CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1 Conclusion

To provide an insight on the crisis management strategy adopted by Horison Hotels Group, the researcher interviewed one of the key people within the company. To maintain confidentiality, this research was conducted using a pseudonym. The interview was conducted with Ms. Sofia Luna (pseudonym), one of the general managers at Horison Hotels Group. Ms. Luna's important role in the company provided a great perspective regarding the company's crisis strategies used to effectively manage the crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic is indeed the reason for the decline in revenues that has negatively impacted the tourism industry in Indonesia, one of the economic pillars. A significant drop in the number of tourists and travel restrictions has led to a decline in sales, resulting in the closure of most businesses in the hospitality sector in Indonesia. Horison Hotels Group, a leading hotel chain in Indonesia, was able to survive and remain competitive even after the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in Indonesia. This study is hoped to provides useful insights on effective crisis management strategies that can be adopted by hospitality businesses when they encounter similar crises in the future.



Figure 4.1 Stages of Crisis Management

Source: Modified from Coombs (2019)

Referring to the figure above, based on the framework from Coombs (2019), the explanation below is the result of crisis management carried out by Horison Hotels Group before, during, and after the pandemic caused by COVID-19:

1. Pre-crisis

Horison Hotels Group actions to prevent and detect a potential crisis is by having Standard Operational Procedures designed to deal with general crisis and force majeure conditions before the COVID-19 pandemic occurred. However still remains a critical gap in Horison Hotels Group's overall crisis management detection and prevention, namely, the lack of a well-developed contingency strategy that involves various types of crisis disruptions. The history of pandemics, including previous viral outbreaks such as avian flu, indicates a repeatable character of these health crises. This history underscores the need for businesses, especially in the hospitality sector, to develop comprehensive contingency plans that go beyond immediate detection and prevention measures.

However, it is also important to recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic is a new and massive type of crisis that no one has ever predict. The ways to manage and minimize its impact are also still uncertain during the initial stages of the pandemic, so it would be understandable if Horison Hotels Group faced challenges in determining the right preparations. But this also highlights the necessity for business to develop flexible well-defined contingency strategy that can adapt to different types of crises, including the unexpected crisis to provide a more resilient foundation for the future. This approach will not only enhance rapid response to unpredictable incidents, but also ensure long-term stability and operational continuity.

2. Crisis

The actions taken by Horison Hotels Group during the crisis recognition stage, such as, renewing their Standard Operational Procedures

following the government's recommended health protocols and launching the "Don't Cancel Postpone" and "Fight Corona" campaigns on social media show their proactive actions to maintain guest engagement and reassure guests of the safety precautions in place. Meanwhile, the actions to fix the crisis taken by Horison Hotels Group including termination of daily worker employees, implement a shift system for employees, activate the results of employee training programs, cutting employee incentives, adopting a "saving energy" strategy, reduction in room prices, conducting "book now stay later" promotions to ensure occupancy when the situation began to improve, and providing delivery services from hotel restaurants. These actions not only enabled them to stabilize their operations during difficult times, but also strategically positioned them to effectively recover when conditions improved.

3. Post-crisis

The normalization stage carried out by Horison Hotels Group after the COVID-19 pandemic began to subside was the adaptation of the drastic increase in demand for accommodation, optimizing marketing strategies to carry out postponed events and meetings, holding giveaways to celebrate special days, conducting "work from horison" package promotions with special prices, optimizing the marketing of unique selling points of the hotel, and a launch of a new branch with the concept of nature.

As for future planning stages, the hotel believes that by implementing a sustainable system of its operations Horison Hotels Group will be able to survive through the crisis in the future. However, it is obvious that Horison Hotels Group still lacks comprehensive future planning. Although they are aware that they tend to falter initially during a crisis and then adapt and recover, it would be wiser for the hotels to have firm contingency plans in place to prevent initial instability. By anticipating potential crises and prepared well, Horison Hotels Group can minimize disruptions, ensuring that they do not experience significant setbacks before adapting to new challenges



Figure 4.2 Post-Pandemic Transformation of the Tourism Industry

Source: Modified from Oguz (2022, pp. 299-307)

