an initial outbreak phase, a rapid spread phase, and a management phase where authorities and health organizations attempt to control the spread of the virus through measures such as lockdowns, social distancing, and widespread testing. It is also possible that future phases of the pandemic may emerge, such as a resurgence of cases, or a more widespread availability of effective vaccines. Thus, the Fink Crisis Management Model can be utilized to identify the three phases of COVID-19 crisis management.

- The initial outbreak phase can be considered as the prodromal stage, where there are early warning signs of a crisis. In this stage, organizations should focus on early detection and rapid response to contain the spread of the virus. Effective communication and collaboration with stakeholders, including government and public health officials, are critical during this stage to ensure a coordinated and proactive approach to crisis management.
- The rapid spread phase can be considered as the acute stage of the crisis, where immediate action needs to be taken to prevent further spread of the virus. In this stage, organizations should focus on implementing their crisis management plans, including measures such as social distancing, contact tracing, and quarantine protocols. Effective communication with employees, customers, and the public is also essential during this stage to provide accurate information and prevent panic.
- The management phase can be considered as the chronic stage and resolution stage of the crisis, where the virus is more stabilized, and organizations can focus on implementing long-term solutions to manage the ongoing impact of the pandemic. In this stage, organizations should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of their crisis management strategies and implementing measures to prevent similar crises from occurring in the future. This includes updating crisis management plans, improving communication and collaboration with stakeholders, and investing in new technologies and procedures to enhance crisis preparedness.

Overall, the Fink Crisis Management Model can be a useful framework for organizations to identify the three phases of COVID-19 crisis management and implement effective strategies to manage each stage of the crisis.



It is important to note that these phases are not mutually exclusive and can overlap or occur simultaneously, depending on the specific circumstances and conditions of the pandemic in different regions or countries. The management of COVID-19 continues to evolve, and the phases of the pandemic can change over time as new information becomes available and public health officials respond to changing conditions. Intercontinental Phuket Resort, like other hospitality businesses, could have used Fink's crisis management framework during the COVID-19 pandemic. The resort's response could be examined in terms of each of the four phases of Fink's model.

The initial outbreak phase.

- **Prodromal Phase:** During this phase, the resort could have engaged in crisis prevention and preparedness activities to anticipate the potential impacts of the crisis. This may include conducting risk assessments and developing crisis management plans that outline the steps to be taken in response to the outbreak. The resort may have also implemented proactive measures to reduce the risk of transmission, such as implementing health and safety protocols and providing training to staff on proper sanitation and hygiene practices.

A rapid spread phase.

- **Acute Phase:** During the acute phase of the crisis, the resort would have been faced with the immediate impacts of the pandemic. In response, the resort may have implemented measures such as travel restrictions, social distancing measures, and the closure of certain facilities or amenities. The resort could have also communicated regularly with guests to provide information on the situation and the measures being taken to protect their health and safety.

Management phase.

- **Chronic Phase:** As the pandemic continued, the resort would have had to adapt to the ongoing impacts and develop strategies to mitigate the long-term effects of the crisis. This may include diversifying revenue streams, adjusting staffing levels, and exploring new business models that are better suited to the current environment. The

resort may have also focused on improving operational efficiencies and implementing cost-cutting measures to improve financial resilience.

- Resolution Phase: The resolution phase involves the process of returning to normal operations. The resort may have used this phase to review the lessons learned from the crisis and identify areas for improvement in their crisis management plans. The resort may have also focused on rebuilding relationships with guests and the wider community and taking steps to restore their reputation and market position.

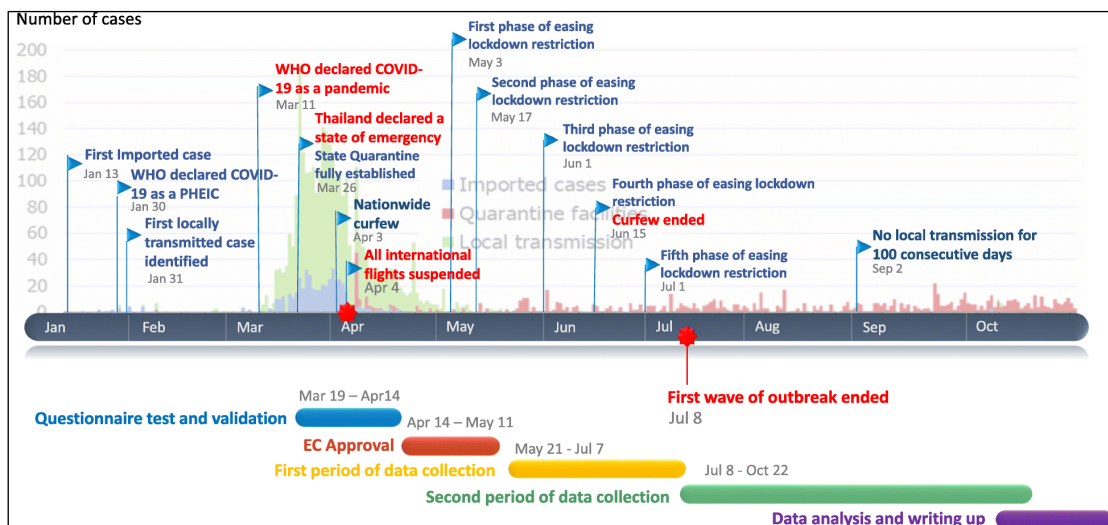


Figure 3: Timeline of the covid-19 pandemic and key events in Thailand (First wave); (Prapaso et al. Tropical Diseases, Travel Medicine and Vaccines, 2021)

