

การวิเคราะห์งานวิจัยที่ศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการบริหารรูปแบบ new normal ในธุรกิจโรงแรม :
แนวทางเพื่อการปรับตัวของผู้ประกอบการในช่วงสถานการณ์โควิด 19

The analysis of studies regarding new normal services in the hotel industry:
Approaches for business adaption during COVID-19 situation

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บทคัดย่อ (Abstract)

ในช่วงสถานการณ์โรคระบาดโควิด 19 มีงานวิจัยที่ศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการบริการรูปแบบ new normal ในธุรกิจโรงแรมจำนวนมาก อย่างไรก็ตาม องค์ความรู้ในหัวข้อดังกล่าวอาจกระจายและยังขาดการศึกษาต่อยอดเพื่อสรุปเป็นกรอบแนวคิดที่ชัดเจน งานวิจัยนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์และจัดหมวดหมู่การให้บริการรูปแบบ new normal ของธุรกิจโรงแรมเพื่อให้ได้กรอบแนวคิดและความเข้าใจที่ชัดเจนขึ้น ซึ่งจะเป็นประโยชน์ต่อภาคธุรกิจโรงแรมในประเทศไทย งานวิจัยนี้ใช้ฐานข้อมูลเชิงวิชาการ ในการค้นหางานวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้อง และใช้การวิเคราะห์เชิงเนื้อหาและสถิติเชิงพรรณนาในการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ผลการวิจัยพบว่า มีงานวิจัยที่เกี่ยวข้องจำนวนทั้งสิ้น 56 เรื่อง โดย 78% เป็นงานวิจัยของต่างประเทศ และ 22% เป็นงานวิจัยที่ศึกษาในประเทศไทย ในจำนวน 56 เรื่องนี้ พบว่า นักวิจัยได้ศึกษาหัวข้อเกี่ยวกับการบริการรูปแบบ new normal ในธุรกิจโรงแรมในหลายประเด็น เช่น การเน้นเรื่องการทำความสะดวกสบายของสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกภายในโรงแรม การเข้มงวดด้านสุขอนามัยของพนักงาน การใช้เทคโนโลยีในการบริการ และประเด็นด้านสิ่งแวดล้อมทางกายภาพของโรงแรม เป็นต้น สำหรับการสรุปกรอบแนวคิดในเรื่องดังกล่าวที่ศึกษากันทั่วโลก รวมทั้งในประเทศไทยด้วย สามารถแบ่งหมวดหมู่ของการให้บริการรูปแบบ new normal ในธุรกิจโรงแรมออกเป็น 4 หัวข้อสำคัญ ได้แก่ 1) ความสะอาดและสุขอนามัย 2) เทคโนโลยีและนวัตกรรม 3) สิ่งแวดล้อมทางกายภาพ และ 4) อาหารและเครื่องดื่ม ข้อค้นพบจากงานวิจัยนี้ จะเป็นประโยชน์ต่ออุตสาหกรรมบริการของประเทศไทยในการประยุกต์ใช้การให้บริการรูปแบบ new normal เพื่อสร้างความเชื่อมั่นให้แก่ลูกค้าทั้งชาวไทยและชาวต่างชาติในการมาใช้บริการของธุรกิจโรงแรมในช่วงสถานการณ์โควิด 19

คำสำคัญ (keywords): โรงแรม; การบริการแบบ new normal; โควิด 19

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Abstract

During COVID-19 pandemic, there are many researches examining new normal services in the hotel industry. However, the body of knowledge in regard to these topics may be scattered, and there is a lack of further studies for conceptualizing them and obtaining a better understanding of the new normal services in the hotel industry. This research aims to explore COVID-19 related studies to analyze and classify the new normal service practices for a better understanding and appropriate implementations in Thailand's hotel industry. Major academic databases are used to search for related studies. Contextual and descriptive analyses of data are employed. Based on the findings, there are approximately 56 studies examining the new normal services in the hotel industry. Among them, 78% are studied internationally; 22% are based on Thailand context. With 56 studies, there are several issues being explored such as cleanliness of hotel facilities, employee hygiene, technology-based services, and physical environment of the hotels. Finally, the study has conceptualized them into 4 main topics: cleanliness & hygiene, technology & innovation, physical environment, and food & beverage. The findings are expected to help Thailand's hotel industry to implement appropriate new normal services to build customer confidence in hotel selections during COVID-19 situation.

