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Marketing Crisis Management and Hotel Performance: Evidence from Hotels in Mombasa County, Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: Tourism is crucial in driving economies and preserving cultural heritage worldwide. The sustainability of tourist destinations depends on their ability to effectively manage and recover from marketing crises that can damage their attractiveness and reputation. Despite the allure of tourist destinations, they are susceptible to various marketing crises, challenging their hospitality industries and local economies. These crises can disrupt visitor flows and tarnish reputations. This study explored the impacts of marketing crisis management practices on hotel performance in Mombasa County, Kenya, within a global context of vulnerable tourist destinations.

Methodology: This study employed partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) embedded in the causal-comparative research design to explore the relationship between marketing crisis management practices and hotel performance. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to management staff in 18 star-rated hotels in Mombasa County. Confirmatory composite analysis (CCA) validated the measurement models, and demographics were considered as potential influencers on the relationship. Data were presented in Table format and interpreted using percentages.

Findings: The findings revealed that communication and public relations ($\beta = 0.417$,

$p < 0.05$), marketing strategy adjustment ($\beta = 0.336$, $p < 0.05$), and reputation management ($\beta = 0.186$, $p < 0.05$) significantly and positively affected hotel performance. The three combined practices explained 75.1% of the variance in hotel performance. Based on these findings, hotels in Mombasa County and the broader Kenyan hospitality industry must prioritize effective communication and public relations, agile marketing strategy adjustment, and proactive reputation management as integral components of their crisis management strategies to enhance resilience, foster customer loyalty, and maintain competitiveness, especially in times of crises, such as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations: Effective communication and public relations positively impact hotel performance by fostering emotional connections, repeat business, and positive reviews. Dynamic marketing strategy adjustment enhances resilience and adaptability, attracting safety-conscious and adventurous travelers. Reputation management safeguards trust, credibility, and customer loyalty, mitigating negative perceptions during crises. Combining these practices contributes to substantial positive impacts on hotel performance.

Keywords: *Crisis, Communication, Public Relations, Reputation Management, Marketing Strategies.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a vital economic driver for many regions worldwide, contributing significantly to local economies and cultural preservation. However, the sustainability of tourist destinations often hinges on their ability to effectively manage and recover from marketing crises that can threaten their attractiveness and reputation. Tourist destinations around the world, regardless of their allure and popularity, are all vulnerable to a range of marketing crises that can pose substantial challenges to their hospitality industries and local economies. These crises can threaten the carefully cultivated image of these destinations, causing disruptions in visitor flows and potentially tarnishing their reputations.

For instance, Bali, Indonesia, a renowned tropical paradise known for its stunning landscapes and rich cultural heritage, faces multifaceted marketing crises. Volcanic eruptions, such as the 2018 eruption of Mount Agung, have led to flight cancellations and evacuations (Syahbana et al., 2019). Negative media coverage highlighting issues of environmental degradation has also impacted Bali's reputation as an idyllic destination (Tomazos, 2022). Meanwhile, Venice, Italy, famed for its intricate canal system and historic architecture, grapples with marketing crises centered on over-tourism. Increased visitor numbers have led to overcrowding, environmental damage, and strain on local infrastructure (Gonzalez, 2018). Media coverage of these challenges has threatened Venice's image as a serene and culturally rich destination (Alexis, 2017).

Cancún, Mexico, celebrated for its pristine beaches and vibrant nightlife, contends with diverse marketing crises. Natural disasters like hurricanes have disrupted travel plans and damaged local infrastructure (Murià-Vila et al., 2018). Additionally, negative perceptions stemming from drug-related violence in neighboring regions have affected Cancún's safety reputation and tourism numbers (Monterrubio et al., 2015). Besides, Phuket, Thailand, an exotic island paradise known for its tropical beauty, faces various marketing crises. Political instability and protests have led to fluctuations in tourist arrivals (Beirman, 2018). Health crises like the SARS outbreak have also adversely impacted tourism (Smith & Puczko, 2015). The COVID-19 pandemic has further devastated Phuket's tourism industry, resulting in lockdowns and travel restrictions (Zhu & Yasami, 2022).

Evidence from the Middle East shows that Dubai, United Arab Emirates, a modern and wealthy city known for its luxury shopping and iconic architecture, confronts marketing crises linked to economic shifts. Economic downturns and fluctuations in oil prices have impacted the spending power of tourists (Nusair, 2019). Cultural and legal norms have also resulted in perception challenges and negative media coverage, affecting Dubai's attractiveness to visitors (Reisinger et al., 2019). Europe also experiences marketing crises in the hotel industry. Paris, France, celebrated for its art, culture, and cuisine, is not exempt from marketing crises. Protests like the "Yellow Vest" movement have disrupted travel and affected tourism revenue (Aktas et al., 2023). Security concerns following terrorist attacks have impacted tourists' perceptions of safety and security (Liu & Pratt, 2017).

