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Customer Experience (Cx) Design in the View of Managers: An Analysis of the Impact of Pandemic in the Local Hospitality and Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

Hospitality and tourism are among the worst-affected industries during this pandemic, with a global drop in demand. These industries are operating under strict restrictions, and a “new normal” needs to be defined. Because of its disruptive effects, hospitality and tourism providers must redesign the customer experience (CX), which is considered the core of the tourism and hospitality sector. Thus, this study sought to measure the views of the managers on customer experience (CX) design as an analysis of the impact of the pandemic in the local hospitality and tourism industry. This study employed a descriptive method to identify the different variables of the study and presents quantitative research that utilized online survey method to gather data information from the respondents. Top-level managers from different hotels, resorts, restaurants and tourism sites in the prime hospitality and tourism towns in the province of Oriental Mindoro were the respondents (n=26) of this study. Results showed that the view of the managers on the measures designed to create safe customer experiences in terms of hygiene and protection, internal work reorganization, services cape reorganization, technology and digital innovations, customer wait time reduction, staff training and communication were all positively affirmative. As a result, these measures positively affected the intended experience in terms of reassurance, quickness and intimacy. It is recommended that the managers adopt and implement the proposed CX framework to enhance the customers’ experience in various hospitality and tourism service providers despite the threats of the pandemic and to guide the managers to transition to post-pandemic situations.

INTRODUCTION

Many countries were devastated by the Covid-19 Virus with lives being lost, firm closures, job loss, and people embracing new-normal for social safety. The world was in shock with the rapid widespread of this deadly disease stealing not only lives but living. As to date of the conduct of the study, there were approximately 590 million confirmed cases with a 1% mortality rate (almost 6.5 million) as reported by WHO (2022). The pandemic outbreak has also nearly immediately caused the world economy to collapse (UNWTO, 2020). As it poses worldwide threats through human transmission, everything has become overwhelming and experimental. In particular, the tourism industry has faced indeed a very challenging position as travel was suspended and people’s movement was limited. As a stimulus, various sectors, government entities, country leaders and health organizations joined hands to improvise ways to cope with the difficulty (Bartik *et al.*, 2020). The public were introduced to skeletal schedule and work-from-home arrangements, less public appearances at different sites, more take-away orders, and no public gatherings.

Tourism and hospitality establishments utilized means and tools to overcome this. In general, management has come up with strategic initiatives and mostly relies on technological innovations to continue operation while businesses were being affected by the restrictions and threats (Gössling *et al.*, 2020). As like in hospitality, although there are protocols provided to secure the

public, it is believed that only about quarter of the customers agreed on sitting in a restaurant for dine-ins same goes for those who are about to stay in hotels and visit destination soon (Gursoy *et al.*, 2020). Customers are still skeptical about the safety and security that are posed upon them against the enemy that cannot be seen by the naked eye. Meanwhile, in the tourism industry, the UNWTO (2020) affirmed that tourism is one of the most affected industries by the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting economies, livelihoods, public services, and opportunities across all continents. Every aspect of its huge value chain has been impacted. Tourism export sales could fall by \$910 billion to \$1.2 trillion in 2020. This will have a broader impact, perhaps reducing global GDP by 1.5% to 2.8%. Tourism supports one out of every ten employment and provides a living for millions more in both emerging and established nations. Finally, tourism accounts for up to 80% of exports in some Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and it contributes significantly to national economies in both developed and developing countries. As many as 100 million direct tourism jobs are at risk, in addition to tourism-related industries such as labor-intensive lodging and food services, which employ 144 million people globally. Small enterprises, which account for 80% of worldwide tourism, are especially vulnerable. The Philippines economy is the 36th largest economy by nominal GDP, according to the International Monetary Fund’s 2019 estimate of the statistics (Ardemer, 2020). From earlier years to the present, the hospitality and

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tourism industry has made a significant contribution to the Philippine economy. The Philippine Statistics Authority (2018) reports that the contribution of the tourism industries to the Philippine economy was estimated to be 12.7 percent, which was the highest contribution to date. This contribution is based on the share of Tourism Direct Gross Value Added (TDGVA) to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The hospitality and tourism sector's contribution in the country lost around Php400 billion (over USD 8.3 billion) in revenue in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but is expected to gradually recover in the current year (Mordor Intelligence, 2022). However, the reopening has been happening gradually and continually with the increased number of vaccinated individuals of the approximated more than 12 billion doses administered worldwide and about 160 million doses in the Philippines (WHO, 2022) resulting to the government relaxing most of the restrictions. For instance, restaurants are now permitted to operate with social distance but at a slightly reduced capacity, guidelines and gradually removing restrictions on internal and international transportation. The COVID-19 crisis seems to be having a significant impact on the quality of service provided by hospitality and tourism organizations even as the industry continues to recover. Businesses are obliged to implement considerable improvements to policies relating to the health and well-being of their employees and customers in order to comply with COVID-19, as well as to boost customers' willingness to support their company (Gössling *et al.*, 2020). This considerably needs to have a safe customer experience. Superior customer experiences are crucial in the modern hospitality and tourism sector to win over customers and obtain competitive edge.

