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Aims and scope

Research in Hospitality Management (RHM) is a peer-reviewed Open Access journal publishing articles that make an original contribution to the understanding of hospitality and to the theory and practice of international hospitality management. The journal focusses on three main areas: (1) "Hospitality (Management) Studies" includes articles related to the study of and the study for hospitality. The study of hospitality refers to studies about the essence and ethics of hospitality from a social sciences perspective, while the study for hospitality refers to a more disciplinary approach according to the quintessential managerial areas of Finance, Human Resources, Operations, Marketing & Sales, and Technology; (2) "Hospitality Management Education" is devoted to articles about curriculum content and delivery methods for training and educating hospitality managers. Considering the size and scope of the hospitality industry, and the number of staff and students involved, studies on efficient, effective, and innovative ways of developing hospitality competencies are considered indispensable; (3) "Student Research Projects" allows excellent student work to be published. Student work can relate to excellent BA dissertations or MA theses. *RHM* also accommodates short communications, working papers, book reviews and discussion papers.

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EDITORIAL

Editorial

Erwin Losekoot, Editor-in-Chief

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I sit down to write this Editorial as 2021 is slowly coming to an end, and we all hope for no more lockdowns. It has been an unprecedented year of hope and despair for our industry, our colleagues and our students. While everyone initially came together to fight the COVID-19 virus, more recent developments, resurgent infection numbers and frustration with contradictory and confusing regulations has clearly impacted on our industry, our research/conferences and our teaching. While COVID-19 therefore should feature in this issue (Nair, Hameed & Prasaad; Hoang & Suleri), and its impact on education be considered (Busch, Berg & Zwaal) it is certainly not the only topic we address. Pijls, Galetzka, Groen and Pruyn share an interesting experimental study looking at the role of 'physical warmth' in a theatre, reminding us that physical factors as well as psychological factors play a part in welcoming our guests. We are pleased to have a good crop of student work in this issue, and readers are encouraged to support their students in submitting papers or co-authoring with them, as Wichard Zwaal, Javed Suleri and Aagje Engel have done. Several students of co-editor Wichard Zwaal have also submitted book reviews for this issue, and we have a book review of Pen Vogler's book *Scoff* by our former Editor-in-Chief Conrad Lashley. The opportunity to get published can provide our best and brightest students with a stepping stone into an academic career, and this journal is proud to continue to assist them in that journey. Keizer-Remmers, Brandsma-Dieters and Ivanova report on research into 'cultural hesitation' or 'handelsverlegenheid' as they say in Dutch. The role of volunteers is a recurring theme in our journal and the latest paper on this topic by Pahus, Fischer and Bradescu proposes a conceptual model that creates insights into the elements that can help foster an identity among volunteers. Human resources and employment issues feature regularly in RiHM, and the paper by El Hajal and our late colleague Bill Rowson is an interesting discussion of the gig economy that so many of our students seem to end up in. Piso's paper on working hours in the UK hospitality industry also provides much food for thought. The international focus of this journal has been maintained in this issue with papers from The Netherlands, but also from Kenya (Were, Miricho & Maranga), Denmark and the UK, although Mihailescu's paper with five co-authors from six countries is an exceptional example of international collaboration! This journal has always championed new researchers and we are pleased to include a paper by Stephanie van Oorschot about temporary agencies and new business models such as AI, the Internet of Things, and Blockchain.

One thing which made us very sad was the discovery of a blatant piece of plagiarism in an early (2012) issue of our journal. We offer our unreserved apology to Neomy Storch and have printed a statement of retraction in this issue. We are confident that our current processes would prevent a repetition of this. We also include a correction to a paper in the previous issue at the request of the authors.

A reminder that the deadline for our next issue is the end of January 2022, with an anticipated publication date of March. As the Hotel Management School at NHL Stenden University continues to fully fund this journal, we have no publication charges for authors.

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RESEARCH NOTE

Sustainability reporting in the hospitality industry

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ABSTRACT**:** In 2015, Medrado and Jackson researched corporate non-financial disclosures for the hospitality industry. Their main conclusion was that sustainability reporting in the hospitality and tourism industry is in its infancy. We update and extend this research by using a wider geography and include private, small and medium-sized firms.

KEYWORDS: sustainability rationale, sustainability standards, sustainability topics

Introduction

Over the last couple of years, sustainability has gained importance in business (English & Schooley, 2014). So much so that in 2014 the European Commission issued directive 2015/95 which requires large companies to report on sustainability.

In 2015, Medrado and Jackson performed a content analysis of sustainability reports in the US hospitality industry. They analysed firms with a domicile in the US, or a major corporate office and who traded on the US stock market. We extend and update their analysis by including European, private and smaller hospitality firms. We performed an archival analysis of 50 hospitality sustainability reports using NVivvo. The reports were sourced using a Google query with the terms "sustainability report", "CSR report" (i.e. corporate social responsibility) and "CSR report hotel". Of these 50 reports, 14 were from large, renowned operators (based on hotel rankings) and 36 were from other lesser-known hotel operators. The majority of the reports are from European operators even though the search was global. A total of 62% are private companies and 42% are considered large. It should be noted that the sample included three white-label operating companies. The archival analysis has provided details about the topics and standards used. We followed up on the archival analysis with interviews. In total, 11 operators and four hotel sustainability experts were interviewed. The interviews provided in-depth knowledge about the rationale for reporting on sustainability topics in the hospitality industry.

This research note will touch upon prior literature, results from Medrado and Jackson (2015) and our own findings. We cover three sections: sustainability topics reported, sustainability standards used and business rationale for sustainability reporting.

Topics in sustainability reporting

In 2007, Holcomb et al. found that hotel companies mainly report on socially responsible activities and diversity. By 2011, however, Levy and Park found that environmental topics are the most reported on. The environmental focus in reporting is sustained in 2015 when Medrado and Jackson do their research. Medrado and Jackson (2015) find that the topics most frequently mentioned are related to water and energy use, water conservation and waste generation. To a lesser extent, community involvement is mentioned. The least mentioned items are related to compensation and the work-life balance.

Other topics Medrado and Jackson (2015) found are: general corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting; community involvement; socially responsible products/services; education, training, and staff development; pay and benefits; participation and staff involvement; values and principles; employee health and well-being; measurement of policies; employment policy; security in employment; equal opportunities; and the work-life balance. In addition to the topics mentioned by Medrado and Jackson (2015), we find the following reported topics: (more) staff training; gender equality; charity support; and volunteering.

The fact that the reported sustainability topics change over the years is not surprising. Džupina (2016) finds that sustainability reporting is influenced by culture and politics, and varies per country. What is surprising is that our survey consisted mainly of non-US companies and we found similar topics being reported. Future research in sustainability reporting can use a content analytic dictionary, such as the one described in Pencle and Mălăescu (2016).

Standards used for sustainability reporting

Prior literature of sustainability reporting in the hotel industry does not mention the reporting standards used, even though several sustainability reporting standards have existed for a number of years. For example, the Travelife standard has existed since 2007, and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) has existed since 2000.

According to a KPMG report (2016), larger companies tend to use GRI more often than small and medium-sized companies (SME), regardless of the industry. This is also what Medrado and Jackson (2015) find: hotel companies use GRI standards if any standards are being used. This result is not surprising as their survey consisted of large, publicly listed US companies. In 2019, we found a similar result while scanning the GRI database which at that point contained 246 hospitality reports: mainly large companies, both public and private.

A possible explanation for SMEs not using GRI comes from a study by Van der Walt (2018): the GRI framework is too complex and too costly to implement for SMEs. To understand this choice of standards, we interviewed 15 sustainability experts in the hospitality industry from both large and small hospitality operators. The majority of the experts stated that they find the GRI standards too complex. The large operators often hire consultants to explain the GRI standards. The smaller and medium-sized operators opt out of GRI altogether, and choose a different standard, for example Travelife (2019). An oft-mentioned argument was the length of the GRI standards. An actual count of GRI and Travelife standards discredits this argument, as there are 138 GRI standards versus 163 Travelife standards. However, reading both sets of standards does reveal a big difference. The language used in the Travelife certification standards is easier for business owners, managers and customers to comprehend.

Our analysis of 50 sustainability reports shows that the majority of the hospitality firms use some type of certification, rating or index. The following standards were found in the reports: EarthCheck, FTSE4Good, Green Globe, Green Leaf, SafeHotels, Travelife, ISO, GreenKey, Ethilabel and the Dow Jones sustainability index. Travelife is most often used for SMEs. During our interviews with sustainability experts, we found that certification drives sustainability reporting; only after a hotel applies for certification and gets certified do they report on sustainability.

At present, there is no unity in use of sustainability reporting standards among hospitality firms. Some use GRI, some use Travelife, some use another standard, and some use no standard at all. However, the use of a reporting standard does not mean the reported data is verified. De Grosbois (2012) does not find evidence that sustainability actions are being measured internally or externally. In 2018, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) developed specific audit standards for certified auditors to use when auditing leisure facilities and lodgings on sustainability reporting (AICPA, 2018a; 2018b). And, according to a report by Ballou et al. (2018), an audited sustainability report adds value. Future research can track the type of reporting standard used, and the number of audited reports.

The rationale for sustainability reporting

The rationale for hotel companies to report on sustainability is debated. Levy and Park (2011) state that cost savings and branding are important drivers for sustainability reporting, while Martinez and Rodriguez del Bosque (2013) state that stakeholders are the main beneficiaries and cost savings are less relevant. Medrado and Jackson (2015) state that economic and social benefits for relevant stakeholders drive sustainability action and reporting.

There is evidence in favour of the cost-saving argument, but this comes primarily from literature about equity financing, for example, Eccles et al. (2014) and Feng et al. (2015), and specifically in the hospitality industry, Singal (2014), and Jackson and Singh (2015). The argument is that sustainability disclosure reduces the information asymmetry between agent (management) and principal (investor) and in turn this reduces the business risk and henceforth the equity finance cost. This argument is validated by Du (2018) who finds that sustainability reporting plays a bigger role for foreign investors needing more reduction of information asymmetry.

But Kang et al. (2010) question the cost-savings argument for the hospitality industry. To gain a better understanding, we asked the sustainability experts in the hotel industry: almost all, representing big and small companies, stated that attracting employees was an important driver, and cost savings not so much. In addition, none of the experts was aware of a cost benefit analysis being performed on sustainability reporting. The rationale for sustainability reporting in hospitality is not clear. More research is needed, using the stakeholder lens in particular (Theodoulidis et al., 2017; Rhou & Singal, 2020).

More research needed

Although environmental topics seem to remain relevant, new topics emerge and other topics fade (Holcomb et al., 2007, Levy & Park, 2011, Medrado & Jackson, 2015). Future research can track which sustainability topics remain relevant in the hospitality industry.

