RESTORING GUEST’S CONFIDENCE BY DELIVERING TRUE HOSPITALITY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC, CASE OF INTERCONTINENTAL ZHUHAI HOTEL, IHG

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ABSTRACT
The coronavirus (COVID-19 pandemic) has unprecedented effects on the hospitality industry. Challenges resulting from the loss of demand caused by travel restrictions, national and local lockdowns, social distancing measures, truncated hours of operation, and sudden business closures following governmental lockdown orders (Hall et al., 2020). This study used the case of InterContinental Zhuhai Hotel to investigate how to lead and deliver true hospitality to guests during COVID-19 pandemic. Insights were explored to restore guests’ confidence in luxury hotels in this unprecedented period. A purposeful sampling method is employed to investigate by using in-depth interviews with hoteliers. Based on thematic analysis of in-depth interviews with hoteliers about the ways to lead and deliver true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during COVID-19 pandemic, 10 Cs were identified from this study.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, Hotel Management, Services Delivery.
INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus (COVID-19 pandemic) has had unprecedented effects on the hotel industry. Challenges caused by the sharp decline of demand due to travel restrictions, social distancing norms, truncated hours of operation, and ad hoc closures by governmental lockdown orders (Hall et al., 2020). UNWTO Secretary General Zurab Palliatively stated that, “The world is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis. Tourism has been hit hard, with millions of jobs at risk in one of the most labor-intensive sectors of the economy” (UNWTO 2020, p. 1). China’s hotel industry has met severe challenges (China Hospitality Association, 2020. China Tourism Research Institute, 2020; Sun et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). Owing to travel bans and social distancing restrictions, travel incentives were dropped (Hao et al, 2020). The current priority for the hotel industry is to create incredible experiences for guests to restore their confidence. Therefore, leading and delivering true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during COVID-19 is important in hospitality research (Sigala, 2020). This study aims, therefore, to fill this research gap by exploring how to lead and deliver true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper used the case of InterContinental Zhuhai Hotel to investigate how to lead and deliver true hospitality to restore guests’ confidence in this unprecedented period. Given the explorative nature of this study, a qualitative approach via interview with hotel management was adopted. Research questions are posed:

(1) What is True Hospitality?
(2) How to lead the team to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic?
(3) How to deliver true hospitality to restore guest's confidence during COVID-19 pandemic?
(4) What are the guest’s experiences reflected on online ratings and reviews?

The perspectives of hoteliers are included in the study, which provides valuable insights for the hospitality industry to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and to restore

Background of InterContinental Zhuhai, IHG

InterContinental Zhuhai makes its home in the Yanlord Marina Centre, a city landmark complex alongside the picturesque Qing South Road of Zhuhai. The Hotel is adjacent to Gongbei/Macau port, Zhuhai rail station and confronting Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. This 46-storey high rise offers 324 contemporary guest rooms and suites, each with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking panoramic sea view or city view. With four award-winning restaurants and lounges, over 2,000 meeting and event space, a renowned infinite outdoor pool, InterContinental Zhuhai delivers true hospitality and prestigious InterContinental Life to guests from all around the world. (InterContinental Zhuhai website, 2022).
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Essence of Hospitality
The Oxford English Dictionary (2002) defines hospitality as the ‘friendly and generous reception of guests or strangers,’ while the Chambers English Dictionary (2001) defines it as, ‘Entertaining strangers and guests kindly and without reward (Hemmington, 2007).’ Hospitality means the host is being hospitable through feelings of generosity, a desire to please and take care of guests as an individual (Lashley, 2000). Hospitality means generosity, friendliness, the host-guest relationship, entertainment, and experiences given freely (King 1995). Hospitality as behaviour and experience that focus on the host-guest relationship, generosity, theatre, and performance, create more surprises to exceed guest’s expectations, the security of strangers (Hemmington, 2007). Conflict between generosity and the economics of business that raise a question of whether true hospitality can ever be provided within a commercial context (Telfer, 2000). Because of the tension between generosity and the economic relationship in commercial hospitality context (King 1995). This leads to several tensions when hotels try to provide a true sense of hospitality (O’Connor 2004). The notion of performance is significant both in terms of the guest experience and the implications for staff as performers (Darke and Gurney 2000). Hotel staff are required to meet and exceed guest’s expectations in special, creative, and exciting ways that create memorable experiences to nurture behavioural and emotional loyalty (Hammington, 2007).

