

Human Resource Management in Managing Employee
Retention during COVID-19 for Sport and Wellness Resorts in
Phuket



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การจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์ในการรักษาพนักงานในช่วง COVID-19 ของรีสอร์ทสำหรับ
สุขภาพและกีฬาในจังหวัดภูเก็ต



สารนิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต
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พินิจา สัตยาภรณ์ : การจัดการทรัพยากรมนุษย์ในการรักษาพนักงานในช่วง COVID-19 ของรีสอร์ทสำหรับสุขภาพและกีฬาในจังหวัดภูเก็ต. (Human Resource Management in Managing Employee Retention during COVID-19 for Sport and Wellness Resorts in Phuket) อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก : ผศ. ดร.สันต์ สัมปิตตะวานิช

ภูเก็ต 1 ใน 10 เมืองท่องเที่ยวอันดับ 1 ของไทย ได้รับผลกระทบจากสถานการณ์โควิด 19 การขาดแคลนพนักงานถือเป็นวิกฤตครั้งใหญ่ในพื้นที่ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งสำหรับตลาดเฉพาะกลุ่มเช่น รีสอร์ทกีฬาและสุขภาพที่มีความต้องการแรงงานศักยภาพสูง การศึกษาค้นคว้าอิสระฉบับนี้เกี่ยวกับวิธีที่รีสอร์ทเหล่านี้จัดการกับวิกฤต รายงานนี้ประกอบด้วยข้อมูลจากมุมมองของฝ่ายทรัพยากรบุคคลและพนักงานเพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยความสำเร็จที่สำคัญของการบริหารทรัพยากรบุคคลในการรักษาพนักงานช่วงวิกฤตโควิด 19 และผลกระทบของโควิด 19 ต่อการบริหารทรัพยากรบุคคลกีฬาและรีสอร์ทเพื่อสุขภาพของจังหวัดภูเก็ต ผลการวิจัยพบว่าโควิด 19 ทำให้การบริหารทรัพยากรบุคคลต้องปรับเปลี่ยนกฎระเบียบด้านความปลอดภัยของทุกคนในที่ทำงาน เพิ่มการสนับสนุนพนักงานในด้านต่างๆ และส่งเสริมการพัฒนาของพนักงานแม้ในยามวิกฤต เพื่อความสำเร็จของการคงไว้ซึ่งพนักงานในช่วงวิกฤติ รีสอร์ทจำเป็นต้องเพิ่มการมีส่วนร่วมของพนักงานและส่งเสริมวัฒนธรรมการทำงานที่ยืดหยุ่นตามความต้องการของพนักงาน การศึกษาในอนาคตอาจใช้เวลาศึกษานานขึ้นเพื่อกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใหญ่ขึ้นและเพื่อค้นหาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างข้อมูลประชากรและกิจกรรม HRM อื่นๆ ที่มากกว่าการมีส่วนร่วมของพนักงานและวัฒนธรรมการทำงาน



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Phuket, a top-ten tourism contributor in Thailand, was affected by the COVID-19 situation. The staff shortage has been a massive crisis in the area, especially for high-potential niche markets like sports and wellness resorts in Phuket. This study is about how these accommodations handle the crisis. The paper contained data from HR and employee perspectives to investigate the key success factors of the human resource management implemented by Phuket's sports and wellness resorts toward employee retention during the COVID-19 crisis and the effects of COVID-19 on the human resource management of Phuket's sports and wellness resorts. The result shows that COVID-19 made many adjustments to human resource management based on safety regulations, increased employee support, and development even in times of crisis. The resorts need to increase employee engagement and promote a flexible work culture based on employees' needs. The future study can take longer study time to complete with a larger sample size to find relationships between demographics and other HRM activities rather than employee engagement and work culture.



Field of Study:	Business and Managerial Economics	Student's Signature
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1.Introduction

Thailand's tourism industry has been growing continuously over the years. It significantly contributes to economic growth and job opportunities for the country's population. Phuket is one of the top 10 popular travel destinations in Thailand of all time. It is well known for its beautiful beaches, clear blue waters, and unique culture. Phuket attracts visitors from all over the world who want to enjoy a variety of beach and water activities, local cuisine with multicultural influences, and historical and cultural attractions with breathtaking views. Phuket is a destination that leaves an indelible impression. The travel and tourism industry in Phuket helps the service sector within the province grow rapidly; examples of service businesses include hotels, restaurants, transportation, and entertainment. This sector covers around 70% of the local economy. As this sector blooms, the opportunities for employment also grow, making it a tempting area for people to work in this industry in Phuket. According to the National Statistical Office of Thailand, the total labor force in Phuket Province stands at 253,129. At 61.8% of this number, people are employed in the service sector, 17.4% in the industrial sector, and 18.7% in the agricultural sector. And the unemployment rate is only 0.7%.

According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Phuket welcomed over 11 million visitors in 2019, making it one of the most visited Asian destinations in 2019. With this high number of travelers, Phuket employs thousands of people to serve the hotel and hospitality industry. There are also plenty of job opportunities for foreign nationals to work in Phuket due to the large number of multinational travelers who need assistance in many languages. The most popular international markets for Phuket at that time were China, Russia, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

New trends in the travel industry are emerging. Rather than a normal vacation getaway, eco-friendly tourism focuses on preserving the environment and creating a more sustainable travel experience. A digital nomadism trend, which allows travelers to be anywhere exploring the world and working at the same time. Lastly, there is an interesting trend focusing on health and wellness, the travelers seek out for physical and mental activities such as sports, yoga, meditation, and related experiences.

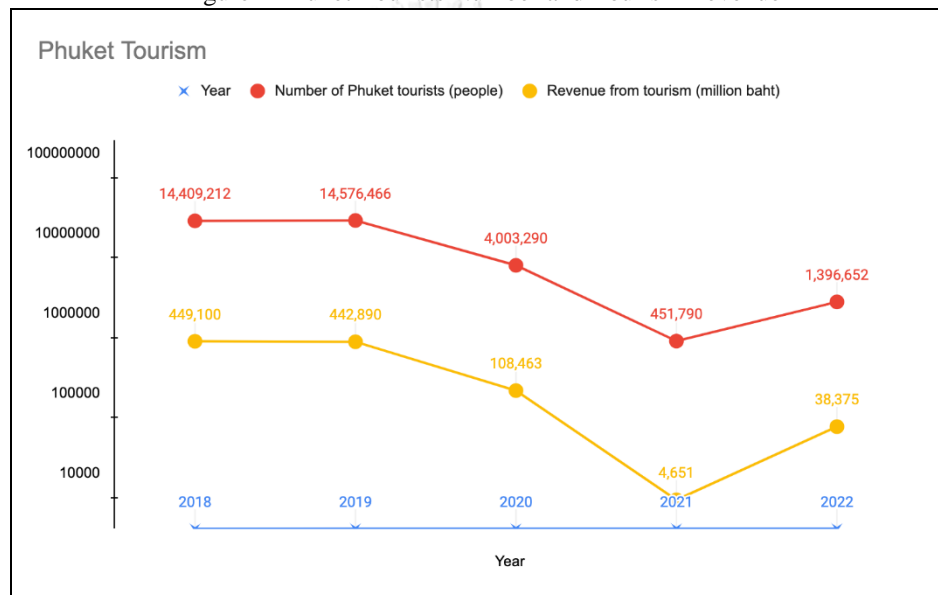
Phuket is seeing a rise in the popularity of sport tourism as a result of the island's abundance of visitor-friendly activities. Golf, Muay Thai, yoga, and scuba diving are all well-liked sports. In addition, Phuket hosts a number of international sporting events, including the Ironman Triathlon, the Asia Beach Games, and the annual Phuket Marathon. Phuket is a great place for tourists interested in sports because of its temperate climate and varied scenery.

Phuket is also the perfect vacation spot for anyone looking to unwind and improve their health. Phuket is a haven for yoga, meditation, spas, and wellness retreats, in addition to offering some of Southeast Asia's top medical care. The island is home to top-notch medical facilities and knowledgeable physicians. Additionally, there are a number of hospitals that focus on offering visitors affordable medical care.

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has arrived and caused damage to the economy of Phuket. The main economic driver, like tourism, was hit so hard. The international airport and border closures strongly affect accommodations, restaurants, and other businesses engaging with the travel and tourism industry.

According to the data from the Phuket Provincial Statistical Office, figure 1 shows the number of tourists and revenue from tourism in Phuket from 2018 to 2022. The number of travelers and tourism revenue have obviously decreased since COVID-19 hit the island in 2020 and carried on into 2021 and 2022. Despite the Thai government's efforts to boost tourism sectors through a variety of programs, numbers are still slowly rising but have not reached pre-COVID-19 levels.

Figure 1 Phuket Tourists Number and Tourism Revenue



Source: Government Data Catalog

Apart from the duty of coping with vaccines and practices against COVID-19 and controlling the spread of the virus in the province, Phuket is one of the main destinations to accommodate domestic tourists who visit during the country's closure. When there was less infection within Thailand, the government stimulated domestic travel with the "We Travel Together Campaign" with a 40% discount on accommodation and food coupons that the government would compensate the service provider directly. Dashboards from the Government Big Data Institute show a higher percentage of Thai than foreign visitors in Phuket from February 2020 to April 2022. But the number of gross revenues in 2020 and 2021 were only 1.59 and 6.89 billion baht, respectively, and revenue per visitor was 8,660 baht in 2020 and 26,320 baht in 2021 due to the different spending proportions of Thai and foreign travelers.

Phuket is actually the first to accept travelers from international airports via the "Phuket Sandbox Program," starting in October 2021. But the number of international visitors is slowly climbing up. After the relaxation of travel restrictions and the

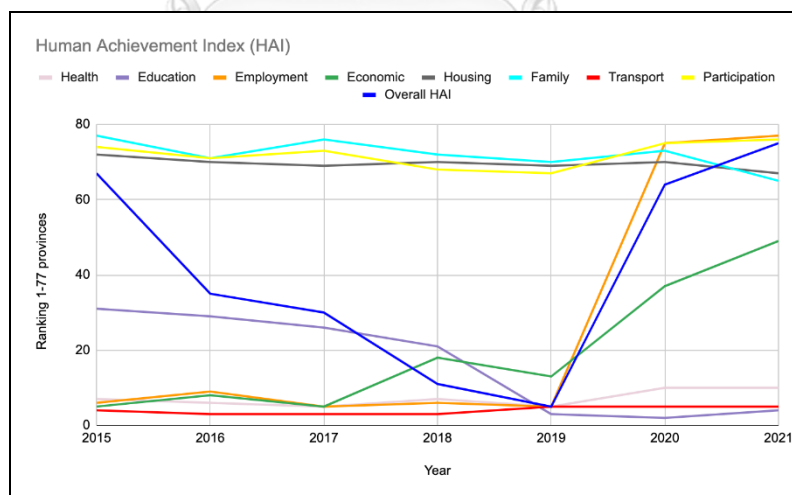
COVID situation can be controlled in mid-2022, the ratio of foreign visitors is higher than Thai visitors, at 65% to 35%. This increases the gross revenue to 26.87 billion baht, and revenue per visitor rises to 33,670 baht.