In Kenya, Mombasa County is renowned for its beautiful beaches, cultural heritage, and vibrant tourism industry. However, like any other tourist destination, it is susceptible to various marketing crises, including negative media coverage, online reputation crises, natural disasters, and health-related incidents (Njoya et al., 2022). Such crises can disrupt hotel operations, deter tourists, and impact the local economy.

In an era where tourism fuels economic vitality and cultural preservation across the globe, the fragility of even the most alluring tourist destinations becomes strikingly evident. The evidence worldwide reveals a common thread—marketing crises, those unpredictable and disruptive events that can potentially mar the very essence of these destinations. From the tranquil beaches of Bali to the iconic canals of Venice, the pristine allure of Cancún's shores to the exotic charm of Phuket, each locale, regardless of its appeal, has confronted a myriad of challenges that can perturb the delicate balance of

its tourism landscape. Even in the urban luxury of Dubai and the cultural splendor of Paris, marketing crises have been witnessed, pointing to the fact that no destination is impervious to their impact.

Marketing crisis management practices, therefore, emerge as beacons of resilience in the face of these challenges. Just as the nature of tourism is dynamic, the hospitality industry's response to marketing crises must be equally agile and strategic. Marketing crisis management refers to the strategies, plans, and actions businesses and destinations implement to effectively handle and navigate crises that can impact their reputation, operations, and overall performance in marketing and public perception. Marketing crisis management encompasses a proactive approach to identifying, preparing for, mitigating, and recovering from various crises that may affect a company's image, customer trust, and market position (Wut et al., 2021).

In the tourism and hospitality industry, marketing crisis management involves developing strategies to address challenges that can emerge unexpectedly, such as negative media coverage, online reputation issues, natural disasters, health outbreaks, political instability, or other unforeseen events (Ritchie & Jiang, 2019). The goal is to minimize the negative impact of these crises on a business or destination's brand equity, customer loyalty, and financial performance.

Statement of the Problem

Kenya's Coastal region has witnessed a decline in tourist numbers and a continuous loss of market share to competitors like Zanzibar. In 2015, most hotels in the area were only 5 to 15 percent occupied due to crisis events in Mombasa and Lamu. This low occupancy rate resulted in the closure of 25 hotels and a staggering loss of 40,000 jobs (Muna, 2017). Despite the critical importance of effective marketing practices in crisis management, there remains a notable gap in understanding how specific marketing crisis management practices could have alleviated this crisis and what their potential impact on the performance of hotels would have been. While various studies have explored the relationship between marketing crises and hotel performance in different contexts (Alananzeh et al., 2018; Alzoubi & Jaaffar, 2020; Kosová & Enz, 2012), limited research has delved into crisis management strategies and their direct effects on the hotels operating within the picturesque landscape of Mombasa County, Kenya.

In light of this gap, this study aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by investigating the distinct effects of marketing crisis management practices on the performance of hotels in Mombasa County. The research focuses on three primary aspects of crisis management: communication and public relations, reputation management, and marketing strategy adjustment. Each aspect is crucial to a hotel's ability to navigate crises and uphold its performance metrics. This research seeks to bridge the existing knowledge gap by examining the direct effects of these specific marketing crisis management practices on the performance of hotels in Mombasa County.

The first objective of this study is to examine the effects of communication and public relations strategies during a crisis on the performance of hotels in Mombasa County. Effective communication, including timely and transparent dissemination of information, is essential for mitigating the negative impact of a crisis. The second objective revolves around investigating the effects of reputation management strategies on hotel performance during and after a crisis. Reputation management involves actively monitoring and addressing online reviews, social media mentions, and news coverage. The third objective of this study is to explore the effects of adjusting marketing strategies during a crisis on hotel performance. Adapting marketing efforts to address the crisis, such as altering messaging, promotional activities, and branding, can influence a hotel's ability to remain attractive to potential guests.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in chaos and stakeholder theories. Chaos Theory is a scientific concept that originated in mathematics but has found applications in various disciplines, including social sciences (Oestreicher, 2022). This study applies Chaos Theory to understand the intricate dynamics of marketing crises and their effects on hotel performance. Chaos Theory suggests that complex systems, even seemingly predictable ones, can exhibit nonlinear and unpredictable behaviors due to their sensitivity to initial conditions (Biswas et al., 2018). This theory highlights that small changes or events significantly impact outcomes in marketing crisis discourse. Thus, understanding the nonlinear relationships between crisis management practices and hotel performance can provide insights into the often unpredictable effects of crisis responses. The selection of Chaos Theory is justified by the inherent complexity of marketing crises and their potential nonlinear impacts on hotel performance. It offers a framework to explore the intricate interplay between crisis responses and hotel performance, which aligns with the multifaceted nature of marketing crises in the context of Mombasa County's hospitality industry.