The concept of "experience" has been studied in a variety of hospitality and tourism settings since the emergence of the experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), including cruises (Kang *et al.*, 2016), hotels (Nysveen *et al.*, 2018), restaurants (Mkono, 2012), tourism destinations (Chen, 2019), and peer-to-peer (So *et al.*, 2021). A streamlined customer experience strategy is essential for differentiating a business from its rivals, which in turn promotes customer pleasure, customer loyalty, and brand awareness, according to a customer experience study cited in Forbes (2020), which involved 200 worldwide marketing leaders. The customer experience survey conducted by Deloitte (2017) found that when hotels comprehend their visitors, stay frequency rises by 13%. Moreover, 63% of customers state that they would rather spend money on an experience than an item from a store, such as dining out (National Restaurant Association, 2020). Therefore, in the hotel and tourism industries today, delivering pleasant customer experiences is essential.

Sundbo and Hagedorn-Rasmussens (2008) define customer experience as the consumer's direct and indirect experiences with the service process, the organization, and the facilities, as well as how the customer interacts with staff members from the service provider and

other customers. Furthermore, in the hospitality and tourism sector, the customer experience is influenced by more than just lodging, entertainment, and food and drink; it also includes other facilities and processes, such as technology, interactions with service personnel, and other guests (Kandampully *et al.*, 2017). According to Hongxiang (2011), one of the key elements that contributes to customer satisfaction is the quality of the experience. Statistics shows that 82% of clients switch to competitors because they are dissatisfied with the service they are receiving from the provider, and 90% of them do so without raising an issue with customer service. One customer can simultaneously express their discontent to a greater number of other customers, which could harm the service provider's reputation. Known for the heterogeneity, inseparability, intangibility, and perishability of experience-based hospitality and tourism (Hwang & Seo, 2016), it is difficult for service providers to provide consistent service quality and produce wonderful customer experiences.

The majority of discussions on customer experience focus on providing customers with a product or service that satisfies their demands in a simple, seamless way (Ardermer, 2020; Kandampully, 2017; Bonfanti *et al.*, 2021; Kim & Fung, 2022; Laturlean & Anggadwita, 2016). Contrarily, the human experience depends on what customers want from the product, and managing it well would mean that customers think the procedure is simple and consistent with their ideas and values (e.g., sustainability). The human experience centers on what customers want and how the company can satisfy those desires; the customer experience concentrates on what the company gives and how customers react to it. It is up to businesses to deliver the kind of experience that connects with each of these consumers by supporting their aspirations, beliefs, values, and/or feelings. Each customer may choose a different kind of experience.

Customer experience is based on the theories and works of stimulus organism response (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), consumption experience (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), experience economy (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), co-creation experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), and service-dominant logic, according to an investigation into its foundation (Lusch & Vargo, 2008). These theories collectively offer a solid foundation for the growth of the consumer experience as used in this study.

The stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model, which belongs to the field of environmental psychology, explains how different environmental factors can serve as a stimulus (S) that affects an individual's internal state (O), which then results in the individual's behavioral response (R). The concept of an "organism" refers to an individual's internal state of perception, emotion, and thought (Zhai *et al.*, 2020). According to Mehrabian and Russell (1974) people make their final decisions and then act in accordance with those decisions. The inadequacies of cognitive frameworks, which until the 1980s were the prevalent models to explain consumer behavior,

contributed to Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) concept of consumption experience. Consumer experience is defined by these information-processing models as the procedure of gathering and processing information to choose the most suitable choice for a decision dilemma (Chaney *et al.*, 2018). When faced with a dilemma of choice, consumers look for, gather, and digest the information that enables them to make an affective evaluation before making a choice. The experience economy by Pine and Gilmore (1998) supported the increasing demand of more customers assuming commodities are wrapped within offered services which promotes experiences on services are then better to be advertised than the goods that it comes together. Thus, it comes down to the entire process by providing the co-creation theory to play part on the value of the customer involvement (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) to the entire customer experience (CX) design.