Currently, larger companies tend to use GRI more often (KPMG, 2016). Follow-up research can confirm the use of GRI by larger companies and discover the rationale for using a specific standard. In addition, future research can track the number of audited sustainability reports.

The wide range of sustainability topics reported on, and the sustainability reporting standards used, show that many companies have not found their rationale for reporting on sustainability issues. Future research can focus on uncovering reasons to report on sustainability.

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REVIEW
ARTICLE

A review of research about the psychology of hospitality management in three leading hospitality journals

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ABSTRACT: This article reviewed research articles published in three leading hospitality journals — *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management* and *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*. Sixty published issues (20 issues per journal) with a total of 539 articles were reviewed. The key objective of this review was to identify articles which dealt with the psychology of hospitality management and to analyse key features of those articles. Findings of a content analysis show that approximately 40% of published articles dealt with psychological topics. The most frequently researched psychological issues were clustered into three main categories: customer behaviour, employee behaviour and managerial behaviour. For the analysed psychological articles, most were authored by two or three authors, mostly academics. The most common type of research approach was testing causal models. The majority of articles employed quantitative research designs and analyses. Key implications of this study include the call for stronger diversity in hospitality psychological research and methodological approaches, better linkages between research and practice, as well as the incorporation of hospitality psychology in hospitality management curricula.

KEYWORDS: employee behaviour, guest behaviour, hospitality research, managerial behaviour, psychology

Introduction

Hospitality research is important. Academic research actively develops knowledge and helps resolve practical and managerial challenges in the hospitality industry (Law et al., 2012). Researchers greatly aid industry decision-making by providing accurate empirical facts and findings, specialised knowledge, sound and scholarly investigative methods and a long-term, objective orientation towards management and staff development (Van Scotter & Culligan, 2003). As such, research published in leading high-impact hospitality research journals is of particular importance and value to the hospitality industry.

To successfully operate a hospitality business, it is critically important to understand the intricate relations between the behaviour of guests, employees and managers. That is why psychological topics represent an integral part of hospitality management curricula in the form of modules and units focusing explicitly or implicitly on topics such as leadership, organisational behaviour, ethics, human resource management, learning and development, sales and marketing, individual differences, personality and diversity management (Min et al., 2016).

Taking into account the importance of hospitality research and the relevance of applied psychology for hospitality management, we set out to examine how psychological research is represented in hospitality research journals. This article reviews articles published in three leading hospitality journals to identify those who are researching psychological topics. Specifically, we focus on the *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* (*CQ*), the *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (*IJHM*), and the *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research* (*JHTR*). These three journals were chosen as they are generally considered to be high-quality and high-impact in the industry, both for researchers and practitioners (Van Scotter & Culligan, 2003; McKercher et al., 2006).

Background of the journals

Established in 1960, and with a five-year impact factor of 3.851, *CQ* is considered one of the leading journals in the field of hospitality research. *CQ* is edited by J. Bruce Tracey of the School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University in the USA. *CQ* publishes four issues per year. The stated range of topics that the journal publishes includes strategic management, human resources, marketing, finance, real estate, accounting, operational management, facilities and design, information systems and technology, communications, travel and tourism and general management.

IJHM has a five-year impact factor of 5.470 and its Editor-in-Chief is Manuel Rivera of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, USA. Since 2007, the journal has published eight issues per year. The stated range of topics that the journal publishes include human resources management, consumer behaviour and marketing, business forecasting and applied economics, operational management, strategic management, financial management, planning and design, information technology and e-commerce, training and development, technological developments and national and international legislation.

JHTR is edited by Chris Roberts of DePaul University, USA, and Linda J. Shea of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA. The journal has a five-year impact factor of 4.117 and currently publishes eight issues per year. In 2016, the journal published six issues and prior to that, the journal typically published four issues per year. The aim of this journal is to publish high-quality, refereed articles that advance the knowledge base of the hospitality and tourism field. The journal states on its website that it encourages the use of a variety of research methods — both quantitative and qualitative, and that the key evaluation criterion for acceptance is a "contribution" to the development of the field.

All three journals focus on original empirical research, but they do accept other types of items for consideration, such as research notes, industry viewpoints, business practice reviews and analyses.

Method

Twenty issues of each of the three chosen journals were reviewed. These issues were published from June 2018 and going backwards. Due to the fact that different journals published different numbers of issues per year, the timeframes covered for the three journals also differed (see Table 1). *CQ* published four issues per year. Therefore, the 20 issues reviewed represented research published in the previous five years. *IJHM* published eight issues per year, which meant the 20 issues represented approximately the previous two and half years for this journal. *JHTR* currently publishes eight issues per year. However, in 2016, the journal published six issues and prior to that, the journal typically published four issues per year. Due to the changes that occurred in the numbers of issues published in different years, the reviewed 20 issues covered most publications between 2015 and 2018 for *JHTR*. The reviewing process focused specifically on original research articles. Other published items (e.g. editorials, research notes, reviews, etc.) were not included in this review. In total, the 60 issues yielded 539 articles for analysis.

Before the full reviewing process started, one of the authors conducted a pilot analysis by reviewing two issues per journal independently. This was done to create a template for the subsequent full review and analysis of all included issues. The resulting template contained items that the reviewers would focus on when reviewing the 539 articles, including: whether or not the article dealt with a psychological topic; whether the psychological issue was researched from the customer perspective, the employee perspective, or the managerial perspective; what the researched psychological topic was (topic was noted on the basis of two textbooks, one on organisational behaviour [Robbins & Judge, 2017] and the other on consumer psychology [Jansson-Boyd, 2010]); level of analysis (organisational level, team level, dyad, individual, or other); sector (hotel, restaurant, casino, spa, tourist destination, etc.); research definition (testing models, testing hypotheses, research questions); data type (cross-sectional survey single source, cross-sectional survey multiple sources, longitudinal survey single source, longitudinal survey multiple sources, on-site observation, interview, focus group, simulation, business or archival data); geographical location of data source (USA, Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa, etc.); data analysis methods (regression, descriptive analyses, SEM, factor analysis, *T*-test/ANOVA/MANOVA, cluster analysis, content analysis, other qualitative analyses, other quantitative analyses); number of authors (1, 2, 3, 4, 5+); and position of authors (professor, assistant professor, associate professor, bachelor's student, master's student, PhD student, post-doc researcher, lecturer/senior lecturer, author from the industry).

Results

Table 1 presents an overview of the reviewed volumes and issues. *IJHM* published the greatest number of articles in total and per issue (Σ = 227, M = 13.85), followed by *CQ* (Σ = 151, *M* = 7.55) and *JHTR* (Σ = 111, M = 5.55); in total 539 articles were reviewed. Of the 539 articles, 224 (42%) were found to be focused on psychological topics. All further analyses and findings relate to these 224 articles.

Psychological studies

In line with the outcomes of the pilot review that was conducted prior to the full review, the articles that were deemed to be dealing with psychological topics were further categorised into three main categories: those related to employee behaviour, customer/guest behaviour and managerial behaviour. To further review the key themes from the customer' perspective, the textbook *Consumer Psychology* (Jansson-Boyd, 2010) served as the basis for reviewing researched topics. Reviewing article abstracts and keywords revealed that the main topics included satisfaction, purchase decision-making, motivation, loyalty, trust, communication, emotions, complaining, norms vs behaviours, culture and discrimination.

The framework for the employee and managerial perspective was provided by Robbins and Judge (2017). A review of article keywords revealed that the main topics related to employee behaviour included: job satisfaction, employee engagement, job characteristics, motivation, emotional labour, stress and job security. The main topics related to managerial behaviour

TABLE 1: Overview of reviewed issues per journal

Journal details	*Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*	*International Journal of Hospitality Management*	*Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*
Five-year impact factor	3.851	5.470	4.117
Number of articles in the 20 reviewed issues	151	277	111
Average number of articles per issue	7.55	13.85	5.55
Twenty issues reviewed	Issue 54(3) to Issue 59(2)	Volume 51 to Volume 71	Issue 39(3) to Issue 42(4)

included: leadership behaviour and styles, leader traits, leader-member exchange, power, organisational culture, organisational branding, trust, emotional intelligence, managing diversity and organisational politics.

Authorship
As shown in Figure 1, most articles were authored by two or three individuals (37% were authored by three authors, 36% by two authors, 17% by four authors, 7% by one author, 4% by five or more authors). In terms of academic and/or professional positions, academics formed the majority of authors: 28% were professors, 32% assistant professors, 22% associate professors and 5% lecturers (Figure 2). Other types of positions that authors held include bachelor's and master's students as well as researchers from related fields such as hospitality consulting firms or governmental agencies and bodies that deal with hospitality and tourism-related issues.

Research
Figure 3 shows how authors formulated their research. Among the psychological papers analysed, testing causal models appeared to be the most frequent research objective (65%), followed by testing hypotheses (23%). Only 11% of articles used research questions. It should be noted here that most articles dealing with causal models also included hypotheses. So, the 23% which dealt with hypothesis testing had only hypotheses and no models.

Consistent with the way that authors formulated their research objectives, a large number of studies utilised a quantitative approach involving survey data (Figure 4). Among the studies

