

They also claimed that it was an honor to be a part of the frontliners who helped people during the surge of the Covid-19 pandemic. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Montemayor (2021), which shows that the employees chose to stay working in a hotel quarantine facility because it is their only way to help the country and show their loyalty and commitment to service. Their passion, commitment, dedication, and willingness to help the industry are some of the primary reasons why they chose to stay. These employees prove a new overview of the dedication and passion of employees working in the hotel industry.

The quarantine period of the hotels demonstrated that workers could continue to deliver services despite the risks of contamination from Covid-19, demonstrating their dedication not only to their specific establishments but to the hospitality industry in general. The study's findings imply that employees in the hotel sector work not for the money but for their enthusiasm and loyalty to the industry. These benefit hotel owners as they can retain their employees despite any crisis. Moreover, this should remind hotel owners to treat and provide all the support to their employees.

Furthermore, this is supported by Purtill (2020) and Goh et al. (2020), who stated that hotel employees are willing to go to any length to demonstrate their allegiance and dedication to their superiors. However, this contradicts the study of Hernandez (2020), which shows that employees who work in a quarantine facility are more concerned about their health and safety than their commitment to helping the industry. Furthermore, the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) acknowledges this on Emerging Infectious Diseases, and recently recognized the brave effort and sacrifice of our tourist sector's men and women. Employees in the hospitality industry have also been on the frontlines, welcoming and offering a safe refuge for our returning fellow citizens and essential travelers (Manila Bulletin, 2021).

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 1: "Before pandemic we are scared, very scared din pero atleast naman sabi namin kailangan (kami) ng mga frontliners tapos yun nalang ang maiambag namin diba. Why naman naman na tatanggihan namin yung mga ganung bagay diba, kasi wala naman na sila (mga guests) na mapuntahan na iba. Yung ibang mga hotels naman is ayaw (tumanggap), kaya tinanggap namin (yung mga guests)." [Before the pandemic, we were scared, very scared, but then we thought that frontliners are needed and that is the only thing we could contribute. So why refuse? Also, the guests do not have anywhere else to go. The other hotels do not want to accept them. That is why we did.]

Informant 4: Actually, I'm happy kahit may covid kasi hindi naman tayo magtatagal sa isang trabaho. Ako 14 years na dito, kahit sinong tao hindi magtatagal sa trabaho kung hindi siya masaya sa ginagawa nila. Siguro someday

kung ako umalis dito, mapapaiyak din ako kasi napamahala na sakin to (hotel)." [Actually, I am happy even if there is COVID because we are not going to stay long in one job. I am working here for 14 years already. A person will not be able to stay long in a job if he/she is not happy. Maybe someday when I decide to leave my job, I will be in tears because I love this hotel.]

Informant 2: Syempre, kami kasi importante na empleyado kasi kami dito. Once na nawala kami dito, kami ang pinaka-importante kasi na empleyado as maintenance. Eh kung wala kami dito, sigurado magpapaalis. Hindi magfafunction." [Of course, we are counted as important employees here. Once we are not here, the hotel will not function because we are part of the maintenance.]

C. Willingness to Help the Medical Frontliners

The duration of the pandemic gave birth to a new definition of frontline since, in the eyes of the majority, frontliners are those who assisted in battling the spread of Covid-19 and those who heroically battled the virus to attend to and help Covid victims. In connection to that, the result of this study shows that hotel employees' main reason for staying in a quarantine facility despite the danger is their willingness to help the frontlines, as well as the country, in battling the deadly virus. Some employees mentioned that because there is a lack of quarantine facilities and hospitals are already at full capacity, they willingly stayed when the hotel became a quarantine facility as their way of helping the frontliners.

As the informants stated, working in a quarantine facility is a chance for them to help the frontliners. This echoes the previous article by Kostuch (2020), which states that some corporations provided free lodging to doctors and nurses to ease the hassle of traveling from their place to the hospital. The previous study is similar to the result of this study as it shows that the employees in quarantine facilities unquestionably catered the isolated guests. Similarly, the study of Jafri et al. (2021) justifies the statement, stating that despite the workload and perceived risk, 42.6% of participants volunteered to work if their department needed their services, while 55.2% agreed to work if their department contacted them. Identical to what Chan et al. (2021) stated, most frontline nurses were eager to work and showed solid professional commitment.