According to Figure 3, the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic in Phuket followed a similar timeline to the rest of Thailand, with the following phases:

1. Initial outbreak phase:

- Start: January 31, 2020
- End: March 25, 2020

During the initial outbreak phase, Phuket reported its first case of COVID-19 in a Chinese tourist who had arrived in Phuket from Wuhan on January 31, 2020. The phase ended on March 25, 2020, when the Thai government declared a state of emergency and implemented strict measures to contain the spread of the virus.

2. Rapid spread phase:

- Start: March 26, 2020
- End: June 30, 2020

The rapid spread phase began on March 26, 2020, when the Thai government declared a nationwide curfew and closed schools, universities, and non-essential businesses. During this phase, the number of COVID-19 cases in Phuket and throughout Thailand rapidly increased.

The phase ended on June 30, 2020, when the Thai government began a phased reopening of businesses, schools, and public spaces.

3. Management phase:

- Start: July 1, 2020
- Ongoing

The management phase began on July 1, 2020, when the Thai government began a phased reopening of businesses, schools, and public spaces. During this phase, the Thai government and local authorities in Phuket implemented strict health and safety protocols, contact tracing measures, and quarantine measures for incoming travelers to prevent the spread of the virus. The management phase is ongoing, with the Thai government and local authorities continuing to adjust their measures and regulations as needed to maintain public health and safety while minimizing the impact on the economy and society.

It is worth noting that Phuket has implemented its own specific measures and programs to control the spread of COVID-19, such as the "Phuket Model" and the "Phuket Sandbox" program, which allowed fully vaccinated foreign tourists to visit Phuket with safety measures in place. These programs were launched during the recovery and resolution phases and were designed to support the tourism industry in Phuket while maintaining public health and safety. (Note: Second wave of the outbreak in Thailand began in December 2020)

7.1.1 The initial outbreak phase of COVID-19 in Phuket

The initial outbreak phase of COVID-19 refers to the early stages of the spread of the virus when it was first identified and reported in a limited number of locations. During this phase, the virus was largely contained to a small geographic area, and public health authorities were still gathering information about the nature of the virus and its potential spread. This phase is characterized by the rapid identification and investigation of cases, along with measures to prevent further spread of the virus, such as isolation and quarantine protocols, and increased surveillance and testing. This phase was critical for public health authorities to gain a better understanding of the virus and to implement initial containment measures.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Phuket was one of the most popular tourist destinations in Thailand and was known for its diverse hospitality services. In terms of the number of tourists, Phuket was considered one of the busiest cities in the country, attracting millions of visitors each year. In comparison to other cities in Thailand, Phuket's high number of tourists was due to its reputation as a popular beach destination, as well as its well-developed infrastructure and attractions. The number of hotel bookings in Phuket was also higher compared to other cities in Thailand, as the island had a wide range of accommodation options, from luxury resorts to budget-friendly guesthouses. The number of flights to Phuket was also substantial, with multiple international airlines offering direct flights to the island. The combination of these factors made Phuket a convenient and attractive destination for tourists. However, the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic caused a sudden decline in the number of tourists and bookings, leading to a significant impact on the hospitality industry in Phuket, as well as in other cities in Thailand. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the hospitality industry in Phuket has been able to adapt and continue to provide services to those who are able to travel, in line with local health and safety guidelines.

The initial outbreak phase of COVID-19 in Phuket was marked by uncertainty and confusion. The first case of COVID-19 in Phuket was reported on January 31, 2020, in a Chinese tourist who had arrived in Phuket from Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak in China (Bangkok Post, 2020). The case was quickly followed by others, with the number of cases increasing rapidly in the following weeks. The Thai government responded by implementing measures to control the spread of the virus, including a ban on international flights and the closure of borders. The government also enforced strict lockdown measures, including the closure of businesses and public spaces, the prohibition of public gatherings, and the imposition of a curfew in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in February 2020. These measures had a significant impact on the tourism industry in Phuket, with many hotels and resorts forced to close temporarily or reduce their operations. Hotels in Phuket, Thailand began closing or suspending operations around this time and in the following months, depending on the specific circumstances and government regulations. The lockdown measures also had a severe impact on the local economy, with many businesses forced to close, and workers losing their jobs. The response to the outbreak was further complicated by the high volume of misinformation and rumors surrounding the virus. The Thai government and local health authorities had to work to combat the spread of fake news and rumors to prevent panic and misinformation.