Unfortunately, the increased number of visitors led to a shortage of hospitality staff in Phuket. As a result of the COVID-19 economy shut down, the labor force in this service industry has dramatically reduced, as it is not possible to survive if there is no business to rely on. Many of them moved out of the area or moved on to work in other industries.

With higher demand from rising numbers of tourists mismatching the limited number of suitable workers in Phuket, some service providers are trying to raise salaries and offer tempting working conditions to get qualified staff, offering better benefits and more incentives to retain experienced workers to stay with them. Contrarily, the turnover rate in Phuket's hospitality industry is still between 30 and 40% due to the opposite direction of competition and growth opportunity. Therefore, some hotels and restaurants are in touch with vocational schools to train local students in hospitality-related skills to serve the industry in need.

Figure 2 shows that some criteria in the Human Achievement Index (HAI), one of Phuket's provincial indicators, were consistently high and reached their highest peak in 2019 in health, education, transportation economics, and employment. But due to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic and employment indicators have changed to low levels compared to the 77 provinces in Thailand.

Figure 2 Human Achievement Index (HAI)



Source: NESDC

Rank and classification 1-15 = "high" 16-30 = "somewhat high" 31-45 = "average" 45-60 = "somewhat low" 61-77 = "low"

Obviously, COVID-19 has had a huge impact on Phuket's economy and employment. And because the tourism industry is the province's main driving force, hospitality labor and service personnel are extremely important to run this tourism sector. It is interesting to see how this sector copes with the economic crisis and labor shortages, especially the niche market resorts that require a specific workforce.

This paper would like to explore how hotels and resorts in Phuket dealt with the COVID-19 situation, focusing on how to manage the human resources of hotels and resorts to survive the COVID crisis. The scope of the research is specific to the sports and wellness tourism market in Phuket only.

Research objectives

- To examine the effects of COVID-19 on the human resource management of sports and wellness resorts in Phuket
- To investigate the key success factors of human resource management implemented by Phuket's sports and wellness resorts toward employee retention in the COVID-19 crisis

Research frame

In order to achieve the paper objectives, the study focuses on changes in human resource management to manage staff retention during COVID-19 in Phuket. The target populations are sports and wellness resorts in Phuket that offer accommodation as well as at least one sport or wellness package as a part of the stay.

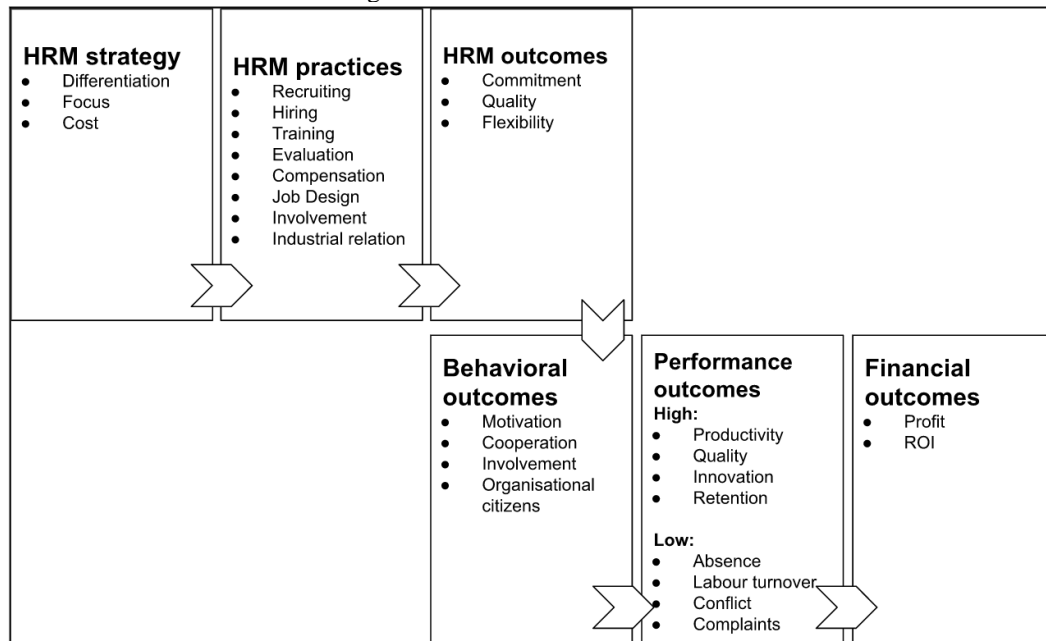
2.Literature Review

2.1 Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management (HRM) is an essential factor in the organization's performance. (Price 2007) HRM involves the planning, organizing, and controlling of the employment alongside strategies and goals of the organization to maximize its efficiency and productivity (McKenna and Beech 1995). Later on,(Armstrong and Taylor 2006) added that HRM also involves the development, maintenance, and best use of human resources in firms.

HRM oversees all activities that lead to the success of attracting, developing, motivating, and maintaining productivity, all of which affect the success of the organization. In other words, HRM is taking care of the success of the organization(Sims 2002).

Figure 3 The Guest Model of HRM



Source: Guest (1997)

The Guest model since 1997 has emphasized the assumption of human resource management, linking each step's execution with outcome in three aspects: behavior outcome, performance outcome, and financial outcome. (Guest 1997)

(Price 2007) suggested that understanding the external environment and the wider picture of the organization is essential for effective human resource management. (Tiwari and Saxena 2012) said firms need to implement innovative HRM practices one step ahead of their competitors. With dedication, effective HRM leads to higher competitive advantage, job satisfaction, financial performance, and employee retention, with the agreement of (Dessler 2013) who emphasizes the importance of employee retention for successful human resource management. (Tiwari and Saxena 2012) also suggests that HRM practices should be analyzed from time to time with perspectives from employees and involve line managers in HRM practice design and decision making.

HRM in the hospitality and tourism industries (Cho, Woods et al. 2006) stated that human resource practices significantly impact the performance of hospitality, due to the character of service-oriented organizations that require service-minded behaviors in employees of this industry (Tang and Tang 2012). (Chand and Katou 2007) suggested that, apart from key practices to recruit and plan for manpower and job design, provide training and related development, and arrange payment systems, HRM should use job analysis and staffing strategies to confirm they hired employees with sufficient skills and abilities with ongoing training and development opportunities, as well as construct activities to promote employee engagement, motivation, and loyalty in the workplace for alignment with the firm's competitive strategy.

For the study in boutique hotels, employees' service perception and their engagement to create brand value with the organization are influenced by internal branding, brand communication, and leadership direction.(Nguyen, Lu et al. 2018) The bigger hotels, especially luxury 4 and 5-star hotels, focus more on the strategic HRM approach to improve employee retention via more sustainable labor practices and reduce dependence on temporary labor (Davidson, Timo et al. 2010).

2.2 Human Resource Management vs COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on workplaces. Uncertainty has spread due to the crisis that has made organizations fight for their survival and vitality. In terms of physical, practical, and social psychology, it has altered how all aspects of work are done and how they are done (Carnevale and Hatak 2020). This raises issues in HRM such as virtual workplace adaptation, management in unstable situations, and redefined performance descriptions. In order to adjust to the new working environment, HRM needs to assess and modify its practices and tools (AVGITIDOU 2021).

In a crisis situation,(Athamneh 2018) suggested HRM make sure employees are fully protected by providing employees with clear communication, implementing safety processes and policies, and supporting them throughout the entire time. HR should be proactive in focusing on employee safety and well-being, as well as mitigating the effects of the crisis. In the (Kniffin, Narayanan et al. 2021) study, it was established that people benefit from having strong social connections. While formal forms of social connection like handshakes are now not allowed, informal ways like chatting play an important role in relational interaction, reflecting both mental and physical health (Kniffin, Narayanan et al. 2021). Bradley Connor's study shows how HR increased awareness and importance of mental health has had a positive impact on employees in any work industry. He also added that employees are satisfied with their employers' handling of the situation and how they adapted to the changing environment (Bradley 2022).

The arrival of the pandemic has highlighted the need for automated HR systems, such as HRIS, for workforce management. The study states that the use of automation in HRIS will help businesses manage remote workforces, assist hiring processes efficiently, and reduce administrative burden (Amodeo 2020).

(Gavett 2020) stated key learnings from the COVID-19 pandemic for the future of work. These include digital tools and infrastructure investment for future remote work, collaboration company culture, trust and autonomy environment, data and productivity analysis and measurement, and human touch and virtual work combination. Employees can face experiences of misfit working during COVID-19 as a result of elimination of association with colleagues (Carnevale and Hatak 2020). Working remotely can easily have an impact on an employee's productivity and well-being, as it increases levels of autonomy and self-responsibility (Carnevale and Hatak 2020).

Additionally, (Gavett 2020) emphasized the importance of creating an inclusive work environment and understanding the different needs of different employees to guarantee the health, safety, and effectiveness of the workforce, which would ensure the organization's survival and functionality. (Gigauri 2020) stressed the importance of understanding the unique needs of the workforce, adapting to changing circumstances, and taking health and safety considerations into account.

2.3 Employee retention and turnover

Employee retention is one of the criteria used to assess the organization's human resource management performance. As per the performance outcome in the Guest model, high staff retention is one of the elements (Guest 1997). (Mahal 2012) found a positive correlation between HRM practices and employee retention, but what is employee retention?

A definition by (Tepeci and Bartlett 2002) defined employee retention as the ability of an organization to keep its employees who remain with the organization, while turnover is defined as the rate at which employees leave an organization over a period of time. Employee turnover measurement can identify areas for improvement and measure whether employees are satisfied with their work or not (Chow, Haddad et al. 2007). Additionally, tracking employee turnover can reveal insights into employee motivation, engagement, and the efficiency of an organization (Boudreau and Ramstad 2002).

Turnover intention, defined as "the conscious and deliberate willfulness to leave the organization," is cited in 23 research citations by (Tett and Meyer 1993). (Bluedorn 1982) found a correlation between turnover intention and leaving behavior, (Chiu and Francesco 2003) as their study found that turnover intention leads to actual turnover. The regression analysis by (Bhuyan, McIntyre et al. 2018) shows that HRM practices, motivation, innovation, and organizational culture factors are significantly associated with lower turnover intentions. According to a study by (Mobley, Griffeth et al. 1979), it was found that turnover intentions can give a warning of potential turnover. Examining the intention of turnover thus helps to prevent true leave by addressing employee concerns rather than allowing employees to resign (Tett and Meyer 1993).