Guest’s Expectations and Hotel’s Responses on Service Delivery in COVID-19 Pandemic
The uncontrollable impact of the COVID-19 pandemic forced hoteliers to redesign guests’ experiences (Bonfanti et al., 2021) and to implement proper risk information intervention measures (Zhang et al, 2020). Whereas guests focus on experience, cleanliness, service, and front-desk in the pandemic phases because of increasing demand for inside experiences, security, and hygiene (Hu et al, 2021). Safety is paramount in hotels (Telfer, 2000). Hotel guests are often in unfamiliar and alien environments and see the hotel as an important sanctuary (Hepple et al. 1990, Rutherford and McConnell 1991, King 1995, Telfer 2000, Choi, and Chu 2000, Gill et al. 2002, Poon and Low 2005). During the COVID-19 pandemic, guests were extremely concerned about services related to hygiene, safety, and social distancing measures (Nilashi et al, 2021). Hotels respond to guests’ needs by implementing contactless services such as self-serving apps, kiosks, and robots (Lau 2020). All staff wear face masks to make intangible hygiene and safety tangible, representing genuine care in true hospitality (Kong et al., 2021).

Guests’ Experiences Reflected on Online Ratings and Reviews
Guest’s electronic reviews are influential for hotels (Yang et al., 2018). Guests indicate their preferences through electronic comments (Ahani et al., 2019). Prabu (2014) stated that more than 80% of travelers browse other travelers’ comments before making a booking, while 53% are unwilling to choose a hotel with no reviews. Travelers prefer to stay longer in hotels with positive comments and high ratings than negative comments or low ratings (Hoisington, 2018). Thus, hotels’ revenues are specifically delicate to the impact of electronic reviews (Hilbrink, 2017). For hoteliers, online reviews present hotels with the opportunity to conduct consumers’ behavior analysis referring to standard ratings (Nilashi et al., 2018). Online reviews can allow
management to understand the actual performance of a hotel from the guest’s perspectives (El-Said, 2020).

This study seeks to respond to the below research main questions:
1. What is True Hospitality?
2. How to lead the team to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How to deliver true hospitality to restore guest's confidence during COVID-19 pandemic?
4. What are the guests’ experiences reflected in online ratings and reviews?

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

In line with the explorative nature of this study, a qualitative research strategy was employed for primary data collection and analysis (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) to examine how to lead and deliver true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during COVID-19 pandemic. Semi-structured interviews were selected as the data collection method because it provides respondents with the flexibility to express their views freely (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The interview protocol questions were as follows: 1) What is True Hospitality? 2) How to lead the team to cope with the challenges of COVID-19 pandemic? 3) How to deliver true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during COVID-19 pandemic? 4) What are the guests’ experiences reflected on online ratings and reviews?

**Sampling and Data Collection**

This study employed a purposeful sampling approach to invite knowledge-rich informants who could provide relevant information about leading and delivering true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during COVID-19 pandemic. Using personal networks, the researchers approached potential participants by working in a luxury hotel (five-star rating) and their hotel was still running. Interviews were conducted between Jan and Feb 2022, each lasting for approximately 40 minutes. Interviews were mostly undertaken in English and Mandarin. The translation of interview responses into English was subsequently cross-checked for meaning and consistency by researchers fluent in both languages to ensure that it retained the subtlety and meaning of the original responses (Hogg et al., 2014). Creswell (1998) recommended conducting 5–25 interviews to reach data saturation. Researchers should continue collecting and analysing data until additional data starts to repeat previous data and no longer provide new insights (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Guest et al., 2006). In this study, data saturation was reached after 10 interviews. Table 1 presents the profiles of the respondents. The multiple sources of evidence and informants’ confirmation of data content helped ensure research validity and reliability (Yin, 2003).

**Data Analysis**

To gain a degree of meaning depth, which is not possible to achieve simply by analyzing quantitative data, a qualitative data analysis was chosen. Qualitative research is used for understanding things rather than with measuring them, whereby the “subjectivity and the authenticity of human experience” (Silversman, 2010, p. 138) allows the researcher to gain an insight into the different meanings, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes of research subjects.
(Holloway et al., 2007; Veal, 2006). The interviews were audio recorded, and later transcribed and checked for accuracy. Through a thematic analysis, this research enabled the detection, examination, and description of themes gleaned from qualitative data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The data analysis followed a blended approach, which is theoretically driven but also allows for themes to inductively emerge from the data (Miles et al., 2014). A bilingual (English and Mandarin) researcher transcribed the interviews. The data were manually analyzed for this exploratory study, although there are a lot of computing tools for qualitative analysis. This choice provides an advantage for an interpretative approach rather than just doing a mechanical analysis using software (Gräosch, 2005). Finally, the results were grouped into similar conceptual areas according to prevalent themes.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Based on the analysis of the interviews, it was possible to examine and categorize ten main themes:

1. Charismatic Leadership Driving all Teams Stepping out of Comfort Zone Courageously!
2. Comprehensive Delivering True Hospitality of Incredible and Caring Services
3. Conclusive and Strict Sanitary Measures
4. Caring Services and Careful Disinfected Measures by Front Office Team
5. Convincing Cleaning Standards by Rooms Services Team
6. Creative Culinary Produced by Food and Beverages Team
7. Changeable Sales Strategies but Unchangeable Spirit of True Hospitality by Sales Team
8. Creative Marketing Communications by Marketing and Communication Team
9. Compassionate and Supportive Human Resources Team
10. Committed and Competent Teams Coping COVID-19 Pandemic Cooperatively

Leading and managing the team to provide true hospitality in crises can be challenging (Bitner, 2008; King, 1984). As our results indicate, the hoteliers are actively engaged in precautionary measures in response to the COVID-19 crisis (see Figure 1 for conceptual framework). Our research provides insights for hoteliers to deliver true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during COVID-19 pandemic.

**Charismatic Leadership Driving all Teams Stepping out of Comfort Zone Courageously**

General Manager (GM) adopt charismatic leadership creates a strong personal bond with followers. This connection reflects their followers’ convictions of their leader’s extraordinary character which inspires followers to achieve unprecedented results (Conger et al. 2000). By seeing beyond current constraints and challenges, charismatic leaders articulate a compelling vision of the future. This vision of the future solidifies that personal connection, forges an identity between members and the hotel, and inspires high levels of personal commitment (Lussier and Achua 2009). Bennis and Nanus (2007) suggested that the key indicator of a successful leader is the leader’s skill at paying attention, inspiring hearts, touching souls, and affirming the best in team. Creates a change in people’s hearts and minds that empowers people to become passionately committed to a great ideal and fulfil their potential (Anding 2005). GM has strong abilities to ensure harmonious and synergic communication relationships to improve performance. He leads his team to review, redesign the services, and adjust the marketing...
strategies in response to the ever-changing external environment. Whereas he never changes the fundamental principle of providing true hospitality for good that has been upheld firmly in whatever situation.

**Leader Uphold the Fundamental Principle of Providing True Hospitality for Good**

“True Hospitality is about ensuring every guest who can feel welcome and genuine care, recognized and respected, no matter who they are and where they are. True Hospitality for Good, which means striving to make a difference, every day, to our people, guests, and communities, and protecting the beauty of the world around us. At InterContinental true hospitality is our service culture which we put at the center of our service and operation, and we are practicing it day in and day out. It includes four parts in detail - True Attitude, True Listening, True Confidence and True Responsiveness, to deliver the most genuine and satisfying experience to our guests.”

**Management Strategies and Acts as a Safety Leader**

GM develops management strategies and acts as a safety leader that promotes employee safety behaviour from four aspects - safety coaching, care, motivation, and control. (1) For safety coaching, GM provides employees with sufficient safety knowledge and safety guidance. Implement IHG Cleaning Promise based on the guest room cleaning Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which was developed by IHG support centre coping with global pandemic prevention. “By complying IHG guidelines, our hotel and government pandemic prevention policies and regulations are our bottom line throughout the whole operation day in and day out. We adopt IHG cleaning promise SOPs, hotel SOPs and hotel policy and procedures, government hygiene and health guidance.”

(2) For care, GM enhances employee positive expectations and confidence of crisis intervention, he provides positive feedback on employees’ safety concerns. During COVID-19, the leader develops an organizational atmosphere that supports safety, conducts systematic safety skills training, and provides sufficient protective equipment. This helps to improve employee safety performance. GM pays attention to belief restoration during crises and provides psychological motivation for employees to adopt safety behaviours. He cares about employee’s needs and psychological status during the crisis, provides employees with sufficient safety information, as well as demonstrating the hotel’s crisis response capabilities. “At the beginning, the staff felt worried and unsafe during the pandemic breakout period, after receiving the prompt information and guidance, their worries were released, and pressures were relieved.” GM meets the safety needs of the teams and develops a safe workplace, as well as providing enough resources to support employee safety behaviour. “A series of staff pandemic prevention SOP and Policies and procedures by following IHG guidance and local government guidance were adopted.”