Stakeholder Theory posits that organizations do not exist in isolation but are interconnected with a network of stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors, local communities, and more (Freeman et al., 2018). This theory asserts that a business's success is contingent on managing and fulfilling the interests and expectations of its various stakeholders (Gaur et al., 2015). In the study, Stakeholder Theory provides a lens to examine how effective marketing crisis management practices influence hotel performance metrics and impact the perceptions and interests of different stakeholders. The choice of Stakeholder Theory is valid given the interconnected nature of the hospitality industry, where the success of hotels is intertwined with the perceptions and interests of various stakeholders. Analyzing crisis management practices through Stakeholder Theory provides a comprehensive understanding of how different strategies influence stakeholder perceptions, trust, and loyalty.

Communication and Public Relations Strategies and Hotel Performance

Several empirical studies have explored the relationship between communication, public relations strategies, and hotel performance. These studies provide insights into how these strategies may impact various aspects of hotel performance, shedding light on potential connections and offering valuable perspectives.

Al-Qeedaa (2019) examined the impact of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMCs) on hotels' marketing performance. Using a survey methodology in high-quality hotels in Abu Dhabi, the research examined the correlation between public relations, advertising, social media marketing, and hotels' marketing performance. The findings highlighted a positive correlation between these IMC tools and marketing performance. The study's context provides insights into how different aspects of communication, when integrated, can contribute to positive marketing outcomes.

Milohnić (2012) explored the effect of public relations on competitive advantages in small hotels in Croatia. The study used parametric and nonparametric tests to show evidence of a strong influence of public relations on increasing competitive advantages. The study emphasized small hotels' underutilization of public relations, highlighting its potential for better business efficiency. This context underscores the potential significance of public relations for enhancing competitive edges.

Ogunyemi (2022) used selected hotels in Abeokuta, Nigeria, to investigate the effect of public relations practices on hotel performance. Through questionnaires and statistical analysis, the research revealed a significant positive effect of public relations practice on the hotel's customer patronage and image

promotion. The study's findings suggest a connection between public relations and customer-related outcomes.

Susilo and Prayudi (2022) delved into the role of hotel public relations in crisis management during the COVID-19 pandemic. They used qualitative research methods to explore how public relations practices were employed by two five-star hotels in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, to manage the crisis. The study highlighted the strategic role of public relations in overcoming crisis challenges and maintaining brand image, even amid difficult conditions. This study illustrates the pivotal role of public relations in handling crises and their potential impact on hotel performance.

Natakusumah et al. (2017) investigated the impact of marketing communication in attracting customers to Fairmont Hotel Jakarta. They used a non-probability sampling technique to show that marketing communication, including advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing, collectively contributed to attracting customers. Dika et al. (2018) conducted a study at Hotel Four Seasons Resort Bali at Jimbaran Bay to explore formulating a public relations strategy to attract customers. The study identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting the hotel's public relations strategy through interviews and questionnaires. The study emphasized the importance of maintaining the uniqueness of the resort's offerings while utilizing various distribution channels to enhance communication.

While the cited studies provide insights into positive relationships between public relations, communication strategies, and various aspects of hotel performance, the context, market conditions, and other factors specific to Mombasa County's hospitality industry may lead to different outcomes. The need to adapt findings from different contexts to the unique conditions of Mombasa County's hotels could influence the observed effects of communication and public relations strategies on hotel performance in this particular location. Therefore, we formulate the hypothesis that.

H₀₁: Communication and public relations strategies have no significant effect on hotel performance in Mombasa County

Reputation Management and Hotel Performance

Qoura and Khalifa (2016) explored the impact of reputation management on hotel image among internal customers of five-star hotels in Egypt. The RepTrak model was used to examine the success factors affecting hotel reputation and their influence on hotel image. The study found significant relationships among the investigated variables. Factors negatively affecting the hotel's reputation, particularly related to the workplace environment, were identified. The study provides insights into the importance of addressing reputation management to enhance hotel image. While the study identified significant relationships, the context of Egyptian hotels might differ from Mombasa County's hospitality industry.