(Tepeci and Bartlett 2002) state that high turnover rates can be costly for organizations, as they must invest time and resources into recruiting and training new employees, but high retention rates are beneficial for organizations, as they indicate that employees are satisfied with their jobs and are likely to remain with the organization for the long-term. As it costs the company lots of time and resource investment, organizations should increase their retention rate and reduce their turnover rate in the organization.

For an effective employee retention (Williams 2018) pointed out that employers should consider both the tangible factors, like wages, benefits, compensation and the intangible factors, like respect and recognition. According to the study of (López-Cabrales 2019), there are several key elements to successful employee retention, such

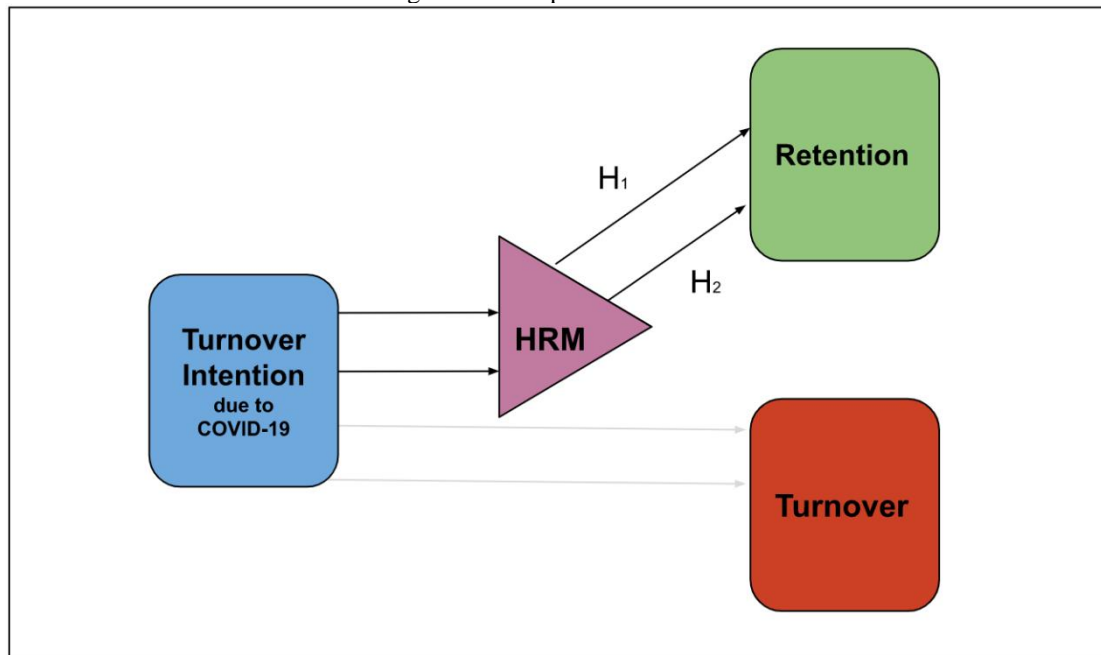
as adequate communication, career development opportunities, fair reward systems, and strong employee involvement in decision-making. (Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn et al. 2014) summarized in their study that encouraging employee engagement has a positive impact on employee retention. Additionally, the studies suggested that organizations should create a positive work environment (López-Cabrales 2019), promote a culture of teamwork and cooperation (Dessler 2013), promote job satisfaction (Tett and Meyer 1993), develop effective rewards systems, and ensure that employees feel valued and appreciated in order to successfully reduce turnover and retain their valued employees (López-Cabrales 2019). However, (Carsten and Spector 1987) pointed out long ago that flexible work environments in organizational culture can make a positive difference in the retention of quality employees, along with providing job security in order to reduce employee turnover.(Deery 2008) agreed with the idea that flexible working hours can reduce high turnover rates, and also emphasized factors such as work-life balance (WLB) that reduce employee turnover in the hospitality and tourism industries.

2.4 Conceptual framework

In conclusion, employees' turnover intention leads to actual turnover behavior (Chiu and Francesco 2003). Human Resource Management (HRM) has a positive correlation with employee retention (Mahal 2012). Moreover, the research found that encouraging employee engagement has a positive impact on employee retention (Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn et al. 2014), and flexibility in organizational culture made a positive impact on the retention of quality employees(Carsten and Spector 1987).

While HRM handles many practice areas, (Guest 1997), covering drives of employee engagement described in 2 Employee Engagement Models by (Hewitt 2015, Deloitte 2016) (see Appendix 1 and 2). HRM's role is playing an intermediate part of work culture creation (Marín, Hernández et al. 2016). Therefore, this paper has its framework and variables, and hypotheses as below.

Figure 4 Conceptual Framework



Source: Developed for this research

H1: HRM at Phuket's sports and wellness resorts encourages employee engagement for employee retention during COVID-19.

H2: HRM at Phuket's sports and wellness resorts increased flexibility in work culture for employee retention during COVID-19.

Independent Variable: Employee Turnover Intention Due to COVID-19

HRM Intervention

- Mediating variable 1: Employee Engagement
- Mediating variable 2: Work Culture

Dependent Variable: Employee Retention

3.Data and Methodology

This chapter will explain the methods utilized in this study to gain data and how to analyze them. Research objectives are to examine the effects of COVID-19 on the human resource management of sports and wellness resorts in Phuket and to investigate the key success factors of the human resource management implemented by these resorts toward employee retention during the COVID-19 crisis. With a narrower scope down to two hypotheses that will investigate HRM in employee engagement and work culture that affect employee retention. This study required a qualitative data type.

3.1 Data Collection

To achieve the objectives and collect information for hypothesis testing, data required in this study must be from the sports and wellness resorts in Phuket, to explore HRM practices that they used to weather COVID-19. As the cause of the whole study framework is COVID-19, the information must cover the whole time period before and after the pandemic to compare and study key success factors.

This qualitative research is separated into two parts: the first part is insight from the people who are directly involved with HRM, which is the human resources department; the second is the employees' desire to remain working with sports and wellness resorts in Phuket through the pandemic to reflect HRM on employee engagement and work culture to make employees stay.

Firstly, the study started with an in-depth interview with the human resources department of the sports and wellness resorts in Phuket regarding their ways and practices to manage their workforce, especially staff retention during the crisis. Using internet searches, there are 16 hotels that meet the criteria to be the target population. The resorts must be in Phuket and offer at least one package that includes accommodation as well as a sport or wellness program during the stay. Last but not least, the resorts must have survived the crisis until now without going bankrupt during COVID-19.

An email sent to the human resources department of 16 applicable sports and wellness resorts in Phuket, introducing that this study is for the MABE program and explaining the need for the study with background and purpose for an academic study paper, asking for a cooperation was the first thing that happened for the data collection. Later on, reaching out to each resort by phone was done to follow up on the matter. Only 10 applicable hotels kindly responded to the data requirement, which means 62.5% response rates. The third attempt was about the scope of information and topic the study needed; hotels required a question list before the interview appointment.

Unfortunately, three out of ten hotels from big hotel chains cannot cooperate further with this study due to the confidentiality and sensitivity of personal information exposure. They suggested relying on published information on websites and tracking down press releases and company communications for the information. Furthermore, two resorts could not keep up with the in-depth interview as the human resource management team is new to the company and cannot provide the information needed for this study to compare HRM before and after COVID-19 has arrived in the organization. Therefore, only five successful in-depth interviews were made in this part. The semi-structured interviews (Adams 2015) were conducted to cover HRM practices in managing staff retention during COVID-19. In case of lacking information or touch points on topics, the probing question about their answers is an aid in this regard.

Table 1 Interview Questions

Research Objectives	Issues	Interview Questions
	Introduction	How would you describe the hospitality labor situation in Phuket?
1	The effects of COVID-19 on the human resource management of sports and wellness resorts in Phuket	How would you describe the COVID-19 situation at your workplace? What are the changes with HRM inside your company to handle the COVID-19 pandemic?
2	Key success factors of human resource management implemented by Phuket's sports and wellness resorts toward employee retention in the COVID-19 crisis	How would you describe the workforce situation in your organization? In what way has COVID-19 had an impact on your employees? What did your company do to manage human resources?

Source: developed for this research

Crisis management has been considered a sensitive issue in a number of studies. This is because organizational crisis management can be linked to management failures (Elsabbagh, Fildes et al. 2004). Therefore, information from the interview will be displayed anonymously in this research. This is clearly communicated prior to the interview to ensure respondent confidentiality.

The interview was conducted via phone, and although it was only five in-depth interviews, it still provided real HRM experience and practice for further analysis. Each phone interview takes approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The whole data collection process for these 10 hotels and resorts started on January 16, 2023, and the last interview was conducted on February 8, 2023.

Part two is the qualitative survey to specifically understand how HRM does indeed affect employee retention during COVID-19 from the employees' perspective. This survey needs to gain information from employees at the sports and wellness resorts in Phuket who remain with the organization before COVID-19 (no later than January 2020).

The goal was to conduct a survey with 50 employees from Phuket's sports and wellness resorts between January 25 and February 25, 2023. A target population comes from the shared insight gained from human resources interviews conducted earlier in Part 1 of this study. They mentioned that the number of employees who have been working with the company until now is not high, and they advised that the companies do not want to expose confidential details of talented employees. The number of employees the company can assist with this study is approximately five people from each company.

Therefore, 10 resorts multiplied by 5 employees equals 50 people. The sampling methods used in this study were judgmental sampling because it required specific participants to provide informative answers, and those participants are difficult to reach (Neuman and Robson 2014), with a little snowballing method thrown in for good measure. Reaching out to target participants by key contact person at 10 hotels that are willing to help at the start was difficult because there is no guarantee that those employees will do the survey; therefore, the response rate was low. Later on, the researcher's personal network takes part in this study. I have reached out to every community I have, searching to see if anyone knows people with specific characteristics, such as working in sports and wellness resorts in Phuket since

COVID-19. Then the sampling method looks slightly like snowballing, with connections to connections.

Participants fill out the survey and anonymously respond to be at number 45, which is a 90% response rate because not all surveys match the criteria of the study. Only 33 effective survey results were included in this paper. Duration of the survey received is from 26 January to 26 February 2023.

The survey was made via Google Form and consisted of 6 demographic questions, one of the questions was the year of work to screen participants who had been working with the hotels and resorts before COVID-19. The survey also has a set of yes/no choices to screen participants for turnover intention. For the work culture, there are two questions to compare the work culture before and after COVID-19 and one open-ended question directly asking about the ideal work culture from the employees. The topic of employee engagement is asked in three sets of yes/no/not sure choices. And five more probing, open-ended questions to extract more opinions from targeted employees (Adams 2015).