(3) For safety motivation, GM establishes safety motivation systems and rewards employees for behaviours that are conducive to improving safety performance, such as adhering to safety systems, taking part in safety training, and proposing new safety ideas. Clear policies and comprehensive SOPs covering both workplace and dormitory even at home. Hotel put the safety
control content in our existing management system and staff norms, it is an evolving and ongoing process. “We put the pandemic practice as the baseline of operation and require our staff to practice. We motivate and reward team members by using existing programs together with considering their safety operation behaviours.”

(4) For safety control, GM sets up safety management systems and safety behavioural norms and improves hotel safety performance through monitoring employee safety performance and correcting unsafe behaviours. GM emphasis changing mind-set to cope with uncertainty. GM driving all teams stepping out of their comfort zone courageously. He emphasises that his team must treat the uncertainty as certainty, then deal with it calmly, confidently, and optimistically in whatever situation.

Comprehensive Delivering True Hospitality of Incredible and Caring Services
Create a systematic operation approach to cope with pandemic situations, which includes change, adjust, tailor made and create service and product processing based on pandemic prevention purpose or guest’s demands. ‘Hygiene and Health Kits’ are supplied complimentary for every in-house guest, F&B outside catering and take away services are provided, temporary closure of outdoor swimming pools to adopt social distancing measures in public areas. Hotel management design the guest experiences to include lots of little surprises or sparkling moments to delight their guests. They take care of their guests along the way, starting from reservation, arriving at the hotel lobby, check-in, room staying, dining experiences, fitness centre, till check out and departure. They create lots of memorable experiences for guests such as pre-arrival call, cartoon bouquet for kids, themed welcome a menu in room, guest preferences for housekeeping service, restaurant butler service for VIP guests, farewell arrangement for special guests, hotel souvenirs, give-aways and hotel mascots are presented. Unexpected Moment Week is a one-week delivery of special guest experience activities in hotel, mini-wow housekeeping service, tailored made room decoration for celebrating guest’s special moments. When guests encounter with unexpected situations or have special requests, they help instantly such as accompanying guests to hospital when needed, prepare special meals for elderly, decorate guest room/dining room for celebrating guest’s special moments, themed Little Prince guest room for kids, show kitchen in the ballroom to create unique event experience, special welcome gifts and flowers, free upgrade for special guests, provide cooking demonstration of dessert or carving in restaurant, deliver the bi-monthly food promotion, live band performance, gueridon service, Christmas choir are just some examples of little surprises or sparkling moments to delight their guests.

Conclusive and Strict Sanitary Measures
Guests are extremely concerned about their sense of safety. All staff wear face masks to make intangible hygiene and safety tangible, representing genuine care in true hospitality (Kong et al.,2021). IHG Clean Promise in place as daily guidance. Ensuring guests have high confidence in hotel services, a strict standard of hygiene to maintain cleanliness, hygiene and avoiding the spread of germs and viruses in the air. Hotel put safety and pandemic prevention in the heart, all departments comply with re-designed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) including Cleaning Promise, IHG Way of Clean, Food safety management, staff health and safety
management. The hotel is responding by implementing strict cleaning protocols to combat the virus. Strict hygiene and sanitary measures to secure their guests’ accommodation environments such as conducting complete disinfection; controlling food hygiene; distributing masks at the hotel entrance and at the food picking area in restaurant; detecting the health of guests and employees by thermometer one by one carefully; shutting down swimming pool, gyms, and other public areas and facilities. “We promptly update employees with pandemic control situation progress, prevention approaches from government authorities and IHG support centre, conduct training and practice on daily cleaning and disinfection and emergency drills periodically. Hotels follow safety measures that entail the compulsory wearing of face masks by guests and staff.”

Caring Services and Careful Disinfected Measures by Front Office Team
Disinfectant and masks are provided at the reception for guests, strict audit checking for health records of each arrival guest at entrance and parking lots. Body temperature measuring robot is used to measure each guest’s body temperature efficiently, effectively, and accurately. Key card would be disinfected at once upon return. The front desk team will remind guests to keep social distance in a caring way. Attentive care for guests in need during the pandemic period such as concierge staff can accompany guests to hospital in 24 hours.