This implies that despite the risk of viral transmission, hotel quarantine staff find a method to assist the frontliners, as they are the only ones with the capability and knowledge to serve the hotel industry. The quarantine employees mirror not only the hospitality industry workers' dedication, but also the devotion of frontliners from various management, such as the hotel discounts and accessible accommodation to medical frontliners. Similarly, Luci-Atienza (2020) states that around 60 emergency medical personnel from the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC) are being housed at the Madison Park Hotel in Tacloban City. Moreover, it was stated

that medical personnel should offer full support in light of their sacrifices during this pandemic, and that many companies provide discounts to healthcare professionals (HealthJobEditors, 2022). This demonstrated that the Covid viral time highlighted many eager individuals to become frontliners, and employees are eager to assist them in the betterment and healing of the people and the country.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 1: "Natakot din pero challenges lang namin, syempre kailangan ng mga frontliners. Syempre yun nalang yung maitulong namin, why not (tumulong) diba. Atleast alam naman namin yung mga gagawin, yung prevention para hindi mahawa. Yung reason namin, syempre para makatulong kami. Marami naman kasing ayaw, parang sa frontliners yung mga nurse diba. Tapos meron silang mga kinukuhang utilities, syempre ayaw din naman sana nila pero sila lang naman kasi ang pag-asa, wala din ibang tutulong." [We are also scared. It is considered a challenge for us, of course. Frontliners are needed. That is the only thing we can contribute, so why not? Atleast we know what to do to not get infected. Our reason is to help. Many frontliners, like nurses, sometimes refuse. Then they get people from utilities, even though they do not want to, because they know that they are the only hope and no one else will help.]

Informant 2: "Sabi namin kailangan (kami) ng mga frontliners tapos yun nalang ang maiambag namin diba." [We say that frontliners are needed and that is the only thing that we contribute.]

Sub-Theme 2: Challenges Encountered while Working in a Hotel Quarantine Facility

The informants describe their challenges when working in a hotel quarantine facility. The prevalent theme common to most responses is the fear of contagion from the virus, increased workloads, and dealing with non-complying guests.

A. Fear of Contagion from the Virus

During the surge of the pandemic, hotel employees working in a quarantine facility faced high emotional distress due to the fear of being exposed to the virus and contagion for themselves, their family, and their friends. The result of the study shows that most of the informants were scared and nervous due to the health risks associated with the virus. According to them, they felt terrified for themselves and their families because there was a high possibility of getting contaminated, resulting in sudden death. Similarly, the result of this study is consistent with the study of Lin et al. (2020), which shows that the challenge hotel employees experienced was the

high mental stress associated with the exposure, high workloads, decreased income, and contagion from the virus.

Hotel workers working with quarantined guests stand a higher risk of infection because these contacts are the primary means of transmission. This implies that the hotel management must conduct a proper orientation on the characteristics of the virus and safety health protocols to ease the fear and stress that every hotel employee experiences when working in a quarantine facility. This will benefit the hoteliers as they become more secure, comfortable, and confident in case another crisis occurs. This is further backed up by the studies of Brooks et al. (2018) and Lin et al. (2020), which demonstrate the need for good training before, during, and after the Covid-19 epidemic, and how it may be used to prevent mental health issues. Employees should get training in various COVID-19 protective measures, including causes, modes of transmission, symptoms, and proper cleaning and disinfection procedures. Training also informs personnel of appropriate conduct and its significance in stopping the spread of the virus (Hamouche, 2020; Lin et al., 2020).

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 2: "Nafifeel ko natatakot. Syempre meron tayong karamdaman na ganon, lalo na nung kasagsagan ng Covid." [I feel scared. Of course, there's fear especially during those times of Covid.]

Informant 3: "Kinakabahan din syempre eh quarantine facility siya maari kaming mahawaan ng sakit." [I'm also worried because it is a quarantine facility. We can be contaminated with the virus.]

Informant 6: "Natakot ma'am, kinakabahan po. Nag-iba po yung sitwasyon ng trabaho ko." [We are scared and nervous. My work situation has changed.]

B. Changes in Working Assignments

When the hotel started to operate as a quarantine facility, most employees quit, while some were retrenched. Moreover, those who continue to work experienced extra workloads as they needed to attend to other assignments besides their usual jobs. The informants claimed that they were assigned to a specific task during the pre-pandemic. However, when the hotel started to operate as a quarantine facility, there was an increase in their workloads, and they became all-around employees. Specifically, some informants mentioned that they were initially a maintenance crew, but they became all-around employees, such as front desk clerks, security guards, and housekeepers. Moreover, a previous study showed that the pandemic affected every role in hospitality. Some of these changes are the employees' roles as they perform the job that some employees used to do (Fox, 2021).

Moreover, the employees affirmed that attending to various assignments was challenging, especially when they had

to work overtime, resulting in high exhaustion. This implies that hotel management must hire more employees to deliver a great guest experience and train hotel workers in transferable soft skills. This will benefit the hotel management as hiring more employees may result in a smooth operation flow and can handle high guest demands. In addition, the study of Huang et al. (2021) shows that recognizing and stressing cross-industry soft skills may be a successful approach to reducing the high unemployment rate in the hospitality sector.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 3: Dati (before pandemic) regular lang mga 6:00 am po kami pumapasok nun. Sa pag adapt naman, hindi madali, mga one month din syempre eh hindi regular yung ano namin diba 6:00am kami nagigising pero nung quarantine naging 3:00am to 9:00pm kami ng gabi at araw araw na schedule na namin yun.” [Before the pandemic, we regularly start at 6:00 am. Adaptation is not easy. It took us a month because it was difficult, but when the hotel became a quarantine facility, we started at 3:00 am and ended at 9:00 pm. It is our everyday schedule.]