With the abovementioned literatures on customer experience (CX), the research study was conducted to address the gap on the limited studies on CX design in the context of local hospitality and tourism providers in the light of the pandemic crisis. Moreover, this study tried to propose a customer experience (CX) framework based on the results of the study to help the sector adapt to the post-pandemic situation of the hospitality and tourism industry. The study sought to measure the views of the managers on customer experience (cx) design as an analysis of the impact of the pandemic in the local hospitality and tourism industry. Specifically, the study aimed to: (a) know the demographic profile of the respondents of the study; (b) determine the view of managers on the measures designed to create safe customer experiences (CX) in terms of the seven main measures of CX: (1) Hygiene and Protection, (2) Internal Work Reorganization, (3) Servicescape Reorganization, (4) Technology and Digital Innovations, (5) Customer Wait Time Reduction, (6) Staff Training and (7) Communication ; (c) identify the managers perceptions on the expected effects of the safety measures on customer experience in terms of the three main effects on CX: (1) Reassurance, (2) Intimacy and (3) Proximity ; and lastly (d) propose a CX design framework for in- and post-pandemic situations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism and hospitality establishments utilized means and tools to overcome this. In general, management has come up with strategic initiatives and mostly relies on technological innovations to continue operation while businesses were being affected by the restrictions and threats (Gössling *et al.*, 2020). As like in hospitality, although there are protocols provided to secure the public, it is believed that only about quarter of the customers agreed on sitting in a restaurant for dine-ins same goes for those who are about to stay in hotels and visit destination soon (Gursoy *et al.*, 2020). Customers are still skeptical about the safety and security that are posed upon them against the enemy that cannot be seen by the naked eye. In the

tourism and hospitality sectors, CX design is viewed as a tactical way to attain innovation and a future competitive advantage. Berge and colleagues (2020) According to Ponsignon *et al.* (2017), the core of CX design is the concept that, by planning and regulating the setting in which interactions are produced, it may be feasible to reduce the gap between planned experiences and actual CX. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused hotels and tourism sectors to reinvent the experience guests might expect at touchpoints along their client's journey; a client can have a completely different experience at a touchpoint depending on the circumstances of the touchpoint. (De Keysner *et al.* 2020, p) emphasized the significance of context, which is defined as "the conditioned status that governs the assets an individual can in both direct and indirect ways draw on at some point in time."

Sundbo and Hagedorn- Rasmussens (2008) defined customer experience as the consumer's direct and indirect experiences with the service process, the organization, and the facilities, as well as how the customer interacts with staff members from the service provider and other customers. Furthermore, in the hospitality and tourism sector, the customer experience is influenced by more than just lodging, entertainment, and food and drink; it also includes other facilities and processes, such as technology, interactions with service personnel, and other guests. According to Hongxiang (2011), one of the key elements that contributes to customer satisfaction is the quality of the experience. Statistics shows that 82% of clients switch to competitors because they are dissatisfied with the service they are receiving from the provider, and 90% of them do so without raising an issue with customer service. One customer can simultaneously express their discontent to a greater number of other customers, which could harm the service provider's reputation. Known for the heterogeneity, inseparability, intangibility, and perishability of experience-based hospitality and tourism, it is difficult for service providers to provide consistent service quality and produce wonderful customer experiences.

With the abovementioned literatures on customer experience (CX), the research study was conducted to address the gap on the limited studies on CX design in the context of local hospitality and tourism providers in the light of the pandemic crisis. Moreover, this study tried to propose a customer experience (CX) framework based on the results of the study to help the sector adapt to the post-pandemic situation of the hospitality and tourism industry.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Sampling

The research study employed a descriptive method to identify the different variables of the study and presents quantitative research that utilized online survey method to gather data information from the respondents.

The respondents of the study were twenty-six (26) top-level managers from different hotels, resorts, restaurants and tourism sites in the prime hospitality and tourism towns in the province of Oriental Mindoro. The study is

limited to the top-level managers who were currently in the position during the conduct of the study and in the middle of the pandemic in 2021. The respondents were chosen through purposive sampling from pre-surveyed hotels, resorts, restaurants, and tourism sites that did not undergo closure during the mentioned period. The limitation of the study was the difficulty on tapping the respondents to participate in the study due to the nature of their job responsibilities.

