

**INFLUENCE OF CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC ON THE PERFORMANCE OF  
HOTELS: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED ONE-AND TWO-STAR HOTELS IN  
MOMBASA, KENYA**

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**DECLARATION**

This project is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree or for any similar purpose in any other institution

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this research work to Orlando family for always support me in pursuit of my dream. I also dedicate this work to my friend Antony for his support and always encouraging in my research work.

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## **ABBREVIATION AND ACCRONYMS**

CCTV - Closed-Circuit Television

COVID 19 - Corona Virus Disease 2019

SARS - Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

WHO- World Health Organization

## ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry has significantly been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic in every operation. Staffing, occupancy rate, food and beverage, cleaning costs are among challenges facing hotel operations, in addition to additional costs due to adherence to WHO COVID-19 protocols. Therefore, the study examined the influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance selected hotels in Mombasa, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to examine the influence of hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa. Crisis management theory was employed in understanding the concept of the study. The study used a descriptive survey research design. The study targeted one-and two-star rated hotels in Mombasa. A sample size of five hotels was used with a sample size of one hundred respondents. Simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents. Questionnaire was used to collect primary data. It was piloted before actual study to improve the validity and reliability of the research instrument. A drop and pick later method were applied while issuing questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Data was presented using frequency distribution tables and measures of central tendency. A multi-regression analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between variables and the level of significance. The study revealed that massive cancellations of bookings, events, and reservations had been canceled due to travel restrictions and lockdowns. The star rated hotel managers sent employees on compulsory leave with no pay, some were called back with pay cut and multitasking due to minimal operations. The hotel management were forced to set aside resources to install hygiene and sanitation equipment at the entry point, IR thermometers, and frequently fumigating the hotel. The results showed that the hotel offered take-away services and packaged products for delivery at a convenient fee. There is need for the hotel management to ensure the employees and customers observe the laid COVID-19 protocols to enhance safety and fluctuation of COVID-19 curve.

*Key words: Hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions, performance of hotels, Corona virus*

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The hospitality industry has over the years been faced with unexpected catastrophes such as terrorism, natural disasters and pandemics which paralyses the industry. This forces the hoteliers to struggle for survival of the industry by initiating response mechanisms to address the threats posed. For instance, as a result of 9/11 attacks in United States of America (USA), the hoteliers in China enhanced their Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) and trained staff on safety precautions (Huang & Rust, 2018). According to Kim, et al. (2005), the aftermath of the outbreak and eruption of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), the hoteliers in Korea retrofitted sanitation equipment in hotels and instituted health programmes for its employees to be trained and sensitized about health awareness to restore guest's loyalty.

Towards the end of 2019, a deadly virus, the Corona Virus Disease-19 was discovered in Wuhan, Hubei Province in China. In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a global pandemic. At this point there was neither vaccine nor medication, resulting in many deaths in China. This resulted in governments issuing travel restrictions to prevent the spread of the virus. Government directives such as lockdown, state of emergency and forced quarantine were witnessed (Rodríguez-Antón & Alonso-Almeida, 2020). This was meant to rein in the escalating deaths witnessed across the globe (Johns Hopkins University, 2020).

As a result of its spread, mitigation measures were introduced such as wearing of facial masks covering mainly nose and mouth, maintaining a physical distance of 1.5 metres, moving from one place to the other only when necessary, and quarantine for infected persons. In addition, there was to be no shaking of hands. Further, hands were to be washed regularly with running water. Sanitization measures were instituted to curb Corona Virus Disease-19 (COVID-19). The hoteliers have installed sanitation equipment at entry points, in addition to checking body temperature; rearranged the way guests were previously sharing a table while

dinning and winning and sitting arrangements to maintain the recommended physical and social distancing. All the protocols laid out by WHO are adhered by hoteliers as a recovery strategy (Shin, 2020).

Jiang and Wen (2020) argue that there is need for the hospitality industry to be innovative with initiation of artificial intelligence and robotics with the aim of offering contact-less services. This will automate the hotel processes. However; it will depend on the type of Artificial intelligence that will be automated. Some of the robotic services can be found in the reception, concierge assistants, voice guest control, delivery and facial scan check-ins. For the effectiveness of robotic services, a partnership between robotics industry, government and hoteliers is required. This will prepare hoteliers and employees for the future of contact-less services. Consequently, there is need to assess its influence and assure employees of their job security due to fear of job losses (Li & Bonn, 2019).

Evidently, over the years, human mobility in Africa has continued to record growth in terms of tourism, reaching and around 71.2 million by 2019. Tourism has become a key source of employment and contributes significantly to economic development. Employment created is mainly in service industry (hotels); however, with travel restrictions due to COVID 19, hotel reservations were canceled, causing tourist numbers to plummet. This in turn gives rise to retrenchment of employees, limited operations in hotels and often to indefinite closure of hotels (Biwota, 2020). In Ethiopia, the effect of COVID-19 on hospitality industry has been noted with a drop in hotel occupancy by as much as 43%. This resulted in the decline in bookings, leaving hotels the option of only offering delivery services. The aftermath of the pandemic has resulted into severe shock in hospitality industry, where hotels cannot meet the revenues for payment of the operations, thus being forced to limit operations, minimize employees and worst of all, inability to support operations leading to temporary close down. Management have had to go back to the drawing board to strategize (Bell, 2020).

According to Kenya Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife (2020), the coastal counties and in particular Mombasa county hotels depend on tourism which is a major boost in bookings and revenue recording. According to tourism records, growth of tourists in Kenya has been 2.05 million. However, with travel restrictions and the fear of COVID-19 importation, tourism steeply dropped, bookings were canceled and postponed, hotels were closed occasioning additional expenses to the hotel industry as they try to restructure the hotels following government directives. To instill confidence among guests with regard to health issues, employees are trained on COVID-19 protocols and maintaining hygiene and safety of the guests. There were notable changes in the hotel such as wearing facial masks, conducting temperature checks on guests and sanitization. The hotels have now been offering take-aways as a means to support their survival. The government in collaboration with hospitality and tourism industry have opted to support local tourism to enhance survival of the industry (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 2020).