Alrawadieh and Dincer (2019) focused on luxury hotels in Petra, Jordan, to evaluate the response of hotels to negative online reviews. The study explored how hotels managed negative online feedback by considering response rate, response time, and response content. The findings revealed inconsistencies between hotel managers' perceptions and practices in online reputation management. Less than half of the negative reviews received managerial responses, and not all responses addressed the raised issues. While this study examined negative online reviews, it may provide insights into potential gaps in reputation management practices, but the results might not directly align with Mombasa County's context.

Perez-Aranda et al. (2019) developed a measurement model for hotel reputation management within the context of online review platforms. It assessed the impact of reputation management on perceived benefits by hotel managers. The study highlighted the significance of hotel reputation management on

financial benefits, customer relationship benefits, and customer-based brand benefits. While the study demonstrated the importance of reputation management, the observed benefits might differ based on contextual factors specific to Mombasa County.

Ramgade & Kumar (2021) examined the impact of reputation management on protecting and strengthening the brand value of hotels. The research emphasized the importance of reputation management in the digital age, particularly in handling online reviews and social media influence. While this study emphasizes the significance of reputation management, the observed impacts might differ based on local market conditions and guest behaviors specific to Mombasa County.

Jeziarski (2020) focused on Cracow's hotel market and investigated how different hotels managed their online reputation by responding to online user reviews. While the study observed patterns in online reputation management, the context of Cracow's hotel market differs from Mombasa County's hospitality industry. Meanwhile, Anagnostopoulou et al. (2019) quantified the impact of online customer reputation on financial profitability. They linked recurring themes in positive online reviews with financial performance measures of hotels. While the study emphasized the relationship between online reputation and financial profitability, the findings might not directly apply to Mombasa County's hospitality industry.

While the studies highlight the importance of reputation management in various contexts, the specific dynamics, guest behaviors, and market conditions in Mombasa County might result in different outcomes. Besides, given the mixed findings and the diverse contexts of the cited studies, it was imperative to hypothesize that.

H₀₂: Reputation management strategies have no significant effect on hotel performance in Mombasa County

Marketing Strategies Adjustment and Hotel Performance

Chanyasak et al. (2022) explored how hotels adapted their business models during the COVID-19 pandemic as a strategic response to the crisis. The study focused on a boutique hotel chain in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The findings revealed that the hotels adapted their business models by cutting costs, increasing non-room revenues, securing financial support, and training staff. The study contributes to understanding business model adaptation during crises and provides insights into recovery efforts. However, the study's focus on a boutique hotel chain in Thailand might not directly reflect the dynamics of Mombasa County's hospitality industry.

Liu and Yang (2021) investigated how hotels adjusted their technology-based strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic to gain competitive productivity. The research revealed that hotels with dynamic capabilities made minor adjustments to their self-service technology strategies. The study provided insights into the role of dynamic capabilities in adjusting strategies during crises. However, the findings might not directly align with the specific technological strategies and competitive landscape of Mombasa County.

Shi et al. (2021) explored the resilience strategies of five-star hotels during difficult times, emphasizing the adjustments made to maintain competitiveness. The study focused on Chinese hotels, revealing adjustments in resource management, marketing mix, and more. While the study offers insights into resilience strategies, the context and specific strategies might differ from those in Mombasa County.

Handa & Bhalla (2023) examined marketing strategies in response to tough times, focusing on India's experience during the global crisis, including the COVID-19 pandemic. It categorized marketing strategies and innovations organizations use to cope with disruptions caused by crises. While this study provides insights into marketing strategies during challenging times, India's context, strategies, and market conditions might differ from Mombasa County's hospitality industry.

Doan et al. (2023) focused on homestay businesses' strategies for adapting to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam. While it provides insights into business resilience and adaptation strategies, the specific dynamics of homestay businesses in Vietnam might differ from those of hotels in Mombasa County. Although the studies offer insights into the strategies hotels adopt during crises, the specific conditions, guest behaviors, and market dynamics of Mombasa County might result in different outcomes. Such diverse findings and contexts led to the formulation of the hypothesis that.

H₀₃: Adjusting marketing strategies during a crisis does not significantly affect hotel performance in Mombasa County.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), called PLS path modeling, to predict and understand the causal relationship between marketing crisis management practices and hotel performance. The PLS-SEM technique, a structural equation modeling (SEM) variant, facilitates the simultaneous modeling and estimation of intricate relationships among multiple independent and dependent variables (Hair et al., 2021). Notably, PLS-SEM has swiftly emerged as an evolving statistical modeling method, initially introduced as a causal-predictive approach within the SEM framework, effectively explaining the variance within the dependent variables of a given model (Chin et al., 2020).

