

Brand Reputation as a Mediator in the Relationship Between Crisis Management and Hospitality Performance in Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The study examines the mediating effect of brand reputation on the relationship between crisis management factors such as stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, and training and education, and guest satisfaction in the Nigerian hospitality industry. **Methodology:** The primary data collection involved 195 structured questionnaires designed for hoteliers from the selected Hotels in Oyo State. Data analysis was performed with the aid of Path Analysis Structural Equation Modelling (PA-SEM) using STATA version 15. **Findings:** The results confirm that stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, training and education, and brand reputation all have significant direct effects on guest satisfaction. Additionally, the study highlights the partial mediating effect of brand reputation on the relationship between crisis management parameters and guest satisfaction. **Implication:** This implies that while crisis management practices directly enhance guest experiences, the positive impact is further reinforced when a strong brand reputation is maintained. A well-managed brand identity, particularly during crises, fosters customer trust and loyalty, ultimately leading to higher guest satisfaction. Subsequently, the study provides practical recommendations for hospitality businesses to enhance resilience, improve guest experiences, and maintain competitive advantage in the face of crises. **Originality:** The analysis emphasizes the vital role of crisis management practices in improving guest satisfaction, highlighting brand reputation as a key factor that transforms crisis management benefits into tangible performance gains for the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Stakeholder engagement, Legal and ethical considerations, Response coordination, Training and education, Brand reputation, Crisis management

JEL: D10, D40, D41

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry is a key driver of economic growth, creating jobs, generating revenue, fostering cultural exchange, and advancing infrastructure development in both developed and emerging economies. According to Cao et al. (2022), this sector significantly contributes to the GDP and employment of countries like the United States, Canada, Germany, and the United Kingdom, directly impacting their economies and workforces. For example, the industry contributes approximately \$1.3 trillion to the U.S. GDP while employing over 16 million people. In Canada, it accounts for 2% of the national GDP, sustaining over 1.8 million jobs. Similarly, Germany's hospitality sector adds around €100 billion to its economy and employs over 2.4 million individuals, while the UK's sector contributes £93 billion annually to the GDP and provides employment to about 3.5 million people. In Nigeria, the hospitality industry has experienced significant growth, contributing approximately 3.9% to the country's GDP in 2024, valued at ₦9.55 trillion (around \$14.8 billion). The sector employs about 2.71 million people, marking an increase from the 1.98 million jobs recorded in 2023 (Chokoe et al., 2023).

However, its growth has been hampered by challenges such as insurgency, kidnappings, armed robbery, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Olapegba et al. (2020) emphasize that economic instability, insecurity, and global disruptions have negatively impacted the operations, profitability, and competitiveness of Nigeria's hospitality industry. Similarly, Adenomon and Maijamaa (2020) highlight that ongoing security issues have deterred both domestic and international tourists, affecting key attractions such as the Yankari Game Reserve, Argungu Fishing Festival, and Lake Chad National Park. These challenges have led to financial setbacks for major players like Transcorp Hotels and Ikeja Hotels. Reduced visitor numbers due to security concerns have resulted in revenue losses, with an estimated ₦19.77 billion decline attributed to reduced occupancy rates and cancellations. Occupancy levels for some hotels have dropped from a previous high of 64% to as low as 33%, causing significant revenue declines and operational difficulties (Olapegba et al., 2020).

This scenario has compelled the hospitality industry and researchers to develop strategies to prevent the sector's abrupt decline. One such strategy is the effective implementation of crisis management practices. These practices encompass a wide range of activities aimed at safeguarding guest care, ensuring employee well-being, and maintaining operational continuity. The overarching goal is to anticipate, prevent, and effectively respond to crises, ensuring the safety of guests, employees, and assets while protecting the organization's reputation. By adopting robust crisis management plans, hospitality businesses aim to minimize disruptions, sustain customer trust, and ensure business continuity during incidents such as natural disasters, health outbreaks, security threats, or operational failures. Moreover, brand reputation is also widely regarded by researchers as a vital intangible asset in the hospitality industry, playing a key role in fostering customer trust, enhancing retention, and boosting market competitiveness. It directly impacts both short-term revenue generation and long-term growth while serving as the crucial link that converts the advantages of crisis management into measurable performance improvements for the industry.