Overall, the initial outbreak phase of COVID-19 in Phuket was characterized by uncertainty, confusion, and fear. The rapid spread of the virus and the stringent measures implemented by the government had a severe impact on the tourism industry and the local economy. The response to the outbreak was further complicated by the high volume of misinformation and rumors, highlighting the need for accurate and reliable information during public health emergencies.

Intercontinental Phuket Resort adaptation strategies during the initial outbreak phase

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Intercontinental Phuket Resort received a significant number of guests from Chinese and Russian nationalities, who accounted for 50% of the resort's total customer base. The resort's philosophy is rooted in the belief that hospitality is not about selling products, but rather about creating and selling a memorable experience that evokes a sense of emotional connection with the guests. Moreover, in the hospitality industry, the food and beverage offerings can be customized to appeal to the specific tastes and preferences of the target customer segment. In other words, the cuisine and drink options can be crafted in a way that tells a story or narrative that resonates with the intended customer group. This may involve selecting ingredients, flavors, and presentation styles that are favored by the target customers, as well as incorporating cultural or regional elements that create a sense of authenticity and uniqueness. Ultimately, the goal is to create a food and beverage experience that is memorable and distinctive, and that aligns with the overall brand identity and values of the hospitality establishment.

The success of the Intercontinental brand is built on the belief of customers that Intercontinental Phuket can provide better services and offerings compared to local or standard hotels. However, during the initial outbreak phase of COVID-19, the hotel had to adopt quick and effective strategies to respond to the unprecedented situation. The primary focus during this phase was to ensure the safety and well-being of guests, employees, and stakeholders. During the initial outbreak phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, Intercontinental Phuket resort had to imperative every expenditure is scrutinized to determine the feasibility of reducing costs, and a comprehensive assessment of whether the expense is necessary should be conducted before any financial commitment is made and adapt quickly to mitigate the

impact on their operations. Some of the proactive strategies that Intercontinental Phuket resort used to cope during this phase include:

1. Implementing hygiene and safety measures: The resort implemented strict hygiene and safety measures to protect guests and staff from the virus. They provided hand sanitizer and masks, conducted temperature checks, and increased the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of public areas and guest rooms.
2. Improving business efficiency: Many hotels focused on improving their operational efficiency to reduce costs and optimize revenue. For example, Intercontinental Phuket resort renegotiating contracts with vendors and suppliers, and scaling back on non-essential services and amenities.
3. Postponing non-critical activities: Several hotels postponed non-critical renovations to reduce capital expenditure and conserve cash. For example, InterContinental Phuket Resort postponed non-critical activities to reduce capital expenditure and conserve cash and focus on essential capital projects only.
4. Remodeling business: The resort remodeled its business to adapt to the changing demands of the pandemic. For example, they introduced contactless check-in and check-out to minimize contact between guests and staff and to appeal to the new target market, the resort adjusted its pricing strategy and carefully monitored flight data to estimate visitor numbers.
5. Communicate effectively: Effective communication with guests, employees, and other stakeholders is crucial during times of crisis. Hotels have used a variety of channels to keep guests and employees informed, such as email, social media, and in-room literature.

Overall, InterContinental Phuket Resort adopted a range of strategies to cope during the initial outbreak phase of the pandemic. These strategies helped the resort to reduce costs, maintain operational efficiency, adapt to the changing demands of the pandemic and well-being of all stakeholders. Moreover, it is imperative to engage in a continuous process of learning, including from any mistakes made, during the Covid-19 pandemic.

7.1.2 A rapid spread phase of COVID-19 in Phuket

The rapid spread phase of COVID-19 refers to the period in which the virus spreads rapidly and infects a large number of people in a short amount of time. During this phase, governments and health organizations may implement stricter measures, such as lockdowns and travel restrictions, to slow down the spread of the virus. For the hotel industry, this phase can result in a significant decrease in demand, as people may cancel or postpone their travel plans. In response, hotels may have to reduce their operations, lay off employees, and implement cost-saving measures to survive during this challenging time. They may also have to adopt new strategies, such as promoting local travel and offering flexible cancellation policies, to attract guests who are still willing to travel during this period. In addition, hotels may need to adopt measures to ensure the safety and health of both guests and employees, such as increased cleaning and sanitization, social distancing measures, and the use of personal protective equipment.