This research used confirmatory composite analysis (CCA) to validate the measurement (outer) models. The reflective model investigated the direct influence of reputation management on customer loyalty. The underlying assumption guiding the selection of the reflective model was the comprehensive explanation of the study constructs by the corresponding indicators. The model development encompassed ten manifest variables, containing communications and public relations (3), reputation management (2), marketing strategy adjustment (2), and hotel performance (3).

The study was conducted in hotels located in Mombasa County. Mombasa County has witnessed many crises, including the Paradise Hotel bombing in November 2002 and tourist kidnapping in Lamu. The target population comprised 580 management staff drawn from 18-star rated hotels in the county. For this research, a sample of 219 management staff was selected using stratified and simple random sampling methods. Two hundred and nineteen questionnaires were distributed to participants, and the response rate achieved was 94.5%, with 207 questionnaires being returned. Among these, 9 questionnaires were deemed unusable due to incomplete or inaccurate responses, constituting approximately 4.11% of the distributed questionnaires. Following the exclusion of these unusable questionnaires, the dataset for data analysis consisted of 198 valid responses, accounting for 90.4% of the initially distributed questionnaires.

Variables Measurement

Hotel performance was conceptualized as the endogenous latent variable in this study. Researchers acknowledge the complex and manifold concept of hotel performance, requiring various and diverse measurement indicators (Duric et al., 2021; Pnevmatikoudi & Stavrinoudis, 2016). Still, most scholars measure hotel performance using simple indicators that obscure its multidimensional nature. These simple measures include occupancy rate, average daily rate, and guest satisfaction (Abdelmawgoud, 2022; Mitra & Pal, 2022). Therefore, this study aligned with scholars seeking simple hotel performance indicators and measured hotel performance using the three-manifold variables of Occupancy Rate (OR), Average Daily Rate (ADR), and Guest Satisfaction Score (GSS).

Hotel communication and public relations were conceptualized as the first exogenous latent variable. Scholars perceive communication and public relations as vital to hotels' competitive advantage (Mihlonic, 2012). Therefore, several indicators are delineated to measure hotel communication and

public relations. In this study, communication and public relations was measured using social media engagement (SME), media coverage reach (MCR), and guest feedback response rate (GFRR) (CS), as employed by others (Yoong & Lian, 2019). In the same vein, hotel reputation management was measured via online review sentiments (ORS) and reputation recovery actions (RRA). On the other hand, marketing strategy adjustment was measured through adaptive marketing campaigns (AMC) and channel diversification (CD), which were conceptualized as the second and third exogenous variables.

4.0 FINDINGS

Demographic Characteristics

The study aimed to analyze the relationship between marketing crisis management practices and hotel performance, taking into account various demographic characteristics of the participants. These demographics encompassed gender, age, job title, employment duration, and department. Understanding these factors was pivotal in formulating effective marketing crisis management strategies, as hotel performance relies on a diverse workforce with varied backgrounds.

Survey results (Table 1) indicated a higher proportion of female respondents (59.1%) compared to males (40.9%), suggesting balanced gender representation in Mombasa County hotels. Age-wise, a significant portion fell within the 26-40 bracket (45.5%), with a smaller fraction above 40 (22.2%). In terms of education, most respondents had secondary schooling (50.5%), followed by college education (44.4%), and a minority with primary schooling (5.1%). Supervisors constituted the majority (50.5%) in job titles, while assistant managers (33.3%) and managers (9.1%) followed. The employment duration revealed that over half of the management staff had worked for less than 5 years (53.5%), with the smallest percentage (22.2%) having employment beyond 10 years. Regarding departments, food and beverage (40.4%) had the highest representation, whereas the front office (24.7%) had the least. These demographic insights provide a comprehensive context for interpreting the effects of crisis management practices on hotel performance in Mombasa County.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	81	40.9
	Female	117	59.1
	Total	198	100
Age in Years	18-25 years	64	32.3
	26-40 years	90	45.5
	Above 40 years	44	22.2
	Total	198	100
Academic Qualification	None	0	0.0
	Primary	10	5.1
	Secondary	100	50.5
	College	88	44.4
	Total	198	100
Job Title	Supervisor	100	50.5
	Ass. Manager	66	33.3
	Manager	18	9.1
	Other	14	7.1
	Total	198	100
Duration of Employment	Below 5 years	106	53.5
	6-10 Years	48	24.2
	Above 10 years	44	22.2
	Total	198	100
Department	Housekeeping	51	25.8
	Front Office	49	24.7
	Food and Beverages	80	40.4
	Other	18	9.1
	Total	198	100

Model Validation

The validation of the PLS-SEM models aimed to assess the appropriateness of the proposed constructs through measures of composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and discriminant validity. The suitability of the models was determined based on specific criteria: CR values above 0.7, AVE values exceeding 0.5, and adherence to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, where the square root of AVE for each latent variable should be greater than the correlation values with other latent variables to establish discriminant validity. Evaluation of model fitness for the marketing crisis management practices and hotel performance conceptual model indicated robust internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha and CR values surpassing 0.7 (Table 2). Additionally, the results affirmed the fulfillment of convergent validity, as evidenced by AVE values exceeding 0.5.