Research Instrument

The study used a researcher-made online survey questionnaire using Google forms with a close-ended 3-point and 4-point Likert scale statements (quantitative data) after critically looking for a literature review related to the aspects and components of the customer experience (CX) design in relation to the in-pandemic situation outcomes. The descriptions followed in the study were Yes (1), No (2) and Maybe (3) as well as Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3) and Strongly Agree (4). Statements in the questionnaire were categorized into three (3) main domains as follows:

- The first part was for the demographic profile of the respondents.
- The second part (35 items) was on the view of the managers on the measures designed to create safe customer experiences (CX) in terms of the seven main measures of CX.
- The third part (15 items) was on the view of the managers on the expected effects of the safety measures on CX in terms of the three main effects on CX.

Validity and Reliability

The inter-rate approach was followed by the study, where agreement between raters and agreement of repeated measures will be performed so that presentations of the statements can be controlled (Hallgren, 2012). The online survey questionnaire was presented to three experts on customer experience design through electronic mail in order to ensure its validity. The reliability of the study was determined after administration to five (5) managers of business establishments in Calapan City (the commercial capital of the province) who were not included in the study (they were former managers who were not connected to the service providers due to various reasons but were managers during the onset of pandemic) and the instrument was found reliable with Cronbach alpha's reliability of 0.85 ($p < 0.05$). The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of each domain were above 0.8, which was considered satisfactory.

Data Collection

The data were collected among the thirty (30) top-level managers of pre-surveyed different hotels, resorts, restaurants and tourism sites in Calapan City and Puerto Galera. An online survey questionnaire was created through Google Forms (Google LLC, Mountain View, California) and respondents were provided with a link sent

to their Facebook Messenger account as indicated in their establishments' FB page or through personal contacts of the authors. They were notified a week prior to the administration of the online survey with consideration to some barriers or issues that affected the number of responses from them, as expected from online surveys, only twenty-six (26) participated in the survey in a span of a week were included in the study that covered 90% of the identified research respondents.

Ethical Consideration

Prior to the conduct of the study, the respondents were informed and vital concepts on customer experience design were explained. The respondents signified their consent of voluntary participation in the conduct of the study and the data gathered were treated with confidentiality and anonymity. Indeed, protecting data privacy is urgent and complex. Before the study was conducted, the respondents received a briefing and key information about the purpose of the study. Through informed consent, the respondents willingly decided to take part in the study. To guarantee anonymity, secrecy, and the avoidance of potential harm, all information was held and handled with the utmost confidentiality in accordance with RA 10173, generally known as the Data Privacy Act.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The study revealed as shown in Table 1, that half ($n=13$) of the respondents were female and one among the respondents prefer not to disclose their gender. This result can be supported with the statistics that 53% of the workforce in the hospitality sector and 61% of all workers in the tourism sector are women (UNWTO, 2020). This was also indicated in the study by Baum (Baum, 2013) that of the more than 200 million people employed in the hospitality and tourism industry, women made up 55.5% of various positions including top-level management.

The result of the study showed that the majority of the respondents were from the young adult bracket as categorized by Erik Erikson on his 8 stages of development (Brennan, 2021) ranging from 20-30 ($n=12$) and 31-40 ($n=10$). This implies that with the highly diverse nature of the tasks performed in the hospitality and tourism industry that includes overseeing line-level employees as they interact daily with their staff and guests as stated by Mistry, Hight, Okumus and Terrah (Mistry *et al.*, 2021) which can be performed well by this group age. This is supported by the study of Antonakis (Antonakis, 2011) that young managers in the private sector possess enhanced leadership skills and could be as a result of a bigger percentage of people working in circumstances that are competitive and frequently changing, which encourage good leadership growth.

Exhibited in Table 1 the result that 75% of the managers who participated in the study are Bachelor's degree holders ($n=19$) with two who holds a Doctorate degree and two who do not finish College. This suggests that

since the nature of the hospitality and tourism industry is skill-based, holding a higher degree of education may not be a major constraint as to the industry perspectives it is the essential skills that graduates in hospitality and tourism education should possess (Li & Li, 2013). This result is parallel to the finding of the study conducted by Varra *et al.* (2021) that specialized skills relevant to the particular employment roles are taken into consideration throughout the hiring process in the hospitality and tourism sector and that regardless of educational leverage the most important are effectiveness and knowledge of

the desirable attributes fitted for work. The most common business types by which the respondents from the major hospitality and tourism industry locations in Calapan City (n=18) and Puerto Galera (n=8) is food and beverages (n=10). It was further revealed as shown in Table 1 that aside from the employed managers (n=17), the owners/proprietors (n=9) also act as the managers. These findings can be explained by the study of Jirjahn and Mohrenweiser (2016) that owner-managers are those who are the residual claimants of the establishment and that their primary reason is profit-earning and economic compromise.