The rapid spread phase of COVID-19 in Phuket was a challenging period for the region. The number of cases in Phuket and Thailand increased rapidly in March and April 2020, with the situation reaching a critical point in early April. During this phase, the Thai government implemented stricter measures to control the spread of the virus, including a nationwide curfew, the closure of all businesses except essential services, and the suspension of public transportation. These measures were necessary to slow down the spread of the virus, but they had a significant impact on the local economy, with many businesses forced to close, and workers losing their jobs. The rapid spread of the virus also put significant pressure on the healthcare system in Phuket. Hospitals and healthcare facilities were overwhelmed with patients, and there was a shortage of medical equipment and supplies. The government responded by increasing the number of healthcare workers and expanding healthcare facilities in the region. To address the challenges posed by the rapid spread of the virus, the Thai government and local health authorities worked to implement more effective measures to control the spread of the virus. This included the implementation of contact tracing, testing, and quarantine measures, as well as the promotion of social distancing and the use of masks. The government also provided financial assistance to businesses and individuals affected by the pandemic. This included a range of measures, such as tax relief, low-interest loans, and cash handouts to affected individuals. Overall, the rapid spread phase of COVID-19 in Phuket was a challenging period for the region, with the healthcare system, the economy, and the community all affected by the pandemic. The measures implemented by the government were necessary to control the spread of the virus, but they had a significant impact on the local economy and community. The response to the outbreak highlighted the importance of effective measures, accurate information, and financial assistance to help individuals and businesses during public health emergencies. By communicating clearly, being transparent, and adapting to the changing market, hotels were able to better manage the challenges posed by the rapid spread phase of COVID-19.

Intercontinental Phuket Resort adaptation strategies during the rapid spread phase:

However, it is likely that the hotel has implemented similar measures as other hotels have, such as increased cleaning and sanitization protocols, social distancing measures, and policies to promote the health and safety of guests and staff. It may also have offered flexible cancellation policies and implemented contactless check-in and payment options. Additionally, the hotel may have also taken advantage of the digital marketing to promote its hotel to attract more customers during the pandemic, such as through its website, social media, or email campaigns. The hotel also likely has been closely monitoring the situation and following the guidelines and regulations set by the government or the World Health Organization (WHO) to adapt accordingly.

The ability to be lean and agile is essential for businesses in the hospitality industry, as it enables them to quickly adapt to changing market conditions. A key aspect of this approach is an aggressive strategy, which involves a high degree of control over inputs, and a clear understanding of where to focus efforts and allocate resources. Moreover, Intercontinental Phuket Resort needs to minimize losses as a business partner, it is important to focus on reducing expenses. The number one expense is typically labor cost, and one strategy to reduce this cost is by closing the mountain side operation and focusing solely on the ocean side. Before spending any money, it is crucial to carefully assess each expense and determine whether it is necessary. Tough decisions may need to be made by senior management, including reducing the number of employees. To be successful, businesses need to act quickly and capitalize on opportunities as they arise. During the rapid spread phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, InterContinental Phuket Resort, like many other hospitality businesses in Phuket, implemented several strategies to cope during the rapid spread phase of

the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some examples of the approach that the InterContinental Phuket Resort used:

1. **Implement health and safety protocols:** To reassure guests and employees that it is safe to stay in their properties, hotels have implemented strict health and safety protocols, such as increased cleaning and sanitation, social distancing, and mandatory mask-wearing. They also invested in new technologies, such as UV-C lights and electrostatic sprayers, to disinfect guest rooms and common areas.
2. **Reduce expenses:** In order to conserve cash and weather the storm, many hotels have taken a hard look at their expenses and implemented cost-cutting measures, Intercontinental Phuket resort implemented a hiring freeze, reduced executive pay, suspended non-essential training programs and reduced their staffs to cut costs.
3. **Emphasize flexibility:** With the situation constantly changing, hotels have recognized the need to be flexible in their policies and procedures. Many have relaxed their cancellation policies, allowed guests to modify their reservations without penalty, and offered refunds or credits for future stays.
4. **Diversifying revenue streams:** InterContinental Phuket Resort diversified its revenue streams to reduce its reliance on traditional sources of income. They offered food and beverage delivery services, created new menus to cater to changing guest preferences and launched a range of virtual events to generate additional revenue.
5. **Digital marketing Channels:** During the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted significantly compared to pre-pandemic times. With travel restrictions, lockdowns, and health concerns affecting customer behavior, hotels have had to pivot their marketing efforts to meet changing customer needs and preferences. During this time, hotels have focused on digital marketing channels to reach potential customers. This includes increasing their online presence through social media, email campaigns, and websites, and utilizing online travel agencies (OTAs) to drive bookings. In addition, hotels have also introduced new and innovative promotions and packages to attract customers during this time. For example, they may offer discounts or extended stay options, or create special packages that focus on wellness and relaxation. In conclusion, the marketing strategy of the hotel industry during the COVID-19 pandemic has been focused on adapting to the changing customer needs and preferences, emphasizing health and safety measures, and utilizing digital marketing channels to reach potential guests.
6. **Operational Flexibility:** Hotel need to reduce capacity, close certain amenities, and change their food and beverage service to comply with government regulations and guidelines. Thus, the decision was made to temporarily suspend operations on the mountain side and focus solely on the ocean side of the property. They also were forced to adopt operational flexibility, such as adjusting their schedules and adjusting the size of their workforce to reduce costs and align with demand as it received significantly fewer Russian and Chinese guests due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the resort had to reconsider its strategy and offerings, considering the shift in its target market towards domestic guests. Moreover, the resort opened its food and beverage outlets earlier than the hotel, allowing it to quickly establish a foothold in the market and gain a competitive edge. The resort's ability to rapidly adapt to the new market conditions and offer a unique experience helped it to create a strong brand identity and establish a loyal customer base.
7. **Increased use of technology:** The pandemic has also accelerated the use of technology in the hospitality industry, such as implementing Workforce optimization tools which can help hotels manage and schedule their employees more efficiently, reducing labor costs and ensuring that the right number of employees are working at the right time, online check-in and ordering, mobile payments, and digital concierge services. These