Informant 2: “Ang epekto samin is syempre naging all around na ako, yung trabaho ko noon. Nag front desk, nag maintenance, nag room boy, yon ang naging trabaho ko. Tapos syempre naging taga-bantay na rin, security guard ganon, yon na ang trabaho ko dito.” [The effect on us is that I became all around. I worked as a front desk, maintenance, and room boy. Those were my tasks, and I also became a security guard.]

Informant 4: “Then hanggang sa first month ng covid skeletal schedule habang tumatagal takot na rin yung mga kasamahan namin, mga front desk namin, mga kitchen personnel, hotel staff, so ang naiwan lang kasi noon dito kaming mga maintenance (personnel). So kaming dalawa lang nung kasama ko yung nagpapalitan noon dito, umaga at gabi. Kailangan sakripisyo talaga. Kami na rin po ang front desk (clerk) noon kapag dumadating yung mga LSI.” [Until the first month of the COVID skeletal schedule, we are scared. When the time came, our front desk, kitchen personnel, and hotel staff left. The ones who remained are the maintenance staff. From day to night, my co-worker and I exchange schedules. We have to sacrifice. We also became the front desk clerks when the LSI arrived.]

Informant 6: Nung wala pang pandemic, ang trabaho ko po ay service crew. Face to face po ang operation namin dito. Pero nung nagka-Covid naging all around na din ako.” [Before the pandemic, I am a service crew. The operation here is face-to-face. But when the COVID began, I became an all-around crew.]

C. Dealing with Behavioral Issues

Given the current situation of quarantine hotels where the hotel employees' roles are similar to that of medical frontliners, it is very challenging to deal with the behavioral problems of the isolated guests. Moreover, the result of this study shows that some quarantined guests are ill-tempered and irritable because they do not want to be in an isolation facility. The informants stated that the most challenging part of dealing with guests is their unwillingness to follow the safety protocols set by the local government in a hotel quarantine facility. Non-compliance with the safety protocols can harm the guests and hotel employees as they have direct contact with the isolated guests.

Similarly, Naskar et al. (2021) stated in their previous study that equal attention must be paid to the health and safety of the staff, as well as the visitors. As hotels get visitors from various places, they serve as disease-causing virus hotspots, directly endangering the well-being of staff members. Due to this, the isolated guests must follow the standard safety protocols set by the government to protect the people around them, especially the hotel employees who work hard to sustain their families during the pandemic.

Understandably, hotel employees are trained to interact with diverse people in normal situations. However, dealing with guests with behavioral problems in a hotel quarantine facility can harm the employees and their friends and families. This implies that there should be precise and constant communication and feedback through and from the guests. Furthermore, the study by Lin et al. (2020), which states that hotel owners should develop a communication strategy to inform staff members clearly about what will happen during the COVID-19 pandemic, supports this as well. The study states that staff members should be informed about critical operational decisions, potential workload effects of these decisions, constant updates on pandemic data, and status of guests who have been quarantined. As one of the best tools for encouraging resilience among quarantine hotel workers, they should also provide a two-way communication platform that encourages employees to communicate their wants and concerns.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 3: “Yung mga iba masungit ayaw nilang mag paquarantine ganon. Iniintindi na lang namin sinasabihan namin pag hindi sila na quarantine na pwede nilang mahawahaan yung mga pamilya nila pag umuwi na sila sa kanila.” [Some were grumpy because they did not want to be quarantined. We choose to understand them and advise them that if they do not get quarantined, there is a possibility that they will infect their family at home.]

Informant 1: “Meron yung minsan mga nagquarantine maarte, maraming reklamo tapos minsan madami silang ina-ask.” [There are times that they complain about being

quarantined; they are dramatic, they have a lot of complaints, and they ask too many questions sometimes.]

Informant 4: "Sa working environment natin, actually halo halo kasi ang mga tao na nagqu-quarantine. Meron tayong tinatawag, in general, na words na "kaplastikan", "pakikisama". Pagdating kasi sa hotel or kahit sa anong company, hindi natin matatanggal yan, kaplastikan nature na ng tao yan. Sa mga OFW (guests) na nagquarantine, of course kahit ayaw nilang sumunod (sa rules) wala silang magagawa, kailangan nilang magcomply sa policy ng hotel at sa policy ng government natin." [In our working environment, the quarantined people are mixed. They have what we call, in general, "two-faced," "companionship." When it comes to hotels or any other company, we cannot avoid that. Faking is the nature of humankind. Even when the quarantined OFW do not want to comply, there is nothing they can do about it. It is the policy of the hotel, as well as the government.]