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Communications and public relations	0.955	0.876
Hotel performance	0.944	0.849
Marketing strategy adjustment	0.832	0.713
Reputation management	0.838	0.722

The discriminant validity matrix (Table 3) revealed that Communication and Public Relations had a square root AVE value of approximately 0.967. This value was higher than all the correlation values with other constructs (0.936, 0.823, 0.822, 0.698), confirming discriminant validity concerning the other constructs. Hotel Performance had a square root AVE value of approximately 0.960, greater than all the correlation values with other constructs (0.921, 0.814, and 0.721), indicating discriminant validity. Similarly, Marketing Strategy Adjustment had a square root AVE value of approximately 0.919, higher than its correlations with Communication and Public Relations (0.822) and Hotel Performance (0.814), satisfying the criterion for discriminant validity. Reputation Management had a square root AVE value of approximately 0.922, higher than its correlations with Communication and Public Relations (0.850), Hotel Performance (0.721), and Marketing Strategy Adjustment (0.724), thus fulfilling the criterion for discriminant validity.

Overall, the results of the Fornell-Larcker criterion suggested that the constructs in the study—Communication and Public Relations, Hotel Performance, Marketing Strategy Adjustment, and Reputation Management were distinct and exhibited discriminant validity as their square root AVE values were consistently greater than their correlations with other constructs.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity

	Communication and public relations	Hotel performance	Marketing strategy adjustment	Reputation management
Communication and public relations	0.936			
Hotel performance	0.823	0.921		
Marketing strategy adjustment	0.822	0.814	0.845	
Reputation management	0.698	0.721	0.724	0.850

Marketing Crisis Management Practices and Hotel Performance

The study's outcomes, as depicted by the conceptual model (Figure 1) and the path coefficients (Table 4), unveiled clear impacts of different marketing crisis management practices on hotel performance outcomes within the specific context of Mombasa County.

Communications and public relations: The analysis indicated that communications and public relations as a marketing crisis management practice positively and significantly impacted hotel performance in Mombasa County ($\beta = 0.417$, $t = 6.006$, $p < 0.05$).

Marketing Strategy Adjustment: On the other hand, marketing strategy adjustment as a marketing crisis management practice was found to significantly and positively impact hotel performance outcomes ($\beta = 0.336$, $t = 4.694$, $p < 0.05$).

Reputation management: Similarly, reputation management was identified as a marketing crisis management practice with a significant and positive influence on hotel performance outcomes in Mombasa County ($\beta = 0.186$, $t = 3.357$, $p < 0.05$).

These three marketing crisis management practices combined explained a substantial portion of the observed variance in hotel performance, contributing to 75.1% of the variance. Besides, the t-values confirmed that communication and public relations had the larger effects on hotel performance, followed by marketing strategy adjustment and reputation management. Consequently, the study's model, reflecting the relationship between marketing crisis management practices and hotel performance in Mombasa County, is modeled by Equation 1:

Hotel performance = 0.417* communication & public relations + 0.336 * marketing strategy adjustment + 0.186 * reputation management + ε.....Eqn. 1