technologies can help to reduce physical contact and increase efficiency, while also enhancing the guest experience.

8. Invested in branding through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be an important initiative during the COVID-19. Intercontinental Phuket Resort's commitment to social responsibility and to supporting the local community during a time of crisis. By providing assistance to those in need and by promoting sustainability and responsible business practices, the hotel is helping to create a more positive and resilient future for all stakeholders such as, support for local businesses: The Intercontinental Phuket Resort worked with local businesses and vendors to provide them with financial and logistical support.

Overall, InterContinental Phuket Resort adopted a range of strategies to cope during the rapid spread phase of the pandemic. These strategies helped the resort to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and position itself for recovery as the tourism industry slowly resumes.

7.1.3 Management phase of COVID-19 in Phuket

In the COVID-19 situation, the management phase is characterized by the need for hotel businesses to adapt to the rapidly changing circumstances brought about by the pandemic. This includes developing and implementing new protocols to keep both employees and guests safe, such as increased sanitation measures, social distancing practices, and enhanced hygiene protocols. Additionally, hotels may also need to make significant changes to their operations and staffing levels to adjust to decreased demand and reduced revenue. Effective communication and collaboration with employees, guests, and suppliers is crucial to successfully navigating this phase.

The management phase of COVID-19 in Phuket began in mid-2020, with the Thai government implementing measures to control the spread of the virus while also reopening the economy and the tourism industry. This phase was characterized by a delicate balance between controlling the spread of the virus and reviving the economy, which is heavily dependent on tourism. One of the key measures implemented during this phase was the "Phuket Model" or "Phuket sandbox" which was a pilot program aimed at reopening the island to foreign tourists while ensuring public health and safety. The program required visitors to undergo a 14-day quarantine upon arrival and adhere to strict health and safety measures during their stay. The Phuket Model was initially met with some skepticism but was ultimately successful in attracting tourists and reviving the local economy. The program was eventually expanded to other provinces in Thailand, with some modifications. The management phase also saw the implementation of other measures to control the spread of the virus, including the widespread use of masks, social distancing protocols, and contact tracing. The Thai government also launched a nationwide vaccination program in early 2021, which prioritized high-risk groups such as healthcare workers, the elderly, and people with underlying health conditions. The government continued to provide financial assistance to affected individuals and businesses during this phase, including a range of measures such as low-interest loans, tax relief, and cash handouts.

Overall, the management phase of COVID-19 in Phuket was a delicate balance between controlling the spread of the virus and reviving the economy. The measures implemented by the Thai government, including the Phuket Model and the nationwide vaccination program, were successful in attracting tourists and reviving the local economy while also ensuring public health and safety.

Intercontinental Phuket Resort adaptation strategies during the management phase:

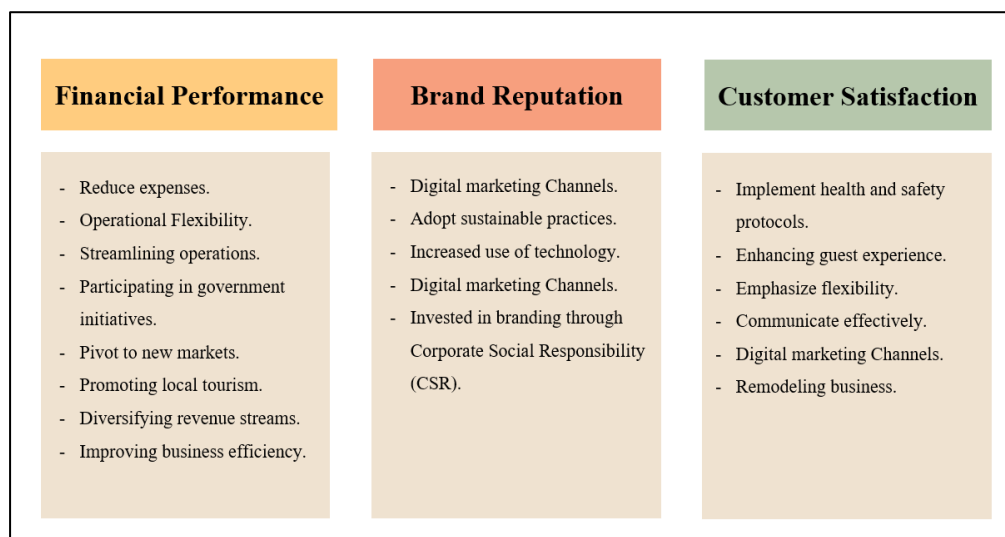
Upon the reopening of the hotel, a detailed analysis of the guests' nationalities and their preferences was conducted, with the primary objective of identifying and capitalizing on potential market opportunities. The resort's strategic approach involved a thorough assessment of the amenities, services, and activities that were most preferred by these nationalities, with a view to tailoring the resort's offerings accordingly. The focus was on developing a deep understanding of the target market and utilizing this knowledge to attract and retain guests, thereby maximizing revenue streams. During the management phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, Intercontinental Phuket resort had to adopt various strategies to cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic. Some of these strategies include:

1. Implementing hygiene and safety measures: The resort continued to implement strict hygiene and safety measures to protect guests and staff from the virus. They continued to provide hand sanitizer and masks, conducted temperature checks, and increased the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of public areas and guest rooms.
2. Enhancing guest experience: The resort placed greater emphasis on providing an exceptional guest experience. They continued to introduce personalized services and tailored experiences to cater to guests' changing needs and preferences.
3. Streamlining operations: InterContinental Phuket Resort focused on streamlining its operations to improve efficiency and reduce costs. They continued to adopt new technologies and automated processes to enhance the guest experience and optimize operations. If an organization is characterized by a lean structure, it may be more capable of adapting and responding to changes in a flexible and agile manner.
4. Participating in government initiatives: The resort participated in government initiatives to support the tourism industry during the pandemic. For example, they collaborated with the government to for domestic travelers (Travel together or เราเที่ยวด้วยกัน), which helped to generate revenue and support the recovery of the tourism industry. Moreover, they collaborated with the government to provide alternative state quarantine (ASQ) facilities for international arrivals, which helped to generate revenue and support the recovery of the tourism industry (Phuket Sandbox).
5. Promoting local tourism: the resort employed was to shift its focus to the domestic market, as international travel was heavily restricted due to the pandemic. To appeal to the domestic market, the resort adjusted its pricing strategy and carefully monitored flight data to estimate visitor numbers. InterContinental Phuket Resort also offered packages and promotions to attract Thai residents to travel domestically such as introduced new packages and promotions aimed at the domestic market, such as staycation packages that included spa treatments, food and beverage credits, and other amenities. They also partnered with other businesses and government agencies to promote local tourism and encourage travelers to explore the island.
6. Pivot to new markets: Intercontinental Phuket resort could adopt sustainable practices and promote their commitment to sustainability in their marketing efforts. Moreover, the resort could position itself as a leader in environmental sustainability in the hospitality industry and appeal to an increasingly eco-conscious consumer base such as offer organic food including organic recipes and plant-based menus.

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Intercontinental Phuket Resort shifted its focus towards the Thai market by offering a range of events and storytelling activities to attract local customers. The resort's marketing efforts were directed towards social media platforms, where it promoted its services and offerings to the Thai audience. The resort also introduced unique products to entice visitors and encouraged repeat visits through the creation

of engaging stories and experiences. In addition, Intercontinental Phuket Resort expanded its offerings by introducing a variety of amenities, including Japanese cuisine and a beach bar, to cater to the diverse interests of its target market. The resort also focused on generating demand for its services, with the aim of increasing prices while maintaining the same product quality to achieve higher margins. Finally, the resort acknowledged the importance of being a market leader, emphasizing the need to be recognized as the premier destination in order to succeed in the highly competitive hospitality industry. Through a combination of creative marketing, innovative product offerings, and a focus on quality and excellence, Intercontinental Phuket Resort was able to maintain a strong market position and build a loyal customer base, even in the face of challenging market conditions.

Overall, InterContinental Phuket Resort adopted a range of strategies during the management phase of the pandemic. These strategies helped the resort to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, maintain operational efficiency, and position itself for recovery as the tourism industry slowly resumes.



In summary, lean and agile approaches, an aggressive strategy, creativity, and an open-minded attitude are essential for businesses in the hospitality industry to succeed in the face of changing market conditions. Focusing on storytelling, creating unique experiences, and tailoring strategies to local market conditions are also critical for building brand loyalty and maintaining a competitive edge.

7.2 Intercontinental Phuket Resort opportunities and challenges in the future.

There are several opportunities and challenges that Intercontinental Phuket Resort may face in the future, including:

Opportunities:

1. **Recovery of International Tourism:** With the reopening of international borders and the resumption of international travel, Intercontinental Phuket Resort may see a surge in demand from international tourists, especially from countries with high vaccination rates.