Previous studies have investigated crisis management as a tool for maintaining customer trust and ensuring business continuity in the face of such challenges (Cao et al., 2022; Adenomon & Maijamaa, 2020; Xiang et al., 2021; Olapegba et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2020; Pizam, 2020; Rogerson, & Baum, 2020; Sao Joao, 2021; Selisho, 2020; Sharma et al., 2021; Sio-Chong, & So, 2020; Stankov,

& Gretzel, 2020; Sucheran, 2021; Wut et al., 2021). However, none of the existing studies have conceptualized crisis management in the way this study proposes, which aims to measure it as a distinct construct. Additionally, there is a lack of empirical research examining the extent to which crisis management influences hospitality performance when brand reputation is introduced as a mediating variable. In this study, crisis management, as the independent variable, is evaluated through four dimensions: stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, and training and education. Brand reputation is introduced as the mediator, while organizational performance, the dependent variable, is measured using guest satisfaction. This approach addresses a key conceptual gap in the literature and offers a fresh perspective on the mediating role of brand reputation in the relationship between crisis management and performance in the hospitality industry.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is anchored in Signalling Theory, Image Restoration Theory, and Organizational Resilience Theory, which collectively provide a robust foundation for understanding the interplay between crisis management, brand reputation, and performance in the hospitality industry. These theories illustrate how effective crisis responses build trust (Signalling Theory), restore and safeguard reputation (Image Restoration Theory), and ensure long-term adaptability and success (Organizational Resilience Theory), ultimately driving performance improvements.

According to Alves et al. (2020), Signalling Theory explains how effective crisis management practices communicate positive signals to stakeholders. Baum and Hai (2020) highlight that crisis management actions, such as transparent communication and swift responses to incidents, serve as indicators of reliability, competence, and a commitment to customer safety. These signals enhance brand reputation by fostering trust and confidence among customers and stakeholders. Similarly, Bama and Nyikana (2021) affirm that a strong brand reputation, shaped by these signals, directly improves performance by boosting customer loyalty and guest satisfaction. In Nigeria's competitive hospitality sector, signalling effective crisis management emerges as a critical strategy for differentiating brands and enhancing performance.

Image Restoration Theory, as emphasized by Rogerson and Baum (2020), focuses on the strategies organizations use to rebuild their image during or after a crisis. Brand reputation is central to this process, as effective crisis management helps restore trust and sustain performance in the hospitality industry. Selisho (2020) notes that hotels employ image restoration strategies such as transparent communication and ethical actions to safeguard their reputation during crises, which in turn impacts performance outcomes. Similarly, Pizam (2020) argues that crisis management practices like public apologies, compensation, and visible corrective actions align with Image Restoration Theory in repairing brand reputation. This theory is particularly relevant to Nigeria's hospitality sector, which faces recurring crises such as security challenges, pandemics, and operational disruptions. By restoring customer confidence post-crisis, organizations can protect their reputation and mitigate long-term damage to performance metrics such as customer retention and revenue (Chokoe et al., 2023; Coombs, 2021).

Organizational Resilience Theory, as articulated by Hall et al. (2020), illustrates how effective crisis management fosters resilience, thereby strengthening brand reputation through

demonstrated reliability and competence. This enhanced reputation drives hospitality performance by increasing customer satisfaction, retention, and revenue stability. Gössling (2021) emphasizes resilience as a strategic capability that integrates crisis management, brand reputation, and performance to create sustainable competitive advantages. Ghaderi et al. (2021) describe this theory as equipping organizations with tools and strategies to handle unexpected events such as natural disasters, health crises, and security threats. Preparedness enables businesses to adapt to disruptions, recover swiftly, and maintain operational continuity—key elements of resilience. Xiang et al. (2021) further argue that resilience-driven crisis management not only protects operations but also strengthens brand reputation, a critical factor in attracting local and international customers. In the context of Nigeria, demonstrating adaptability and recovery enhances customer trust and loyalty, thereby improving performance even in challenging environments.