Table 1: Demographic profile of managers

Gender	F*	Age	F*	Highest Educational Attainment	F*	Business Type	F*	Position/ Designation	F*	Location	F*
Male	12	19 and below	0	Undergraduate	2	Food & Beverage	10	Managerial	17	Calapan City	18
Female	13	20-30	12	Bachelor's Degree	19	Restaurant	5	Owner/ Proprietor	9	Puerto Galera	8
Prefer not to Say	1	31-40	10	Master's Degree	3	Resort	3				
Others	0	41-50	3	Doctorate	2	Hotel	3				
		51 and above	1	Fellowship	0	Tourism operation	3				
						Fast food	2				

N= 26, *for frequency

Views of Managers on the Measures Designed to Create Safe Customer Experiences (CX)

The Table 2 shows the aggregated results of the seven categories of measures designed to create safe customer experiences during the pandemic as viewed by the managers and this was patterned in the result of the study of Bonfati, Vigolo & Yfantiduo (2021). These categories were used to identify the views of the managers on the measures imposed to limit or reduce the risk of Covid-19

transmission; improve the internal work structure; reorganize the environment in which the service is assembled and in which the service provider and customer interact, combined with tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service; invest on technology and digital mechanisms; lessen the time that the customer waits to be served; enhance the capabilities and intensify productivity of staff; and proper information and dissemination for safe customer experience.

Table 2: Views of Managers on the measures designed to create safe customer experiences

Measures	Responses (Y:N:M)					Description
	Item #1	Item #2	Item #3	Item #4	Item #5	
Hygiene and Protection	24:1:1	24:2:0	26:0:0	25:0:1	20:2:4	Yes
Internal Work Reorganization	20:3:3	22:0:4	24:1:1	25:1:0	23:1:2	Yes
Servicescape Reorganization	23:1:2	16:6:4	22:2:2	19:4:3	21:3:2	Yes
Technology and Digital Innovations	16:8:2	18:6:2	18:8:0	18:7:1	10:12:4	Yes
Customer Wait Time Reduction	23:3:0	18:7:1	26:0:0	23:3:0	23:1:2	Yes
Staff Training	25:0:1	26:0:0	25:0:1	21:5:0	21:5:0	Yes
Communication	25:0:1	26:0:0	25:0:1	25:0:1	26:0:0	Yes

N=20, Y: Yes, N:No, M: Maybe

Hygiene and Protection

The result of the study as shown in Table 2, the view of the managers in hygiene and protection as among the measures designed to create safe customer experiences

were affirmative. In which all of them believed that high-touch areas need to be frequently sanitized (item #3), this is supported by the study of Casini, *et al.* (2019) by which with treatment integrated into routine cleaning and disinfection

procedures of frequently touched areas, hygiene failures were reduced and environmental contamination by viruses and bacteria was effectively controlled.

The remaining items yielded almost the same affirmation by the respondents and that they believe that government health protocols are well disseminated and properly followed (item #1); intensified efforts in maintaining communal spaces clean (item #2); and alcohol-based sanitizers should be installed in establishment entrance for ease of use by guests (item #4). These affirmations can be supported by the study of Bonfati, Vigolo and Yfantiduo (2021) that authorities' introduced new protocols should be particularly followed to reduce the danger of Covid-19 transmission and these measures often involve updated cleaning and hygienic practices, more emphasis on communal area safety, and protective equipment. Though majority of the respondents said yes that air-filters of ventilations need to be frequently cleaned (item #5), there were a few who were unsure if this serves as a safety measure (n=4). This might be because some of the establishments prefer natural ventilations as revealed in the study of Nishiura *et al.* (2020) that in the transmission of virus was almost 19 times lesser in an open-air environment than in confined places with air conditioners.

Internal Work Reorganization

The result of the study as shown in Table 2, on the view of the managers that internal work reorganization as among the measures designed to create safe customer experiences were positively affirmed. In which all of them believed that employees work and work spaces needs to be reorganized (item #4) to fit the new normal setting. This is supported by the findings of the study of Richardson and McKenna (2014) that as "flexworking" of employees are likely to engage in creative experimentation as they seek to adapt to and manage their changing spatial relations as this work arrangement grows more prevalent that was further supported by the study of Soga, *et al.* (2022) that there are substantial consequences for organizational structures, workforce well-being, and physical workplace designs when flexible working (FW) models are adopted. The remaining items yielded almost the same affirmation by the respondents and they believe that the availability of experts on hygiene, infection prevention and food safety (item #3); regular conduct of temperature and health check on employees, suppliers and guests (item #5); as well as the new standards on cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing are being implemented (item #2) are necessary to ensure safe customer experience.