Theme 2: Coping Mechanism Measures during a Crisis

The informants describe their measures in keeping themselves healthy and protected when working in a hotel quarantine facility. The prevalent theme common to most responses is the provision of adequate protective equipment and the implementation of health and safety procedures in hotel operations.

A. Provision of Adequate Protective Equipment

During the storm brought by the Covid -19, many people stayed at home and isolated themselves from the outside world as their line of defense against the virus. In contrast to how hotel staff members manage the situation, they welcome the chance of contamination entering their doors rather than trying to avoid it. In connection with this, the informants stated how they equipped themselves to interact with different guests and the self-protection measures they took before coming home. According to the employees, wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is an essential aspect of administering to isolated guests, especially when delivering the food and sanitizing the room. Moreover, taking a bath before interacting with family, taking vitamins, and eating nutritious food are just some of the healthy practices of employees to ease the threat of the virus and feel safe when working in a quarantine facility.

Personal safety measures, personal hygiene, and following standard protocols are essential when fighting any virus. These aspects are proven by the results, which imply that hotel management must regularly monitor employees' health status to ensure their safety and health. Another implication that benefits the hotel, employees, and guests is the regular inspection and sanitation of the area to create a safe working environment. It is supported by the statement of ShineACS Lock (2022), stating that it is vital to follow proper hotel

sanitation standards to avoid cross-contamination and, consequently, the spread of disease. Moreover, for the hotel employees, maintaining their safety, proper medications, and hygienic practices are essential not only for themselves but also for the hotel and guests. This shares a similar sentiment to the study of Decon (2021), which states that sanitation and hygiene are critical components of hotel and restaurant operations.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 3: "May times kasi syempre may mga vitamins kami kung ano yung binibigay ng boss namin sa kanya lahat ng mga vitamins at PPE pati sa complete uniform. Sa kitchen ako noon at nagdadala rin kami ng pagkain sa door hindi na kami pumapasok. Mga masusustansyang pagkain lang kinakain namin ganun, naka PPE kaming pumupunta sa taas" [There are times because, of course, we have vitamins. Our boss gives all the vitamins and PPE, as well as the complete uniform. I was in the kitchen then and we just leave the food at the doorstep. We no longer went in. We only eat healthy foods, we wear PPE when we go around the hotel.]

Informant 4: "Atsaka ang ginagawa ko, ang pre-caution ko kasi sa mga anak ko sinabi ko sakanila before, kapag nakita niyo akong padating, wag kayong lalapit saakin, wag kayong yayakap saakin. Wag muna nilang gawin yung mga nakasanayan namin, ang gawin nila pagdating ng 6 o'clock ng gabi, yung mga damit ko ilagay na sa labas pati sabon ko dun na lahat. Tapos yung pintuan isarado pati gawin ganun ginagawa namin for safety." ["What I am doing as my precaution is that I told my children before: when you see me coming, do not come near me, do not hug me. We avoid doing what we used to do in the mean time. What they do when I arrive at 6 o'clock at night is to put my clothes outside, as well as my soap. Then close the door as well as the gate. That's what we do for safety."]

B. Implementation of Health and Safety Procedures in Hotels

Even with changing limits and government mandates, hotels can take basic precautions to equip their property for quarantined guests and expedite operations. These Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and checklists for hotel quarantine facilities are in addition to the increased cleaning and sanitization procedures that hoteliers must employ to avoid the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the health and safety of their guests and employees. The result of this study shows that to protect themselves from the virus, they follow the hotel protocols and protocols by the Department of Health, such as social distancing and wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Some visible changes from the previous operation include leaving the food in front of the door, signages of the protocols by the Department of Health, and allocating Police officers outside the hotel to ensure that standard protocols are strictly followed.

In a COVID-19-dominated workplace, enhanced cleanliness and hygiene are essential elements of effective hotel operations (Jiang & Wen, 2020; Goh et al., 2021). According to the Decon's (2021) study, hotel guests are more aware of and worried than ever about hygienic practices. Due to the pandemic's decreased occupancy, hotels go above and above to ensure that their customers are comfortable. Disobedience to sanitary regulations may lead to illness, decline in trust, and long-term harm to the company.

This implies that hotel management must utilize a stricter implementation of safety health protocols that is convenient and practical. Based on the World Health Organization statistics and research, establishing minimum health standards and implementing response mechanisms such as wearing personal protective equipment and other behaviors to protect oneself is very helpful in the struggle to control and prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Tagum City Information Office, 2020). It also suggests that monitoring evaluation and adjustments must be executed. This is supported by NiBusinessINFO.co.UK (2022) which states that with the specific responsibilities for staff, the hotel can ensure that employees are carried out to an acceptable standard. The hotel can monitor whether guests and personnel adhere to any restrictions or safe practices outlined in the arrangements.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

Informant 1: "Natakot din pero yun naman nagsusuot kami ng PPE." [I was scared too, that is why we wear PPE.]