The reason to use choice questions is because Google Forms allows only one choice to be selected for each question. Yes or no options were asked about the fact that it happened. Yes, no, and not sure questions asked opinions about how they feel about their employee engagement encouragement; a certain answer shows no hesitation in the answer (Sinnott-Armstrong 2006). I did not use Likert's scale in the survey due to the downside of neutrality in opinion and the scale distance between two things (Likert 1932).

3.2 Methodology

- Employee Turnover Intention due to COVID-19

Turnover intention is the willfulness to leave the organization (Tett and Meyer 1993). Turnover intention, leaving behavior, and turnover are correlated (Bluedorn 1982, Chiu and Francesco 2003). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the hospitality and tourism industries, it is common for employees to move around and resign as per the lockdown, business shutdown, etc.

This variable is translated by keywords in the interview answer from the human resources department interviews, part 1. In addition, in the survey part, turnover intention is measured by selecting if the participants have thoughts of resigning, have been headhunted to work at another company, have the idea of moving out of Phuket, or have thoughts of switching to different industries due to the COVID-19 situation in Phuket. Asking about resignation and headhunting because they are reasons to leave, relocating from Phuket is because of the latent population there (Appendix 3), and changing to other industries is due to the effect of COVID-19 on Phuket economics and business.

- Employee Engagement

Employee engagement refers to a worker's level of happiness in their job, loyalty, and propensity to do extra effort for the benefit of the company (Deloitte 2016). If employee engagement has been encouraged, employee retention will be higher due to their positive relationship (Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn et al. 2014).

To translate this variable from data, the interview answer is obviously to tell us about it; if there is no mention, the key words will be probing questions asked during the interview. However, the survey extracted variables from the data by asking three sets of yes-or-no or not-sure questions that asked opinions about their employee engagement encouragement. The questions are framed by combining two employee engagement models and using what drives employee engagement. The first model is the Aon Hewitt Employee Engagement Model (Hewitt 2015) (Appendix 1).

The model help forming questions to ask if the participants are satisfied with your job to ask about satisfaction with the work itself, receive news and updates from the company often to ask about communication from the company, the company has extra allowances and compensation for the situation of COVID-19 to ask about benefit, feel that the company try to make you have less concerns about job security (unemployed, layoffs) to ask about job security, feel that the company cares about your health and safety at work more than before to ask about safety, feel supported in your professional development to ask about learning and development, frequently acknowledge the concern from the company that you are not fighting this crisis alone to ask about inspiration from leadership, feel that you have reasonable amount of work because it is crisis time to ask about people management, and last but not least, are satisfied with the employee management from the management team to ask about leadership.

The second model is the Deloitte Employee Engagement Model (Deloitte 2016) (Appendix 2). The questions from this model are: you find your work meaningful to ask about meaningful work; you can easily contact management or HR for help to ask about support from management; the company was empathic for you to work during the COVID-19 crisis to ask about a humanistic workplace; you feel more connected to your coworkers in your organization to ask about a culture of recognition; you are encouraged to learn new tasks and skill sets to ask about growth opportunity, your opinions have been heard and applied regularly to ask about inclusivity; you receive the encouragement from the company to work your best every day to ask about inspiration from leadership; and the company offered to move between positions internally during the COVID-19 to ask about facilitated talent mobility.

The total of 17 questions in the survey are not ordered by models, they are assorted by the theme of the participant's opinion about the workplace, feelings, and work during COVID-19.

- Work Culture

A work culture is a system of values, beliefs, and behaviors that shapes how real work is accomplished within an organization (Deloitte 2016). The Organizational Cultural Assessment Instrument, or OCAI Model, is a model that categorizes a company's organizational culture into four types based on the dimensions of flexibility (adaptability to change) and control (focus on stability), as well as the dimension of internal or external factor orientation (Stock, McFadden et al. 2007, Sánchez-Marín, Danvila-del Valle et al. 2015).

Figure 5 Work Culture OCAI Model



Source:(Stock, McFadden et al. 2007) adapted from (Cameron 1999)

The translation of the data into the work culture variable, the open-ended question in surveys or interviews, will provide keywords linking to each model. If the keywords are not mentioned in the interview answers, I will point out the topic and let HR talk about it. The question in the survey is, "Please describe the work environment that you wish to stay in and work with in normal time and during a crisis period."

For the choice selection in the survey, there are multiple boxes from which participants can choose the word group that they think best describes their work environment during COVID-19. The option that reflects market culture is result orientation: a focus on competition and evaluation (KPI); for hierarchy culture, a focus on stability, management power, formal rules, and control structure; for adhocracy culture, an orientation towards change, personal creativity, and innovation. The last one is clan culture, described in Option 4 as unity, teamwork, mutual respect, and loyalty.

- Employee Retention

Employee retention as the ability of an organization to keep its employees who remain with the organization (Tepeci and Bartlett 2002). It is measured from the interviews by keywords mentioned by HR. The survey contains no question regarding this variable, but the criteria of the participants is that they must remain working in the organization before COVID-19, therefore, all the answers from the survey are from retained employees.

- Data analysis

The in-depth interviews, part 1, started with typing interview records in transcription format. Then categorizing them by models, concepts, and common features as well as using content analysis concept by (Krippendorff 2018) to concern answers by the context and if the analyzed answers infer back to the hypotheses.

The survey part, "turnover intention," directly shows its feature with a yes or no answer. This is criteria for participants as we want to assure that they had turnover intention but still remain working with the company. The employee engagement will be analyzed by descriptive statistics to summarize features from data collection (Mann 2007) and cross it with demographic results to see relationship and trends displayed by survey answers. For the work culture, data analysis will be graphically analyzed with descriptive statistics (Mann 2007) based on the direction survey answers have guided.

For the other open-ended questions, to analyze the answer from the survey will be thematic analysis as it fits qualitative data that allow researchers to identify them into patterns and themes (Guest, MacQueen et al. 2011).

4.Findings

Part 1: Information from human resources departments and the sport and wellness resorts in Phuket

1.1 Primary data from the interviews

- Summary answers from five interviewees

Q: How would you describe the hospitality labor situation in Phuket?

A: The hospitality industry in Phuket is facing a crisis in terms of staffing. Especially with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, many hotels and restaurants have had to close their businesses during lockdown and district closure. As a result, when these businesses reopen, they often find themselves with a shortage of employees, as many

of the previous staff have decided to leave the hospitality industry or leave Phuket for good. This has resulted in many hotels having to reduce their services or limit their opening hours because they cannot find enough people who are willing to work for them. The situation is becoming increasingly dire, and it is clear that more needs to be done to ensure that the hospitality industry and related industries are adequately staffed. In the meantime, businesses in this sector must find their ways to survive with the limited resources they have.

Q: How would you describe the COVID-19 situation at your workplace?

A: The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on their workplaces; one out of five sports and wellness resorts here had to make difficult decisions about layoffs and salary reductions for some of their employees, while the other three organizations only reduced salaries without laying off, and only one hotel did not layoff or reduce salaries. All five hotels emphasize workplace safety very seriously and have taken all necessary precautions to ensure the health and safety of their employees. They all push the workplace toward remote work and working from home as much as possible. As is the nature of the service industry, not all positions can be done remotely; therefore, three of them provided accommodations for staff to reduce the risk of infection and offered quarantine packages in case their staff had gotten COVID-19 infection, as they already collaborate with hospitals and provide hospital measures with Phuket Sandbox. Four out of five have implemented a policy requiring employees to get vaccinated and do a COVID test before returning to the workplace and once every day or week. Only one hotel said that the vaccine is optional based on their employees' decisions, but the testing practices are still ongoing. Additionally, due to the pandemic, some of their employees had to take on more work as a result of the resignation of some workers who are not from Phuket or Thailand, as well as increased workloads for health and medical staff to ensure the health and safety of both clients and employees within the organizations.

Q: What are the changes with HRM inside your company to handle the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: These five companies have implemented a number of changes to HRM practices to address the COVID-19 pandemic. They have provided support, resources, and training for their employees to work from home; they have increased communication with employees to ensure they are aware of the latest policy and practices; they have to ensure the well-being of the employees; and they also have to provide compensation for those affected by the pandemic. Moreover, they have also had to deal with leave and resignation requests, make the difficult decision to stop any new recruitment and reduce budget allocation toward rewards and extra pay, and be careful not to make any long-term commitments.

Q: How would you describe the workforce situation in your organization?

A: Three out of five sports and wellness resorts mentioned in the interview were temporarily closed during the COVID-19 lockdown, and staff who lived on wages and service charges left the companies. Later on, they slowly opened up to Thailand's government programs such as "Phuket Sandbox," "SHA Plus," "SHA Extra Plus, and

"We travel together". The other two said they did whatever they could to keep their existing customers and provide the best service and safety possible. After their hotel comes back into operation, everyone has to adapt to the new normal situation. During COVID-19, they did not take on any new staff but tried their best to ensure that existing staff remained safe and supported. However, despite these five hotels, the HRs said their employees have remained incredibly loyal and feel like a family working together, but because they are not a normal leisure-oriented business, it is harder to rise up and make a lot of money in this niche market. Therefore, some of their loyal employees resign due to financial constraints. Also, some employees who were not satisfied with the changes left the organizations too.

Q: In what way has COVID-19 had an impact on your employees?

A: The pandemic has had a significant impact on their employees. Even though one of the hotels did not have to reduce staff salaries or lay anyone off, some employees have resigned due to the effects of the pandemic, and morale has been low because the downturn in business has resulted in a lack of service charges and an increase in workloads for some departments. Additionally, for sure, other sports and wellness resorts that reduce salaries demotivate employees and make them think about leaving as well. All five interviewees said the same thing about an increase in mental health concerns among their employees. Their companies are working to provide them with the care and support their employees need. On the other hand, HR said they see more collaboration and their employees helping each other out wherever possible. The team members that have remained are stronger in their teamwork and more committed to the organization, helping it fight through crises and move on to the future together. Though there are changes and adaptations, they found that their team strives for it more and is vigilant about change.

Q: What did your company do to manage human resources?

A: All five interviewees said their companies tried to ensure the safety, health, and wellbeing of their employees during this difficult time. All five hotels have invested in training for healthy practices and safety protocols, and two hotels utilized the medical staff, equipment, and facilities to boost employee immunity with extra vitamins and nutritious meals. These five hotels provided learning opportunities for those staff members who wanted to grow new skills during the crisis or even cover some new tasks due to limited manpower. It is common for four out of five companies to have some of their employees multitask; therefore, human resources need to provide sufficient resources for them. Rather than focusing solely on key performance indicators (KPIs), they have been more flexible, emphasizing teamwork and cooperation more than ever, and being empathetic about the situation and how hard it is for their employees to work in. The companies have tried to understand their employees and put themselves in their employees' shoes, while also inspiring them to stay strong. One of interviewees said their company wants to make sure that the employees are not left behind, even though they have COVID-19 infection, their company still aims to take care of them equally.