Though majority respondent responded yes that employees need to be were provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (item #1), there were a few who were unsure if this serves as a safety measure (n=4). This may be earlier exposed by the study of Kalantary, Khadem and Golbabae (2020) that everyone must wear the proper PPE required to safeguard employees and

customers from occupationally acquired infections, thus, it is everyone's responsibility not only by the employers.

Servicescape Reorganization

The findings shown in table 2 highly suggested that to create safe customer experiences, managers believed that remodeling of establishment spaces considering protocols and physical distancing (item #1) should be the top priority of the local hospitality and tourism industry. Pandemic has remodeled and changed the design of the established and it provided the customers a safer environment by which they can enjoy the services, amenities and facilities with less worry which is true with the findings of Bonfati, Vigolo & Yfantiduo (2021).

The remaining items yielded almost the same affirmation by the respondents and that they believe that retrofitting, rearranging and redesigning of the servicescape is essential (Item #3); diversifying areas where customers can access independently variety of services (item #5) and putting up of partitions on front desk/ information desk to provide extra level of precaution for staff and guests (item #4). This maybe the same with the findings of Milwood and Hartman-Caverly (2022) that an individual's physical surroundings create a stimulus-response paradigm, which contends that the physical environment affects the customer experience especially in the pandemic times.

Most of the respondents prefer to create outdoor spaces in their local store (item #2), however, preferably due to space and area constraints some respondents were either negated the concept or unsure (n=10). This was asserted by the results of the findings of Ukabi & Gurdalli (2021) that the spatial relationship for indoor and outdoor spaces are dependent on the customers preferences and convenience as well as the establishments capacity especially in consideration with physical distancing protocols during the pandemic.

Technology and Digital Innovations

The result of the study as shown in Table 2, on the view of the managers in technology and digital innovations among the measures designed to create safe customer experiences has a diversified point of view. In the local hospitality and tourism industry, presence of Quick Response (QR) cards for payment transactions and service charges (item #3) were answered affirmatively by most but some opposed (n=8). People now keep track of their restaurants, places and products through their mobile devices, that makes QR codes appealing for customers. Many of the respondents are managers who are organizing for this to occur without human contact. The favorable responses can be supported by the study of Yakaen (2020) that the usage of e-payment may increase as e-commerce expands since it makes it easier, faster, and safer to make pay for services while the contradiction may be answered with the findings of the same study that some customers are reluctant to adopt a cashless

system because they don't understand it or may not be able to have financial transactions through e-payment applications like QR code, so they prefer the traditional methods of cash transactions.

The remaining items yielded almost the same affirmation by the respondents and they believe that the presence of contactless options to the customers via mobile apps (item #4) and the provision of automated totems that enable customers access to various services (item #2) as well as capability of electronic devices that allow do-it-yourself (DIY) service selection (item #1) are considered to create a safe customer experience. Though there were a few who were unsure if this serves as a safety measure for some technological and financial constraints.

However, among all the items in this category, the provision of self-service queuing system for customers (item #5) were the only measure that gained more "No" than "Yes". This maybe so since most of the local hospitality and tourism service providers do not invest in electronic queuing devices for economic reasons, as revealed by the study of Leech, Dunne and Malone (2022) that this cost a lot and can be least prioritize in establishments.

Customer Wait-Time Reduction

Evident in the result of the study that schedule and wait time are extensively changed within the pandemic years, Table 2 revealed that customer wait-time was diverted into more productive window. Most of the respondents believed that they were able to use their mobile phones on services provided to them (item #1) to help them ease the wait-time within an area to avoid physical contact. Many establishments are adopting this system into a more diversified way by just having manual scheduling but also emerged into the use of varied technologies and Ais (2020). The provision of virtual queue system where guest receives text message for the availability of services (item #2) has majority of yes as the respondents' response, however, a number of respondents believed that this may not be that necessary (n=7). Ibrahim and Whitt (2011) on their study supports this claim as they exposed that the ideas of queue-length-based predictors to accurately pronounce the accuracy of the wait system whilst achieving better results may either have a positive or negative impact on customer experience.

With most managers agreeing that communicating with customers about their estimated wait time or predefined service time threshold (item #5), offering customer callbacks (item #4) and giving customers clear information for help them estimate their time (item #3) were positively viewed by the respondents and have provided not only safety but convenience to the customers. This is supported with Papies, et.al. (2017) study that with the experience incorporated in every situation, it arbitrates best experiences that trigger a better customer experience (CX). The innovations attributed towards the wait-time reduction helps a lot of customers to save time queuing and given customers more time to do more things than wait on line.