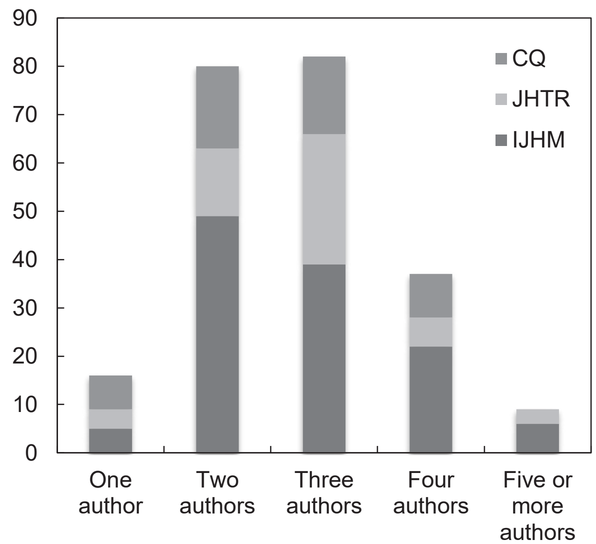

FIGURE 1: Number of authors

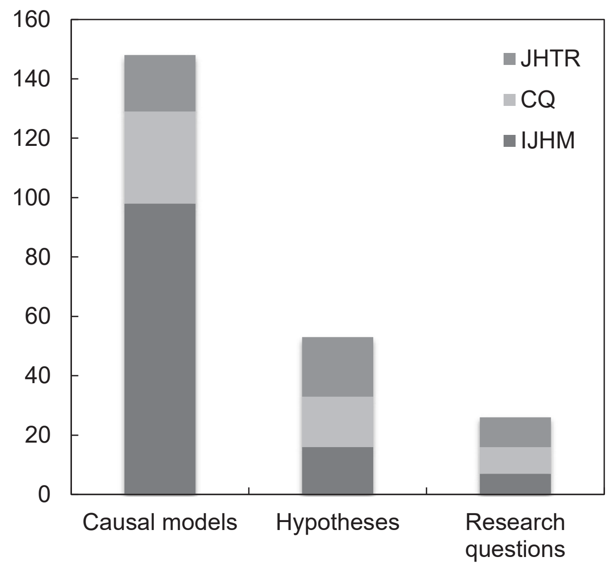

FIGURE 3: Research definitions

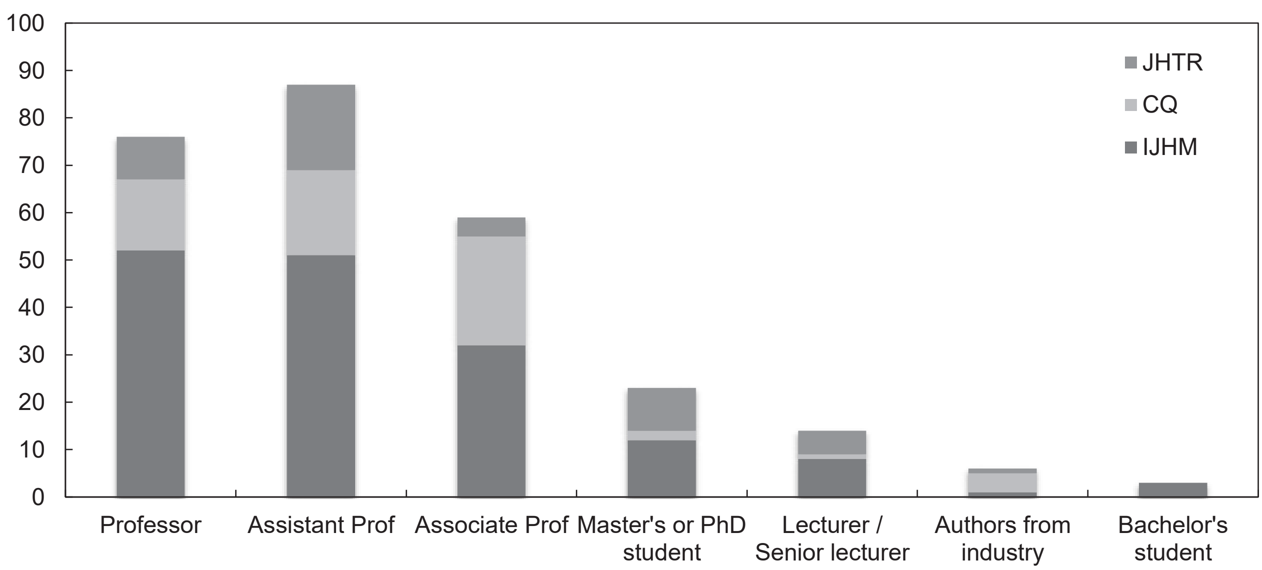

FIGURE 2: Position of authors

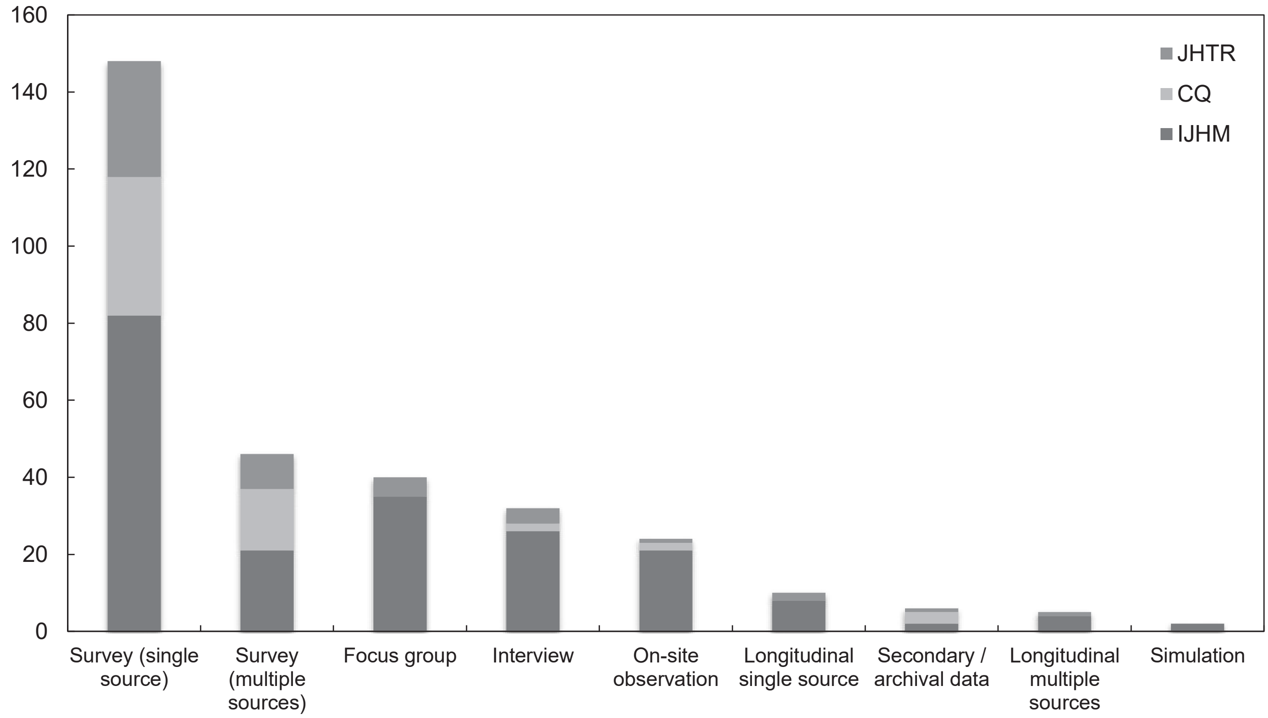

FIGURE 4: Types of data

which relied on cross-sectional surveys, the majority used single-source self-reports (76%), with only 24% using multiple-source surveys (i.e. dyads or teams). The consistency between research objectives and data usage is further shown by the types of data analytical methods performed by the authors (Figure 5). Regression analyses and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) count as the main data analytical approaches used to test models and hypotheses. Associated with these analyses are descriptive analyses and factor analyses which were typically performed prior to testing hypotheses and models. Overall, 94% of the analysed articles used quantitative analytical approaches, while 6% were qualitative in nature (with the most common qualitative data collection instruments being interviewing and focus groups).

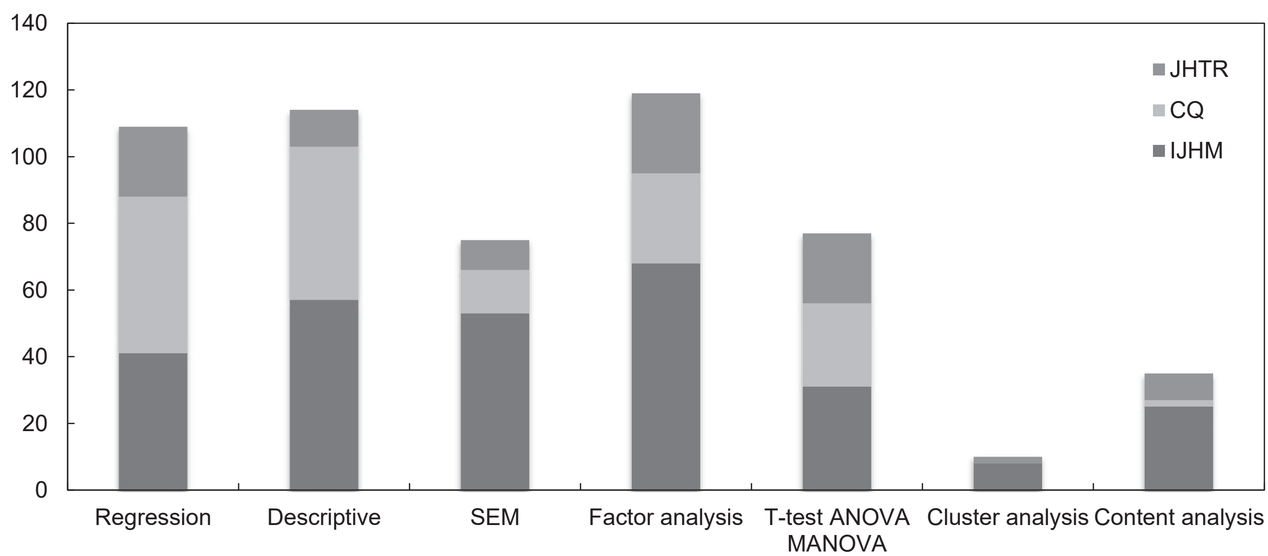

FIGURE 5: Data analytical methods

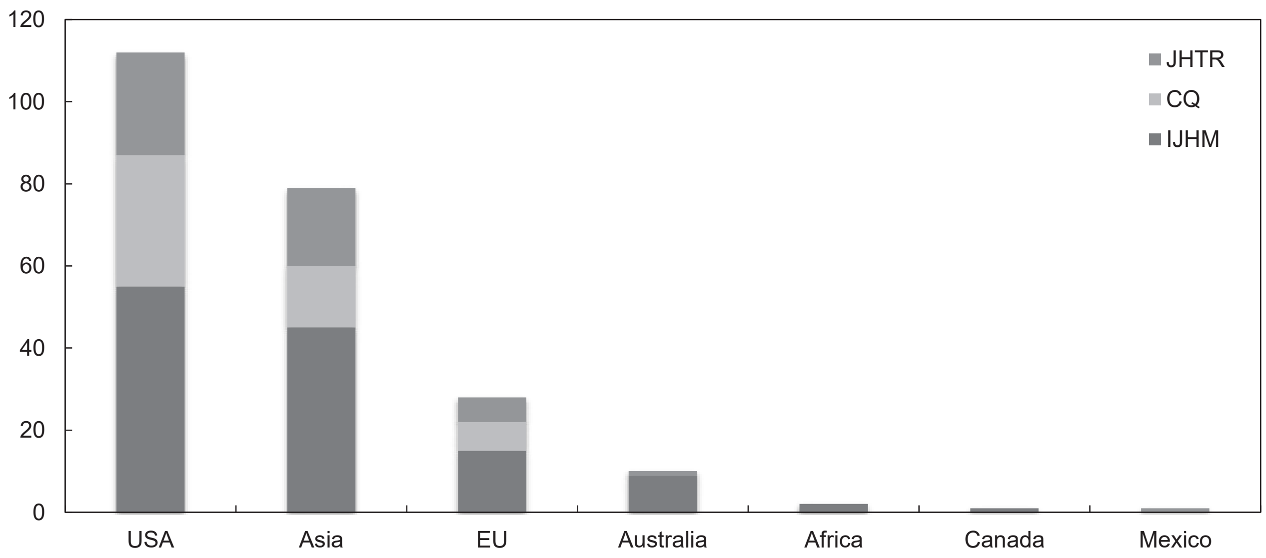

FIGURE 6: Geographical source of data (country and/or region)

Geographical and industrial background

Figure 6 shows the geographical regions where data were collected. The United States (48%), Asia (34%) and the European Union (12%) represent the top three regions where research data were collected. In terms of specific sectors of the hospitality and tourism industries, hotels (37%), restaurants (30%) and tourists in general (14%) were the main sources of research data (Figure 7).