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

According to Grant Thornton International (2020), the hospitality industry has significantly been influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic in every operation. Staffing, occupancy rate, food and beverage, cleaning costs are among challenges facing hotel operations, in addition to additional costs due to adherence to WHO COVID-19 protocols. The unprecedented crisis in hotels has resulted in a reduction of number of employees, pay cuts and minimal operations due to lockdowns, travel restrictions and government directives. The hotel occupancy has decreased significantly in compliance with physical and social distancing requirements, (Grant Thornton International, 2020).

A cure for COVID-19 has not yet been discovered, but there are only vaccinations to mitigate the effects. This results in fear of the unknown for the service industry. At times the government orders indefinite closure of the hotels, and in other circumstances hotels are

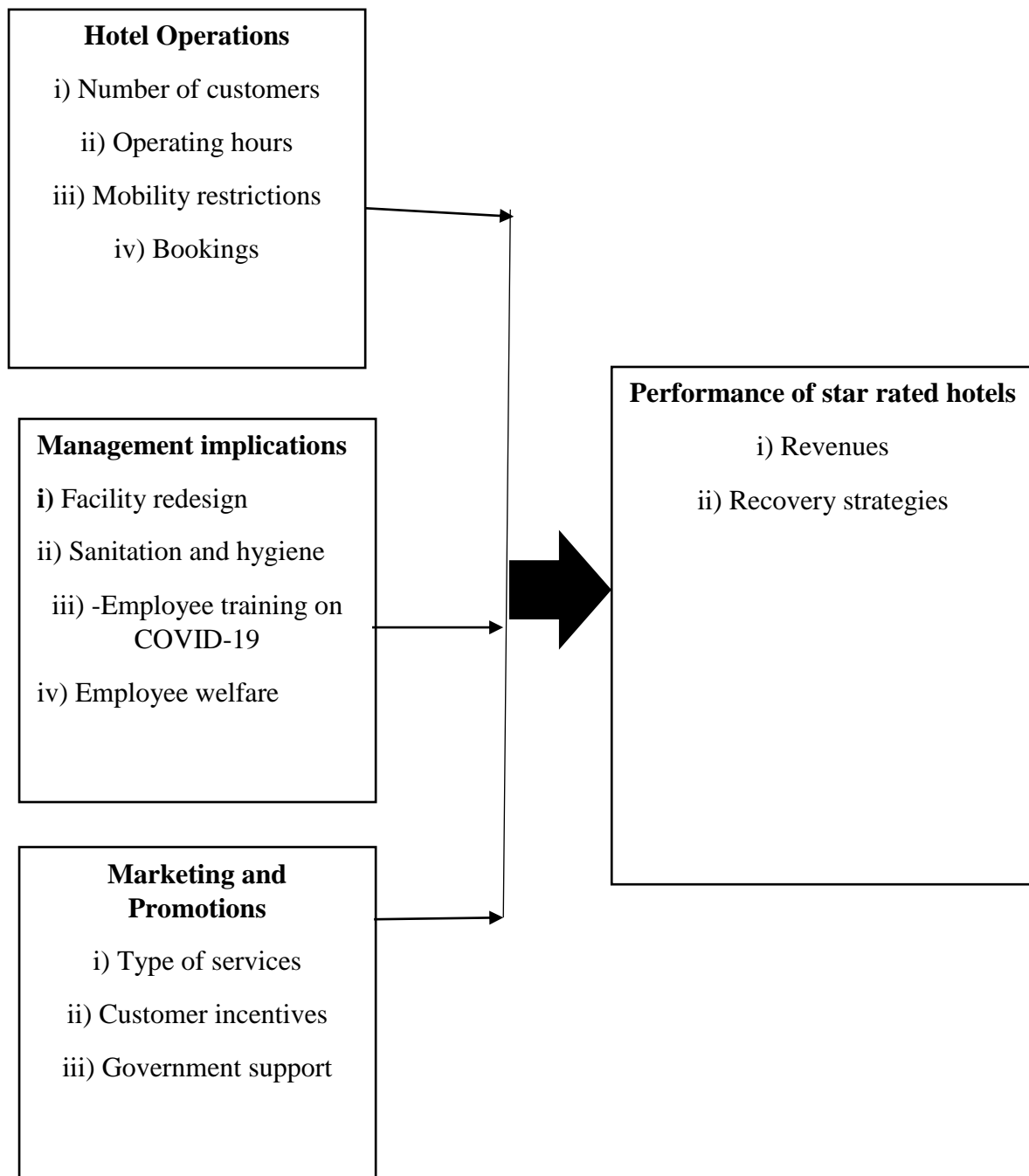
forced to operate on limited hours, which has hampered their operations and forced many of them to lay off employees. This is the new normal in the hotels with limited operations. Balance sheet analysis records either minimal profit or, in most cases, a loss (Khan et.al, 2021). It was for these reasons that this study sought to assess the influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance of selected hotels in Mombasa, Kenya.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The study sought to determine the influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance of selected one- and two-star hotels in Mombasa, Kenya.

**1.4 Conceptual Framework**  
**Independent variables**

**Dependent variable**



*Figure 1: Conceptual framework*

Source: Researcher (2021)



## **1.5 Objectives of the Study**

### **1.5.2 General Objective**

To examine the influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa, Kenya.

### **1.5.3 Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the influence of hotel operations under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa.
2. To establish the influence of Management implications under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa.
3. To determine the influence of the marketing and promotions under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

1. What is the influence of hotel operations under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa?
2. What is the influence of Management implications under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa?
3. What is the influence of the marketing and promotions under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa?

## **1.7 Research Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant relationship between hotel operations under COVID-19 and the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa.
2. There is no significant relationship between Management implication under COVID-19 and the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa.
3. There is no significant relationship between marketing and promotions under COVID-19 and the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa.

### **1.8 Significance of the Study**

The study is of value to the policy makers such as hotel managers, hotel operators and government in understanding the challenges of COVID 19, and inform future development in hospitality industry. The study gives recommendations to the policy makers with an aim of improving the current situation in hospitality industry to mitigate the effect.

The study helps hotel businesses and the customers understand the current situation of the hotel amidst the COVID-19. The findings help inform further developments in the hotel industry and institute mechanisms to curb the spread in the hotels.