- Action to encourage employee engagement

According to keywords from interview answers, combining with the Aon Hewitt and Deloitte Employee Engagement Models (Hewitt 2015, Deloitte 2016) (Appendix 1 and 2)

This study can be summarized by saying that sports and wellness resorts in Phuket encourage employee engagement in terms of 1. The basic needs by keywords: workplace safety, remote work, provided accommodations, quarantine packages, ensure well-being, and promote mental health. 2. meaningful work by keywords: collaboration. 3. supportive management by keywords: provided support, resources, and training. 4. Company practice by keywords: communication, stopping new recruitment, promoting equality. 5. Growth opportunity by keyword: learning opportunities. 6. Trust in leadership by keyword: inspiration.

- Action toward work culture

According to keywords from interview answers, combined with the work culture framework from (Stock, McFadden et al. 2007), adapted from (Cameron 1999), this study can summarize that sports and wellness resorts in Phuket promote work culture in 1. adhocracy culture, as indicated by keywords such as adapt to the new normal, be more flexible. 2. clan culture by keywords: family, loyalty, teamwork, and cooperation, and be more collaborative.

1.2 Secondary data from company websites, press releases, and other public sources of the company communications.

On the public source of information from five sport and wellness resorts in Phuket, they have mentioned that their employees are their greatest assets. All their money can create all equipped infrastructures and luxury accommodation, but without their employees they cannot elaborate the best service and maintain their clients. Therefore, these resorts keep trying their best to nurture their employees to stay with them, with all the trust and loyalty. Three out of five states that they are together like family, more than 50% staff retention and they stay with the company up to 15 years and counting. Even with the staff shortage crisis in Phuket now, two out of five resorts in this group are still doing fine with their staff situation; there is no need for recruitment and talent acquisition to be ready to serve the coming customers.

To manage employee retention, these five sports and wellness resorts in Phuket have not directly mentioned their employee management to maintain their employees with the organizations, but they have provided sufficient information to group their actions and values into two categories: actions aimed at increasing employee engagement and actions aimed at improving work culture.

Focus on employee engagement. Every resort in this group said the same thing about employee development. They value the investment in individuality and respect each of their employees, whose diversity is carried on with their goals for the future. They empowered employees to take ownership of their tasks, be committed to them, and be

their best versions of themselves to handle the tasks. What these companies emphasize are a positive work environment, health and safety practices, benefits and allowances, and growth opportunities. Moreover, from the leader's side, the companies provide transparent communication at every level. They are open-minded and inspire employees to participate to shape their futures together with the organizations. To treat every employee equally regardless of nationality, race, or religion, inclusivity has been widely promoted among these five resorts.

As all these five hotels are in the sports and wellness theme, they set goals toward the wellness of their clients as well as of their staff, who work for them too. Four out of five even incorporate health encouragement into their employees' benefits based on their own needs, such as healthy food in canteens, access to sport facilities at leisure time, and meditation and yoga classes for their employees.

For the work culture, these five sports and wellness resorts in Phuket prioritize a healthy environment with flexibility and mutual respect. Three out of five resorts strongly promote clan culture, being collaborative, helpful, and respectful, and they really emphasize unity, community, and inclusivity. The companies are committed to creating empathetic and happy environments for their people to work in, and they treat everyone like family. Whereas two resorts focus more on the adaptation to changes in the future like an adhocracy culture, they said the companies are constantly evolving and are not held back by legacy, tradition, or outdated standards. They are open-minded, curious, and daring, and they listen well to new ideas. Lastly, they are constantly updating their talent network with innovative technologies.

1.3 The combination of both primary data and secondary data answers the hypothesis as follows:

Hypothesis 1: HRM at Phuket's sports and wellness resorts encourages employee engagement for employee retention during COVID-19. Both primary and secondary data said the same thing about this encouragement: promoting the employees engagement drive in terms of meaningful work, supportive management, a positive work environment, growth opportunities, and trust in leadership. Along with the company's practices in communication, diversity, and inclusion. Even though the basics of the employee engagement drives are not fully met, as not all of the ten sports and wellness resorts can provide their full benefit and job security, they have tried their best to provide compensation and safety to the point each company can go the furthest.

Hypothesis 2: HRM at Phuket's sports and wellness resorts increased flexibility in the work culture for employee retention during COVID-19. Both primary and secondary data said that their companies have moved toward a more flexible direction and promoted more innovation, adaptation, and uptake of changes in adhocracy culture, along with maintaining their clan culture to keep their family-type culture and promoting collaboration, teamwork, unity, and mutual respect within their organizations.

Part 2: Information from Qualitative Surveys

- **Demographic**

Only 33 effective survey results were included in this paper. This survey needs to gain information from employees at the sports and wellness resorts in Phuket who remain with the organization before COVID-19 (no later than January 2020), and the applicable participants had at least one turnover intention applicable in their answers but still remain working with their hotels or resorts. Here is the profile of the respondents in table 2.

Table 2 Profile of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency*	Percentage	Education level	Frequency*	Percentage
Male	10	30.3	Diploma	2	6.1
Female	23	69.7	Bachelor's Degree	21	63.6
			Master's Degree	10	30.3
Total	33	100	Total	33	100
Age	Frequency*	Percentage	Location	Frequency*	Percentage
26 – 35 years old	19	57.6	Northern Thailand	1	3
36 – 44 years old	13	39.4	Central Thailand	7	21.2
45 – 59 years old	1	3	Southern Thailand	23	69.7
			Overseas	2	6.1
Total	33	100	Total	33	100
Time at work	Frequency*	Percentage	Work function	Frequency*	Percentage
3 - 5 years	18	54.6	Operation staff	4	12.1
6 - 9 years	11	33.3	Management	17	51.5
10 years and more	4	12.1	Sport staff	4	12.1
			Medical staff	8	24.2
Total	33	100	Total	33	100

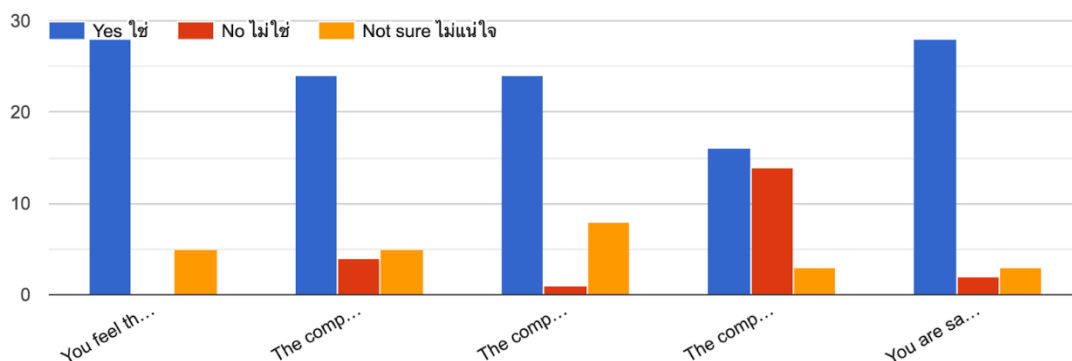
Source: developed for this research

The majority of these participants are female (around 69.7%), have a bachelor's degree (63.6%), and are between the ages of 26 and 35 (57.6%). They are mostly from the southern part of Thailand (69.7%), have been working for the organization for 3–5 years (54.6%), and their current position is at management level (51.5%).

- **Employee engagement**

Overall employee engagement by 33 participants in the scope of Aon Hewitt and Deloitte Employee Engagement Models (Hewitt 2015, Deloitte 2016) (Appendix 1 and 2) show as graphs below:

Your opinion about the workplace with COVID-19 situation in it
 ความคิดเห็นของท่านเกี่ยวกับสถานการณ์โควิด 19 ในที่ทำงาน



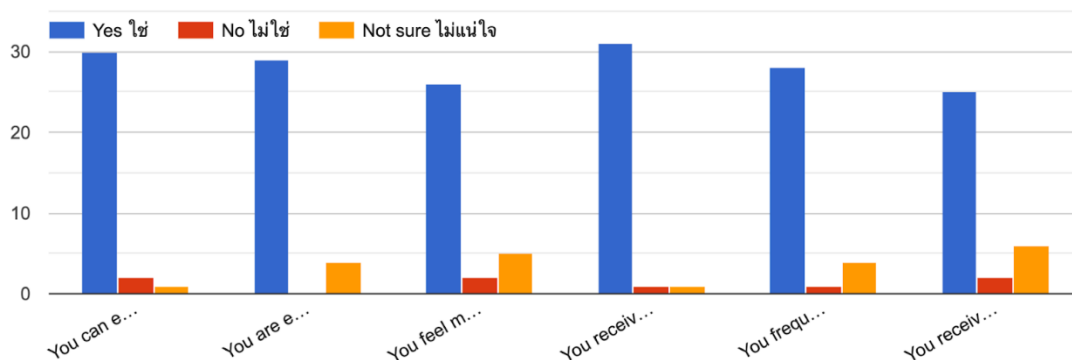
Source: developed for this research

The first group asked about "Your opinion about the workplace with COVID-19 situation in it"

1. You feel that the company cares about your health and safety at work more than before.
2. The company try to make you have less concerns about job security (unemployed, layoffs)
3. The company was empathic for you to work during the COVID-19 crisis
4. The company has extra allowances and compensation for the situation of COVID 19
5. You are satisfied with the employee management from the management team

Figure 7 Overall Employee Engagement 2

Your feelings about working during COVID-19 ความรู้สึกของท่านเกี่ยวกับการทำงานในช่วง โควิด 19



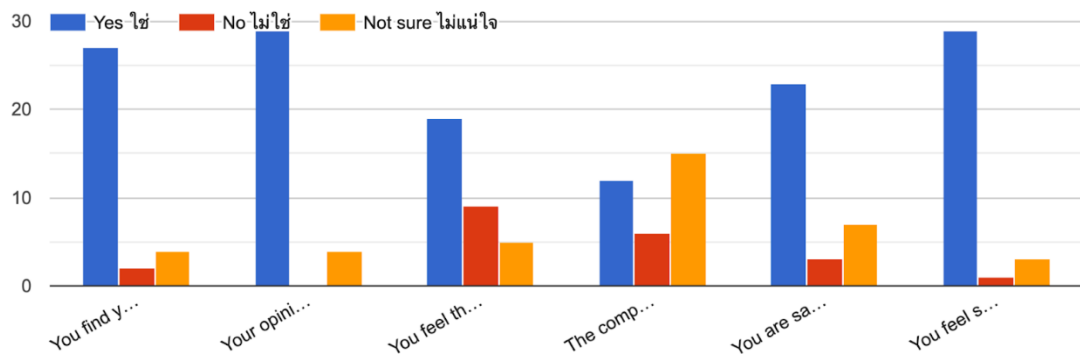
Source: developed for this research

The second group asked about “Your feelings about working during COVID-19”