Discussion and implications

The findings of this review show that psychological research accounted for almost half of all published research papers in the 60 issues that were reviewed, highlighting the importance of psychological research in hospitality. Our findings further show that hospitality psychological research is typically conducted in three main areas: studies focusing on customer/guest behaviour, employee behaviour and managerial behaviour. These are in line with published textbooks focusing on consumer behaviour, human resources and management and leadership (e.g. Crouch et al., 2004; Berger & Brownell, 2009). In terms of authorship and research characteristics, our findings show that most studies were authored by multiple academics (typically two or three, mostly professors, assistant and/or associate professors and lecturers), dealt with testing models and/or hypotheses, utilised

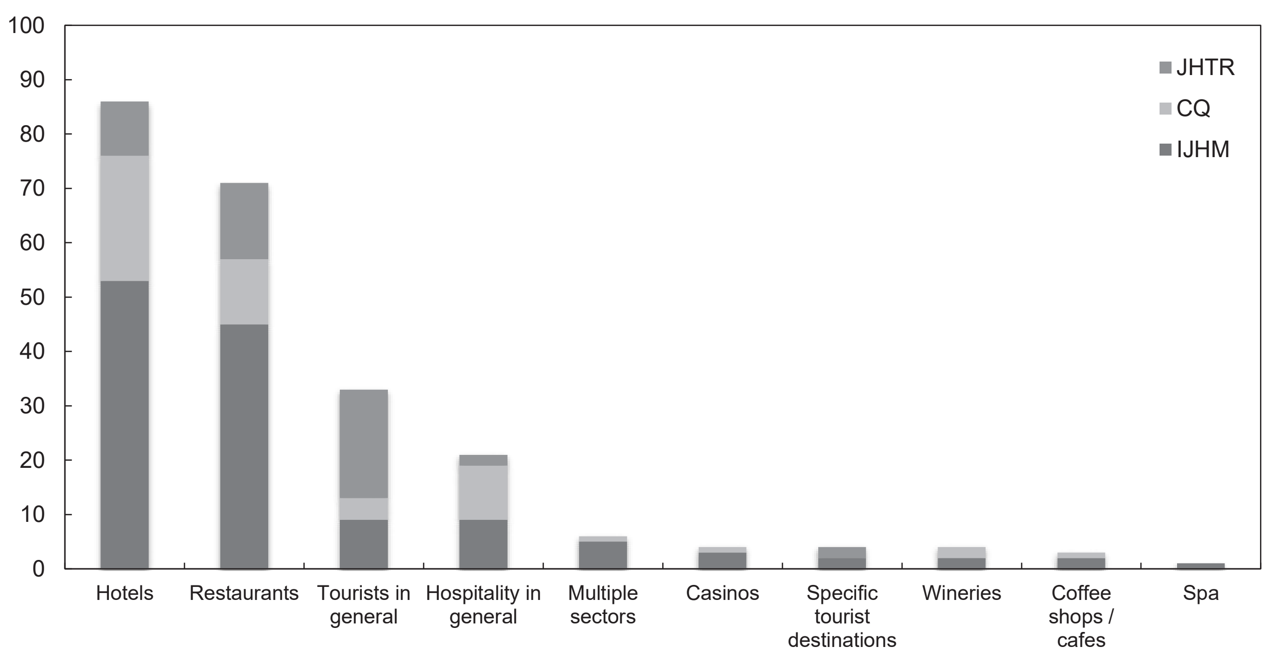

FIGURE 7: Sectors from which data were collected

quantitative data and analytical methods and were conducted in the US, Asia and Europe.

These findings have some potential implications for hospitality professionals, researchers, and educators. From the perspective of authors and scholars, conducting psychological research in the context of hospitality represents a fruitful avenue for publication in respected journals. This is evidenced by the fact that almost half of all published papers in these 60 issues dealt with psychological topics. Given the wide range of themes and subjects from the three perspectives (guest, employee, managerial), there are ample opportunities to conduct interesting and important psychological research in hospitality. For publication in leading hospitality research journals, the general pattern of findings from this review shows that quantitative research studies represent the mainstream, and the testing of causal models and relationships appear to be a key focus.

Second, there is the potential need for academics and practitioners to collaborate more in research and publication efforts. Few studies in the reviewed issues were written and published by practitioners from the industry. The overwhelming majority of authors were from academic institutions. The gap between scholars and managers which exists in the field of general management (Shapiro et al., 2007) also appears to be present when it comes to hospitality management and research. More collaborative and continuous joint research efforts between academic institutes and practitioners from the industry could strengthen the two-way transmission of knowledge between scholars and educators, on the one hand, and practitioners and managers, on the other.

Third, the findings of this review suggest that a wider range of methodological research approaches may serve to strengthen hospitality psychological research. As shown in Figure 4, survey design is the predominant methodological approach used in the studies reviewed. Experimental studies, mixed-method studies and studies collecting empirical data using other instruments (e.g. photographic and video data, data from wearable devices such as Fitbit) may serve to diversify hospitality psychological research and make this specific field more interesting and appealing to readers.

Finally, for hospitality educators and curriculum developers, the psychology of hospitality management represents a core subject for hospitality management courses and programmes. Hospitality psychology can be incorporated into the curriculum in different ways. The various psychological perspectives (employee perspective, managerial and organisational perspective, consumer perspective) could be taught independently as different blocks or modules. Alternatively, they could also be taught in an integrated manner, including these different perspectives in one large unit, allowing links to be drawn between, for example, personnel (i.e., staff) psychology with consumer experiences (e.g. how employee empowerment influences guest satisfaction [Wang & Chen, 2017]).

Potential limitations and future research

The findings of this review study should be viewed in light of two potential limitations. First, as our review focused on only three hospitality research journals, the results of the review may not generalise to the entire field of hospitality research. It should be noted, however, that the three journals that we focused on are generally considered as leading, top-tier hospitality journals by researchers and academics in hospitality management. The fact remains that a wider range of hospitality journals should be reviewed by future researchers to paint a broader picture regarding psychological research published in hospitality journals.

The second potential limitation relates to our focus on psychological research and the exclusion of other topics in this review. The findings of this review study relating to article features, types of data and research definitions, authorship patterns and so forth refer specifically to the articles that were identified to be psychological. Our findings do not apply to all other articles focusing on other important topics published in the issues of the journals analysed. Future review studies may seek to be more inclusive and extensive in terms of scope and research topics.

Conclusions

This article reviewed research articles published in three leading hospitality journals. The research topics of the 224 psychology-related articles were categorised into three main themes: customer/guest behaviour, employee behaviour and managerial behaviour. Articles dealing with customer behaviour included topics such as customer satisfaction, purchase decision-making, motivation, loyalty, trust, communication, emotions, complaining, norms vs behaviours, culture and discrimination. Articles dealing with employee behaviour focused on job satisfaction, employee engagement, job characteristics, motivation, emotional labour, stress and job security. The studies on managerial behaviour covered issues such as leadership behaviour and styles, leader traits, leader-member exchange, power, organisational culture, organisational branding, trust, emotional intelligence, managing diversity and organisational politics.

Most studies were authored by two or three authors, with the majority of authors being academics. The most common type of research definition was testing causal models. A majority of articles used quantitative survey data. Fewer articles used qualitative data, in which cases, data were most likely collected through interviewing and focus groups. Most articles relied on data collected from hotels and restaurants in the US and Asia.

These results highlight the relevance and importance of psychological research in hospitality management and research overall, and provide potential directions for hospitality educators, researchers and practitioners in future research efforts to enhance hospitality research and to strengthen the two-way transmission of knowledge between hospitality researchers and managers.

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REVIEW
ARTICLE

The future of hospitality jobs: The rise of the gig worker

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ABSTRACT: This review article aims to analyse the different perspectives on the gig economy and gig workers, specifically in the hospitality industry, and establish a research base that contributes to future research. The article examines the perceptions of both employers and employees of the gig economy based on available literature. Current literature reveals that the impact of gig-style work is under-researched in many areas, including the hospitality sector. The COVID-19 pandemic and its restrictions have revitalised the gig economy and forced the hospitality industry to explore a sustainable long-term relationship with it. Many of today's permanent hospitality jobs will be lost to gig workers. Governments and employers have to prepare and adapt to a future where the desire for flexibility is central. The article reviews the many advantages and disadvantages of the gig economy and offers an insight into the future of hospitality jobs. This review article is beneficial for both industrial and educational applications.

KEYWORDS: employment, COVID-19, gig economy, human resources

Introduction

How people live, work and spend their money has changed dramatically over the past two decades with advances in technology, especially smartphone technology. Being super-connected via social networks has increased communication. It has opened up new ways to make money online; picking up a "gig" (or a temporary work engagement) has become very easy to do. The advances in technology, artificial intelligence and the "gig economy" are changing how people find and do work. Countries must be ready to respond to this new phenomenon with innovative policies and programmes.

What is the gig economy?

The gig economy is made up of three main components: the independent workers paid by the gig (i.e. a task or a project) as opposed to those workers who receive a salary or hourly wage; the consumers who need a specific service, for example, a ride to their next destination, or a particular item delivered; and the companies that connect the worker to the consumer in a direct manner, including app-based technology platforms. Companies such as Uber, Deliveroo, Airbnb, Lyft, Etsy or TaskRabbit act as the medium through which the worker is connected to and ultimately paid by the consumer. These companies make it easier for workers to find a quick, temporary job (i.e. a gig), from a musical performance to fixing a leaky tap. However, one of the main differences between a gig and traditional work arrangements is that a gig is a temporary work engagement, and the worker is paid only for that specific job.