The study acts as a reference to the future scholars reviewing literature on a similar unprecedented crisis to the service industry. Therefore, this work serves as literature to the future scholars.

The study helps hotel businesses and the customers understand the current situation of the hotel in the mid of the COVID-19. The findings help inform on the effect in the hotel industry and instituted mechanisms to curb the spread in the hotels.

### **1.9 Scope of the Study**

The study was delimited the influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance of hotels. The study was a comparative study of one- and two-star hotels. The study focused on limited hotel operations, Management implications and marketing and promotions as the independent variables. The study was confined in Mombasa county. The targeted respondents were hotel operators, managers and workers.

### **1.10 Limitations of the Study**

As a result of the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic whose effect was severe, the respondents feared to take part in the study because of the unknown COVID-19 status of the researcher. The researcher observed the COVID 19 protocols and underwent COVID-19 test to assure respondents that the researcher was COVID-19 negative while collecting data.

The respondents feared to take part in the study with the perception that the information gathered was shared with their competitors to strengthen their competitive strategy in their operations. The researcher assured respondents that the information gathered was strictly for academic purposes, in pursuit of partial fulfillment for the award of the degree. In addition, participants response was confidential and help in reporting the study findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The chapter reviewed relevant literature on the influence of COVID-19 on the performance of hotels. The chapter focused on limited operations, hotel closure and workforce. It also discussed the theoretical framework.

### **2.2 Influences**

#### **2.2.1 Hotel Operations**

Bartik et.al (2020) asserts that the COVID-19 closed down the world economy overnight. The hospitality industry had no options but to limit their operations and focus on only take-outs as per government directives. The unprecedented circumstances of COVID 19 resulted in numbers of hotel customers plummeting exponentially due to travel restrictions, leading to reduction in occupancy rate. The usual flooding of customers in hotel reduced and only few customers could be seen forcing the hotel to limit their normal operations with new adaptation of COVID 19 laid protocols (Rodrigues, 2020). The hotel operations were restricted from entertaining customers and a majority of the customers visited hotel and restaurant in the evening, but with limited hours and curfew in place, only a few operations are seen due to reduced number of customers (Khan et al., 2021).

Mensah (2020) avers that one of the hardest-hit industry is the hotel. Minimal operations are noted due to massive cancellation of bookings, events, flights, reservations and indefinite closure of hotels. Mensah (2020) further notes that Italy and Rome bookings in hotel had sharply declined by 90% and 80% respectively. In some cases, hotels are even recording occupancy of 5%. These cancellations have been associated with lockdown, travel restrictions and COVID-19 protocols instituted by the government with an aim to flatten the infections curve.

Various organizations, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and government agencies were booking hotel conference halls to conduct training, meetings and events. They were recording profits from the conference halls. However, the situation has changed, the customers who were booking the conference halls have turned to video conferencing facilitated by notable apps such as zoho, zoom and skype. The guests are currently in the virtual world and this has reduced the number of customers visiting the hotel premises. This impels the hotel to employ new strategies on the digital marketing and the future of robots in hotels to enhance contact-less services (Johns Hopkins University, 2020).

### **2.2.2 Management Implications**

The COVID 19 led to global travel restriction as a mean to curb its spread. This impelled tourism and hospitality industry to close indefinitely. As a result, managers were forced by circumstances to send employees on compulsory leave with no pay, upon partial reopening of the hotels, only a few employees were called back with a pay cut. The hospitality industry is fighting for its survival with plummeted tourism travel and restrictions (Guevara, 2020).

Dogra (2020), argues that managers have been forced to spot unnecessary services with an aim of cutting the costs, reduce the utility bills and to avoid the continuous losses noted. Some of the unnecessary services witnessed include use of washing machine, minimizing the number of escalators and elevators usage. Dogra (2020) further argues that management have had to negotiate with the employees on the pay cut, temporary layoff of some employees temporarily until normalcy and requesting staff to clear outstanding leave as well as initiating advance leave with no pay. These measures were initiated to minimize the labour and utility costs that accounts for 50% and 10% respectively in a hotel (Mensah, 2020).

According to Li and Bonn (2019), due to minimal operations managers are forced to train staff to multitask and operate almost in all departments. More than anything else, managers must ensure sanitation and health of the customers in addition to service quality. Sanitation

and hygiene training programs makes employees aware of sanitation and hygiene to make sure at all times, they are wearing masks while serving customers, cleaning frequently and sanitizing the hotel; and temperature monitoring of the staffs and customers at the entry time (Almanza & Park, 2019).

According to Biwota (2020), the immediate measures taken by the managers to curb COVID-19 was to procure and install hygiene and sanitation equipment at the entry point, buying thermometers to ensure temperature is taken for the guests and customers. These measures were taken to reduce the spread of COVID 19, since the hotels are considered super spreaders of COVID-19. This compelled hotel managers to redesign the facility to observe physical distance. Allan (2006), argues that the hotel was a super spreader of SARS in 2003 whose outbreak emanated from a hotel guest who spread it to others customers in more than five countries, including China, Canada, Vietnam, Singapore, Hongkong. The brand image of a hotel will be tilted and affect the hotel negatively. Therefore, all hygiene and sanitation measures must be adhered to (Chen, 2007).

### **2.2.3 Marketing and Promotions**

The hotel has been forced to change their strategies as they can no longer offer the services in same manner as it was before COVID-19. To continue existing, hotels have opted to repackaging their services for their survival. According to Mensah (2020), the hotel has entered into agreement with the government to be used as quarantine centers, offering quarantine packages to their guests. To curb the spread of COVID-19, use of trolleys in delivering food to reduce human contact for the isolation cases and frequent sanitization and cleaning of surfaces to minimize the spread. The housekeepers are trained about how to handle those guests and make use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) with the guidance of the health professionals (Bartik, et.al, 2020).

According to Bell (2020), to cushion the hotel industry, the government has supported the hotel by instituting austerity measures such as promoting local tourism with incentives packages to promote hospitality industry and increase the occupancy rate and hotel operations (Seitzman, et al. 2020). The reality is that, with travel restrictions and lockdowns, international tourists are not coming. Hotels in collaboration with the stakeholders such as government have opted to reach out to the locals with innovative promotional packages, repackaged products and discount rates to attract and encourage the locals to visit the tourist sites and hotels for the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry (Guevara, 2020).