Convincing Cleaning Standards by Room Services Team
Implement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) including IHG Cleaning Promise, IHG Way of Clean about standardized disinfection procedures and anti-pandemic cleaning measures in all the guest rooms, corridor, and pantries, lifts, and all hotel public areas. Pandemic prevention kits are supplied complimentary in every room. Pandemic prevention measures are communicated via multi-channel with guests through guest letters, TV screen displays and notices. Implement a white bed program that takes away unnecessary sofa pillows and bed sheets. Linen cleaning and laundry disinfection measures are in place.

Creative Culinary Provided by Food and Beverages Team
Chefs are devoted to preparing delicious and creative cuisines for guests artistically. They prepared a tailor-made menu for senior guests attentively. They changed the theme of bimonthly buffet and menu regularly and won tons of favourable comments which have been posted on online platforms with impressive evaluation scores and feedback. For the safety measures, assign extra manpower to remind the protective measures and give masks to the guests while they are taking food at the buffet restaurant. In this way, all the guests are aware of the hygiene while they are dining simultaneously. Also, guests are required to fill guest contact information records to keep track of their trail records. Safety and audit checking is not only conducted daily, but also inspected by the government monthly, yearly as well as food safety audit by 3rd party from IHG. Implement IHG Clean Promise the standardized disinfection procedure and anti-pandemic cleaning measures. Whereas impressive and stylish service cape and service experiences are considered attentively. “Music band has performed on stage. Restaurant design artistic decorations according to different festival such as New Year, Valentine, Mid-Autumn Festival, Halloween, and Christmas as well as bi-monthly themes such as Malaysian theme, Italian Theme, Northwest China flavour, etc.”
Changeable Sales Strategies but Unchangeable Spirit of True Hospitality by Sales Team

A shift was changed from focusing on the international business travel market to the national leisure market; focus not only for the business travelers but also for family travels and leisure travelers, providing services not only for international guests but also for domestic guests. However, to uphold and deliver true hospitality firmly without changes in whatever situation.

“We focus on service excellence, exceptional product quality and consistency, exploring new market opportunities and gaining advantage through leveraging strengths is an ongoing process. To capture the growth of the family and kids’ market, our hotel has built a Planet Trekker kids club including kids golf, fairy-tale castle, and cooking class activities for kids.”

Hotels have changed from traditional sales channels to WeChat Apps for stimulating online purchase at anytime and anywhere. Nowadays, guests heavily depend on mobile apps to shop online (Kim et al., 2013). Mobile technology facilitates people to access the required information anytime and anywhere (Wang and Wang, 2010). Smartphone apps are convenient, the search process for guests are just a few easier steps, making the purchase process simple, quick, reachable, and free of stress (Ozturk et al., 2016). Hotel has already acknowledged that mobile apps are an emerging communication medium that can attract new customers and enhance brand loyalty, brand awareness and brand experiences resulting in higher sales (Hew et al., 2017; Narang and Shankar, 2019; Zhou, 2014). The hotel did successful live streaming on weddings, dim sum, afternoon tea, guest room and fitness center services. The 3 years anniversary promotion offers creative ‘blind box’ via WeChat. On the one hand, it can delight guests in surprising ways, on the other hand, it can boost business purchases. Guests can buy hotel products and services via mobile apps instantly. Through Double 11 in November 11 in 2021 which is the popular online shopping event in Mainland China, the flash sale of Zhuhai set the highest record of sales among Zhuhai hotel sectors. Also, use live streaming to promote products interactively.

Communicative and Creative Marketing Communications

Management joined the WeChat groups to listen to guest’s opinions, follow their requests instantly and interactively. Live-stream conferences and on-line virtual conference room were adopted during the pandemic period. Additionally, the local creature and delicacy of Zhuhai’s Virgin Scylla Crab was chosen as the mascot of the InterContinental Zhuhai with a name called “Xiao Xie.” It was designed as various emoji for guests to download in WeChat for sharing among their social circle through WeChat. It is a smart way to convey an approachable and appealing image. Xiao Xie wears staff uniform function as mascot, ambassador, and actor for various promotional videos which spread via e-channels to attract the family-oriented market segment and kids.

Compassionate and Supportive Human Resources Team

To alleviate the tense pressure both in physical and psychological ways, the human resources department organized various activities for relaxation and decompression for all staff including singing competition, on-line cooking show, fun sport competition, hotel knowledge and skill competition, team outing, dumpling making, festival celebration throughout the year. So that the harmony, healthy and happy working atmosphere is maintained in whatever tough situation. Whereas, to ensure effective internal communication by sharing update information promptly.
Coordinate communication through staff town hall meetings, training sessions and daily briefings constantly.