The history of gig work

The development of the gig economy started first in delivery and freelance working scenarios, and the term "gig" comes from the music and entertainment business, where performances were often one-offs. However, the term is slowly and steadily entering hospitality discourse. Therefore, this article suggests that workers in the hospitality industry today are and will be confronted with the consequences of gig work. Over the past two decades, the world of work has changed considerably as organisations have focused on increasingly flexible recruitment strategies. The now almost historical notion of a job for life and the concepts of a "9 to 5" workday are diminishing fast (Tabet, 2020). The idea of "gig working" is rapidly gaining ground (Burkard & Craven, 2019; Dewan & Ernst, 2020). As a definition, gig working is when people take temporary, often ad-hoc, work contracts (or gigs) sourced online through digital, cloud-based marketplaces (International Labour Organization, 2021). Digital work platforms such as Upwork and Freelancer.com are typical of the "Uberisation" of work, as they allow businesses (employers) to contract workers for short-term engagements (gigs), or specific projects, for a defined period. The recent growth of online platforms such as Uber, Deliveroo and TaskRabbit has given rise to a *global sharing economy* in which it is becoming ever more commonplace to buy and sell jobs and services online across the world. With the increasing number of crowd sourcing platforms, the number of people working in the area has also increased. All these developments have resulted in the rise of the so-called gig economy.

The gig economy is usually understood to include chiefly two forms of work: "crowd work" and "work on-demand via apps" (Kessler, 2015; Said, 2015; Smith & Leberstein, 2015). The term "crowd work" (also called "crowd sourcing) usually refers to working activities that imply completing a series of tasks through online platforms (Howe, 2006; Cherry, 2009; Felstiner, 2011; Adriaan et al., 2013; Bergvall-Kåreborn & Howcroft, 2014; Mandl et al., 2015). These platforms put potential workers (employees) in contact with an indefinite number of organisations and individuals (employers) through the Internet, connecting clients and workers globally. "Work on-demand via apps" is a form of work in which the execution of traditional working activities such as transport (taxis), cleaning (either commercial or domestic), food delivery, and even clerical work is directed via apps on individual mobile phones. These apps are managed by companies that also intervene in setting minimum quality service standards and selecting and managing the workforce (Greenhouse, 2015; Rogers, 2015; Aloisi, 2016).

It is difficult to estimate the number of workers in the gig economy. Businesses are sometimes reluctant to disclose these data and, even when figures are available, it is hard to draw a reliable estimate since workers may be registered and work with several companies in the same month, week or even day (Singer, 2014). However, data collected and elaborated on by Smith and Leberstein (2015) for the principal platforms and apps show that the gig economy is a growing phenomenon.

There are many associated difficulties with assessing the number of employees and contractors (active in the gig economy) employed by multiple platforms because of a high turnover of contractors. However, some recent data from Uber.com suggests Uber claims to have 22 000 employees as of December 2018 (Uber Newsroom, 2021). Uber also cites 3.9 million drivers worldwide. However, drivers' very high turnover rate complicates this measure of gig workers contracting to Uber.

One media article reported that in early August 2016, Deliveroo had 800 employees (Satariano, 2016), while another article of around the same date said there were 6 500 riders employed by the company (Sahoo, 2016). On 8 September 2016, the *Financial Times* reported that 20 000 self-employed couriers were working for Deliveroo (O'Connor, 2016). In September 2017, Deliveroo confirmed that the company works with 30 000 riders across the globe (Titcomb, 2017). In September 2020, Deliveroo claimed that the company plans to increase riders to more than 50 000 in the UK (Deliveroo, 2020).

Hermes has contracts with 20 000 people paid on a piece-work basis to deliver parcels using their cars (Butler, 2020). Dubbed "lifestyle couriers", they are self-employed and do not receive any paid holiday, sick pay, parental leave or pension contributions. They pay for their fuel and car insurance but can take other jobs and have some flexibility over their working day. They are part of the fast-growing "gig economy" in which big companies, including Hermes, rely on increasing numbers of self-employed contractors, who are not subject to the national living wage, to deliver their core services.

A report by SPERA, a venture capital-backed portfolio company of Medici Ventures (2016), indicates that internationally the gig economy has been having a much more significant impact than first thought, and currently, more than a quarter of the US workforce is officially part of it (SPERA, 2016). To further clarify, nearly 54 million Americans participated in some form of independent work in 2015 (SPERA, 2016), and more than 10 million people – that is about 1 in 12 US households – rely on independent work for more than half of their income (SPERA, 2017). Researchers project that half of the working US and UK population will move into the gig economy within the next five years (SPERA, 2016; 2017). The number of US gig workers in 2021 rose to 51.1 million, a 34 per cent increase year on year. These numbers are expected to grow further, with some predicting that gig workers will constitute half of the workforce by 2023 (MBO Partners, 2021). The European Union also saw a 45 per cent increase in the number of independent workers from 2012 to 2013. Independent workers comprise the fastest-growing group in the European Union labour market (Goudin, 2016). Other parts of the world are also affected by these developments. For example, India's independent workforce, at 15 million, the second largest in the world, fills about 40 per cent of the world's freelance jobs (SPERA, 2016).

As the gig economy has grown over recent years, so have debates about its place and value to employment sustainability in the global labour market. Confusion has arisen around what exactly it constitutes and how it impacts employers, recruiters and workers alike. Some see online talent platforms as "clearing houses" with the potential to inject new momentum into the labour market. The McKinsey Global Institute, for example, calculates that by 2025 digital work platforms could add USD 2.7 trillion, or 2.0 per cent, to global GDP, increasing employment by 72 million full-time equivalent positions. For the UK, that equates to £45 billion and extra work for 766 000 people. The study estimates that up to 200 million people worldwide could personally benefit from using digital work platforms, specifically by allowing the unemployed to find work as freelancers or allowing part-time workers to work additional hours on a supplementary basis (Manyika et al., 2015). From the worker's perspective, the argument goes that the gig economy gives people the opportunity to work when they want to and be more in control of their lives (O'Conner, 2016). There are, though, downsides to the gig economy. There is ambiguity about the employment status of the gig worker linked to the reluctance of companies to disclose information and the flexible work patterns of gig workers: are they self-employed or an employee? This is not a rhetorical question because the status of an employee determines their rights, such as maternity leave, overtime pay, sick pay, pension rights and health care insurance (in the US).

Ambiguity in the workplace

Consider a hypothetical work arrangement for a delivery truck driver. They drive for a delivery service whose primary client is a large commercial company. The driver is paid based on the number of deliveries they complete, and they do not receive traditional employment protections such as overtime pay, sick pay or pension rights. The driver must purchase their vehicle but is not allowed to work for other delivery services. The driver must wear a uniform with the delivery service's logo on it. They can be removed as a contractor at will for not meeting the service's standards or expectations. What are the sources of classification ambiguity?

As the above example illustrates, the so-called self-employed workers in the gig economy are, in reality, employees in the real sense of the word in that they often only work for one organisation. In contrast, the organisation saves costs by not having the on-costs of employees by, for example, saving on employee benefits such as pensions, sick pay and paid holidays (Taylor et al., 2017). Secondly, employees in a gig economy may be free to choose when to work but not how to work or, perhaps more crucially, how much they are paid (O'Conner, 2016). Even more crucially, as will be explained in the next section, many gig workers are not in the position to choose when and how long to work because if they refuse a gig too often, they may not be offered any in the future and be, in effect, dismissed (Lee et al., 2015). Furthermore, many organisations offering gig work are often deploying algorithmic management based on the argument that algorithms are better at managing new employment opportunities and that this offers better and cheaper consumer services. This may be the case; however, the reality is often tightened control of the gig worker's performance.

Algorithmic management

Algorithmic management might sound like a science fiction future, but it has had uncanny echoes from the past. A hundred years ago, a new theory called "scientific management" swept through the factories of America. It was the brainchild of Frederick W. Taylor, the son of a well-to-do Philadelphia family who dropped his preparations for attending Harvard to become an apprentice in a hydraulics factory. At the factory, he saw a haphazard workplace where men worked as slowly as they could get away with, while their bosses paid them as little as possible. Taylor wanted to replace this rule-of-thumb approach with "the establishment of many rules, laws and formulae which replace the judgment of the individual workman" (Taylor, 1911, p. 37). To that end, he sent managers with stopwatches and notebooks to the shop floor. They observed, timed and recorded every stage of every job and determined the most efficient way that each one should be done. As Taylor discussed in his book, *The Principles of Scientific Management*, "[p]erhaps the most prominent single element in modern scientific management is the task idea. This idea specifies not only what is to be done, but how it is to be done and the exact time allowed for doing it" (Taylor, 1911, p. 39).

Taylor's scientific management approach has been widely applied in manufacturing, but the service industry has always been a specialist sector providing customer service at different levels. Hence it has been considered difficult to measure service time without highly standardising service operations such as has been the case in companies like McDonald's and Wok to Walk (n.d.), a Dutch fast food take-away company that, after its start in Amsterdam in 2004, is now represented on four continents (Wok to Walk, 2017). More complex operations, such as those in most hotel chains, have long been considered safe from the extended hand of Taylorism because of their complexity caused by customer demand. However, thanks to algorithms, a vast amount of data can be collected and analysed in real-time, making the measurement of and the improvement of processes such as the check-in at hotels possible. Today, many warehouse workers for companies such as Amazon, for example, use handheld devices that give them step-by-step instructions based on GPS on where to walk and what to pick from the shelves when they get there, all the while measuring their "pick rate" in real-time (Baraniuk, 2015). If a process can be analysed and reduced to its constituent parts, human employees may be (at least partly) substituted by machines, thus taking a new step in the deskilling of hospitality labour. For example, online check-in and check-out facilities have become widely available recently, with many hotel groups speeding up the process and reducing staff numbers on the front desk at the hotel.

Alongside pushing people to work faster and helping in the deskilling of labour, the use of algorithms is providing a degree of control and oversight that even the most hardened advocate of Taylor could never have dreamt would happen. Consider, for example, Uber, the well-known pioneering company in the sharing economy, offering a location-based app that connects drivers to riders. It started in a small number of US cities and, by the end of 2017, it is operating in more than 600 cities worldwide. Uber's app controls the fares that drivers charge and raises rates when demand surges. Surge pricing is meant to allow both the driver and Uber to boost revenues. However, research shows that surge pricing failed to reach its goal because rates changed too quickly and suddenly for drivers to utilise the information strategically to improve their incomes. Therefore, the interaction between algorithms and people in this situation failed (Lee et al., 2015).

Academics need to consider Uber's operations better to understand the degree of control possible with algorithmic management. Uber's app is designed to adjust the ride price to the demand; it also monitors the driver's position to assign a client to the driver nearest to the client's location. This process increases efficiency, but it also raises issues about the driver's privacy. Moreover, the driver's acceptance rate of the passengers assigned to them by the algorithm is one indicator of drivers' performance. As passengers' assignment is often not transparent to the driver, his motivation and sense of control are negatively affected. Algorithms are also used to analyse passengers' ratings of the driver's service quality, another objective on which a driver's performance is evaluated. If the rating drops below a predetermined level, drivers are warned or dismissed. However, a passenger's rating of a driver's quality may not accurately reflect a driver's performance and service level. Consider, for example, passengers under the stress of missing a flight. They may rate a driver's service based on events beyond the driver's control, such as a traffic jam on the road to the airport. As an Uber driver may never meet with a human resource manager during their whole employment period and may therefore not be able to discuss particular circumstances, algorithmic performance management may be perceived as unfair and become a source of stress, disappointment and frustration (Lee et al., 2015).