Informant 5: "Ang ginagawa naming pag nag o-order yung guest naglalagay kami ng bagay na lets say na table or chair dun sa tapat ng pintuan nila so ang ginagawa naming dun na nilalapag ang pagkain kinakatok namin pero kung wala pang sumasagot, iniwan nalang namin sa labas yung pagkain. Sumusunod kasi bawat kwarto, dati na kaming naglagay ng protocol ng DOH nagpapaskil na sila bago ginawang quarantine facility ito merong protocol na nakadikit sa loob ng pintuan nila. So ang ginagawa naming pag nagpapasok kami "sir pakibasa nalang yung nandun nasa pintuan nyo para sa protocol ng DOH" ino-observe naman nila yung mga protocol." [What we do when a guest orders is that we place something like a table or chair in front of their door, and place the food there. We knock on the door, but if no one answers, we just leave it outside. Every room follows, we already placed a DOH protocol before it was made into a quarantine facility. There is a protocol positioned on their door. So, what do we do when we enter? "Sir, please read the DOH protocols on your door." They observe the protocols.]

Informant 2: "During quarantine merong mga nagbantay na pulis sila ang sumusuway kung sino ang hindi sumusunod, nire-report sa DOH kung sino man ang hindi makakasunod sa protocol." [During quarantine,

there are police officers who reprimand those who do not comply, and they report to the DOH anyone who cannot follow the protocol.]"

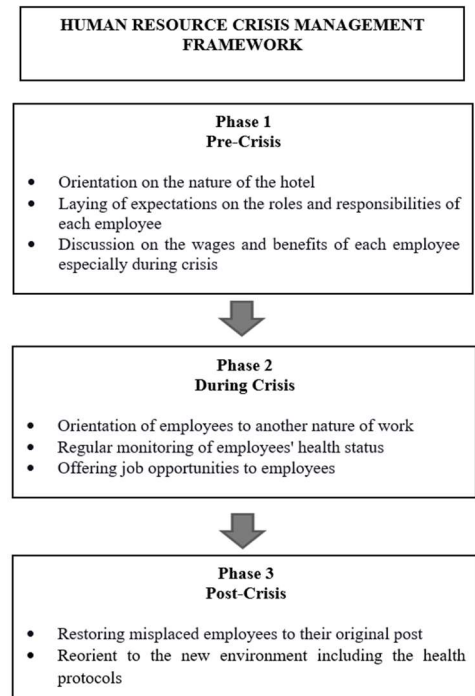


Figure 1. Human Resource Crisis Management Framework

Figure 1 is the proposed Human Resource Crisis Management Framework based on the study's findings on employees' experiences in a hotel quarantine facility. It illustrates the suggested actions that have to be implemented by the HR department in terms of crisis management to ensure the safety and comfort of the hotel employees while working in a hotel quarantine facility. It has three phases: Phase 1 is the pre-crisis stage, wherein the hotel management should conduct an orientation on the nature of the hotel itself. Also, in this phase, expectations on each employee's roles and responsibilities and discussing their wages and benefits must be clearly laid out, especially during a crisis. During the Pre-Crisis stage, employees need to be oriented to another nature of work to better function on their new assignments. Also, regular monitoring of employees' health status is a must to ensure their safety during the surge of the pandemic, and offer job opportunities to employees. Phase 2, during a crisis stage, requires identifying any possible losses of human resources. A calculation must be conducted to determine the costs and damages made by the pandemic in terms of human resources. Hotel management should provide adequate compensation to the employees. Constant communication and feedbacking is also a must. Also, at this stage, physical and mental support is given to employees, as well as monitoring their health status. Lastly is phase 3, the post-crisis. At this stage, there is a need to restore misplaced employees to their original posts after the pandemic surge. Consequently, employees must be reoriented