6. You can easily contact management/HR for help
7. You are encouraged to learn new tasks and skill sets
8. You feel more connected to your coworkers in your organization
9. You receive news and updates from the company often
10. You frequently acknowledge the concern from the company that you are not fighting this crisis alone
11. You receive the encouragement from the company to work your best every day

Figure 8 Overall Employee Engagement 3

Your opinion about work when you have to work during COVID-19
ความคิดเห็นของท่านเกี่ยวกับการทำงานในช่วงโควิด 19



Source: developed for this research

The third group asked about “Your opinion about work when you have to work during COVID-19”

12. You find your work meaningful
13. Your opinions have been heard and applied regularly
14. You feel that you have reasonable amount of work because it is crisis time
15. The company offered to move between positions internally during the COVID-19
16. You are satisfied with your job
17. You feel supported in your professional development

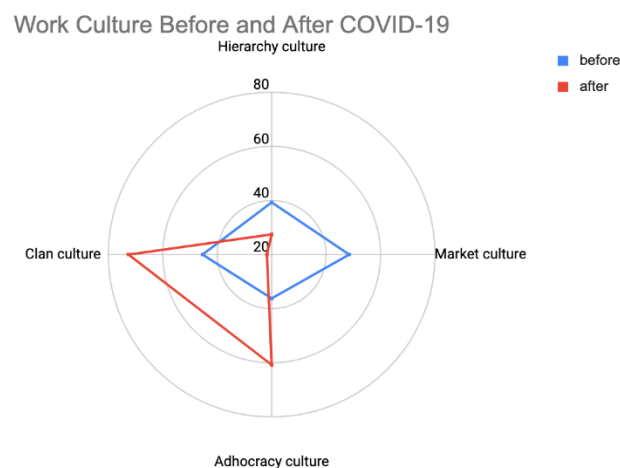
From the overall engagement questions, the graphs show that these employees are not certainly seeing opportunity, which means that during COVID-19, the sports and wellness resorts are not obviously facilitating talent mobility. Another two things to point out from the overall employee engagement graphs are about a reasonable amount of work and allowances or compensation. Although the answers from participants indicate they are in the ‘yes’ zone, which means their companies still encourage these employee engagement drives, they are not significantly different from ‘not sure’ or ‘no’.

Using line chart (Appendix 4) to compare the trend in demographics of the participants towards 17 employee engagement questions, almost all of the results go in the same direction except for participants who work as sports staff such as coaches and trainers; they have answered 'yes' to "The company was empathic for you to work during the COVID-19 crisis" more than others. And for the medical staff, they feel "the company has extra allowances and compensation for the situation of COVID-19" while the majority of employees here said it is low on Lastly, management roles in the organization said the company encourages employee engagement: "The company offered to move between positions internally during COVID-19," whereas others said the opportunity to internally change positions is low.

Work Culture

The comparison of the work culture in sports and wellness resorts in Phuket before and after COVID-19 situation can be displayed like this:

Figure 9 Work Culture Before vs After Covid 19



Source: developed for this research

The survey results show that the work culture in the participants' companies dramatically changed to be less of a market culture, which means during this crisis their hotels and resorts were less result-oriented and were more flexible on competition and evaluation (KPI), as well as loosening formal rules and control structures for a hierarchy culture. The work culture after COVID-19 surprisingly shaped into more flexibility, which is more adhocracy and clan culture; it means that these companies are up to change, focusing on the uniqueness of individuals and striving for innovation with the baseline of teamwork, mutual respect, unity, and loyalty.

- **Open-ended questions**

To answer the objective regarding the examination of the effects of COVID-19 on the human resource management of sports and wellness resorts in Phuket, open-ended

question 1 in the survey asked if there were any changes within the company during COVID-19 that affected the daily work basis. The 33 participants' answers can be categorized into 4 groups. 1. personal concerns such as personal financial flow, salary deduction, transportation issues, eliminating allowances, and personal health and safety. 2. business concerns such as temporary closures, government campaigns, lockdowns, and layoffs. 3. HRM-related problems such as more workloads, fewer work hours (people management), directions or goals (supportive management), multitasking, and the need for training (growth opportunity). Even the employees mentioned the HRM aspect that affected their work during COVID-19, yet they did not mention how HR and the company encourage and motivate better use. But their answers provide clear statements regarding the changes in work culture, like adaptation to changes, updates, and technology (adhocracy culture), or teamwork has been improved and unity is shared by the same team and goal (clan culture), or even if KPIs are increased, we face higher competition (market culture).

Table 3 Changes in the workplace

Category		Frequency*	Percentage
Personal Concern		27	81.82%
Business Concern		14	42.42%
HRM	People management	15	45.45%
	Supportive management	2	6.06%
	Growth opportunity	15	45.45%
	Total	32	96.97%
Work Culture	Clan Culture	3	9.09%
	Adhocracy Culture	3	9.09%
	Market Culture	4	12.12%
	Total	10	30.30%
Total Participants = 33			

Source: developed for this research

Table 3 clearly shows that the participants point out the changes in their workplace regarding human resource management the most, at almost 97%, then share their personal concerns in terms of financial, health, and safety at 81.82%, followed by business concerns and changes in work culture at 42.42% and 30.30%, respectively.

Moving on to open-ended **question 2**, I asked about employee health concerns and how their companies handled them. 23 out of 33, or 69.7%, of participants, said they had faced health concerns during COVID-19.

From these 23 people, the answers mentioned physical health concerns such as office syndrome from the 'work from home' time at 21.7%, mental health concerns such as stress and anxiety at 34.8%, and 26.1% of them had COVID-19 infection, while the rest did not specifically mention their concern at 17.4%. In addition, in the answers of these 23 participants, employees stated that their companies attempted to assist them with health benefits and compensation, such as compensation money, health and safety practices, sanitizers, masks, COVID tests, offering long sick leave covering the

infection and healing period, offering a quarantine package for employees, and the mental health therapist offered by their companies. Moreover, the participants also said that their management tried to communicate with the staff better, tried to cheer them up, and put less pressure on them while they worked through the crisis, as the companies' actions handling health concerns in the workplace statistically show in Table 4.

Table 4 Health Concern Handling

Category		Frequency*	Percentage
Management communication, cheer up		5	21.74%
Less pressure on employees		2	8.70%
Benefits	Compensation money	8	34.78%
	Health and safety practices	6	26.09%
	Sick leave	4	17.39%
	Quarantine package	2	8.70%
	Therapist for mental health	2	8.70%
Total 23 participants provide answer detail			

Source: developed for this research

For the open-ended **question 3**, ask, "What are the 3 things you like the most about how this workplace copes with COVID-19?" The summary of the 33 participants' answers can be grouped into categories as ranked in Table 5.

Table 5 Workplace COVID-19 Handling

Category	Frequency*	Percentage
Health regulation for staff safety	18	54.55%
Management support	12	36.36%
Colleagues/teamwork/unity	9	27.27%
Positive environment	6	18.18%
Benefit/compensation	5	15.15%
No layoffs	4	12.12%
Change for the better/development	3	9.09%
Training and Self-improvement	2	6.06%
Organization restructure	1	3.03%
Nothing specific	2	6.06%
Total Participants = 33		

Source: developed for this research

The answers of 33 participants found that their most favorite aspect of their sports and health resorts was health regulation for staff safety, with 54.55% of respondents indicating this. Management support was the next most popular, with 36.36% of

participants mentioning it. Other key aspects included colleagues/teamwork/unity (27.27%), a positive environment (18.18%), benefits and compensation (15.15%), no layoffs (12.12%), change for the better/development (9.09%), training and self-improvement (6.06%), and organization restructure (3.03%). Two participants indicated that they did not like any action from their workplace specifically.

To answer the objective regarding the investigation of the key success factors of human resource management implemented by Phuket's sports and wellness resorts toward employee retention in the COVID-19 crisis an open-ended **question 4** "What makes you stay working with this company?" answers from the survey can be shown as Table 6.

Table 6 What Makes Employees Stay

Category	Frequency*	Percentage
Good teamwork	10	30.30%
Growth Opportunity	13	39.39%
Inclusiveness	8	24.24%
Company culture	8	24.24%
Empathy to management/owner	5	15.15%
Intensive/well paid	5	15.15%
Supportive manage	3	9.09%
Meaningful work	4	12.12%
Hometown	1	3.03%
Total Participants = 33		

Source: developed for this research

According to table 6, the employees' reasons to stay are related to employee engagement drives as well as work culture. In detail, the actions from the organization that value their employees' voices, support them in their needs, provide them with benefits and opportunities to learn and grow until they feel their values, and build bonding with the team and their management with these employee engagement drives ensure that they remain working with the companies. The work culture that participants in the survey point out is about good teamwork, fast growth, and development focus, which means clan culture and market culture (Cameron 1999).

When the survey asks, "What do you recommend this workplace do to cope with COVID-19 better and achieve better employee satisfaction?" In open-ended **question 5**, 13 of 33 participants said they did not have anything particular they wanted to recommend to their companies or that they were ok with what happened. "It is understandable as it is a crisis time, and the company is trying its best to survive too," said the employee from the survey. Therefore, the answers to the recommendation in Table 7 are based on the responses of 20 participants.

Table 7 Recommendation from Employees

Category	Frequency*	Percentage
Financial assistance	13	65%
Increased healthcare activities	12	60%
Mental healthcare	11	55%
Wage negotiation/No deductions	11	55%
More communication	10	50%
Clear direction to deal with crisis	9	45%
Less competition/ more relaxation	6	30%
Provide training	4	20%
Total 20 participants provide answer detail		

Source: developed for this research

From table 7, it is not surprising that employees recommend their workplace to provide more benefits and support from their employers; the percentages are not significantly different except for the training provided by the company, but 4 employees still want to recommend.

The last open-ended **question 6**, asks the participants to describe the work environment that they wish to stay in and work in during normal times and during times of crisis. The majority of the answers from 33 people said they prefer some specific work culture and also mentioned growth opportunity, benefit, and inclusivity at the workplace.

Table 8 group answers from 33 participants of the survey showed that an Adhocracy was the most popular, with 36.36% of respondents citing it as their preferred work culture. A culture of teamwork (Clan) was the second most popular, with 30.30% of respondents citing it as their preferred work culture in the workplace. Hierarchy holds the third place as the employees still like systematic work at 9.09%. A market culture that is more competitive was the least popular, with only 6.06% of respondents citing it as their preferred work culture.

In terms of employee engagement, inclusivity was the most popular, with 21.21% of respondents citing it as their preferred engagement factor. Growth opportunity and benefit were the next most popular, with 18.18% each citing them as their preferred engagement factors in the workplace.