**Committed and Competent Teams Coping COVID-19 Pandemic Cooperatively**
At InterContinental Zhuhai, teammates are devoted and are willing to go the extra mile because they have a great leader who always stands by them and demonstrates true hospitality in whatever situations. Strong affective commitment as displayed by the whole team because they have recognized their GM’s leadership and values. Their powerful force is delivering true hospitality led by a charismatic and courageous GM who leads the team to uphold and deliver true hospitality firmly in whatever situation.

**Guests’ Experiences of True Hospitality Reflected on Online Ratings and Reviews**
Guest’s electronic reviews are influential for hotels (Yang et al., 2018). Guests show their preferences through electronic comments (Ahani et al., 2019) independently and voluntarily. Indeed, the online reviews provide valuable information shared by the guests which includes their satisfaction factors for effective engagement and loyalty in the luxury hotel context and highlight the areas for hotel’s further enhancement.

“Even in the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, InterContinental Zhuhai Hotel totally received 2,935 guest comments from 11 different booking channels which are including, Ctrip, TripAdvisor, Elong, Dianping, FLiggy, Qunar, Agoda, Booking, Expedia, Hotels, and Meituan. Among all the feedback, 98.13% of the comments were positive feedback. Our hotel not only receive lots of guest’s positive comments and high ratings from online reviews, we have received 28 awards as recognitions, some of them from online review organizations such as TripAdvisor Traveler’s Choice 2021 by Trip Advisor, Ctrip Annual Best Hotel 2021 by Ctrip, Restaurant of the Year 2021 by Dian Ping, Top 100 MICE Hotel 2019 by China Top 100 MICE Hotel, Platinum Award of Landmark Hotel in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area 2021 by Chinese and Foreign Hotel Magazines, and Annual Most Anticipated New Hotel 2018 by Target Taste…etc. I feel so proud to see the hotel rank in the top one position with a score of 4.9 on Ctrip which are 100% rated by guests independently and voluntarily. We also got a top one position in the IHG Social Review Rating system in Zhuhai for 2 years. All those outstanding results reflected the actual performances of our hotel from the guest’s perspectives through the online ratings and reviews systems.”

**Proposed Conceptual Framework**
From the findings of the study, the conceptual relationship has been proposed in Fig. 1 (Framework of 10 Cs Strategies of Leading and Delivering True Hospitality to Guests During COVID-19 Pandemic). The 10 Cs strategies and expected outcome explored above can be framed, which include leading and driving various teams such as sales, food, and beverages, marketing and communications, front office, rooms services, human resources to deliver true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during COVID-19 pandemic. Guests experienced the true hospitality of incredible and caring services that would be reflected in those online ratings and reviews. Eventually, those positive assessments will drive the occupancy rates and sales to hotel.
Figure 1: Framework of 10 Cs Strategies of Leading and Delivering True Hospitality to Guests During COVID19 Pandemic
CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATION, AND FUTURE STUDIES

Even in the challenging period of COVID-19 pandemic, management and frontline are devoted to deliver true hospitality to restore guests’ confidence attentively, affectively, and authentically. Their efforts are well deserved to be recognized through those outstanding online reviews and ratings which are all truly reflected from guests’ experiences of true hospitality at InterContinental Zhuhai Hotel. In conclude, “INTERCONTINENTAL ZHUHAI” means to guest as:

I - Incredible
N-Nice
T-Thoughtful
E-Earnest
R-Remarkable
C-Caring
O-Outstanding
N-Noticeable
T-Talented
I-Ideal
N-Noble
E-Enthusiastic
N-Nice
T-Top-notch
A-Awesome
L-Love
Z-Zeal
H-Hearty
U-Unique
H-Helpful
A-Attentive
I-Impressive

This study contributes to actionable insights from the hoteliers’ perspective to the hotel industry about leading and delivering true hospitality to restore guests’ confidence of a luxury hotel during COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, this study provides practical insights for China’s luxury hotel management specifically to understand how to lead and deliver true hospitality to restore guest’s confidence during COVID-19 pandemic, an area where research is sparse in Asia and almost non-existent within the context of China. The dataset used in the current study was collected from a single hotel. The empirical basis of analysis is restricted to a five-star hotel in Zhuhai province in Mainland China. Pandemic situations are different in nationalities. The current methodology can be repeated to uncover practical implications for different nations based on different datasets. Guest’s expectations on service requirements are indifferent between different hotel-types. Future research should explore the coping strategies in other hospitality sectors.
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