2. **Domestic Tourism:** Domestic tourism has played a crucial role in the survival of the hospitality industry during the pandemic. Intercontinental Phuket Resort can continue to tap into this market by offering new experiences and packages to attract domestic tourists.
3. **Sustainability:** The global trend of environmental sustainability is gaining momentum, and customers are becoming more environmentally conscious. Intercontinental Phuket Resort can capitalize on this trend by implementing sustainable practices and offering eco-friendly experiences to attract customers.
4. **Digital Transformation:** The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in the hospitality industry. Intercontinental Phuket Resort can continue to invest in digital solutions to enhance the guest experience, reduce physical contact, and increase efficiency.
5. **Wellness and health:** The wellness and health trend are increasingly important in the hospitality industry, with more and more hotels and resorts offering spa services, fitness centers, and healthy food options.
6. **Personalization and customization:** The hospitality industry is becoming increasingly focused on providing personalized and customized experiences for guests. This includes using data and analytics to understand guest preferences and using that information to tailor the guest experience.

Challenges:

1. **Changing Consumer Behaviour:** Consumer behaviour has changed significantly due to the pandemic, with customers becoming more health-conscious and cost-conscious. Intercontinental Phuket Resort may need to adapt its operations and services to meet these changing customer expectations.
2. **Competition:** The hospitality industry in Phuket is highly competitive, with numerous hotels and resorts vying for customers. Intercontinental Phuket Resort may need to differentiate itself by offering unique experiences and services to stand out from the competition.
3. **Talent Management:** The pandemic has resulted in a shortage of skilled workers in the hospitality industry. Intercontinental Phuket Resort may face challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled workers, especially during peak seasons.
4. **Financial Stability:** The pandemic has had a significant impact on the financial stability of the hospitality industry. Intercontinental Phuket Resort may need to continue implementing cost-cutting measures and optimizing its operational expenses to maintain financial stability in the future.

Overall, Intercontinental Phuket Resort can leverage the opportunities presented by the recovery of international and domestic tourism, the trend towards sustainability, and the digital transformation of the hospitality industry. However, the resort may also need to navigate challenges posed by changing consumer behaviour, intense competition, talent management, and financial stability to remain competitive and successful in the future.

By focusing on these areas, hotels can differentiate themselves from competitors and attract more guests in the competitive market. Moreover, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for businesses to stay relevant and maintain an open-minded approach, while also being confident and creative in their strategies. Businesses should be able to act fast in response to market changes and focus on creating unique experiences that differentiate them from their competitors. Storytelling is a particularly effective way of creating emotional connections with customers and fostering brand loyalty. While global

hotel groups offer valuable knowledge and resources, local market conditions can differ significantly, and it is important to tailor strategies to meet the unique needs of the local market. Businesses should follow minimum standards set by the head office, but also be responsible for adapting to local market conditions and regulations.

8. Result

Based on the analysis of the Business Adaptation and Coping Strategies implemented by Intercontinental Phuket Resort during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the resort has seen an increase in service charge in 2021, 2022 and 2023 per Figure 4, which suggests that the guests are satisfied with the services provided by the resort. Additionally, the resort has received recognition and awards for their efforts in adapting to the pandemic, further indicating their success in implementing effective strategies, Such as the TripAdvisor Travelers' Choice Award and the World Luxury Hotel Award. In terms of guest satisfaction, the resort has received positive ratings and reviews on Agoda, Bookings and other websites, which reflect the effectiveness of the adaptation strategies in providing guests with a safe and enjoyable experience during the pandemic. This suggests that the resort has successfully adapted to the challenges posed by the pandemic and has implemented strategies that are aligned with guest needs and preferences.

Overall, the analysis suggests that the Business Adaptation and Coping Strategies implemented by Intercontinental Phuket Resort during the COVID-19 Pandemic have been effective in maintaining and improving guest satisfaction, leading to an increase in service charge and recognition from industry peers.

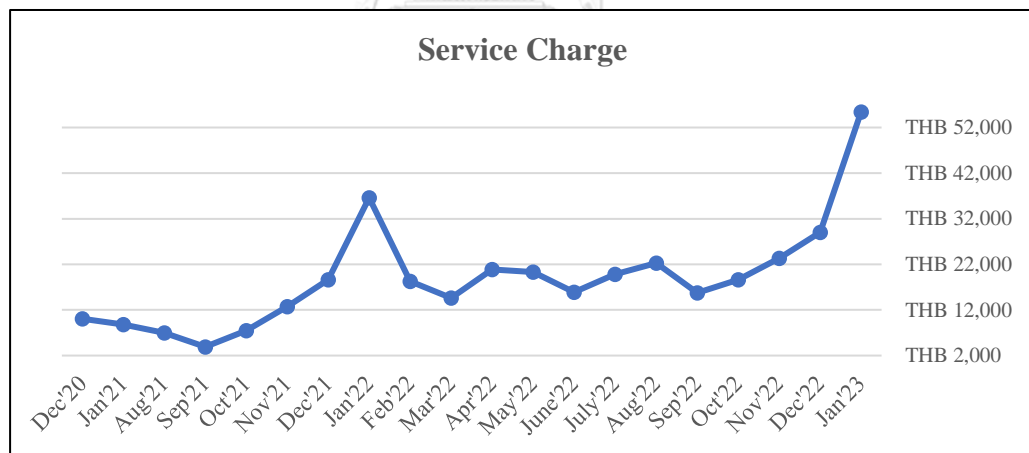


Figure 4: Intercontinental Phuket Resort Service Charge (2021-2023), HR Intercontinental Phuket Resort FB page