Table 8 Ideal Workplace from Employees

Category		Frequency*	Percentage	
Work Culture	Clan:teamwork	10	30.30%	
	Adhocracy:freedom and creative	5	15.15%	
	Adhocracy:innovation	4	12.12%	
	Adhocracy:adaptive	3	9.09%	
	Overall adhocracy culture	12	36.36%	
	Hierarchy:sytemetic work	3	9.09%	
	Market:performance evaluation oftenly	2	6.06%	
	Employee Engagement	Inclusivity	7	21.21%
		Growth opportunity:reasonable promotion	2	6.06%
	Growth opportunity:development driven	4	12.12%	
	Overall growth opportunity	6	18.18%	
	Benefit: good payment/allowance	3	9.09%	
	Benefit:offer accommodation	3	9.09%	
	Overall benefit	6	18.18%	
Total Participants = 33				

Source: developed for this research

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

The **research objective 1** is the effects of COVID-19 on the human resource management of sports and wellness resorts in Phuket. The study found findings from both the human resources and employee sides that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on sports and wellness accommodation businesses. Both HR and employees have had to adapt to the changes brought about by the pandemic, similarly to how the study by (Carnevale and Hatak 2020) found COVID-19 affects organizations in every aspect.

The most mentioned impacts by both sides are the increased health and safety practices, just as (Athamneh 2018) suggested HR should handle crises, lockdowns, closures, and the difficulties that come with working from home and being online. Both groups have mentioned that they faced salary reductions, layoffs inside the company, increased workloads, multitasking, and many other changes in the workplace, the same as what (AVGITIDOU 2021) said about adaptation to workplace conditions. Even though the business got affected by the crisis and benefits and rewards were reduced, both HR and employees still reflect that their company went

further to help the situation by providing staff accommodations and trying to invest in health and safety in the workplace before government programs were adopted to help the hospitality industry.

However, there are some key differences between the two groups. Employees have faced fewer work hours but more workloads that cause them office syndrome, stress, and anxiety, and HRM offers special sick leave for that. Human resources, on the other hand, had to deal with their extra tasks of managing limited staff as there were resignations during COVID-19 but they could not proceed with the recruitment. As well as dealing with existing employees with no long-term commitments, and handling those who are demotivated, mental health also has an impact on employees (Bradley 2022). While the business is going down, they try their best to keep existing customers.

For **research objective 2**, the key success factors of human resource management implemented by Phuket's sports and wellness resorts toward employee retention in the COVID-19 crisis, which this study will discuss in two parts,

Part one, **hypothesis number 1**. HRM at Phuket's sports and wellness resorts encouraged employee engagement for employee retention during COVID-19. The answers from both HR and employees show that a positive environment helps the situation a lot, which agrees with (Mowday, Porter et al. 2013) study—the flexible work environment, the humanistic workplace with empathy for both business and labor force, less pressure, a culture of recognition and inclusivity that (Gavett 2020) said was very important, and everyone being valued and treated equally. Besides, the retained employees and the companies that can manage staff retention said the same thing about the growth opportunity that must be provided to the staff. Even in a crisis, the employees still need to be trained and improved for their higher development. The employees also said that they required empowerment and meaningful work to be reasons for staying, and HR said that they promote the same thing. However, there are indispensable actions to encourage employee engagement for staff retention, such as the basic but very important needs and supportive management. These surviving hotels and retained employees said the benefits one way or another regarding health money allowance are all important, as are safety and job security, which they are required to have. Apart from tangible things based on their current situation and new normal practices, the organizations need to have clear and transparent goals. The direction and communication toward the next step One more thing that should be mentioned here, as both sides agreed on it, is the leadership of the organization, as it can inspire and motivate employees to stay.

In conclusion, sports and wellness resorts in Phuket had encouraged employee engagement drives of growth opportunity, meaningful work, positive environment, supportive management, the basics, and trust in leadership to manage employee retention during COVID-19, similarly to the research of (Tangthong, Trimetsoontorn et al. 2014) saying employee engagement positively affects staff retention.

Part two **hypothesis number 2**: HRM at Phuket's sports and wellness resorts increased flexibility in the work culture for employee retention during COVID-19.

Findings from this study show that HR is already flexible and has both clan culture and adhocracy culture as key success factors for their organization. They promote flexibility, adaptation, keep learning and updating, strive for innovation along with togetherness, family, and unity teamwork with mutual respect and loyalty. Employees who remain working on these surviving sports and wellness resorts agreed with the flexible culture that got them through the rough situation of the COVID-19 crisis; they even rated the overall work environment as having shifted most of the market culture and hierarchy culture feeling at work during COVID-19 (see Figure 9). The work culture after the company faced the crisis bent toward clan and adhocracy culture. In contrast, retained employees point out that the work culture they want in their ideal workplace also contains a hierarchy culture in terms of systematic work and a market culture because of the fast growth, motivation from competition, and evaluation.

To sum up, flexibility in work culture indeed help HRM to manage employee retention during COVID-19 better just like the study (Carsten and Spector 1987, Deery 2008).

5.2 Conclusion

This study aims to examine the effects of COVID-19 on the human resource management of sports and wellness resorts in Phuket and investigate the key success factors of human resource management implementation toward employee retention during the COVID-19 crisis. The comparison before and after COVID-19 from the perspective of HR, who implement HRM, and the employees who are treated and still remain working for the same organization

Data collection came from 10 sports and wellness resorts in Phuket, with the criteria that they must offer accommodation as well as at least one sport or wellness package as a part of the stay. Information gathered by five semi-structured interviews (Adams 2015), 33 effective survey answers, and secondary data from five companies' websites that they cannot proceed to share specific information.

The COVID-19 pandemic had big effects on the human resource management of sports and wellness resorts in Phuket. It causes HRM a lot of adjustment on the basis of employee safety at work. Even if it's working from home. Individuals still have to support their employees' needs to the fullest. Do everything you can for employees who are still together and deal with situations where layoffs and people on leave cannot be returned or recruit new people. Although employee salaries are being reduced, other benefits are being provided to compensate.

The increase in employee engagement and a flexible work culture are the key success factors of the human resource management implemented by Phuket's sports and wellness resorts toward employee retention in the COVID-19 crisis. Because they had encouraged employee engagement drives of growth opportunity, meaningful work, a positive environment, supportive management, the basics, and trust in leadership, they managed to have employee retention and fight through COVID-19. Clan and adhocracy work cultures are the environments that make these resorts survive, but

employees' ideal workplaces still want it to be a hierarchy culture in terms of systematic work and a market culture because of the fast growth, motivation from competition, and evaluation.



Appendix

Appendix 1

The Aon Hewitt Engagement Model



Appendix 2

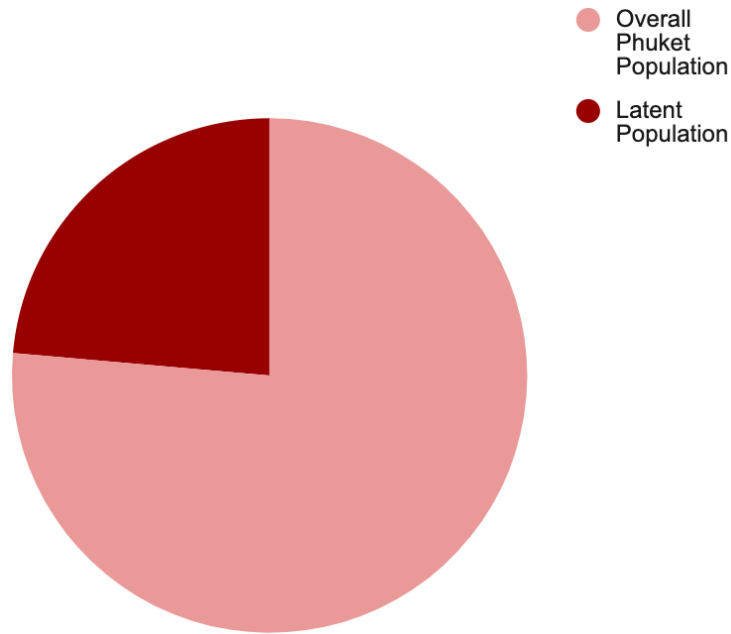
The Simply Irresistible Organization™

Meaningful work	Supportive management	Positive work environment	Growth opportunity	Trust in leadership
Autonomy	Clear and transparent goals	Flexible work environment	Training and support on the job	Mission and purpose
Select-to-fit	Coaching	Humanistic workplace	Facilitated talent mobility	Continuous investment in people
Small, empowered teams	Investment in development of managers	Culture of recognition	Self-directed, dynamic learning	Transparency and honesty
Time for slack	Agile performance management	Fair, inclusive, diverse work environment	High-impact learning culture	Inspiration
Cross-organization collaboration and communication				

Source: Bersin by Deloitte.

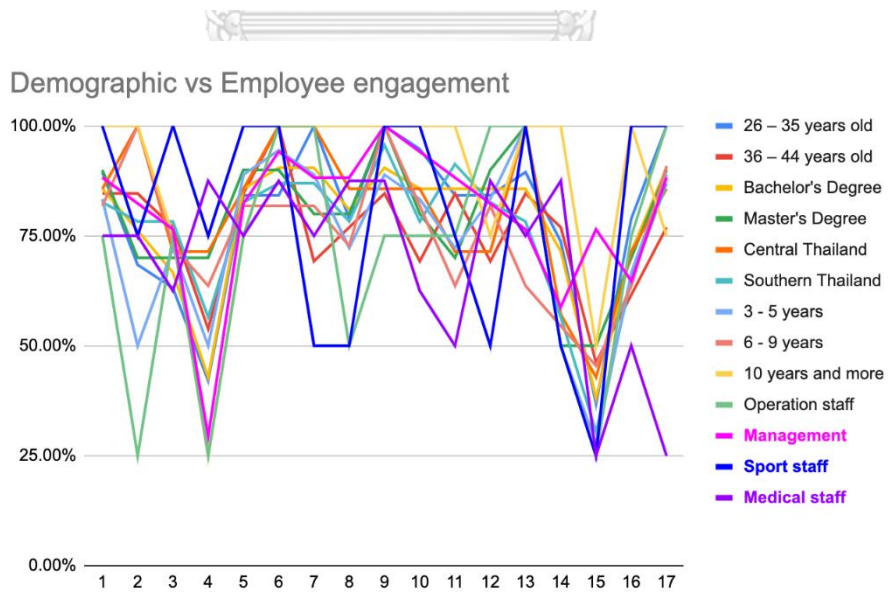
Appendix 3

Number of latent population in Phuket for hospitality and tourism industry is high, almost 1 in 3 ratio in Phuket population were not from Phuket but they were there to support the industry, at least 133,570 people 432,216 total population in 2020



Source: Revised fiscal year 2021, Phuket Provincial Development Plan (2018-2022) , Phuket Provincial Office

Appendix 4 Demographic Comparison with Employee Engagement



Source: developed for this research

The graph shows the percentage of answering 'yes' in 17 employee engagement questions.