### **2.3 Performance of the Hotel**

According to Gassoling et.al (2020), the world economy was indefinitely closed by COVID-19 and to curb the spread, through travel restrictions, stay-at-home, social distancing and lockdowns imposed by the government. This abruptly forced the hotel to close as there were no customers. Reservations and bookings were cancelled by customers due to uncertainty when operations will resume to normal operations. The hospitality and tourism industry recorded and reported decline in hotel occupancy and revenues. Despite hotels reopening, the capacity was reduced due to social distancing and directed to only offer take-out services, as the COVID-19 curve fluctuates, the hotel industry is still negatively affected as they are closing and reopening, bearing in mind there are still considered as spreaders as was the case with cases noted when SARS erupted in 2003 (Dogra, 2020).

The hospitality industry was caught unawares and incurred expenses to adhere to the government directives. Hotel management were forced to procure and install hygiene and sanitation equipment, redesign the hotel facilities for physical distancing between customers and staffs and to frequently clean the hotel for hygiene and safety of guests. Though the hotel has complied with the directed measures, it is slowly recovering and operations are not yet back to normal. A majority of the customers have opted to dine and wine in their homes and

minimized travel and mobility. It is only a few customers who are willing to visit hotels and restaurant (Biwota, 2020) . This has forced hotels to have high operating costs and are looking at ways to minimize costs. Only a small proportion of the customer are recorded in the hotel. There is no certainty when the customers will return to the hotel in large numbers for operations return to normal (Gursoy et al. 2020).

According to Huang and Rust (2020), customers are expecting hotels to install technology that will enhance contact-less services to remove physical services and guarantee customers safety. Despite hotels resuming operations, customers still feel insecure in fear of the human-to-human contact as well as on surfaces. Installation of contactless services such as service robots, keyless entry, contactless payment, and touchless, will attract huge expenses, indicating that this can only be for future investment. In the meantime, hotels are continue recording minimal profits and losses (Gursoy & Chi, 2020).

According to the Central Bank of Kenya (2020), hotel compliance with the health protocols is one of the costs the hotel is experiencing, bearing in mind the low revenue generated to meet the expenses. However, Central Bank of Kenya notes a positive trajectory of the hotels with increment of the occupancy rate from 10% to 24%, in particular Nairobi and Mombasa, due to easing of the travel restrictions and lockdowns. Central Bank of Kenya further asserts that support measures given by the government such as tax relief and recovery funds to boost their businesses have encouraged the hospitality industry to continue the struggle to survive.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

### **2.4.1 Crisis Management Theory**

Though there are several crisis management definitions, Mikušová and Horváthová (2019) described it as “a process by which an institution deals with a disruptive and unexpected event that threatens to harm the organization, its stakeholders or the general public”. Moreover, various models and perspectives of crisis management have been proposed in



literature. Generically, these frameworks present the following steps: crisis disaster prevention and planning; strategic implementation; and resolution, evaluation and feedback, (Mikušová and Horváthová 2019).

Scholars recognized that it is extremely challenging to create a flawless strategy due to “the chaotic nature of crises and disasters and the uncertainty that surrounds them”, adding that these are highly complex, thanks to time pressure constraints, limited control and high uncertainty (Ritchie 2004). Nonetheless, it is commonly agreed that the key determinant in successful crisis management is to identify a crisis in time, along with applying an effective action plan to reduce the negative consequences and exploit the opportunities that may arise from the situation (Tew et al. 2008).

It is essential to acknowledge that each situation is unique and there is no perfect framework that would allow any company to resolve all crises. It is thus important to create fluid guidelines, rather than have fixed steps that need to be strictly followed (Tew et al. 2008). Recognizing potential risks should also be one of the first steps when drawing an effective plan in order to create a framework that effectively addresses responsive strategies, so that the influences can be minimized (Kim, et al. 2005), while distinguishing between short, medium and long-term plans for the effective allocation of resources (Renee and Johns 2015). In addition, pre-crisis management guidelines should be included. However, it is important to note that companies are not able to fully avoid these situations, thus preventive strategies can only alleviate the negative repercussions (Faulkner 2001; Kim, et al.2005).

Furthermore, recognizing the limitations of the various approaches is fundamental (Faulkner 2001), as well as, exploiting knowledge of previous crises to avoid unsuitable capital expenditures throughout the process (Tew et al. 2008) and acquire knowledge to further improve existent guidelines accordingly (Faulkner 2001; Tew et al. 2008). Therefore, it is

crucial that institutions fully understand all these perspectives when developing their crisis management strategies so they can allocate energy and resources efficiently, mitigate the negative influences, fasten the recovery process and scheme preventive approaches for potential upcoming situations. This theory was useful in understanding the effect of, and the response to, the COVID-19 on the hotel industry.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter discussed the research design, study area, target population, sample size and sampling technique. The chapter also highlighted research instrument, validity and reliability, and data collection techniques. The chapter further discussed data analysis, and logistical and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed descriptive survey design. According to Kothari (2012), the aim of descriptive survey design is to give a narrative description of the current study. The study utilized this design with an aim of describing the influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance of selected one-and two-star hotels in Mombasa, Kenya. The researcher collected both primary and secondary data to describe the status quo of the study. It also helped establish the correlation between independent variables and dependent variables.

### **3.3 Study Area**

The study was located in Mombasa County. It is one of the forty-seven counties in Kenya. It is known as one of the tourist destinations sites in Kenya attracting many tourists both local and international on yearly basis. According to Central bank of Kenya report 2020, Mombasa county is one of the hardest hits by COVID 19 in particular the hotels due to local and international travel restrictions.

### **3.4 Target Population**

The study targeted one-and two-star hotels in Mombasa County. According to Mombasa County report 2019, there are 43 one- and two-star hotels in Mombasa with an estimate total of 1,000 employees. This formed the target population of the study.