to the new environment, including the health protocols, to have them accept the change and subsequently perform.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the lack of hospital rooms and quarantine facilities has led to the abrupt use of hotel rooms as isolation facilities for people needing a 14-day quarantine. Hotel employees have been at the frontline catering to the needs of isolated guests. However, hotel employees were not prepared enough for this crisis which impacted their regular operations and standard procedures. Employees in hotel quarantine facilities undergo countless challenges, such as changes in work assignments, fear of contagion from the virus, dealing with behavioral issues of the guests, and changes in their work routines: daily wearing of PPE, early coming to work and overtime work, self-protection measures against the virus, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, compliance with the health and safety procedures in hotel operation. Despite the possible risks concerning their employment, hotel employees still prefer to remain in their respective jobs due to financial necessity, dedication to serving the hotel, and willingness to help the frontline during these challenging times. One of the most important considerations is that employees are the company's most important assets and are in charge of carrying out crisis management strategies as necessary. The human resources management framework has three phases: pre-crisis, during crisis, and post-crisis. The management formulates expectations on each employee's roles and responsibilities. They also provide different levels of communication to discuss the wages and benefits of each employee, especially during a crisis. During the crisis, hotel management oriented their employees to another nature of work to increase focus on employee preparedness when it comes to crises. Also, regular monitoring of employees' health status is a must. Post-crisis consists of restoring misplaced employees to their original posts and reorienting them to the new environment, including health protocols consultations.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with the data gathered from this research, necessary recommendations are suggested to improve the general status of the management and its employees based on the developed human resource crisis management framework. Therefore, this study seeks to suggest the following:

First and foremost, hotel management should be advised to conduct essential orientations on the nature of the hotel and health protocols, and to offer proper familiarization about Covid-19 for awareness. Management should necessarily formulate laying of expectations on the roles and responsibilities of each employee. Moreover, providing different levels of communication to discuss the wages and

benefits of each employee, especially during a crisis, must be properly laid out. During a crisis, hotel management should orient their employees to another nature of work to increase focus on employee preparedness. Also, regular monitoring of employees' health status is encouraged to maintain the health and safety of employees in a quarantine facility. This will guarantee that the hotel management greatly ensures and monitors the health, physical, mental, and even psychological states of everyone. Consequently, offering employees job opportunities is a must to support them financially during the pandemic. There is also a need to restore misplaced employees to their original posts and reorient their new working environment.

As for the Department of Tourism, the continual checking of each hotel's data of people is advised to avoid potential guests that could break specific protocols like skipping isolation, breaking safety protocols, etc. They should also do an observation regarding the operation of hotels for them to be sure whether the hotel is still fit to function or not. Furthermore, DOT should ensure that hotels strictly adhere with the safety measures set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Department of Health (DOH). For LGUs or Local Government Units, they should have scheduled visits to reorient hotel staff with updated information on new protocols to keep them informed on any protocols released by the national government. Lastly, the proposed Human Resource Crisis Management framework must be validated to ensure the reliability and validity of the information stated. Also, the validation process will propose an opportunity to prove the accuracy and effectiveness of the data presented in a real-life crisis.

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Employee Retention Strategies of Hotel Industries In Tuguegarao Amidst the Pandemic

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Abstract— The hospitality industry has been one of the first industries affected, specifically the hotel sector. With the changes in society due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the hotel industry experienced an employment shock earlier than other industries, with a sharp drop in the number of employees and a dramatic rise in temporary leave. One of the toughest challenges an organization or a business encounters nowadays is on managing their people amidst the pandemic and keeping them at their job. Consequently, it is essential to identify those retention strategies in the hotel industry to gain new insights and approaches for stabilizing hotel employment amidst the pandemic. However, several studies about employee retention have been recently published, but there is no specific research about retaining employees amidst the pandemic. For these reasons, the researchers have decided to embark on this study to determine the strategies of accredited hotel industries in retaining their employees amidst the pandemic in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan. After sending a letter to the school administrators and hotel managers to seek permission to conduct the study, the researchers proceeded to administer survey questionnaires to 5 accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City that retained all their employees amidst the pandemic. The findings of this study confirm that fourteen (14) strategies are fully employed in the 5 accredited hotels. However, the strategy concerning the remuneration of employees, even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme set by the government, is employed.

Keywords— *Retention Strategies, Hotel Industries, Covid-19 Pandemic, Employee, Hospitality Industry*

I. INTRODUCTION

On December 8, 2019, the government of Wuhan, China, revealed that health officials were treating dozens of new virus cases classified as coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Since

then, COVID-19 has been designated a novel strain of SARS (SARS-CoV-2) and has spread to multiple countries as a global pandemic. It's a highly contagious respiratory disease that starts with a fever, cough, and breathing issues after contact with other sick people. Furthermore, asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus, with up to 40% of infected people staying asymptomatic (World Health Organization, 2020).

However, critical global responses to control the spread of the COVID-19 have included travel restrictions, home quarantine, and social distancing orders. A million workers suddenly became unemployed because of the uncertainty over economic recovery and global fears of continuing COVID-19 spread and future waves. The hospitality industry has been one of the first industries affected, specifically the hotel sector. The hotel industry, in particular, has seen huge revenue declines as occupancy rates have declined as a result of social distance and a sharp drop in the number of tourists (Sobieralski, 2020). With the changes in society due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the hotel industry experienced an employment shock earlier than other industries, with a sharp drop in the number of employees and a dramatic rise in temporary leave. Even before COVID-19, modern working environments cannot guarantee employment stability to all employees because of technical developments, economic fluctuations, and political insecurity (Etehad & Karatepe, 2019). Employees' views on job insecurity and their subjective and unconscious beliefs of job loss have grown because of organizational restructuring and scale-downs (Niesen et al., 2018), but COVID-19 has aggravated this situation. The rapid onset of the COVID-19 pandemic is contrasted by the severe effect most likely on many hotel employees. It has

increased the number of hotels closing their doors, resulting in increased employee turnover (Soria, 2020).