Keywords: hotel industry; new normal services; COVID-19

Introduction

The outbreak of COVID-19 has tremendously affected the hospitality and tourism industry worldwide. In particular, the hotel industry has been significantly affected by facing the negative economic impacts, and demands have been significantly reduced (Smart, Ma, Qu, & Ding, 2021). COVID-19 pandemic not only affects the demand side but also the hotel operations. Many hotels have changed their regular service standards to be new normal services by implementing new service standards and precautionary measures to build customer confidence (Chan, Gao, & McGinley, 2021; Sangpikul, 2022; Sharma & Kaushik, 2021; Smart et al., 2021; Yu, Seo, & Hyun, 2021).

At the same, from the academic side, there have been an increasing number of studies related to COVID-19 in the hotel industry with the aims to provide hotel operators with the knowledge and new normal service strategies to recover from the pandemic (Chan et al., 2021; Sangpikul, 2022; Sharma & Kaushik, 2021; Smart et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021). In this study, new normal services refer to the new service approaches being implemented in the hotel industry to reduce the chance of COVID-19 infection, for example, new sanitary standards, new cleaning methods, hygiene of employees, and technology contactless services (Chan et al., 2021; Smart et al., 2021; Yu et al., 2021). Although there are a number

of studies examining new normal services in the hotel industry, particularly international studies, however, the body of knowledge regarding these topics may be separated or scattered (various issues). There is a lack of study to further analyze and conceptualize them to obtain an in-depth understanding of the new normal service approaches in the hotel industry. In particular, the knowledge of the new normal services is essential for all hotel categories (small to large hotels) because it can help them to thoroughly understand the overall new service approaches and to appropriately implement them to deliver the better services to meet customer expectations during COVID-19 period. Therefore, it is important for researchers to strength the knowledge for the hotel industry in Thailand to help them to recover from COVID-19 and to proceed their business (Jiang & Wen, 2020; Sangpikul, 2022). The findings of the study are expected to help hotel practitioners to thoroughly understand various new normal service approaches, and to focus them in order to deliver the appropriate services to meet customer expectations.

Research objectives

1. To examine COVID-19 related studies in the hotel industry both in Thailand and international contexts to identify the important issues/topics being examined
2. To conceptualize the practices of new normal services from past studies to yield a better understanding and appropriate implementation for Thailand's hotel industry

Research Methods

1. Scope of study

This study aims to explore only related studies in regard to new normal services in the hotel industry both in Thailand and international contexts. Only the full-text articles published during 2019 – 2022 in relation to COVID-19 were included in the analysis.

2. Instrument

A record form was created in order to collect certain information corresponding to research objectives such as location of studies, topics of studies, and information about new normal services being addressed in the literature.

3. Data collection

This study used popular academic databases (e.g. ScienceDirect and Scopus) and search engine (Google Scholar) to search for related studies. Key words were, for example, 'COVID-19 and hotel industry', 'new normal services in hotels and COVID-19', and 'COVID-19 and Thai hotels'. Only the full-text studies related to the new normal services in regard to hotel operations were included in the analysis. Data were collected in March 2022.

4. Data analysis

Content analysis was employed to identify key issues/topics relevant to the new normal services in the hotel industry during COVID-19. The information was later grouped into appropriate categories, and finally were conceptualized into meaningful themes. Descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the data in terms of frequency and percentage.