Staff Training

The study shown in Table 2 significantly proves that managers believed that providing adequate training to staff ease the anxiety of customers on their experiences. As Covid-19 brings about hesitation towards physical contact and general movement from one place to another, it is with utmost compliance that managers focus on their staff to secure the process of customer experience (CX). Managers viewed preparing the staff on their responses towards the infections by providing them training for symptoms and health risks (item #2) is favorable. The urgent shift to adapt and improve the current state should be everyone's priority based from Zuo & Juvé (2020) adaptation series.

Almost all respondents assumed that providing satisfactory training for their staff about the government's strong protocols and procedures towards the current pandemic (item #3) is necessary. Cleaning and disinfecting of communal spaces and frequently touched areas (item #1) were believed to be communicated to everyone within the organization This is supported by Zuo & Juvé (2020) that all training of new set of skills in order to combat the threats of the pandemic attested that new skills were gradually introduced during outbreak of Covid-19 to cope up with the difficulty.

With this in mind, the heightened precautions towards the virus are secured by the provisions of demo materials and instructional videos on standards in relation to enforcing hygiene and protection measures (item #4) and training to operate and access technological and digital devices, apps, software and systems (item #5). Though most of them assumed that this helped train the staff and make it more convenient for the staff to track progress, there were still some who were skeptical on this (No=7). The affirmative result is parallel to that of Olaniyan and Lucas (2008) which connotes that without training programs there would be multilateral problems that would lead into incompetence, inefficiency and ineffectiveness.

Communication

Communication plays one vital source of information these days especially during pandemic. While it is believed that most of the employees are equipped, educated and informed through training, public is best informed in varied channels. This study has identified positive provision of webpages or FB pages that customers can communicate about policies and guidelines established and followed (item #5) and that service providers needs to keep information and announcements up-to-date and accessible (item #2). This only proves that technologies will provide an avenue for communication readily accessible by the customers (2020).

Among the initiatives local manager indulge were the use of various media as major communication tools to inform customers about recommended practices (item #3). Reviews and help community were part of this channels that arises during pandemic. Research conducted by

Yu, et. Al. (2020) revealed that a number of co-creation channels has uncovered varied purposes and intentions on communicating epidemic reports. Activities online as like maintaining continuous and positive relationships to online customers (item #4) were considered to be part of their initiatives. Companies were also confident about informing customers about their policy in terms of preventive measures and protocols on the services they require (item #1). All these practices indeed promote the diversity of the channels of communication. As the community deemed to still understand the current situation, emotions amplify the urge to communicate as supported by Back, et. al. (2020).

Views of Managers on the Expected Effects of the Safety Measures on CX

The Table 3 shows the aggregated results of the three expected effects of the safety measures on customer experiences during the pandemic as viewed by the managers and this was patterned in the result of the study of Bonfati, Vigolo & Yfantiduo (2021). These consequences that can be considered as the result of the safety measures designed by hospitality and tourism service providers so that their customers feel confident and safe during their experience; give quick responses and feedback; and have privacy and intimate moments with their companions, partners, family and the likes.

Table 3: Views of Managers on the expected effects of the safety measures on customer experiences

Effects	Mean						Description
	Item #1	Item #2	Item #3	Item #4	Item #5	Total	
Reassurance	3.49	3.81	3.88	3.70	3.69	3.71	Strongly Agree
Intimacy	3.62	3.62	3.81	3.73	3.65	3.69	Strongly Agree
Proximity	3.62	3.58	3.48	3.73	3.76	3.63	Strongly Agree
	Overall Mean: 3.68						Strongly Agree

Reassurance

The revealed result in Table 3 shows that in the reassurance aspect as customer experience, the managers strongly agree that with the in-place safety measures, staff are committed to provide prompt customer service, whether in person or via technological tools like apps, instant messaging, and video conversations (Item #2) and aside from knowing how to behave, trained staff can provide guests urgent instructions and notify the appropriate authorities (item #3). This is in consonance with the findings of Olaniyan and Lucas (2008) that training of staff results to higher productivity and increased effectivity at work. This could also have an impact on service providers as they communicate the safety precautions and practices it has implemented to the customers with the necessary information to ensure their safety for the services they require (Item #4) that could eventually lessened wait time and queues will reduce the exposure of customers to the spread of the Covid-19 (Item #5). On the other hand, the managers agreed (M=3.49) that use of self-service systems and physical distancing at the establishments allow customers to feel reassured in terms of safety (Item #1) during the pandemic. This goes with the result of the study of Milwood and Hartman-Caverly (2022) that as to the stimulus-response paradigm, the physical setting has an impact on how customers feel assured.