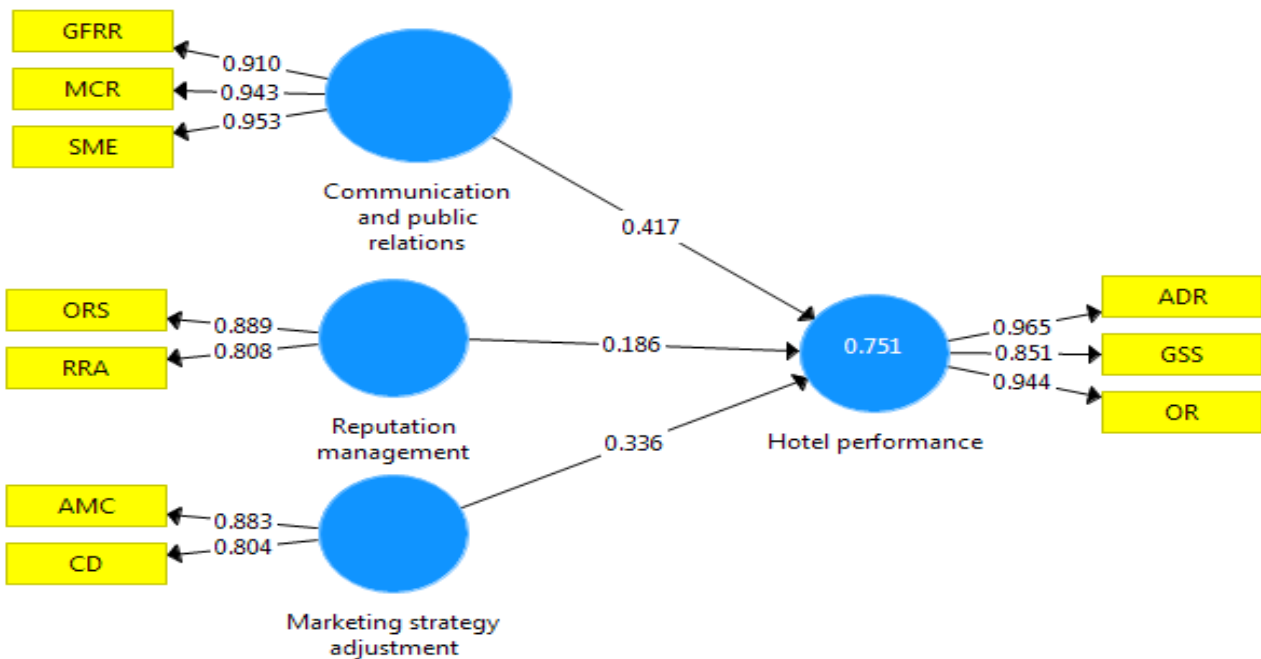


Figure 1: Inner and Outer Models

Table 4: Path Diagram

	Original sample (β)	Sample mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ($\frac{O}{STDEV}$)	p Values
Communication and public relations → Hotel performance	0.417	0.410	0.069	6.006	0.000
Marketing strategy adjustment → Hotel Performance	0.336	0.343	0.072	4.694	0.000
Reputation management → Hotel performance	0.186	0.186	0.055	3.357	0.001

5.0 DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The study's findings, as presented through the conceptual model and the corresponding path coefficients, shed light on the significant impacts of distinct marketing crisis management practices on hotel performance outcomes within the specific context of Mombasa County. The positive effect of communication and public relations as a marketing crisis management practice and hotel performance holds significant implications for the hotel industry in Mombasa County and Kenya. This alignment with previous research (Leta & Chan, 2021; Susilo & Prayudi, 2022) underscores effective communication's pivotal role in enhancing hotels' resilience and prosperity through marketing practices, especially in crises.

Implementing effective marketing crisis management strategies can yield numerous advantages in the dynamic landscape of Mombasa County's hospitality sector, where hotels cater to a diverse range of guests. Primarily, adept crisis management strategies can help hotels navigate turbulent times with resilience and poise. This navigation of turbulent times is particularly pertinent during events such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, where hotels that swiftly adapt their marketing strategies to convey safety measures, flexible booking policies, and unique offerings can attract safety-conscious and adventurous travelers alike.

Research has shown that the positive repercussions of successful marketing crisis management extend beyond short-term guest satisfaction, playing a pivotal role in shaping brand perception and guest loyalty (Liu et al., 2017). Therefore, leveraging upon communication and public relations is likely to foster emotional connections with guests, translating into repeat business, positive online reviews, and endorsements through word-of-mouth, all of which may bolster the hotel's performance in Mombasa County's fiercely competitive market.

Similarly, the positive influence of marketing strategy adjustment on hotel performance outcomes corresponds with studies that highlight the adaptability of marketing strategies as crucial during crises (Patrucco & Kähkönen, 2021). These results underscore the importance of dynamic and agile marketing approaches in responding to changing market conditions, which can contribute to better hotel performance even in crisis scenarios. Implementing dynamic and agile marketing approaches in the hotel industry in Mombasa County offers several advantages. These strategies enable rapid responses to market shifts, ensuring tailored guest experiences and enhancing crisis management during challenging times. Innovation, adaptable pricing, real-time data utilization, and effective reputation management become achievable, fostering a competitive edge and future readiness. By swiftly adapting to changing market conditions, hotels can maintain relevance, improve guest satisfaction, and position themselves as resilient and innovative players in the industry.