### **3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the study can use a sample size of 10-30% of the target population. In this case, 10% of the target population was used. A sample size of 5 hotels was used (10% of 43 hotels). A total sample size of the respondents was 100 (10% of 1,000). A simple random sampling technique was used to select participants and this gave every participant an opportunity of being selected.

### **3.6 Research Instruments**

The researcher collected data with the guide of a questionnaire. It was formulated in a closed ended format. A likert scale was used. The questionnaire entailed five sections; bio-data, hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions, and performance of star rated hotels. The use of a questionnaire was easy to formulate, respondents take few minutes to respond and also analysis of the data was easier.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

The content of the research was validated by the university supervisor. It was also subjected to plagiarism level at the university library for authenticity purposes. The researcher conducted a pretesting study by issuing a sample of questionnaires to selected fifteen respondents. From the responses after pretesting, the researcher detected questions that were ambiguous and need editing to ensure there were simple and easy to understand for the purpose of quality assurance (Borg & Gall, 2003).

The internal consistency of the questions was tested before the actual study with a Cronbach alpha test for reliability purposes. According to Zikmund (2009), for the coefficient values of the research instrument must be above 0.7 to be reliable. The researcher measured the internal consistency of the variables to enhance reliability.

### **3.8 Data Collection Techniques**

The researcher first collected the secondary data. It was gathered from journal articles, reports, conference proceedings and electronic source. The secondary data was also

corroborated with the primary data to validate it. The primary data was gathered from the targeted respondents with a questionnaire. The researcher sought permission to issue questionnaires and collect data from the hotel management. After permission had been granted, researcher gave a brief information of what the respondents were expected to do. Then, researcher gave questionnaire to the respondent and provided them enough time to respond to the posed questions and pick the questionnaire later.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The researcher checked if the questionnaires had been exhaustively and appropriately replied to. Questionnaires was sorted per section then coded into themes. The analysis was both in qualitative and quantitative. Data was qualitatively analyzed with a narrative description of the findings and interpreting the results while giving a report. Analyzed quantitative data was presented using frequency distribution tables and measures of central tendency.

A multi-regression analysis was conducted to test the study hypothesis and determine if there was a relationship between variables and the level of the significance. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was employed for quantitative data analysis.

### **3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations**

The researcher aimed to conduct the study with a stipulate period and present the report on time. Therefore, a time frame was drafted to ensure data collection, analysis and reporting the findings was done on time.

Due to COVID 19, there were a lot of financial difficulties and social interactions was minimized. The researcher designed a budget estimates to ensure resources needed for research were known and allocated finances for the completion of the study.

The researcher sought permission from Grets University to collect data. The letter issued from the University was used to sought permission to gather data from the selected star rated hotels management. After authorization to collect data, the researcher explained to the

respondents the reason for conducting the study, requested for voluntary participation, and assured them of their confidentiality. The research was purely for academic purpose and findings were not shared without their consent.

## CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses the findings of the study, reports responses of the respondents and presents them in frequency tables.

### 4.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Prior the actual study, a pretesting was conducted by the researcher using Cronbach Alpha test which tested the consistency and relevance of the respondents' responses. The study questionnaire was in a close ended likert format where options were provided requiring respondents to either agree, strongly agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree based on the statements provided. Per each section of the questionnaire, internal consistency was measured. The value of the Cronbach coefficients ranged from 0-1 and the more the coefficient values were closer to one, the higher the internal consistency of the statements per section in interval scale. According to Zikmund (2015), construct validity can be best measured with Cronbach alpha. An alpha value whose range is between 0.70-0.95 is reliable and acceptable. The study Cronbach alpha values ranged from 0.72 to 0.81. This was an indication that the questions were reliable and acceptable with high internal consistency.

Section	Variables	Values of Cronbach alpha	Number of questions	Status
V	Performance of star rated hotels	0.85	6	Reliable
II	Hotel operations	0.75	6	Reliable
III	Management implications	0.80	6	Reliable
IV	Marketing and Promotion	0.71	6	Reliable

Table 1: Reliability test

### 4.3 Response Rate

The researcher distributed hundred questionnaires to the respondents. The study noted that seventy-eight questionnaire were returned while twenty-two respondents never returned their questionnaire.

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Returned	78	78%
Not returned	22	22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2: Response rate

### 4.4 Gender

The study showed that forty-nine respondents were female while twenty-nine respondents. It was noted that majority of the respondents were female.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	49	63%
Female	29	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3: Gender

### 4.5 Respondents Age

The results showed that thirty-five respondents aged 28-38 years while twenty-six respondents were within the age bracket of 18-28 years. It was also revealed that eleven respondents ranged between 38-48 years and six respondents were aging 48 years and above.



<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-28 years	26	33%
28-38 years	35	45%
38-48 years	11	14%
48 years and above	6	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 4: Age*

#### **4.6 Education level**

The study noted that forty-three respondents had acquired diploma with various fields within the hospitality sector. The findings also revealed that twenty-four respondents had attained degree in hospitality management while eleven respondents had post graduate certificates.

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Diploma	43	55%
Degree	24	31%
Post graduate	11	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 5: Education level*

#### **4.7 Job Position**

The findings revealed that fifty-nine respondents were employees while ten respondents were managers. It was also noted that nine supervisors participated in the study.

<b>Job position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Employees	59	75%
Supervisors	9	12%
Managers	10	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 6: Job position*

#### **4.8 Job Longevity**

The results indicated that thirty-eight respondents had worked for 10-15 years while twenty-seven respondents had a working experience of 15 years and above. The study noted that ten respondents had worked for 5-10 years while three respondents had working experience of less than five years.

<b>Working experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1-5 years	3	4%
5-10 years	10	13%
10-15 years	38	49%
15 years and above	27	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Table 7: Working experience*

#### **4.9 Hotel Operations and Performance of Star Rated Hotels**

Majority of the respondents stated that massive cancellations of bookings, events, and reservations had been canceled due to travel restrictions and lockdowns as revealed by the highest mean of 4.35. The study found that hotels were impelled to close indefinitely and were reopening partially with the fear of being closed again depending on COVID 19 curve and wave (mean score of 4.16).