Moreover, one of the highly valued business assets is its employees because they do the work assigned to them in exchange for a commensurate salary. Employee success is also strongly tied to the success of the team, and keeping experienced and knowledgeable individuals on board will aid the organization's success (Singh, 2018). Since the critical importance of workforce has been recognized, concepts to improve individual and organizational performance, such as employee commitment or engagement, must be realized (Ongel, 2014). Employee retention is all about persuading and encouraging employees to stay with a company for as long as possible. It is also a systematic effort and strategy utilized by organizations to keep a productive staff while satisfying operational goals, such as having strategies, policies, and practices that fulfill their various needs (Mita, 2014; Bidisha, 2013; Bandt & Kostic et al., 2015). Retaining employees in the new normal is essential because many employees have left their job due to COVID-19. Some employees have been forced to stop working, had an early retirement, and shifted to other jobs such as online selling, sari-sari store, and many more. However, it is also noted that one of the main problems of the business managers is the unpreparedness in addressing retention issues (Singh, 2018). Some managers lack strategies to retain employees, especially amidst the pandemic.

Tuguegarao City serves as the Economic Center of Region 02, and strives for outstanding performance and competence in administration, citizen participation, community and economic development, cultural arts, education, fiscal management, infrastructure, intergovernmental cooperation, planning, public safety, recreation, and leisure services, social services, and technology. Its economy changed from agricultural to secondary and tertiary economic activities such as trading, commerce, and services. Tuguegarao's role as Northern Luzon's Regional Government Center and Center of Commerce ushered in the change. The city acts as a commercial and institutional center due to its role as a province and regional government seat. As a result, commerce and service businesses and industrial and tourism-related activities have increased in the area. Thus, as the Economic Center of Region 02, banking, educational and commercial entities proliferate in the city (Philippines Cities, 2017). The hotel industry is one of the most growing and lucrative industries in the town, contributing as the main driver of the social and economic growth of the place, resulting in an increased job or employment opportunities improved living standards, and other social and economic factors. The population and the influx of tourists visiting Tuguegarao City resulted in the economic growth of the place. It is one of the driving forces that led many business enthusiasts to invest their money in building hotel establishments. The bustling city is a commercial site where multiple businesses and buildings are easily accessible to the target market.

Hence, one of the toughest challenges an organization or a business encounters nowadays is on managing the people amidst the pandemic and keeping them at their job. The hotel industry, in particular, needs to understand how to retain its employees effectively since they highly contribute to the continuity, profitability, and success of the business. Consequently, it is

essential to identify those retention strategies in the hotel industry to gain new insights and approaches for stabilizing hotel employment amidst the pandemic. However, several studies about employee retention have been recently published, but no specific research about retaining employees amidst the pandemic as the topic. For these reasons, the researchers have decided to embark on this study to determine the strategies of accredited hotel industries in retaining their employees amidst the pandemic in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan.

II. METHODS

The researchers utilized a descriptive quantitative research design. This study was conducted in the following accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City. The human resource manager or hotel owner of each accredited hotel were the respondents of the study. The researchers decided to include human resource managers or owners as their respondents since they are involved in the day-to-day activities of all the employees, and are knowledgeable with HR management policies and strategies of the hotel. Furthermore, purposive sampling was employed since the criteria of selecting hotel respondents will be those accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and who have retained all their employees amidst the pandemic. This study utilized a survey questionnaire to gather the needed data. Part 1 consists of the profile of the hotel respondents in Tuguegarao City in terms of length of operation, hotel classification, type of ownership, and the number of employees. Part 2, on the other hand, consists of the employee retention strategies of accredited hotels amidst the pandemic in Tuguegarao City. This part was modified from the study of Shweta (2019), and the content experts validated it. First, the researchers conducted a pre-survey on the accredited hotels to ensure that they have retained all their employees. Then, the researchers sent a letter to the school administrators to seek permission to conduct the study outside the University of Saint Louis in Tuguegarao City. After which, the researchers wrote a letter to the accredited hotel owners or human resource managers requesting their participation and consent in the survey. After approval, the researchers set a schedule based on the availability of the respondents for the data gathering. After gathering the data, the respondents' responses were effectively observed and kept confidential for data analysis.