The positive effect of reputation management on hotel performance outcomes aligns with research that underscores the significance of reputation in the hospitality industry (Proserpio & Zervas, 2017; Quora & Khalifa, 2016). Building and maintaining a positive reputation is vital for attracting and retaining customers, ultimately impacting overall hotel performance. Reputation is a foundation of trust and credibility among customers, stakeholders, and the public. During times of crisis, such as the current pandemic or other unforeseen events, a well-managed reputation can mitigate negative perceptions, build resilience, and maintain customer loyalty. A positive reputation enhances a hotel's brand image, attracts new guests, and retains existing ones.

Moreover, online reviews and social media play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion in the digital age. Effective reputation management helps hotels address negative feedback promptly, demonstrate transparency, and showcase their commitment to guest satisfaction. By prioritizing reputation

management, hotels can safeguard their long-term success and confidently navigate crises. The combined variance explained by the three marketing crisis management practices (communication and public relations, marketing strategy adjustment, and reputation management) about hotel performance is substantial at 75.1%. This finding resonates with previous studies highlighting the cumulative impact of various crisis management strategies on overall organizational performance (Chanyasak et al., 2022; Perez-Aranda et al., 2019). It reinforces that an integrated and comprehensive approach to crisis management is crucial for achieving favorable performance outcomes.

Limitations

Although this study on the effect of marketing crisis management practices on hotel performance in Mombasa County provides valuable insights, it's important to acknowledge its limitations. The study's sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. Focusing solely on Mombasa County might not accurately represent the broader hotel industry in Kenya or other regions. Moreover, the study's cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of the relationships between marketing crisis management practices and hotel performance at a specific point in time. However, this design does not capture the dynamic nature of these relationships over different phases of a crisis or changing market conditions.

The study relied on self-reported data from participants, which could introduce common method variance and bias into the findings. Respondents may have provided socially desirable responses or misreported their experiences with marketing crisis management practices and hotel performance. Finally, the study exclusively used partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. While PLS-SEM offers advantages in handling complex relationships and smaller sample sizes, it might not fully capture the nuances of latent constructs and interactions compared to other structural equation modeling approaches. Relying solely on PLS-SEM may have overlooked deeper relationships and intricate dynamics among the variables under investigation.

Conclusions

In the distinct context of Mombasa County, communication and public relations strategies, as integral components of marketing crisis management, significantly and positively influence hotel performance. Effective communication, known for enhancing reputation and credibility, proves instrumental in upholding customer loyalty and ensuring the long-term sustainability of hotels. Similarly, employing reputation management strategies as part of marketing crisis management yields substantial positive impacts on hotel performance during and after crises, aligning with the recognized importance of proactive reputation-building. These strategies facilitate customer trust and loyalty, contributing to sustained performance. Furthermore, the study underscores the benefits of strategically adjusting marketing practices within broader marketing crisis management strategies, highlighting their positive impact on hotel performance. Agile and dynamic marketing approaches enable hotels to navigate challenges, capitalize on opportunities, and enhance overall performance, accentuating the crucial role of adaptability in maintaining competitiveness within Mombasa County's dynamic landscape.

Future Research

Future research in marketing crisis management and hotel performance can address the limitations identified in this study to enrich the understanding of these dynamics. Firstly, expanding the sample size beyond Mombasa County and including a more diverse range of regions within Kenya and even other countries can enhance the generalizability of findings. This expansion would provide a comprehensive view of how marketing crisis management practices impact hotel performance across varied contexts. Additionally, adopting a longitudinal research design could offer a broader perspective on the dynamic relationships between marketing crisis management practices and hotel performance

over different crisis phases and market conditions. Longitudinal studies would capture the evolving patterns and the influence of strategy changes over time.

Issues related to self-reported data and potential bias require future research to employ mixed methods approaches. Combining quantitative data with qualitative insights, such as interviews or focus groups, can provide a more holistic understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding marketing crisis management practices and their effects on hotel performance. This combination of methods would add depth to the analysis and reduce the reliance on self-reported data alone.

Furthermore, while partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) is useful for its flexibility and suitability for smaller sample sizes, future research can explore alternative modeling techniques. Comparing results from PLS-SEM with those obtained through traditional covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM) or other advanced statistical methods would provide a more robust evaluation of the relationships among latent constructs and variables. This comparison would enhance the rigor of analysis and provide a more nuanced understanding of the complex interactions involved.

Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests related to the research presented in this study. The research was conducted with the primary goal of advancing the understanding of marketing crisis management practices and their impact on hotel performance. No conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, have influenced the design, execution, analysis, interpretation, or reporting of the study's findings. This declaration is provided to ensure transparency and uphold the integrity of the research process.

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