The study revealed that star rated hotels occupancy had decreased significantly in compliance with physical and social distancing requirements as indicated by a mean of 4.02. The findings concurred Rodrigues (2020) and argues that the unprecedented circumstances of COVID 19 resulted in numbers of hotel customers plummeting exponentially due to travel restrictions, leading to reduction in occupancy rate. The usual flooding of customers in hotel reduced and only few customers could be seen forcing the hotel to limit their normal operations with new adaptation of COVID 19 laid protocols.

The respondents argued that the number of customers visiting on daily basis had reduced significantly contrary to what was the case before COVID 19 (mean score of 3.93). The results showed that hotel operated within restricted hours as directed by the government as noted by a mean of 3.72. It was noted that in star rated hotels, there were minimal activities going on in the hotel with a reduced number of staffs as recorded by the lowest mean score of 3.55. Mensah (2020) avers that one of the hardest-hit industry is the hotel. Minimal operations are noted due to massive cancellation of bookings, events, flights, reservations and indefinite closure of hotels.

<b>Hotel operations</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
Massive cancellations of bookings, events, and reservations had been canceled due to travel restrictions and lockdowns	4.35	0.88
Hotel operates within restricted hours as directed by the government	3.72	0.54
The number of customers visiting on daily basis has reduced significantly contrary to what was the case before COVID 19	3.93	0.65
The hotel occupancy has decreased significantly in compliance with physical and social distancing requirements	4.02	1.11
Hotel were impelled to close indefinitely and are reopening partially with the fear of being closed again depending on COVID 19 curve and wave	4.16	0.75
There are minimal activities going on in the hotel with a reduced number of staffs	3.55	0.87

*Table 8: Hotel operations*

#### **4.10 Management Implication and Performance of Star Rated Hotels**

In table 9, the study found that the star rated hotel managers sent employees on compulsory leave with no pay, some were called back with pay cut and multitasking due to minimal operations as indicated by the highest mean score of 4.15. Most of the respondents strongly agreed that the hotel management was forced to redesign the facility to abide by physical and social distancing (mean score of 4.01).

The findings revealed that the hotel management had been forced to set aside resources to install hygiene and sanitation equipment at the entry point, buying thermometers, and frequently fumigating the hotel as noted with a mean score of 3.79. Respondents agreed that managers were forced to stop unnecessary services to reduce utility bills (mean score of

3.64). Dogra (2020), argues that managers have been forced to spot unnecessary services with an aim of cutting the costs, reduce the utility bills and to avoid the continuous losses noted. Some of the unnecessary services witnessed include use of washing machine, minimizing the number of escalators and elevators usage.

The results showed that employees were trained on way to handle customers amidst of COVID 19, and ways to protect themselves and maintain the hygiene and sanitation of the hotel as recorded by a mean score of 3.48. The study noted that management was compelled to strategize and diversify products for hotel survival as revealed by lowest mean of 3.20.

<b>Management Implications</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
The hotel management was forced to redesign the facility to abide by physical and social distancing	4.01	0.95
Managers sent employees on compulsory leave with no pay, some were called back with pay cut and multitasking due to minimal operations	4.15	0.82
The hotel management has been forced to set aside resources to install hygiene and sanitation equipment at the entry point, buying thermometers, and frequently fumigating the hotel	3.79	0.50
Employees are trained on way to handle customers amidst of COVID 19, and ways to protect themselves and maintain the hygiene and sanitation of the hotel	3.48	0.66
Managers are forced to stop unnecessary services to reduce utility bills	3.64	0.80
Management is compelled to strategize and diversify products for hotel survival	3.20	0.56

*Table 9: Management implications*

#### **4.11 Marketing and Promotions**

From table 10, respondents stated that the management partnered with the government and converted hotel as quarantine centers and offer services for those in isolations as noted with the highest mean of 4.05. The findings revealed that social networking has been applied by the hotel to market services and products offered, redesigned hotel and incentives on offer (mean score of 3.95).

The results showed that the hotel offered take-away services and packaged products for delivery at a convenient fee as noted by mean score of 3.88. The study revealed that the hotel management in collaboration with the ministry of tourism promoted local tourism with incentives packages to increase hotel occupancy (mean score of 3.64). Hotels in collaboration with the stakeholders such as government have opted to reach out to the locals with innovative promotional packages, repackaged products and discount rates to attract and encourage the locals to visit the tourist sites and hotels for the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry (Guevara, 2020).

Respondents agreed that the hotel had reduced price of services and products offered to woo customers as revealed by a mean score of 3.52. The results showed that the management had opted to rely on customers visiting occasionally and they don't saw the need of marketing and promoting the hotel amidst of COVID 19 as revealed by the lowest mean score of 3.14.

<b>Marketing and Promotions</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
The hotel offered take-away services and packaged products for delivery at a convenient fee	3.88	0.86
The management partnered with the government and converted hotel as quarantine centers and offer services for those in isolations	4.05	1.10
The hotel management in collaboration with the ministry of tourism promoted local tourism with incentives packages to increase hotel occupancy	3.64	0.73
The hotel has reduced price of services and products offered to woo customers	3.52	0.87
Social networking has been applied by the hotel to market services and products offered, redesigned hotel and incentives on offer	3.95	0.60
The management have opted to rely on customers visiting occasionally and we don't see the need of marketing and promoting the hotel amidst of COVID 19	3.14	0.75

*Table 10: Marketing and promotions*

#### **4.12 Performance of Star Rated Hotels**

Majority of the respondents stated that they were forced to lay off employees as they were not earning but paying bills hence attempting to reduce utility bills to avoid continuous loss as revealed by the highest mean of 4.20. Respondents strongly agreed that since inceptions of the hotel business, they had never recorded minimal revenue as they were currently witnessing (mean score of 3.98). The results showed that the respondents argued that star rated hotels were uncertain when the operations shall resume normal, customers flood in the hotel and record profit as noted by a mean score of 3.85.

Despite hotels reopening, the capacity was reduced due to social distancing and directed to only offer take-out services, as the COVID-19 curve fluctuates, the hotel industry is still negatively affected as they are closing and reopening, bearing in mind there are still considered as spreaders (Dogra, 2020). The study found that hotels had opted to diversify services and product to remain a float (mean score of 3.77). The respondents stated that hotels were operating at a loss and we are struggling to survive as revealed with a mean score of 3.49. The findings revealed that hotels were struggling to pay loan due to limited time of operation and services and it had not been easy, they might be forced to close permanently as noted by the lowest mean of 3.09.