Research results

Table 1 Number of studies examining new normal services in the hotel industry

Classification	Number of studies (percentage)
Studies based on international context	44 (78%)
Studies based on Thailand context	12 (22%)
Total	56 (100%)

Table 1 presents number of studies examining new normal services in the hotel industry. There are a total of 56 related studies regarding new normal services in the hotel industry. Among them, there are 44 studies (78%) being conducted in international context while 12 studies (22%) are based on Thailand context.

Table 2 Number of topics being examined

Topics	Number of studies (percentage)
Physical environment (e.g. social distancing, changing table layout)	4 (7%)
Food & beverage (e.g. food hygiene, e-menu)	6 (11%)
Cleanliness & hygiene (e.g. hygiene of employees, cleaning of shared facilities)	9 (16%)
Innovation & technology (e.g. mobile check-in/check-out, e-payment, robots)	11 (20%)
Mixed topics	26 (46%)
Total	56 (100%)

According to table 2, there are various topics being examined in regard to the new normal services in the hotel industry. Among them, mixed topics (a study examining various new normal services) have the highest number of studies (46%), followed by innovation & technology (20%), and cleanliness & hygiene (16%). Also, there are some other studies examining about food & beverage (11%) and physical environment (7%) in the hotel setting.

Table 3 The conceptualization of new normal services in the hotel industry

Topics	Categorization	Guidelines for new normal services
1.Cleanliness & hygiene	1.1 Hygiene of employees 1.2 Hygiene and cleanliness of guest rooms and hotel facilities	1.1.1 Staff wearing facemasks 1.1.2 Staff using hand sanitizers 1.2.1 Stricter cleaning and sanitation procedures in guest rooms, public areas, and all facilities 1.2.2 More rigorous and frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces in common areas
2.Technology & innovation	2.1 Technology-based check-in/out 2.2 Technology-based payment 2.3 Technology-based equipment	2.1.1 Mobile check-in/check-out 2.1.2 Self-service check-in/check-out 2.1.3 Mobile room access 2.2.1 Digital or e-payment/ QR codes 2.3.1 UV technology-based equipment for public cleaning services 2.3.2 Cleaning robots 2.3.3 Electrostatic sprayers 2.3.4 AI temperature check
3.Physical environment	3.1 Health safety precautions	3.1.1 Implementing social distancing 3.1.2 Limiting the number of customers served

Topics	Categorization	Guidelines for new normal services
		3.1.3 Managing table layout /partition 3.1.4 Providing hand sanitizers at the entry
4.Food & beverage	4.1 Food safety & hygiene 4.2 Technology-based services	4.1.1 Restaurant sanitation standards for food production, equipment & facilities 4.2.1 Digital menus/e-menu/e-payment 4.2.2 Food service robots

Table 3 presents the conceptualization of new normal services by analyzing all topics from 56 studies and categorizing (grouping) them for a better understanding of the new normal services in the hotel industry. According to table 3, all new normal services being documented in the literature (Thai and international contexts) can be grouped into 4 topics: 1) cleanliness & hygiene 2) innovation & technology 3) physical environment and 4) food & beverage.

Each topic contains a categorization of the new service practices (column 2) with the guidelines for new normal services in the hotel industry (column 3). For example, a topic like hygiene and cleanliness, there are two categorizations within this topic: 1) hygiene of hotel employees and 2) hygiene of hotel facilities. Each categorization will also have the guidelines for new normal services in the hotel industry. Likewise, a topic like technology & innovation, there are three categorizations regarding check-in/out, payment and equipment, together with the guidelines for new normal service practices. These three categorizations need technology & innovation development to reduce human interaction (human touch), which can help to reduce the chance of COVID-19 inflection (Jiang & Wen, 2020). Other findings are presented in table 3 with the overall conceptualization of the new normal services for the hotel industry in Thailand.