Quickness

On the effect of the measures on safe customer experiences, all of the managers strongly agree that various technological elements play key roles in eliminating queues (Item #1); contactless transaction is easy and convenient, given that customers can confirm their arrival time, add payments, and verify their ID via

mobile apps before even setting foot in the establishment or destination (Item #2); quicker service delivery procedures satisfies the customers need for speed (Item #3); internal reorganization necessitates altering work schedules and shifts as well as accelerating changes like improving the telematics infrastructure to help employees perform more productively (Item #4); and rearranging and redesigning the servicescape enable fast flow of ins and outs of customers. This is similar to the result yielded in the study of Bonfati *et al.* (2021) that even if the customers are not aware of these different safety measures, it surely have an impact on their experience.

Intimacy

Most of the managers who participated in the study, has a strong agreement on the effects of the seven categories of the measures designed to create safe customer experiences to the aspect of intimacy. Presumably, customers can have greater privacy with their companions since the utilization of servicescape is constrained by physical and social distancing (Item #1); enjoy a quieter and more reserved experience in common areas with their themselves or with their companions (Item #2); with the predetermined profile and personal information, they will be called by their name and personal stuffs which creates intimacy between the service providers and the customers (item #4); and personalizing and customizing services based on their desires and requests. Beetles and Harris (2010) supports this result as they found out in their study that organizations must be equipped to accommodate and facilitate multiple approaches to customers to promote intimacy. While the respondents agreed (M=3.48) that provision of digital networks and access for customers can assure confidentiality of transactions (Item #3).

Proposed Customer Experience (CX) design Framework

Based on the result of the study, a proposed customer experience (CX) framework is presented in Figure 1. This aims to enhance the experiences of the customers in various hospitality and tourism service providers despite the threats of the pandemic and could possibly be continuously guide the managers to transition to post-pandemic situations.

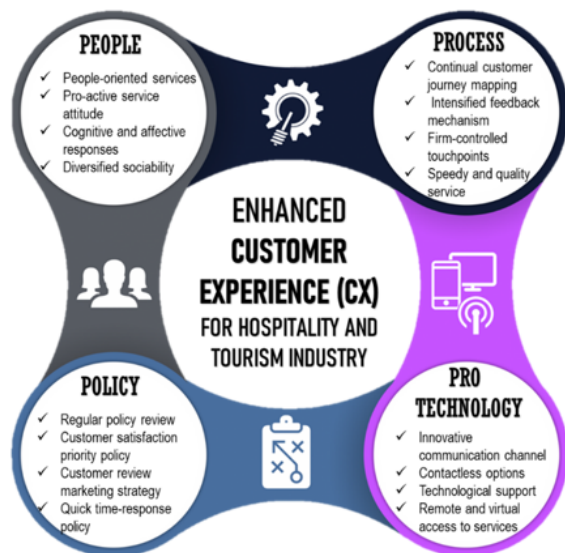


Figure 1: Proposed Customer Experience (CX) design Framework

CONCLUSION

The management had a positive opinion on internal work restructuring, hygiene and protection, and other strategies used to ensure that customers had a safe experience. The local hospitality and tourism business should prioritize remodeling of establishment spaces while taking procedures and physical distance into consideration in order to offer secure customer experiences, according to management. Managers have a variety of perspectives on technology and digital advancements intended to enhance safe consumer experiences. Additionally, the majority of respondents thought they could use their mobile phones to access services offered to them to shorten wait times so they wouldn't have to interact physically. Managers that oversee employee training believe that doing so will help clients feel less anxious about their experiences. The public is best informed through a variety of means, even though it is thought that the majority of personnel are equipped, educated, and informed through training. For the reassurance aspect of the customer experience, however, the managers strongly concur that with the safety measures in place, staff are committed to providing prompt customer service, whether in person or via technological tools like apps, instant messaging, and video conversations. In addition to knowing how to behave, trained staff are also committed to providing prompt customer service. All of the managers firmly agree that various technical components play crucial roles

in reducing lines as it relates to the impact of the measures on safe customer experiences. Finally, the majority of the managers who took part in the survey were in complete agreement regarding the impact of the seven types of safety-focused measures on the intimacy-related element. To determine the long-term effects of internal work restructuring, hygiene and protection techniques, and other safety measures on client experiences, future researchers may undertake additional research. Examine the effects of these metrics on patron satisfaction, adherence, and perceptions of the business as a whole. This can give important information about the viability and efficiency of such initiatives.

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