In summary, these theories provide a comprehensive lens through which the dynamics of crisis management, brand reputation, and hospitality performance can be understood and applied in Nigeria's hospitality sector, highlighting strategies for achieving resilience, trust, and sustained success.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES

Crisis management is essential for addressing diverse emergencies, including natural disasters, pandemics, cybersecurity threats, and public health crises (Wut, 2019). The development of crisis management involves creating, refining, and implementing strategies to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises. This process is vital for building organizational resilience, mitigating the impact of unforeseen events, and improving recovery times (Chokoe & Sao, 2024). Research consistently underscores the link between crisis management practices such as stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, and training and education and the performance of the hospitality industry. For instance, a study by Chokoe and Joao (2024) in South Africa revealed that crisis management, particularly through stakeholder engagement and legal and ethical considerations, significantly influences hospitality performance. Similarly, Ghaderi et al. (2021) demonstrated that response coordination and training and education are critical predictors of hospitality performance in Malaysia.

In the United States, Coombs (2021) found that stakeholder engagement, response coordination, and training and education significantly impact hospitality performance. Israel et al. (2019) also identified stakeholder engagement, response coordination, and training and education as key determinants of hospital performance. Gössling et al. (2020) highlighted how crisis management practices improve hospitality performance, while Lai et al. (2020) reaffirmed the significant influence of crisis management dimensions on firm performance. De Ghaderi et al. (2021) similarly emphasized that crisis management practices are critical factors for hospitality performance improvement. Chokoe et al. (2023) established crisis management practices as essential strategies for enhancing hospitality performance. Pizam (2020) described these practices as powerful tools with a significant impact on performance. Gössling (2021) reported a positive correlation between stakeholder engagement and organizational performance in the hospitality industry. Xiang et al. (2021) confirmed that legal and ethical considerations and response coordination significantly influence firm performance.

Hall et al. (2020) also revealed a strong relationship between crisis management practices, such as stakeholder engagement and training and education, and hospitality performance. Israel et al. (2019) emphasized the importance of crisis management as a managerial tool that positively affects organizational performance, while Yallop and Seraphin (2020) demonstrated that effective crisis management fosters sustainability in the hospitality industry, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings collectively highlight the critical role of crisis management in enhancing the performance and resilience of the hospitality industry across various contexts.

Brand Reputation as a Mediator

The concept of reputation dates back to ancient civilizations, where it was closely associated with an individual's or entity's trustworthiness, integrity, and social standing. As trade and commerce evolved, this idea was extended to businesses, products, and brands. Brand reputation thus became linked to the quality of products, fairness in trade, and consistency in delivery, which collectively established trust among customers (Dorčák et al., 2017). Einwiller (2001) notes that brand reputation has emerged as a significant competitive advantage, with customers associating a strong reputation with attributes such as quality, innovation, and ethical behavior. The rise of advertising further transformed the management of brand reputation, as businesses actively shaped their public image by investing in positive brand associations through slogans, logos, and endorsements. According to Han et al. (2015), the digital age has introduced a paradigm shift in how brand reputation is built and managed. Online reviews, social media, and instant communication now allow public perception to be rapidly shaped and reshaped, underscoring the dynamic nature of modern brand reputation.

Existing studies have established a strong connection between brand reputation, crisis management, and hospitality performance. For example, Hasan et al. (2009) emphasize that transparent and empathetic engagement during crises helps maintain trust and demonstrates accountability, ultimately protecting or enhancing a brand's reputation. Koh et al. (2009) further highlights that stakeholders who feel valued through engagement are more likely to remain loyal. In the context of hospitality, personalized communication during disruptions can significantly mitigate guest dissatisfaction. Lindenblatt (2014) also asserts that handling crises with integrity fosters public confidence and reinforces the perception of a brand as ethical and responsible. Guests, in particular, value ethical conduct, such as fair compensation for disruptions, which enhances their experience even in challenging circumstances. Similarly, Veloutsou, and Moutinho (2009) note that a well-coordinated response minimizes confusion, delays, and errors, projecting an image of efficiency and reliability. Quick and effective crisis resolution ensures that guests' needs are promptly met, reducing frustration and maintaining satisfaction. Additionally, Wijaya (2013) underscores the importance of training employees for crisis management. Well-trained staff are better equipped to handle crises competently, demonstrating the brand's preparedness and professionalism. This capability ensures that guests receive better support, contributing to a seamless experience even in adverse situations.