The data gathered from the survey questionnaires were analyzed through descriptive and frequency analysis. The respondent's profile was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, while the employee retention strategies of the hotel industries were analyzed using mean with the following legend for interpretation:

- 3.50 - 4.00 = Fully Employed
- 2.50 - 3.49 = Employed
- 1.50 - 2.49 = Least Employed
- 2.00 - 1.49 = Not Employed

III. RESULTS

TABLE I. PROFILE OF THE HOTELS

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage
No. of Years in Operation		
6-10 Years	3	60.00 %
11 Years and above	2	40.00 %
Hotel Classification		
Economy Class	3	60.00 %
Business Class	2	40.00 %
Type of Ownership		
Sole Proprietorship	4	80.00 %
Corporation	1	20.00 %
No. of Employees		
10 Below	1	20.00 %
11-20 Employees	1	20.00 %
21 & Above	3	60.00 %

The accredited hotel establishments in Tuguegarao City are profiled in Table 1. It can be gleaned from the table that three hotels have been in operation for six to ten years, and two have been in operation for ten years or more. In addition, the majority of the hotels are categorized as economy. When it comes to ownership, majority of them are sole proprietorships. Finally, most of the hotels have 21 and above employees.

TABLE II. EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES OF HOTEL INDUSTRIES

Strategies	Mean	Qualitative Description
1. The hotel communicates a clear role and responsibilities assigned to employees amidst the pandemic.	3.80	Fully employed
2. The hotel strictly follows government protocols to maintain a safe and secure working environment.	4	Fully employed
3. The hotel empowers employees by having a good time listening to their ideas and suggestions amidst the pandemic.	3.80	Fully employed
4. The hotel sets a work-life balance among employees.	3.80	Fully employed
5. The hotel continuously gives employee benefits, such as incentives, medical assistance, cash assistance, and the like.	4	Fully employed
6. The hotel provides training and development programs against the COVID-19 pandemic.	3.60	Fully employed
7. The hotel conducts performance appraisals and continuous feedback for employees' performance.	3.80	Fully employed
8. The hotel values and extends employee contracts despite the COVID-19 pandemic.	4	Fully employed
9. The hotel observes work fairness in job scheduling, promotions, and the like.	3.60	Fully employed
10. The hotel has a systematic policies, practices, and good working conditions that retain employees.	3.60	Fully employed
11. The hotel persistently remunerates its employees even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme set by the government.	3.40	Employed
12. The hotel management consistently works and helps boost employee morale amidst the pandemic.	3.80	Fully employed

13. The hotel administration guides and manages employees on a professional standard of conduct.	3.80	Fully employed
14. The hotel establishment builds a culture of teamwork among employees in the working environment.	4	Fully employed
15. The hotel establishment promotes trustworthy, tactful discipline and ethical considerations.	4	Fully employed

The employee retention strategies of the hotel industries were analyzed using mean with the following legend for interpretation; 3.50 - 4.00 = Fully Employed; 2.50 - 3.49 = Employed; 1.50 - 2.49 = Least Employed; 1.00 - 1.49 = Not employed. The table shows that majority of the strategies have been fully employed, except for one strategy which concerns about the remuneration of employees even if there is a reduction in their total salary due to the limited working scheme. Since majority of strategies got a mean of 3.50-4.00, the 5 hotels strongly agreed that they are using the following strategies to retain their employees amidst the pandemic.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study has provided data regarding how hotel industries, specifically in Tuguegarao City, managed to develop and implement strategies for employee retention amidst the pandemic. The results regarding the employee retention strategies were obtained from the five (5) respondents of different accredited hotels, primarily using their total profiling percentages.

First, it was found that three (3) accredited hotel establishments in Tuguegarao City were functional and offer their products and services by their employee's workforce over 6 to 10 years, while the remaining two (2) were found operating for at least 11 years and above. Second, it was noted that three (3) hotels were classified as economy class, while the remaining two (2) hotels were revealed as business class. Third, four (4) of these accredited hotels' ownership type was sole-proprietorship, while one (1) accredited hotel was established with shareholders or corporate ownership. Lastly, it was found that three (3) hotels have 21 and above number of employees, one (1) accredited hotel has 11-20 employees and the other (1) accredited hotel has below 10 employees.

On the other hand, the result of the study shows that hotel respondents in Tuguegarao City had strictly followed and implemented strategies to retain employees. Based on the result, these accredited hotels have identified the following as their top strategies to support them in keeping their employees amidst this adversity. These accredited hotels in Tuguegarao City who had retained their employees showed that they are highly-engaged with their employees which resulted to a mean of four (4), and considered as the qualitative description (QD) of fully employed which ranked as the highest strategies of the accredited hotel establishments. First (1), the hotel strictly follows government protocols to maintain a safe and secure working environment. This implies that amidst the pandemic, the hotel industries strictly act and work in accordance to the