Taylorism on steroids

Documents submitted as part of an employment tribunal case brought by the GMB – Britain's general trade union – against Uber in London include an email sent to driver James Farrar congratulating him on an average rating above 4.6. According to an article published by the *Financial Times*, Uber shared that they will continue to monitor drivers' rating every 50 trips and will send an email if they see the rating for the past 50 trips fall below 4.4. Uber confirmed it would deactivate drivers whose ratings dropped too low. However, it says this is extremely rare. The court documents include one instance in which Uber sent an email on 23 December 2013 to a driver called Ashley Da Gama wishing him a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year and explaining that they are currently planning for 2014 and would like the employee to be part of it. However, they do need to see an improvement on his current track record to ensure this. Two weeks later, Uber emailed again to say his ratings had not improved enough. His account was deactivated on that day (O'Conner, 2016).

Considering these drawbacks and the enormous number of people affected by gig work and algorithmic management, it is not surprising that the phrase "gig economy" is seen by many as a code for little more than the exploitation of the workforce and that algorithmic management is seen as a tool exacerbating the exploitation. As a proportion of the total employees in the population, there are millions of people who are, in effect, forced to undertake work at inadequate pay rates imposed upon them globally (Lashley, 2016). The word "wage slaves" may sound extreme, but many arguments support this in the modern world.

The gig economy, rather than being driven by workers' preferences to work flexibly, is seen by many as the result of employers' attempts to drive down costs and avoid "unnecessary" permanent employees, particularly but not exclusively during periods of economic uncertainty (Taylor et al., 2017). The legislative divisions between "employees" and the "self-employed" on one side and the mixed blessings of algorithmic management on the other make it artificially cheaper for businesses to move away from the traditional employer-employee model of working and towards an insecure "firm-contractor" relationship instead. The current situation remains unsustainable as this model favours the employer more than the employee (Brinkley, 2015).

COVID-19 and the gig economy

COVID-19 has wholly destabilised the world's workforce. Many people have resorted to gig work to survive (Helling, 2021). The gig economy has been growing since the beginning of the pandemic as gig workers are removing many hurdles of human resources management from the service and hospitality industry (Financialnewsmedia.com, 2020). Since the beginning of the pandemic, more people are staying at home to minimise the spread of the virus and thus shopping online (Liu, 2020). Amazon, for example, has opened 100 000 new roles mostly in their warehouses and delivery units to support people in self-isolation (Clark, 2020).

Today's world is witnessing an unprecedented crisis of significant magnitude, a crisis that aggravates human suffering, paralysing world economies and disrupting the way humans lead their lives. In an interview with *Euronews* in March 2020, the UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres compared the crisis to a "war situation" requiring a war economy to deal with it (International News Channel, 2020). On 31 December 2019, the crisis began when the World Health Organisation (WHO) China Country Office got news from the Chinese authorities about a new type of novel coronavirus (nCoV). Since then, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has led to 231 703 120 confirmed cases and 4 746 620 confirmed deaths reported in 216 countries (WHO, 2021). In June 2020, the Global Economic Prospects report by the World Bank Group presented a grim outlook for the world economy. The report confirmed that nations would face recessions and substantial growth downgrades that will push tens of millions into extreme poverty (The World Bank, 2020).

With world markets slowing down and nations facing recession, the gig economy, surprisingly, grew exponentially. This was mainly due to the increased reliance of the confined population on gig workers for home deliveries, and the reliance by many people on gig work as an additional or primary source of income (Henderson, 2020).

Research by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) shows that 2019 was the ninth year in a row that the travel and tourism sector showed growth. The sector has outpaced global economic growth, contributing the USD 8.9 trillion to the world's GDP (10.3% of the worldwide economy) and creating 330 million jobs, one in ten across the globe. A worst-case scenario presented by the WTTC predicts that travel and tourism jobs will suffer 98.2 million job losses worldwide and a loss of USD 2 686 billion in travel and tourism GDP (WTTC, 2020). According to Laura Bosch Ferreté (2021), an engagement specialist working for ROBECO, an international asset management firm, COVID-19 has created a shift in behaviour among consumers and businesses, and has created a significant disruption in labour-intensive sectors. The response to this disruption requires the retail, hospitality and gig economies to maintain robust capital management strategies. The hospitality industry is one of the hardest hit. Recent research suggests that recovery will take many years. As a labour-intensive industry requiring a vital face-to-face exchange between guests and employees, the hospitality industry was the first to suffer from quarantines and shutdowns. Hospitality establishments had to shut down out of fears of community spread through group environments.

As of 2021, with many countries relaxing COVID-19 restrictions, the hospitality industry is finally beginning to recover. Nevertheless, the recovery is not proceeding smoothly as the industry cannot find workers. Post-pandemic research has shown that many laid-off hospitality workers, especially those at entry-level, who left the industry refuse to return (DeMicco & Liu, 2021). According to a survey by Bloomberg, half of the laid-off hospitality workers in the US will not return to their previous jobs in the hospitality industry, with over half of the respondents arguing that they want better working conditions, better pay and benefits, more flexibility and the desire to work remotely (Dmitrieva, 2021). While struggling to attract and retain employees and develop meaningful careers, the hospitality industry has had many insights from the COVID-19 pandemic. Most importantly, flexible forms of work reduce the risk on the company while supporting and offering varied benefits to employees (Martins et al., 2020). Nevertheless, many disadvantages associated with flexible forms of work were also highlighted during the pandemic, such as the adverse effects on the mental well-being of employees and the lack of income during forced leave (Robinson et al., 2019; Plastow, 2020).

Employment strategies in the hospitality industry are constantly evolving, with new generations requesting flexibility and actively working towards attaining this objective. A survey by Adecco Group among CEOs, leaders and employees concluded that flexibility at work is here to stay. Productivity will be measured on output and impact rather than hours worked (Adecco Group, 2020). The hospitality industry needs to embrace these principles to attract future generations of workers. To deal with substantial staff shortages, hospitality has to endorse the gig economy and embrace it from the top-down (Woodcock et al., 2018). At the 32nd Hunter Hotel Investment Conference at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, Mike Deitemeyer, the CEO of Aimbridge Hospitality, the largest global third-party management company, announced that the company has started testing the waters of the gig economy. According to

Deitemeyer, even though general managers, department heads and the sales team need to be full-time permanent employees, all other hotel jobs should be flexible and vary, based on demand. Having full-time employees in these positions could have dire consequences (Fox, 2021; Katz, 2021). As the hospitality industry recovers from COVID-19 restrictions and employee dismissals in 2020, it should focus more on workers' desire for flexible working and invest in digital transformation and technology to attract and retain talent. To tackle the dire shortage of labour, the industry should embrace and work further with the gig economy.

Future research

The impact of gig-style working is under-researched in many areas, including the hospitality sector. This discussion article aims to highlight the issues raised by the so-called gig economy that touch on areas already researched in traditional human resource management working environments, such as labour turnover, flexible working practices and the employer-employee relationship, and to focus on how these areas can become future research projects in the hospitality sector.

Conclusion

Today's digital capitalism creates a world of consumers delighting in apps for a cheap taxi or delivering take-away food or groceries to their doors. However, it is also creating a world of disempowered workers who have to labour in this on-demand world, the so-called gig economy, in which a working week is no more than a series of "gigs" contracted out by the online dispensers of on-demand work. The case against the gig economy is that it bids down wages; it makes working lives episodic; it displaces risk from corporations onto ordinary people; furthermore, it is a source of growing stress. Gig work does not come with pensions, sick pay, holiday entitlement or parental leave, and perhaps most importantly, a feeling of belonging to a team or organisation, the so-called "physiological contract". Gigs are one-on-one relationships between the contractor and the contractee. The workers are easy to abuse and hard to monitor. There are workers in the global labour market, students, older workers and adults with childcare responsibilities seeking flexible working hours that fit their lifestyles, for which the gig economy presents real opportunities. However, it is not great for many other workers, especially as it forces mainstream employers to compete on the same terms.

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Bill Rowson passed away on 12 October 2020.

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From on-site to online collaborative learning

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to determine the impact of switching from on-site to an online education on the collaborative learning experience of third-year students in Hospitality Management. An online survey containing seventeen questions was answered by 90 students. The results show that the students perceive more disadvantages than advantages of the switch from on-site to online education, resulting in 74% qualifying it as a negative experience. Furthermore, overall appreciation was significantly related with impact on study behaviour, like time spent on study, attending classes or asking questions. In order to get a more complete view on how all students perceive and practise online education, further research is recommended on design and delivery of online collaborative learning.

KEYWORDS: collaborative education, learning experience, online education, study behaviour

Introduction

Context and rationale for the study

The hospitality industry is one of the most service-oriented industries, with a high level of guest interaction (Widjaja, 2005). Interaction in this context is mostly concerned with face-to-face situations, while the world around us is gradually digitising. Despite the fact that technological innovations play an increasingly important role in our lives, people will continue to have a need for personal contact for the foreseeable future.

This research provided an insight into the current collaborative learning experience of future hospitality professionals. It is a way of learning in which several skills are practised that are essential for hospitality students to become successful in their industry. Skills such as teamworking are very important in this industry, because only with communication and collaboration can an optimal guest experience be realised.

Normally, at the institute where this research was conducted, these skills are practised through on-site practical learning at the on-campus student-run hotel, group assignments and network events. Currently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this way of collaborative learning is performed in an online study environment. If this way of learning progresses over the longer term, it could possibly have an effect on the development of social skills of, among others, the future hospitality professionals. This may ultimately have an impact on the future hospitality industry.

Purpose and relevance of the study

The goal of this study was to gain knowledge about how the switch from on-site education to online classes has had an impact on the collaborative learning experience of third-year students in Hospitality Management. The research provides a deeper insight into the advantages and disadvantages of online collaborative learning and the way the study behaviours of the students has changed as a result of the switch due to COVID-19. Moreover, the research offers educational establishments recommendations to improve the online collaborative learning experience for future students.

Literature review

According to Barr and Miller (2013), online education is not the most preferred learning environment of every student. This is because the isolation causes a feeling of loneliness and has an impact on the overall learning experience. Fortunately, more and more educational institutions add value to collaborative learning (CL), "a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together" (Dillenbourg, 1999, p. 1). Value is added by developing the students' social competences (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012), but also by increasing skills such as critical thinking and self-reflection (Chiong & Jovanovic, 2012). The current situation, the increased technological knowledge and the growing use of online communication in society offers many new opportunities for "online collaborative learning" (Lee, 2008, p. 2).