The implication of these findings is clear: a positive brand reputation attracts loyal customers and builds a foundation of trust that is especially valuable during crises. Effective crisis management safeguards the brand's image and ensures continued guest satisfaction. In turn, high guest satisfaction reinforces customer loyalty, further strengthening the brand's reputation. In conclusion, brand reputation and crisis management are deeply interconnected, with guest satisfaction serving as both a measurable outcome and a critical indicator of their effectiveness.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Following a meticulous analysis of the literature review, a conceptual model has been developed to depict the indirect impact of brand reputation on crisis management practices; namely, stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, and training and education, influencing hospitality performance measured by Guest Satisfaction.

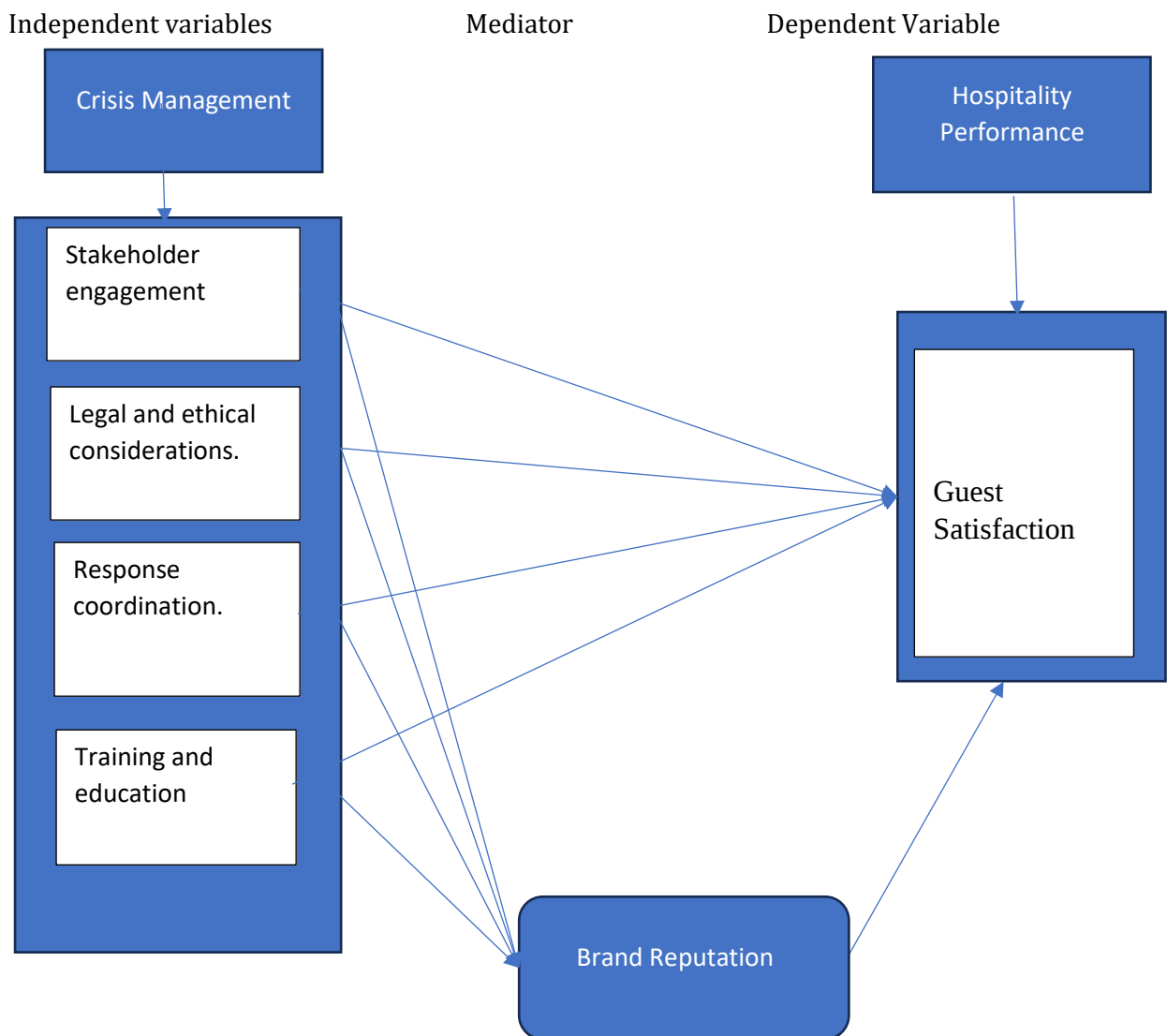


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Figure 1 illustrates a conceptual model predicting hospitality performance through key factors: brand reputation and crisis management practices, which include stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, and training and education. The model highlights the mediating role of brand reputation in linking crisis management practices to hospitality performance, measured by guest satisfaction. This framework establishes hypotheses about the relationships among these variables, emphasizing the importance of effective brand reputation and crisis management practices in enhancing operational excellence, guest satisfaction, and long-term success. Brand reputation is pivotal, fostering customer trust, loyalty, and engagement, which help businesses attract and retain customers while maintaining premium

pricing. Key crisis management components play essential roles: stakeholder engagement enriches decision-making during crises, adherence to legal and ethical standards ensures stability, response coordination minimizes operational disruptions, and well-trained staff ensure guest safety and continuity during crises.

It is anticipated that crisis management practices (stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, and training and education) directly influence hospitality performance (guest satisfaction), while brand reputation indirectly connects crisis management practices to overall performance.

Hypotheses of the Research