Survey Questions

Employee opinion towards adjustments at work during the COVID-19 ความคิดเห็นของพนักงานต่อการทำงานในช่วงโควิด-19

This survey is part of an individual study for a master's degree student at Chulalongkorn University. Your provided information will be utilized for study purposes only. You can express your opinions and feelings with no limits; your personal information will be confidential.

แบบสำรวจนี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาค้นคว้ารายบุคคลสำหรับนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาโท จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย ข้อมูลความคิดเห็นของท่านจะถูกใช้เพื่อการศึกษาเท่านั้น ท่านสามารถแสดงความคิดเห็นและความรู้สึกของท่านได้อย่างเต็มที่ ข้อมูลส่วนตัวของท่านจะไม่ถูกเปิดเผย

* Required

1. What gender do you identify as? โปรดระบุเพศของท่าน *

Mark only one oval.

- Male ชาย
- Female หญิง
- Prefer not to say ไม่ต้องการระบุ
- Other: _____

2. What is your age? อายุของท่านคือ *

Mark only one oval.

- 18 – 25 years old ปี
- 26 – 35 years old ปี
- 36 – 44 years old ปี
- 45 – 59 years old ปี
- 60+ years old ปี

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed? ระดับการศึกษาสูงสุด *
ของท่าน

Mark only one oval.

- High School มัธยม
- Diploma ประกาศนียบัตร/อนุปริญญา/ปวช.
- Advanced Diploma ประกาศนียบัตรชั้นสูง/อนุปริญญาชั้นสูง/ปวส.
- Bachelor's Degreeปริญญาตรี
- Master's Degreeปริญญาโท
- Ph.D. or higherปริญญาเอก หรือสูงกว่า
- Other: _____

4. Where is your residential location? *
ภูมิลำเนาของท่านมาจากจังหวัดใด

5. How long you have been working here? (You can answer with month and year i.e. *
since Jan 2018 or answer by how many years i.e. 5 years)
ท่านทำงานที่นี่มานานเท่าใด (เช่น ตั้งแต่ มกราคม 2561 หรือ 4 ปี 5 ปี)

6. What is your current position? *
ตำแหน่งปัจจุบันของท่านคือ

7. What work environment and work culture are most relevant to you in this workplace **before** COVID-19? *

ท่านรู้สึกว่ารวยอากาศและวัฒนธรรมการทำงานของที่โรงแรม/รีสอร์ทแห่งนี้ ก่อนสถานการณ์โควิด 19 เป็นแบบใด

Check all that apply.

- Result orientation, focus on competition and evaluation (KPI) มุ่งเน้นผลลัพธ์ การแข่งขัน การวัดผลประเมินผลด้วย KPI
- Focus on stability, management power ทำงานเป็นระบบชัดเจน มั่นคง มีแบบแผนการทำงานตัดสินใจจากฝ่ายบริหาร
- Personal creative freedom, orientation towards change, and innovation ให้อิสระในความคิดสร้างสรรค์ส่วนบุคคล เปิดรับนวัตกรรมและการเปลี่ยนแปลงใหม่ๆ
- Unity, teamwork, mutual respect, and trust. เน้นความสามัคคี การทำงานเป็นทีม ความเคารพซึ่งกันและกัน และความไว้วางใจ
- None of above ไม่มีในข้อข้างต้น โปรดระบุ
- Other: _____

8. Any changes within the company during Covid 19 that affect daily work basis? *
- มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงใดบ้างภายในโรงแรม/รีสอร์ทที่ส่งผลกระทบต่อการทำงานในช่วงโควิด 19 ของท่าน

9. Have you experienced any physical or mental health issues while working in COVID-19 period? How the company handle this? *
- ท่านมีอาการเจ็บป่วยหรือข้อกังวลเกี่ยวกับสุขภาพร่างกายหรือจิตใจระหว่างการทำงานในช่วงโควิด 19 หรือไม่ บริษัทดูแลจัดการเรื่องนี้อย่างไร

10. Your opinion about the workplace with COVID-19 situation in it *
 ความคิดเห็นของท่านเกี่ยวกับสถานการณ์โควิด 19 ในที่ทำงาน

Mark only one oval per row.

Yes ใช่ No
 ไม่ใช่ Not
 sure ไม่
 แน่ใจ

1. You feel that the company cares about your health and safety at work more than before. ท่านรู้สึกที่บริษัทใส่ใจกับสุขภาพและความปลอดภัยในการทำงานของท่านมากกว่าเดิม

2. The company try to make you have less concerns about job security (unemployed, layoffs) บริษัทพยายามสื่อสารกับท่านให้ท่านมีความกังวลเรื่องความมั่นคงในการทำงานลดลง เลย์ออฟน้อยลง

3. The company was empathic for you to work during the COVID-19 crisis บริษัทเข้าใจ/เห็นอกเห็นใจคุณ ในการทำงานในช่วงวิกฤตโควิด-19

4. The company has extra allowances and compensation for the situation of COVID 19 บริษัทมีเบี้ยเลี้ยงและค่าชดเชยเพิ่มเติมสำหรับสถานการณ์โควิด 19

5. You are satisfied with the employee management from the management team ท่านพึงพอใจในการดูแลจัดการพนักงานจากฝ่ายบริหาร

11. Your feelings about working during COVID-19 *
 ความรู้สึกของท่านเกี่ยวกับการทำงาน ในช่วงโควิด 19

Mark only one oval per row.

CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY

Yes ใช่ No
 ไม่ใช่ Not
 sure ไม่
 แน่ใจ

6. You can easily contact management/HR for help ท่านสามารถติดต่อขอความช่วยเหลือจากฝ่ายบริหาร/ฝ่ายบุคคลได้ง่าย

7. You are encouraged to learn new tasks and skill sets ท่านรู้สึกได้รับการสนับสนุนในการเรียนรู้การทำงานและชุดทักษะใหม่ๆ

8. You feel more connected to your coworkers in your organization ท่านรู้สึกว่าได้แลกเปลี่ยนพูดคุย/มีจุดร่วมผูกพันกับเพื่อนร่วมงานในองค์กรมากขึ้น

9. You receive news and updates from the company oftenly ท่านได้รับข้อมูลข่าวสารอัปเดตจากทางบริษัทอย่างสม่ำเสมอไม่ตกหล่น

10. You frequently acknowledge the concern from the company that you are not fighting this crisis alone ท่านรับรู้ถึงความใส่ใจจากทางบริษัทอยู่เสมอว่าท่านไม่ได้ต่อสู้กับวิกฤติโควิดนี้คนเดียว

11. You receive the encouragement from the company to work your best every day ท่านได้รับกำลังใจจากบริษัทให้ไปทำงานให้ดีที่สุดในทุกวัน

12. Your opinion about work when you have to work during COVID-19 *
ความคิดเห็นของท่านเกี่ยวกับการทำงานในช่วงโควิด 19

Mark only one oval per row.

Yes ใช่ No ไม่ใช่ Not sure ไม่แน่ใจ

12. You find your work meaningful ท่านเห็นความสำคัญของงานที่ท่านทำอยู่

13. Your opinions have been heard and applied regularly ความคิดเห็นของท่านได้ถูกรับฟังและนำไปประยุกต์ใช้

14. You feel that you have reasonable amount of work because it is crisis time ท่านรู้สึกว่าการที่รับผิดชอบของท่านมีปริมาณที่เหมาะสมเนื่องด้วยสถานการณ์วิกฤติ

15. The company offered to move between positions internally during the COVID-19 บริษัทเปิดโอกาสให้ท่านสามารถย้ายงานไปตำแหน่งอื่นๆ ภายในบริษัทช่วง COVID-19

16. You are satisfied with your job ท่านรู้สึกพึงพอใจกับงานที่ทำ

17. You feel supported in your professional development ท่านรู้สึกว่าได้รับการสนับสนุนเพื่อการพัฒนาในวิชาชีพของท่าน

13. What work environment and work culture are most relevant to you in this workplace **after** COVID-19? *

ท่านรู้สึกว่ารรยากาศและวัฒนธรรมการทำงานของที่โรงแรม/รีสอร์ทแห่งนี้ หลังจากเกิดสถานการณ์โควิด 19 เป็นแบบใด

Check all that apply.

- Result orientation, focus on competition and evaluation (KPI) มุ่งเน้นผลลัพธ์ การแข่งขัน การวัดผลประเมินผลด้วย KPI
- Focus on stability, management power ทำงานเป็นระบบชัดเจน มั่นคง มีแบบแผนการทำงานตัดสินใจจากฝ่ายบริหาร
- Personal creative freedom, orientation towards change and innovation ให้อิสระในความคิดสร้างสรรค์ส่วนบุคคล เปิดรับนวัตกรรมและการเปลี่ยนแปลงใหม่ๆ
- Unity, teamwork, mutual respect, and trust เน้นความสามัคคี การทำงานเป็นทีม ความเคารพซึ่งกันและกัน และความไว้วางใจ
- None of above ไม่มีในข้อข้างต้น โปรดระบุ
- Other: _____

14. Due to the COVID-19 situation in Phuket, you..... *

เนื่องด้วยสถานการณ์โควิด 19 ในภูเก็ต ท่าน.....

Mark only one oval per row.

Yes No ไม่
เคย เคย

- have thoughts of resigning มีความคิดที่จะลาออก
- have been headhunted to work at another company ได้รับการติดต่อขอตัวไปทำงานที่บริษัทอื่น
- have the idea of moving out of Phuket มีความคิดที่จะย้ายออกจากจังหวัดภูเก็ต
- have thoughts of switching to different industries มีความคิดที่จะเลิกทำงานสายงานนี้แล้วไปทำงานประเภทอื่นแทน

15. What makes you stay working with this company? *

อะไรทำให้ท่านยังทำงานกับบริษัทนี้ต่อ

16. What are the 3 things you like the most about how this workplace copes with COVID-19? *

3 สิ่งที่ท่านชอบมากที่สุดเกี่ยวกับวิธีรับมือโควิด 19 ของที่ทำงานแห่งนี้

17. What do you recommend this workplace do to cope with COVID-19 better and achieve better employee satisfaction? *

ท่านต้องการแนะนำให้โรงแรม/รีสอร์ทนี้ปรับปรุงวิธีการรับมือกับสถานการณ์โควิด 19 อย่างไร เพื่อให้พนักงานพึงพอใจมากขึ้น

18. Please describe work environment that you wish to stay and work with in normal time and in crisis period? *

สภาพแวดล้อมการทำงาน/ที่ทำงานแบบใดที่ท่านต้องการทำงานด้วยทั้งในเวลาปกติและช่วงวิกฤต

19. If all questions and answers are not covering your opinion expression. Please feel free to share more over here.

หากคำถามและคำตอบทั้งหมดยังไม่ครอบคลุมความคิดเห็นของท่าน ได้โปรดระบุข้อมูลแสดงความคิดเห็นได้ดังนี้



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