<b>Performance of star rated hotels</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>
The hotel is operating at a loss and we are struggling to survive	3.49	0.78
We have opted to diversify services and product to remain a float	3.77	0.60
We are uncertain when the operations shall resume normal, customers flood in the hotel and record profit	3.85	0.95
Since inceptions of the hotel business, we have never recorded minimal revenue as we are currently witnessing	3.98	0.66
We are struggling to pay loan due to limited time of operation and services and it has not been easy, we might be forced to close permanently	3.09	0.74
We were forced to lay off employees as we are not earning but paying bills hence attempting to reduce utility bills to avoid continuous loss	4.20	0.92

*Table 11: Performance of star rated hotels*



#### 4.13 Model Summary

The model summary tested the study hypothesis through a multi regression analysis to assess the relationship between independent variables (hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions) and dependent variable (performance of star rated hotel). The R square represents the coefficient of determination as noted in table 12. The study revealed that hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions accounted for 47.5% of the variance in performance of star rated hotel as shown in table 12 by R square value of 0.689. This is an indication that other variables that were not factored in or predicted accounted for 52.5% (100% - 47.5%). Subsequently, there could be an error which occurred without the knowledge of the researcher.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.689 <sup>a</sup>	.475	.483	.517

Table 12: Model summary

Predictors: (constant), hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions

Dependent variable: Performance of star rated hotel

#### 4.14 Analysis of Variance Influence on Performance of Star Rated Hotel

The study notes that the significant p-value was 0.031 and was less than 0.05 indicating that the regression for the analysis of variance is significant. The model was significant in illustrating how hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions influenced performance of star rated hotel in Mombasa County. This study rejects null hypothesis.

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of the square</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Regression	31.405	5	4.183	2.057	.031 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	42.581	65	0.620		
<b>Total</b>	<b>73.986</b>	<b>95</b>			

Table 13: Analysis of Variance

#### 4.15 Coefficient of Variation Influences on Performance of Star Rated Hotel

From table 14, hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions recorded p-values that were less than 0.05 which was an indication of a strong relationship with performance of star rated hotel. The formula for the regression model is  $Y = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + c$ . Y= study dependent variable,  $\beta_1 - \beta_3$ = regression coefficients, X1-X3= study independent variables. X1=hotel operations, X2= Management implications and X3=marketing and promotions.

$$\text{Performance of star rated hotel} = 0.350X_1 + 0.375X_2 + 0.280X_3 + 0.461$$

When the study independent variables are at constant, the performance of star rated hotel in Mombasa County would be 0.461. Any unit increase either in hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions will result to 0.350, 0.375 and 0.280 respectively increases in performance of star rated hotel.

Model		Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	T	Sig.
		$\beta$	Std. error	Beta		
<b>1</b>	Constant	0.461	0.280		2.505	0.01
	Hotel operations	0.350	0.095	0.115	2.419	0.04
	Management implications	0.375	0.068	0.073	1.821	0.03
	Marketing and promotions	0.280	0.045	0.104	1.494	0.02

Table 14: Coefficient of variation

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The chapter draws the summary of the study, gives conclusions and recommendations of the study.

### **5.2 Summary**

The study examined the influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa, Kenya. The respondents that took part in the study were seventy-eight. It was noted that respondents acknowledged that COVID-19 had affected one- and two-star hotels significantly. The unprecedented crisis paralyzed the hotel industry. It was noted that both one- and two-star hotels suffered had similar sufferings of COVID-19. The study was guided by hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions.

The first objective of the study was to examine the influence of hotel operations under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa. The study revealed that massive cancellations of bookings, events, and reservations had been canceled due to travel restrictions and lockdowns. The findings showed that hotels were impelled to close indefinitely and were reopening partially with the fear of being closed again depending on COVID 19 curve and wave. The unprecedented circumstances of COVID 19 resulted in numbers of hotel customers plummeting exponentially due to travel restrictions, leading to reduction in occupancy rate. The usual flooding of customers in hotel reduced and only few customers could be seen forcing the hotel to limit their normal operations with new adaptation of COVID 19 laid protocols. The study found that the number of customers visiting on daily basis had reduced significantly contrary to what was the case before COVID 19. The results showed that hotel operated within restricted hours as directed by the

government. It was noted that in star rated hotels, there were minimal activities going on in the hotel with a reduced number of staffs.

The second objective was to establish the influence of Management implications under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa. Majority of the respondents agreed that the star rated hotel managers sent employees on compulsory leave with no pay, some were called back with pay cut and multitasking due to minimal operations. The hotel management were forced to set aside resources to install hygiene and sanitation equipment at the entry point, buying thermometers, and frequently fumigating the hotel.

The study noted that hotel managers were forced to stop unnecessary services with an aim of cutting the costs, reduce the utility bills and to avoid the continuous losses. The findings revealed that the hotel management was forced to redesign the facility to abide by physical and social distancing. The results showed that employees were trained on way to handle customers amidst of COVID 19, and ways to protect themselves and maintain the hygiene and sanitation of the hotel. The study noted that management was compelled to strategize and diversify products for hotel survival.

The third objective was to determine the influence of the marketing and promotions under COVID-19 on the performance of one and two-star hotels in Mombasa. The study found that the management partnered with the government and converted hotel as quarantine centers and offered services for those in isolations. The findings revealed that social networking had been applied by the hotel to market services and products offered, redesigned hotel and incentives on offer.

The results showed that the hotel offered take-away services and packaged products for delivery at a convenient fee. Hotels in collaboration with the stakeholders such as government have opted to reach out to the locals with innovative promotional packages,

repackaged products and discount rates to attract and encourage the locals to visit the tourist sites and hotels for the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry. The study noted that the hotel had reduced price of services and products offered to woo customers. The results showed that the management had opted to rely on customers visiting occasionally and they don't see the need of marketing and promoting the hotel amidst of COVID 19.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The study revealed that COVID-19 greatly influenced one-and two-star hotel. The findings revealed that hotel operations, Management implications, marketing and promotions influenced performance of star rated hotel. It was noted there was no recent unprecedented crisis like COVID-19 that affected hotel resulting to recording minimal revenue. Despite hotels reopening, the capacity was reduced due to social distancing. The hotels have opted to diversify in their services and products for survival. The study noted that hotel management had to go back to the drawing and relook on marketing and promotions to enhance survival and competition.