Based on the literature review, six hypotheses are proposed (see Figure 1):

H1: Stakeholder engagement has a positive correlation with guest satisfaction.

H2: Legal and ethical considerations have a positive association with guest satisfaction.

H3: Response coordination has a positive correlation with guest satisfaction.

H4: Training and education have a positive association with guest satisfaction.

H5: Brand reputation has a positive correlation with guest satisfaction

H6: Brand reputation mediates the relationship between crisis management parameters and guest satisfaction.

Methodology

Survey research was utilized to examine the impact of crisis management factors such as stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, and training and education on guest satisfaction in the Nigerian hospitality industry. This approach is effective for analyzing and predicting population characteristics when carefully structured and implemented (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). The study's population consisted of 385 hoteliers across best ten hotels operating in Oyo State, Nigeria. These hotels were chosen due to their significant roles in advancing crisis management practices in Nigeria. Recognized for maintaining high industry standards and professional operations, they demonstrate a proactive approach to handling operational challenges, including crises. This makes them well-suited for a study on effective crisis management strategies. As a result, a certain level of consistency is expected in their crisis management policies and overall administrative practices. The primary data collection involved 195 structured questionnaires designed for hoteliers and their guests from the selected Hotels in Oyo State. The questionnaires incorporated scales for Stakeholder Engagement, Legal and Ethical Considerations, Response Coordination, Training and Education, and Guest Satisfaction derived from the works of Kim, and Lee (2020), Law et al., (2022), Lai et al. (2020), Ghaderi et al. (2021) and Yallop, and Seraphin (2020) respectively as indicated in Table

1

Table 1: Research instrument

Variable	Items	α of Cronbach	Composite reliability
Stakeholder Engagement	1. Our hotel actively engages stakeholders including customers, employees, and suppliers in decision-making during crises. 2. Regular communication with stakeholders enhances our crisis response effectiveness, while their feedback is integrated into our crisis management strategies.	0.801	0.828