In addition, referring to the figure above, based on the Oguz (2022) framework, the researcher wants to see a comparison regarding the adaptation of sustainability principles, digitalization and technology, as well as the rise in ecotourism activities carried out by Horison Hotels Group in the period before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, which shows the following results:

- 1. The COVID-19 pandemic did not significantly affect the adaptation of sustainability principles after the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, Horison Hotels Group's adaptation of sustainability principles shows that they are able to strengthen their commitment to sustainability. While there is no specific strategy in place to continue the achievement of sustainability principles, the efforts made so far such as the kids activity program at Horison Green Forest, which uses dry leaves as a replacement for paper and the implementation of a paperless system through digital reports in Horison Hotels Group have had a significant positive impact.
- 2. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the principles of digitalization and technology at Horison Hotels Group. The initiative to launch the new feature of myhorison.chat, not only improves operational efficiency and convenience for guests, but also strengthens Horison Hotels Group's commitment to continuously innovate and provide the best service. With the enhancement of technology and digitalization, Horison Hotels Group ensures that they are able to adapt to the low-touch characteristics.

3. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the adaptation of the principle of the rise in eco-tourism in Horison Green Forest. The actions taken by Horison Green Forest after the COVID-19 pandemic significantly support the sustainability and ecological balance. Initiatives such as environmentally friendly kid activities, yoga programs and urban farming demonstrate Horison Hotels Group's commitment to eco-tourism.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions that have been elaborated previously, the researcher will provide several recommendations as follows:

- 1. Horison Hotels Group should develop a more comprehensive and detailed contingency strategy to deal with future crises. Considering the unexpected impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism and hospitality industry, it is clear that future crises could take many forms. These crises could be global pandemics, natural disasters, economic recessions or political instability threats or other unexpected events that disrupt business operations. The contingency strategy can include detailed plans for financial management during a crisis, or scalable operational protocols that can adapt to different types of disruptions. In addition, Horison Hotels Group needs to have a clear and proactive plan of action to mitigate the impact of a crisis situation, rather than simply waiting and watching for the unfolding developments. With a more structured and prepared strategy, Horison Hotels Group can be more resilient and responsive to navigate future challenges effectively.
- 2. Besides developing digitization and technology for guest satisfaction, Horison Hotels Group also needs to improve digitization and technology in its business operations to be more efficient. For example, Horison Hotels Group can implement automation of the check-in and check-out process that allows guests to perform these procedures independently through mobile applications or by providing digital tap machines, room equipped with Internet of Things devices that can automatically adjust temperature and

- lighting according to guest preferences. A 360-degree virtual tour display to provide all-round information on hotel facilities. This implementation not only offers guests greater convenience but also hotels efficiency.
- 3. Horison Hotels Group may continuously strengthen their commitment to sustainability by developing specific strategies that focus more on such aspects as waste management, energy saving, and environmental protection. Hotels can also use recyclable materials such as eco-friendly packaging products, bathroom amenities made from recycled materials, and furniture made of sustainable materials.

4.3 Implications

Based on the conclusions and recommendations explained by the researcher, there are implications when business, especially the hospitality industry, implement the research results and recommendations when a pandemic occurs as follows:

- Improved Contingency Strategy, having a clear plan for crisis management allows business to respond quickly and effectively to unexpected events. This can enhance the company's reputation for reliability and preparedness. By ensuring adequate financial reserves as a contingency strategy, businesses can maintain operational continuity even during a severe crisis. This financial stability not only protects the company's assets but also protects the workforce and supports community stability. By having stable finances during times of crisis, companies can continue to develop new innovative programs to attract customers so that they can boost sales during the crisis.
- Strengthening Commitment to Sustainability, by adopting sustainable practices may differentiate the business from competitors, thus attracting a niche market of environmentally-conscious travelers, this niche market may increase the business market share and reputation as the responsible and forward-thinking brand.

Advancing digitization and technology in operations, the use of mobile applications and digital tap machines for self-service procedures reduces waiting times and minimizes physical interactions; this is especially beneficial for future crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Attract tech-savvy travelers who value innovation and convenience. Valuable data on guest behaviors and preferences to improve services.

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