### **5.4 Recommendations for Policy/Practice**

1. The study noted that hotel operations were paralyzed because of COVID-19 to minimize contact of persons. There is need to look at contactless services such as service robots, keyless entry, contactless payment, and touchless as future investment in case of a similar unprecedented crisis.
2. Despite the reopening of the hotels, there is no strict adherence of COVID-19 protocols. There is need for the hotel management to ensure the employees and customers observe the laid COVID-19 protocols to enhance safety and fluctuation of COVID-19 curve.

### **5.5 Recommendations for Further Study**

The study recommends a study on the installation of contactless services amidst COVID-19 and the performance of the hospitality industry.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Introduction Letter

Dear Respondent,

#### **RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION**

My name is Maryleah Orlando (HPM-4-3103-19) currently pursuing Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management at Greta University. I am conducting a research on influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance of selected one-and two-star hotels in Mombasa, Kenya. I am requesting for your voluntary participation in responding to the questionnaire for this study. Your response will be treated with confidentiality. Responses will be used for academic purposes. Kindly respond with sincerity. I humbly request you to assist me in responding to the posed questions in the questionnaire provided.

**Note:** Anonymity will be respected.

Thank you in advance for your response and participation.

Yours faithfully,

Maryleah Orlando

HPM-4-3103-19

## Appendix II: Authorization Letter



### OFFICE OF THE HEAD, SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY & TOURISM MANAGEMENT

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02/09/2021

**Dear Sir/Madam**

This letter is to introduce **Maryleah Achieng Orlando** registration number [HPM-4-3103-19] who is a student in the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Gretsa University pursuing BSc. in Hospitality Management.

To complete her degree course, she is undertaking research leading to the production of a research report or other publications and her study is entitled:

**Influence of Corona Virus pandemic on the performance of hotels: A case study of selected one and two star hotels in Mombasa County, Kenya**

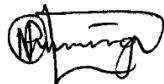
She would like to invite you to assist in this project by filling in the questionnaire which covers certain aspects of this topic.

Be assured of confidentiality of any information you provide and that none of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting research report or other publications. You are entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer particular questions.

Any enquiries you may have concerning this research project should be directed to her supervisor Prof. Wabuke Bibi- **0722687795** or by email **chenaniwabuke@gmail.com**.

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Yours Sincerely



**Peter Irungu**

**Head, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management  
Gretsa University**

## Appendix III: Questionnaire

### SECTION I : GENERAL INFORMATION

Kindly tick appropriately

#### 1. Gender

Male

Female

#### 2. Age

18-28

28-38

38-48

48 and above

#### 3. Education level

Diploma

Degree

Master

PhD

#### 4. Job position

Manager

Supervisor

Normal employee

#### 5. Job Longevity

1-5yrs

5-10 yrs.

10-15 yrs.

15 yrs. and above

**SECTION II: HOTEL OPERATIONS**

The following numbers indicate that 1=Agree, 2=Strongly agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Strongly disagree, 5=disagree Kindly tick appropriately within the boxes provided

<b>Hotel operations statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Massive cancellations of bookings, events, and reservations have been canceled due to travel restrictions and lockdowns					
Hotel operates within restricted hours as directed by the government					
The number of customers visiting on daily basis has reduced significantly contrary to what was the case before COVID 19					
The hotel occupancy has decreased significantly in compliance with physical and social distancing requirements					
Hotel were impelled to close indefinitely and are reopening partially with the fear of being closed again depending on COVID 19 curve and wave					
There are minimal activities going on in the hotel with a reduced number of staffs					

**SECTION III: MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

The following numbers indicate that 1=Agree, 2=Strongly agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Strongly disagree, 5=disagree Kindly tick appropriately within the boxes provided

<b>Management implications statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The hotel management was forced to redesign the facility to abide by physical and social distancing					
Managers sent employees on compulsory leave with no pay, some were called back with pay cut and multitasking due to minimal operations					
The hotel management has been forced to set aside resources to install hygiene and sanitation equipment at the entry point, buying thermometers, and frequently fumigating the hotel					
Employees are trained on way to handle customers amidst of COVID 19, and ways to protect themselves and maintain the hygiene and sanitation of the hotel					
Managers are forced to stop unnecessary services to reduce utility bills					
Management is compelled to strategize and diversify products for hotel survival					

**SECTION IV: MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS**

The following numbers indicate that 1=Agree, 2=Strongly agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Strongly disagree, 5=disagree Kindly tick appropriately within the boxes provided

<b>Marketing and promotions statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The hotel offered take-away services and packaged products for delivery at a convenient fee					
The management partnered with the government and converted hotel as quarantine centers and offer services for those in isolations					
The hotel management in collaboration with the ministry of tourism promoted local tourism with incentives packages to increase hotel occupancy					
The hotel has reduced price of services and products offered to woo customers					
Social networking has been applied by the hotel to market services and products offered, redesigned hotel and incentives on offer					
The management have opted to rely on customers visiting occasionally and we don't see the need of marketing and promoting the hotel amidst of COVID 19					

**SECTION V: PERFORMANCE OF STAR RATED HOTELS**

The following numbers indicate that 1=Agree, 2=Strongly agree, 3= Neutral, 4= Strongly disagree, 5=disagree Kindly tick appropriately within the boxes provided

<b>Performance of star rated hotels statements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
The hotel is operating at a loss and we are struggling to survive					
We have opted to diversify services and product to remain a float					
We are uncertain when the operations shall resume normal and customers flood in the hotel and record profit					
Since inceptions of the hotel business, we have never recorded minimal revenue as we are currently witnessing					
We are struggling to pay loan due to limited time of operation and services and it has not been easy, we might be forced to close permanently					
We were forced to lay off employees as we are not earning but paying bills hence attempting to reduce utility bills to avoid continuous loss					