An example of an online collaborative learning application is computer-supported collaborative learning, also known as CSCL (Lee, 2008). Programs like Microsoft Teams and Blackboard Collaborate are good illustrations. The question of whether this online education has a positive or negative impact on the collaborative learning experience is a topic that is, according to Popov et al. (2019), likely affected by the students' viewpoint of online collaboration and its related study behaviours. "Educational benefits of online collaborative group work have been confirmed in numerous research studies"

(Chiong & Jovanovic, 2012, p. 1). Online education provides new opportunities for the collaborative learning process because distance is not a problem anymore, which increases the flexibility for the participants (Curtis & Lawson, 2001). Furthermore, the way of collaborating is more transparent, since messages that are sent about agreements made are available to every group member. Likewise, it is also easier to determine the participation level of each individual (Macdonald, 2003).

According to Janssen et al. (2005), there have been several studies that compared and observed people who worked in groups. Some groups did this in a face-to-face situation and others via computer-mediated communication (CMC), and it seems to be that collaborating via CMC indeed resulted in some positive outcomes. CMC can, for example, be a very useful way of communicating during the decision-making process (Fjermestad, 2004).

Furthermore, Janssen et al. (2005) claim in their report that according to Fjermestad (2004) and Benbunan-Fich et al. (2003), CMC groups have more complicated and cognitively more challenging group discussions in which group members participate more equally. Lee (2008) affirms the advantages of CSCL too, and repeats benefits such as the positive impact on group contacts.

Nevertheless, there are of course also studies that reported the opposite. According to Capdeferro and Romero (2012), online collaborative learning can cause negative feelings like frustration. Frustration can be caused by several things. Some of the factors Hara and Kling (1999) found during their research were technical issues and the absence of immediate feedback. Another factor that causes frustration or stress is, for example, obstacles faced when studying the content due to misunderstanding and lack of non-verbal communication (Curtis & Lawson, 2001).

Some other negative experiences with online collaborative learning are group members who do not participate or even do not attend, and the amount of time spent on an exercise in comparison to in a face-to-face setting (Goold et al., 2008). Besides this, online education also requires much more self-discipline (Alexander et al., 2012), which is a skill that not everyone naturally possesses but can have an essential impact on the collaboration.

Overall, it can be said that the studies showed different outcomes when discussing the impact on the collaborative learning experience via an online platform. Currently, more negative than positive aspects have been reported about CSCL/CMC, which is probably because the literature is quite outdated. Moreover, the technological improvements, the increased confidence of people with digital tools (generational differences) and the many new experiences with this way of learning will perhaps give some new insights.

Conceptual model

The conceptual model presents the impact of online education (independent variable) on the collaborative learning and study behaviour (dependent variables) and the way they impact each other.

Problem statement and research questions

The educational switch from on-site to online is a new experience to every third-year Hospitality Management student in the institution studied. The literature review on this subject shows that there are advantages and disadvantages related to an online study environment which are expected to have an influence on study behaviour. It is important to know exactly what impact they have and how they contribute to a positive or negative online collaborative learning experience.

Our problem statement is "What impact did the switch from on-site to an online study environment have on the collaborative learning experience of third-year Hospitality Management students?" And the research questions are:

1. How did the educational switch from on-site to online influence the study behaviour of the students?
2. What are the perceived disadvantages of online collaborative learning?
3. What are the perceived advantages of online collaborative learning?
4. What are, according to the third-year students, opportunities for the educational institute to improve the future online collaborative learning experience?

Method

Type of research

For this research, a descriptive research design has been chosen. According to Brotherton (2015, p. 13), descriptive research provides "a 'picture' of the what, who, when and where to create a context for further investigation". It is used to discover possible relationships and to obtain information from the population that might lead to useful recommendations.

Since all educational institutions had to provide their students almost overnight with online education only in early 2020, it makes sense that it likely affected the collaborative learning experience of the third-year Hospitality Management students. Whether the transition has had a positive or negative impact remains to be seen and is answered based on the quantitative data that was gathered during this research. With these outcomes the authors were able to identify what kind of impact online education had on the collaborative learning experience of these students and what educational institutions could do in order to improve future collaborative learning in an online study environment.

Survey

For data collection, an online survey was created, which was generated and administered using the program Google Forms. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete and consisted of thirteen multiple choice and four open questions, with a control question at the beginning. The survey had a basic design and was easy to fill out in to make sure that respondents were more willing to participate. The questions covered subjects like online group assignments, classes, communication, study time, issues in the online collaborative learning process and the advantages it might have. Furthermore, respondents had the opportunity to give recommendations to improve the future online study environment.

Before the survey was sent, it was piloted with a selected group of people who did not belong to the population under study, but had similar characteristics. After this process, the survey was adjusted, before the final survey was sent out.

Sampling and data collection

The population used for the research were the third-year Hospitality Management students of a University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands. The sample of 90 participants was selected with a non-probability sampling method, and the participants needed to meet the criterion of being a student in the particular module. In total, 310 third-year students met this criterion and were invited to participate in the study. Prior experiences have shown that many people do not bother to fill out a survey and therefore a €15 takeaway voucher was raffled among the participants. The online survey program Google Forms automatically processed all data that was provided by the respondents into an Excel-file that was transferred to SPSS for further analyses. If the respondent decided to leave their e-mail address for the give-away, it was presented in a separate section. After the survey was closed, all registered e-mail addresses were collected in a random selection program in order to decide who was the lucky winner. After the winner had been determined, the authors contacted the winner via email and presented the voucher.

The number of responses were monitored throughout the week after the survey was sent. After eight days, 69 surveys were completed and the authors decided to send a reminder. This resulted in a few extra responses, but the goal of 100 participants was still not met. Therefore, the authors decided to send the survey link via WhatsApp to specific, selected individuals (who met the criterion of being third-year students) with instructions that they could fill it out and send it to people they know who met this criterion as well. With this action, a snowball effect was created, which eventually resulted in a final response rate of 29% ($N = 90$).

Planned data analyses

To be able to draw conclusions, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences program (SPSS) was used. Before the answers could be entered into SPSS, the automatically made Excel-file by Google Forms needed to be transferred into readable SPSS outcomes. This meant that all multiple-choice answers were changed into numbers and open-question responses were separated into a Word document. After this process, the authors were able, by using the descriptive statistics function in SPSS, to create tables that indicated both frequencies and percentages. The descriptive statistics were used because the measurement level of the data was nominal.

In order to answer the first research question "*How did the educational switch from on-site to online influence the study behaviour of the students?*", it was primarily important for the authors to know if the students were actually experiencing an influence.

Therefore, the students were asked to answer whether they have the feeling that the online collaborative learning environment had influenced their study behaviour (Yes/No). With the descriptive statistics function on SPSS, a table with the amount of people who answered Yes or No and the percentages per category were presented.

Students were further asked to complete several questions about how they think their study behaviour in the online study environment changed in comparison to the on-site situation. The questions about following classes, consultation, time spent on group assignments or the rest of the study and communication were also presented in tabular format with frequencies and percentages. This gave a clear overview of the students' changed study behaviour and which elements had been influenced the most.

Research question 2 and 3 about the perceived disadvantages and advantages of online collaborative learning were presented and interpreted in the same way. The frequencies and the percentages in the table gave a clear picture of which advantages and disadvantages were experienced the most (mode). Besides the predetermined advantages and disadvantages, the participants had the opportunity to describe any additional ones that they experienced. These outcomes were recorded and presented in a separate table.

In order to be able to answer the problem statement "*What impact did the switch from on-site to an online study environment have on the collaborative learning experience of third-year Hospitality Management students?*", the authors asked the participants to indicate if they experienced the overall online collaborative learning as positive or negative.

Due to the fact that the authors expected that at least some students would indicate that they experienced this switch as negative overall, the fourth research question "*What are according to the third-year students, opportunities for the educational establishment to improve the future online collaborative learning experience?*" was included. Because of the fact that this question was an open question, the authors decided to list these recommendations in a separate table.

The descriptive statistics provided enough information to answer the research questions and the problem statement. However, we were curious if there was a relationship between the overall perception of online collaborative learning and its influence on their study behaviours. Therefore, we decided to do a chi-square test as well, because this is the indicated statistical tool for testing the relationship between nominal variables.

Ethical issues

In the introduction of the survey, it was indicated that the survey would be voluntary and anonymous, unless the participant decided to leave their e-mail address for the give-away. In this case, the personal data was processed according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidelines. The e-mail addresses that were used to send the survey were from the school's database, and therefore complied with GDPR guidelines.

Results

Descriptive statistics

As shown in Table 1, a total of 78.9% of participants had the feeling that the online collaborative learning influences their study behaviour. Table 2 represents which aspects of their study behaviour are influenced and in what way.

Based on the results in Table 2, it can be concluded that online education has an impact on the number of classes that the majority of the participants follow. A total of 26.7% of the participants indicated that they currently follow more classes, while 28.9% participants stated that they follow fewer classes. The overall time that the participants spent on their study in the online study environment decreased by 44.4% of the students. While most of the group spent less time on their study, 51.5% of the participants indicated that they currently spent more time on group assignments but had less consultation with their fellow students (64.4%). Finally, most of the participants stated that they ask their teachers fewer questions in the online study environment (53.3%).

Apart from the abovementioned changes in the participants' study behaviours, they indicated that there were more consequences of collaborating in an online environment. The majority of the group stated that they were less motivated, had more problems with concentration, became lazier and were more easily distracted (Table 3).

As shown in Table 4, it can be concluded that the overall communication in an online study environment is perceived as worse than in an on-site situation, whether this is with fellow students (73.3%) or teachers (66.7%).

As shown in Table 5, better group availability and flexibility was perceived as the main advantage of online collaborative learning (37.8%). Besides that, more transparency (27.8%) was also seen as a benefit. However, 35.6% of the participants indicated that they experienced none of the mentioned advantages.

Apart from the abovementioned advantages of online collaborative learning, the students indicated that with online classes they have more time for their personal lives and are more flexible and able to make their own plans. Overall, it can be concluded that students perceive a better school/work-life balance as the main additional advantage of online education.

In Table 6, some statements are listed that participants made regarding the additional advantages.

TABLE 1: Impact of online collaborative learning on study behaviour (*N* = 90)

Influence on study behaviour	Yes		No	
	F	%	*F*	%
	71	78.9	19	21.1

TABLE 2: Impact on study behaviour (*N* = 90)

	Less/fewer		Equal		More	
	F	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
Following classes	26	28.9	40	44.4	24	26.7
Time spent on study	40	44.4	21	23.3	29	32.2
Time spent on group assignments	19	21.1	25	27.8	46	51.1
Consultation with fellow students	58	64.4	18	20.0	14	15.6
Questions to teacher	48	53.3	18	20.0	24	26.7

TABLE 3: Statements made by participants regarding the impact on study behaviour

"It influences my behaviour because I become more lazy and procrastination."
"My motivation is a lot lower, and I can focus less because I am sitting behind my laptop the whole day."
"My motivation drops on some days since at home I get easily distracted. When I work on-site, I focus on school and that is where my concentration goes. This factor is what I miss at home."
"Less motivation, more (and quicker) tiredness due to spending a lot of time in front of the computer without any live interaction, loss of concentration, thoughts of skipping the lectures because they are recorded anyway, irritation because of the internet and technological issues."