Research discussions

1. As this study has identified 56 studies related to the new normal services in the hotel industry during COVID-19, this figure suggests that both international (44 studies) and Thai researchers (12 studies) are active and enthusiastic to produce the up-to-date or new studies regarding the new normal services in the hotel industry. Most of these studies have

similar aims to help the hotel industry to recover from the crisis of COVID-19 pandemic and to proceed their businesses with health safety precautions and practices (Sharma & Kaushik, 2021; Yu et al., 2021)

2. The reason why there are many studies examining mixed topics (see table 2) will be justified accordingly. In general hotel setting, there are several major service areas in a hotel, for example, front desk, guest rooms, restaurants, conference facilities, and recreational services (Sangpikul, 2022) It could be possible that researchers may want to examine or discuss about the new normal services in various service areas of the hotel in order to point out the necessity of these practices during COVID-19 pandemic (Jiang & Wen, 2020). Several researchers indicate that all major service areas of the hotel require the adaptation of new normal services to reduce the chance of COVID-19 infection, and to build customer confidence in staying at the hotel (Jiang & Wen, 2020; Pappas & Glyptou, 2021; Sangpikul, 2022) Because of this, it may be possible that researchers may conduct their studies by examining various practices (mixed topics) in regard to different hotel functions because all new normal services are important management tools for the hotel industry to assure customers about their health safety during the crisis of COVID-19 (Sharma & Kaushik, 2021; Yu et al., 2021)

3. The findings from table 3 also provide the hotel industry with the complete picture of the new normal services being addressed or discussed in the current literature. The findings are well supported by a number of related studies (e.g. Gursoy & Chi, 2020; Jiang & Wen, 2020; Sangpikul, 2022; Shin & Kang, 2020; Smart et al., 2021) Through the in-depth analysis, the study has conceptualized the new normal services into four meaningful themes (topics) to yield the in-depth understanding of the new service practices being implemented worldwide. This conceptualization is expected to provide important implications for Thailand's hotel industry to implement the new normal services to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and to build customer confidence (Thais and foreigners) when using hotel services in Thailand.

Research knowledge

1. Knowledge about the new normal services in the hotel industry during COVID-19 (based on global context) can be classified into four topics: cleanliness & hygiene, technology & innovation, physical environment, and food & beverage.

2. In each topic, there are several practices of new normal services in the hotel industry which can be implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 infection and to build customer confidence when using hotel services.

Research suggestions

1. For practical purposes

The information in Table 3 can guide hotel practitioners to implement a wide range of new normal services in their operations. It can help them to obtain a clearer picture with overall practices of the new normal services and gain a better understanding of them in the hotel industry. The findings are beneficial for all hotel types (small to large hotels) as they can give alternative new service practices for different hotel categories. For example, cleanliness & hygiene as well as physical environment may be fully implemented in all hotel types because they are the basic new normal services during COVID-19. All hotels should implement them to build customer trust and confidence when the customers are staying at hotels. Importantly, these practices may require minimal expenses or little investment, if they are compared with the innovation or technology-based services which require high investment. These contactless services may be suitable for large or international hotel-chain owners who can invest in these hotel attributes to create their image and reputation. In particular, the management or marketing team of a hotel should communicate the new normal services in all channels to inform customers to build their trust and confidence in the hotel selections during COVID-19. In addition, it should be noted that the findings regarding new normal services as shown in table 3 are related to the service quality as customers expect and perceive them when staying at hotels during COVID-19 (Shin & Kang, 2020). This suggests that the quality of any new normal services offered during COVID-19 should be assessed because they are the new forms of hotel services, and may influence customer expectations and perceptions as well as service satisfactions (Sangpikul, 2022; Shin & Kang, 2020)

2. For future studies

The conceptualization of new normal services in the hotel industry may yield new research variables (e.g. hygiene of employees, physical environment or technology contactless services) which can be employed for future studies both in quantitative and qualitative methods in order to extend the knowledge.

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