	3. Collaboration with local communities strengthens our recovery efforts. 4. We also maintain strong relationships with external partners, such as suppliers and regulatory bodies, to ensure efficient crisis management. 5. Proactively involving stakeholders allows us to identify and mitigate potential risks before they escalate.		
Legal and Ethical Considerations	1. Our hotel strictly complies with legal requirements during crises, ensuring that all actions align with regulatory standards. 2. Ethical considerations play a crucial role in guiding our decision-making processes during emergencies. 3. We prioritize compliance with health and safety regulations to protect guests and employees. 4. Adhering to legal standards helps minimize the risk of fines or reputational damage, while ethical crisis management practices strengthen guest trust in our brand. 5. We undergo training to handle crises with integrity and responsibility.	0.811	0.852
Response Coordination	1. Our hotel has a well-structured crisis management plan that is effectively executed during emergencies. 2. Seamless coordination among departments enables a swift and efficient crisis response, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities communicated to all staff. 3. Emergency response teams are activated promptly to address critical situations, while collaboration with external agencies, such as law enforcement and medical services, enhances crisis resolution. 4. Efficient response coordination helps minimize service disruptions and ensures continued guest safety and satisfaction.	0.803	0.821

Training and Education	1. Our staff undergo regular training to effectively handle various types of crises, boosting their confidence in emergency situations. 2. The training acquired include communication skills for managing guest interactions during crises, as well as compliance with health and safety protocols. 3. Simulation exercises are conducted to prepare employees for real-life crisis scenarios, ensuring a swift and coordinated response. 4. Continuous education on crisis management enhances overall service quality, even during disruptions.	0.811	0.832
Guest Satisfaction	1. Guests consistently express satisfaction with how crises are managed at our hotel. 2. Our crisis management practices prioritize guest safety and comfort, ensuring prompt resolution of concerns during emergencies. 3. Effective handling of crises strengthens guest trust in our brand, while guests value our clear communication efforts during such situations. 4. Our crisis management practices play a significant role in enhancing guest satisfaction and fostering loyalty.	0.819	0.826

From Table 1, the Cronbach's alpha values and composite reliability for each variable is higher than 0.70. The high reliability values across all variables suggest that the measures used in this research instrument are dependable and consistent in assessing the respective factors (stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, training and education, and guest satisfaction). This implies that the findings will likely provide valid insights into how these factors influence guest satisfaction in the hotel industry during crises. The results can help hotel management improve crisis management strategies, enhance guest experiences, and build stronger relationships with stakeholders. Furthermore, it underlines the importance of continuous training, effective coordination, and ethical decision-making in ensuring a successful crisis management approach that leads to positive guest outcomes.

Results and Discussion

Table 2: Results of the Structural Equation Modelling Without Mediation (Direct Effect of Crisis Management Parameters on Guest Satisfaction)

Path	Coef.	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis	Remark
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SE →GS	.6456	4.976	0.000	H1	Supported
LEC →GS	.6321	4.892	0.000	H2	Supported
RC →GS	.6431	5.021	0.000	H3	Supported
TE → GS	.5892	4.421	0.000	H4	Supported
BR→ GS	.5272	4.123	0.000	H5	Supported

NOTE: SE = Stakeholder engagement, LEC = Legal and ethical considerations, RC = Response coordination, TE = Training and education, GS = Guest satisfaction, BR = Brand Reputation

The results in Table 2 highlight the direct effects of crisis management parameters (stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, training and education), and brand reputation on guest satisfaction (GS). A coefficient of 0.6456, t-value of 4.976, and p-value of 0.000 indicate a significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and guest satisfaction. This suggests that effective collaboration and communication with stakeholders directly enhance guests' experiences. These findings align with the works of Xiang et al. (2021), Pappas (2018), and Paraskevas and Quek (2018), who identified stakeholder engagement as a strong predictor of guest satisfaction. Therefore, H1 is supported.

Similarly, legal and ethical considerations (Coef. = 0.6321, t = 4.892, p = 0.000) exhibit a strong association with guest satisfaction, emphasizing the critical role of ethical practices and regulatory compliance in fostering customer trust and satisfaction. This finding is consistent with studies by Yallop and Seraphin (2020) and Israel et al. (2019), which identify legal and ethical considerations as key determinants of guest satisfaction. Thus, H2 is supported.