9. Limitation

One important limitation of this research is the inability to access confidential data from the Intercontinental Phuket Resort. Although such data could have been useful to support the study's findings, the resort was unable to share or publish this information due to privacy concerns or other reasons. Additionally, direct contact with the management of the Intercontinental Phuket Resort was not possible, which prevented the researchers from obtaining further information or insights from the perspective of the hotel. This limitation may have impacted the depth and breadth of the research and should be considered when interpreting the results. Despite this limitation, the study was able to provide a useful

overview of the adaptation strategies used by the Intercontinental Phuket Resort during different phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, and these findings may be helpful to other hotels and tourism-related businesses facing similar challenges in the future.

10. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the hospitality industry in Thailand, with the closure of borders and travel restrictions leading to a sharp decline in tourism. Intercontinental Phuket, like many other hotels and resorts in the region, had to adapt to these challenging conditions to survive.

This research paper has examined the business adaptation and coping strategies employed by Intercontinental Phuket during the pandemic. Intercontinental Phuket Resort's successful adaptation strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic have been analyzed in this research paper by utilizing Fink's Crisis Management Mode. The resort implemented several measures, including safety protocols, cost-cutting measures, and new revenue streams, to address the challenges posed by the pandemic. One of the primary measures implemented by Intercontinental Phuket was a focus on safety protocols to ensure the safety of staff and guests. This involved implementing enhanced sanitation and hygiene practices, implementing social distancing protocols, and requiring staff and guests to wear masks. The resort also provided training for staff on safety protocols and implemented measures to reduce physical contact between staff and guests. In addition to safety protocols, Intercontinental Phuket implemented cost-cutting measures to reduce expenses and maintain financial stability. This included restructuring the workforce, reducing working hours, and implementing a hiring freeze. The resort also adjusted its operational expenses, such as reducing energy consumption, to further reduce costs. To generate new revenue streams, Intercontinental Phuket implemented a range of innovative initiatives, including staycation packages and local market visits. These initiatives were aimed at targeting the domestic market and attracting customers looking for new experiences during the pandemic. The pandemic has also accelerated the adoption of technology in the hospitality industry. Intercontinental Phuket implemented several digital solutions to support its operations and enhance the guest experience, such as contactless check-in and keyless room entry. The resort also invested in marketing strategies, including social media campaigns and collaborations with online travel agencies, to increase visibility and attract customers. The strategies employed by Intercontinental Phuket have been successful in enabling the resort to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic. The resort has been able to maintain financial stability, generate revenue, and retain staff while ensuring the safety of guests and employees. As the pandemic continues to evolve, the resort is continuing to adapt and evolve its strategies to remain competitive and relevant in the market. There are several key implications of the strategies employed by Intercontinental Phuket for the broader hospitality industry in Thailand. First, the focus on safety and hygiene protocols is likely to remain a critical consideration for hotels and resorts in the post-pandemic era. Second, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of domestic tourism for the hospitality industry in Thailand. The domestic market has provided a source of revenue for hotels and resorts during the pandemic and is likely to continue to be an essential market in the future. Hotels and resorts will need to continue to develop new strategies and experiences to attract domestic customers and differentiate themselves from competitors. Third, the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technologies in the hospitality industry. Hotels and resorts will need to continue to develop and implement innovative digital solutions to enhance the guest experience, reduce physical contact, and increase efficiency. Digital marketing and social media campaigns will also be essential in attracting customers and increasing visibility. Finally, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of flexibility and adaptability for hotels and resorts. As the pandemic continues to

evolve, hotels and resorts will need to continue to adjust their strategies and operations to meet the changing market conditions. The ability to adapt quickly to new situations and market conditions is likely to be a critical determinant of success in the hospitality industry in the post-pandemic era.

In conclusion, Intercontinental Phuket's successful adaptation strategies during the pandemic offer important lessons for the broader hospitality industry in Thailand. The pandemic has brought unprecedented challenges to the industry, and hotels and resorts must continue to prioritize safety, develop new revenue streams, adopt innovative digital solutions, and remain adaptable to changing market conditions to succeed in the post-pandemic era. These strategies have been effective in enabling the resort to navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic, as evidenced by the increase in service charge, awards received, and positive reviews from customers. The successful adaptation strategies employed by Intercontinental Phuket Resort during the pandemic offer important lessons for the broader hospitality industry in Thailand. Further research can explore the effectiveness of these strategies in other hotels and resorts in the region and identify additional strategies that can be employed to enhance crisis management in the hospitality industry.



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