The coefficient of 0.6431, t-value of 5.02, and p-value of 0.000 further indicate a significant positive effect of response coordination on guest satisfaction. This underscores the importance of effective crisis response in enhancing guest experiences. These findings align with those of Valeri and Baggio (2021) and Hall et al. (2020), who also found response coordination to be significantly linked to guest satisfaction. Hence, H3 is supported.

Additionally, training and education (Coef. = 0.5892, t = 4.421, p = 0.000) show a significant positive effect on guest satisfaction, demonstrating that investing in employee capacity-building contributes to improved customer loyalty. This finding aligns with existing literature, including Mikulincer and Shaver (2015), Mura et al. (2022), and Feeney et al. (2020), which emphasize the significant role of training and education in organizational performance. Therefore, H4 is supported.

Finally, brand reputation (Coef. = 0.5272, t-value = 4.123, p-value = 0.000) is shown to have a significant impact on guest satisfaction. This highlights the long-term importance of maintaining a strong brand identity and positive image, particularly during crises. Guests are more likely to trust and return to a brand known for effective crisis management. This result is consistent with Wijaya (2013), who found brand reputation to be a key factor in organizational performance. Overall, these findings suggest that all five crisis management parameters (stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, training and education), and brand reputation are predictors of guest satisfaction. This underscores the importance of implementing effective crisis management strategies to enhance guest experiences in the hotel industry.

Table 3: Results of the Structural Equation Modelling Without Mediation (Indirect Effect of Brand Reputation on Crisis Management Parameters and Guest Satisfaction)

Path	Coef.	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis	Remark
SE → BR→GS	.7568	10.760	0.000		Partially

LEC → BR→GS	.7321	10.292	0.000	H6	supported
RC → BR→GS	.7942	11.012	0.000		
TE→ BR→ GS	.6122	8.361	0.000		

Table 3 presents the mediating effect of brand reputation on the relationship between crisis management parameters stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, and training and education and guest satisfaction (GS). The results indicate that brand reputation partially mediates the relationship between stakeholder engagement and guest satisfaction, as evidenced by a β -value of 0.7568, t-value of 10.760, and p-value of 0.000. Similarly, the mediation effect is observed between legal and ethical considerations and guest satisfaction, with a β -value of 0.7321, t-value of 10.292, and p-value of 0.000.

Furthermore, brand reputation is found to partially mediate the relationship between response coordination and guest satisfaction ($\beta = 0.7942$, $t = 11.012$, $p = 0.000$). Additionally, the results indicate that brand reputation also plays a partial mediating role between training and education and guest satisfaction, with a β -value of 0.6122, t-value of 8.361, and p-value of 0.000. These findings align with the mediation guidelines established by Baron and Kenny (1998), which suggest that partial mediation occurs when both the independent variable and the mediator significantly predict the dependent variable. Thus, H6 is partially supported.

Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of crisis management strategies in enhancing guest satisfaction within the hotel industry. The results confirm that stakeholder engagement, legal and ethical considerations, response coordination, training and education, and brand reputation all have significant direct effects on guest satisfaction. This suggests that hotels that prioritize stakeholder communication, uphold ethical standards, coordinate responses effectively, and invest in employee training are more likely to achieve higher levels of guest satisfaction. Additionally, the study highlights the partial mediating effect of brand reputation on the relationship between crisis management parameters and guest satisfaction. This implies that while crisis management practices directly enhance guest experiences, the positive impact is further reinforced when a strong brand reputation is maintained. A well-managed brand identity, particularly during crises, fosters customer trust and loyalty, ultimately leading to higher guest satisfaction.

Inclusion, these findings emphasize the importance of integrating crisis management strategies with brand-building efforts to create a resilient and guest-centric hospitality sector. Hotels that effectively implement these measures are better positioned to navigate crises while maintaining high levels of guest satisfaction and long-term business success.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by reinforcing the applicability of Signalling Theory, Image Restoration Theory, and Organizational Resilience Theory in the context of crisis management, brand reputation, and guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry. The findings provide empirical support for these theories and offer insights into how they interact to shape organizational performance. First, the study validates Signalling Theory by demonstrating that effective crisis management strategies, such as stakeholder engagement and ethical practices, serve as positive signals that build trust and enhance brand reputation. The results

support previous studies (e.g., Alves et al., 2020; Baum & Hai, 2020) that emphasize how transparent communication and proactive crisis responses influence guest perceptions, ultimately leading to higher satisfaction levels. This finding extends the application of Signalling Theory in the hospitality industry, particularly within Nigeria's competitive market, where crisis management serves as a key differentiator for brand positioning.

Second, the study aligns with Image Restoration Theory, highlighting how organizations can use crisis management strategies to rebuild and protect their reputation following crises. The evidence suggests that effective response coordination and ethical considerations are critical in restoring guest trust and satisfaction. This corroborates previous findings (e.g., Rogerson & Baum, 2020; Pizam, 2020) that emphasize the role of public apologies, compensation, and corrective actions in mitigating reputational damage. By applying Image Restoration Theory, this study underscores the importance of proactive reputation management in crisis situations, particularly in regions prone to security threats, pandemics, and operational disruptions like Nigeria.

Lastly, the study provides empirical support for Organizational Resilience Theory by demonstrating how resilience-driven crisis management enhances brand reputation and guest satisfaction. The findings suggest that investing in training and education, as well as maintaining a structured response coordination system, contributes to an organization's ability to adapt to crises and sustain performance. This aligns with previous research (e.g., Hall et al., 2020; Gössling, 2021) that emphasizes resilience as a strategic capability enabling businesses to navigate disruptions while maintaining operational continuity. The study further extends this theory by showcasing its relevance in emerging economies, where resilience is critical for sustaining customer trust and business growth amid external uncertainties.

Overall, this study enriches theoretical discussions by demonstrating the interconnected roles of crisis management, brand reputation, and guest satisfaction through the lens of these three theories. It also provides a foundation for future research to explore more context-specific applications of these theories, particularly in hospitality sectors operating in volatile environments.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study offer valuable insights for hotel managers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders on the critical role of crisis management in enhancing guest satisfaction and sustaining brand reputation. First, the significant relationship between stakeholder engagement and guest satisfaction underscores the importance of fostering strong relationships with key stakeholders, including employees, customers, regulators, and suppliers. Hotel managers should prioritize transparent communication, active engagement with guests, and collaboration with industry regulators to ensure a proactive approach to crisis management. This will help in building trust and improving guest experiences, leading to higher satisfaction and repeat patronage.

Second, the study highlights the strong influence of legal and ethical considerations on guest satisfaction. This implies that hotels must adhere strictly to ethical practices, regulatory requirements, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. By implementing fair business practices, prioritizing customer rights, and ensuring compliance with industry regulations, hospitality firms can enhance their credibility and foster customer loyalty.

Third, the positive impact of response coordination on guest satisfaction emphasizes the need for hotels to develop well-structured crisis response plans. Effective coordination during

crises such as health emergencies, security threats, or operational disruptions—ensures minimal disruption to guest experiences. Hotels should invest in crisis management teams, conduct regular emergency drills, and establish clear protocols to respond swiftly and effectively to incidents. Fourth, the study confirms that training and education significantly improve guest satisfaction by enhancing employees' skills and service quality. Hotel management should continuously invest in capacity-building programs, customer service training, and crisis management workshops for employees. Well-trained staff can respond professionally during crises, ensuring guests feel secure and valued.

Furthermore, the findings reveal that brand reputation plays a mediating role in the relationship between crisis management and guest satisfaction. This suggests that a strong brand identity, built through consistent crisis preparedness and ethical practices, is crucial for long-term success. Hotels should focus on reputation management strategies, including proactive public relations, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and transparent crisis communication to maintain customer trust even during challenging periods.

Overall, this study provides practical recommendations for hospitality businesses to enhance resilience, improve guest experiences, and maintain competitive advantage in the face of crises. By adopting comprehensive crisis management strategies and strengthening brand reputation, hotels can achieve long-term sustainability and customer loyalty in an increasingly dynamic industry environment.

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