TABLE 4: Impact on communication (*N* = 90)

	Worse		Equal		Better	
	F	%	*F*	%	*F*	%
With teachers	60	66.7	24	26.7	6	6.7
With fellow students	66	73.3	21	23.3	3	3.3

TABLE 5: Advantages of online collaborative learning (*N* = 90)

	F	%
Better group availability/flexibility	34	37.8
More transparency	25	27.8
Better decision-making process	10	11.1
Greater knowledge development	7	7.8
More equal participation	16	17.8
None of the advantages	32	35.6

TABLE 6: Participant's statements about perceived additional advantages

"You have more time for personal things and classes can be followed everywhere."
"I can divide my tasks how I prefer them."
"Overall, more flexibility, not only within groups."
"I experience a better work-life balance."

Looking at the results in Table 7, we see that technical issues were most often listed as a disadvantage of online collaborative learning (77.8%). However, misunderstandings (72.2%), group participation problems (61.1%), problems with self-discipline (54.4%) and interaction/feedback delay (53.3%) were also perceived as common disadvantages. Only 3.3% of the participants indicated that they experienced none of these issues with online collaborative learning.

Apart from the abovementioned disadvantages of online collaborative learning, participants had the feeling that the quality of their study had become worse. Moreover, many students stated that they miss especially their social contacts in the online study environment.

In Table 8, some statements are listed that participants made regarding the additional disadvantages.

Finally, it can be concluded that the majority of the students (74.4%) perceived that the switch from an on-site to online study environment has been a negative experience (Table 9).

TABLE 7: Disadvantages of online collaborative learning (N = 90)

	F	%
Technical issues	70	77.8
Interaction/feedback delay	48	53.3
Misunderstandings	65	72.2
Group participation problems	55	61.1
Problems with self-discipline	49	54.4
Problems with time management	27	30.0
No issues	3	3.3

TABLE 8: Participant's statements about perceived additional disadvantages

"I am very annoyed with how bad the quality of some of our lectures is now. We still pay more than €2 000 per year for this study, but the quality of our education has got way worse. With quality, I mean teachers not understanding BB Collaborate or MS Teams, teachers with bad internet access, teachers not doing anything to try and motivate the students a little (like turn on your camera), etc."
"I experience fewer social contacts."
"There is less opportunity for networking."

TABLE 9: Overall experience (N = 90)

	F	%
Positive	23	25.6
Negative	67	74.4

TABLE 10: Participant's recommendations for online collaborative learning

"Training for the teachers on how to work online and motivate the students."
"Schedule more Q&A session about the modules itself."
"Teachers should take more responsibility and guide us more."
"Obligate teachers to answer within two days, also during the holiday."

Recommendations by the students

In the questionnaire, the participants had the possibility to provide the educational establishment with recommendations on how to improve the online collaborative learning experience. Many students stated that they had a need for more Q&A sessions in which they received information and feedback about the study programme. Moreover, they indicated that teachers should take more responsibility and be more involved to stimulate the online collaborative learning, but especially the demand for on-site classes was high. At the same time, the university needed to ensure that they followed the guidance from the government COVID-19 taskforce at all times.

In Table 10, some recommendations are listed regarding the online collaborative learning that participants gave.

Testing for relationships

Chi-square testing shows a significant relation between influence on study behaviour and the overall experience ($\chi^2 = 13.204$; df = 1; $p < 0.001$) (Table 11).

TABLE 11: Relation between overall experience and influence on study behaviour (N = 90)

Influence on study behaviour	Overall experience		
	Positive	Negative	Total
Yes	12	59	71
No	11	8	19
Total	23	67	90

Discussion

In this section, results will be discussed per research question by interpreting the findings, comparing them with prior research and indicating their implications for the theory and practice of online collaborative learning.

How did the educational switch from on-site to online influence the study behaviour of the students?

Results show a significant relationship between the overall experience and the influence on study behaviour. This is in line with the literature which indicates that the switch from on-site to online study environment is likely affected by the students' positive or negative viewpoint of online collaboration (Popov et al., 2019). Students who experience the switch from on-site to online education as negative report more impact on their study behaviour. In the group who said that the switch had no influence on their study behaviour, most students experienced the switch as positive.

In agreement with the literature, the third-year Hospitality Management students who participated in the survey indicated that they became less motivated in an online study environment (Goold et al., 2008). This is reflected in changes in study behaviour, such as following fewer classes, asking fewer questions to teachers, spending less time on studying and having fewer consultations with fellow students. It is remarkable that students indicated that they spent more time on group assignments, while spending less time on studying and consultations with fellow students. A possible explanation for this situation is that group assignments are processed in a different way: if physically sitting together and discussing is not possible anymore, students might decide to divide tasks, which could require more time and effort by each individual member. As a result, students possibly have less time to spend on the rest of the study programme such as assessments and placement preparation.

If it is indeed the case that collaborative learning takes so much more time online than on-site and causes students to not have enough time to prepare themselves for other aspects of the study programme, educational institutions could use this information to improve the quality of their online education. Collaborative learning is not only to develop students' teamworking skills, but also communication, planning and managerial skills, which are equally important to becoming a successful hospitality professional.

What are the perceived disadvantages of online collaborative learning?

The overall negative experiences of the students are mainly caused by the many perceived disadvantages of online collaborative learning. As stated in prior research, the main causes of frustration during online collaborative learning are technical issues, absence of immediate feedback (Hara & Kling, 1999), misunderstandings (Curtis & Lawson, 2001), problems with group-participation, time management (Goold et al., 2008) and self-discipline (Alexander et al., 2012). All of these factors are also perceived as disadvantages of online collaborative learning by the participants, with technical issues as the main disadvantage. The possible explanation for this outcome could be that this educational programme has many international students who travelled back to their home countries due to the COVID-19 situation. Students were also forced to stay at home and therefore all students had to deal with the quality of their Wi-Fi network at home, which might not be as good for everybody else's.

On top of the disadvantages mentioned in the literature, students also experienced a decreased quality of the educational programme and a decreased possibility to build and maintain social contacts and networks. This isolation can cause a feeling of loneliness and can have an impact on the overall learning experience (Barr & Miller, 2013). The perceived decline of educational quality can be for several reasons. Some reasons that are indicated by students are, for example, that teachers do not have enough knowledge about the computer programs that they work with, have bad internet connections, do not actively interact with the whole group or do not share all content that belongs to the assignments or classes that are given. When this is indeed the case, these outcomes are very useful for educational institutes to know to be able to change these things and improve the quality of the student experience.

The social problem in this online study environment is something that cannot be changed that easily by educational institutions. This is because the COVID-19 pandemic forces the government to take decisions about social contact that impact the whole of society. Students stated that online collaborative learning causes a feeling of loneliness and is perceived as negative overall, while educational programmes provide students with many group assignments. These group assignments stimulate social interactions between students, especially in the online study environment. However, it is obvious that most of the students do not experience this as personal social interaction, because they probably have a need to share their personal feelings with someone (most of the time outside of the group), which does not occur that often during school projects.

What are the perceived advantages of online collaborative learning?

The positive overall experience of the students is mainly due to the perceived advantages of online collaborative learning. Students indicated that better group availability and flexibility and more transparency were the main advantages of online collaborative learning. The group availability and flexibility were, according to the students, partly because of the fact that they do not have to travel to school, which saves them much time. This outcome is in line with Curtis and Lawson (2001), who found that online education increases the flexibility for participants, since distance is not a problem anymore. The increased transparency is most likely due to increased arrangements and agreements made on communication platforms such as WhatsApp.

Contrary to the literature (Fjermestad, 2004), most of the students did not perceive greater knowledge development, better decision-making processes or more equal participation as an advantage of online collaborative learning. A possible explanation why most students did not experience greater knowledge development could be because they found that the quality of the online education had become worse. The decision-making process in an online study environment can be influenced by the lack of non-verbal communication (Curtis & Lawson, 2001) and can cause misunderstandings, which might lead to a slowed down decision-making process. Lastly, a possible explanation for most students not experiencing more equal participation between group members could be caused by the fact that students are not able to control the amount of time each member spends on their individual part, something which is possible in a face-to-face setting.

Students indicated that they had less consultation and communication with their fellow students and did not experience more equal participation in an online study environment. These outcomes are quite contradictory in relation to the increased transparency that was mentioned earlier, especially about participation. A reason that was given to explain why students probably do not experience a more equal participation was because of the fact that they were not able to control the work effort of their fellow students.

What, according to the third-year students, are opportunities for the educational institute to improve the future online collaborative learning experience?

Because of the fact that the online collaborative learning experience at this institution was mainly perceived as negative by students, many students suggested improvements to turn this experience into a more positive one. For some students, the negative viewpoint cannot be changed, but based on the recommendations, this experience can be much better for many students if a few easily changeable elements in the online study environment were taken into consideration. Elements such as more Q&A sessions, working on MS Teams instead of BlackBoard Collaborate, training for teachers on how to give good online workshops, having teachers respond within 48 hours including during holidays, and improving the interaction between students and the teacher by, for example, an introduction round at the start of each session and the obligation to turn the camera on.

Moreover, some students recommend that this institution give on-site classes again, for example, in smaller groups, because it provides a better overall collaborative learning experience. The number of students who gave this recommendation was not great because many students might not see it as possibility in the COVID-19 situation. It was claimed that other educational programmes at the same institution do offer on-site classes, for example, one day per week in small groups. When these students learned this, especially the ones who experience online collaborative learning as negative, they might have recommended this as well. Therefore, this is something to take into consideration because it might affect the overall learning experience of the school and therefore influence the choice of future hospitality students.

Limitations

This study has potential limitations. The switch to an online study environment is not voluntary for the participants since schools in the Netherlands were, due to COVID-19, forced to close and to supply online education. Students did not sign up for an online education and therefore online learning is not something they wanted in the first place. Consequently, it can be reasoned that students have a negative view of and a biased opinion about online education, which potentially influences the conclusions.

Another consequence of the pandemic is the fact that students not only have to deal with a switch to an online study environment, but also experience changes and restrictions in their personal lives. These consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak potentially have a great impact on most of the students, and therefore their experiences might quickly be perceived as negative.

Recommendations for further research

In the case of further research on online collaborative learning, it is recommended to expand the sample size. While doing this, it is important that demographic characteristics such as gender, nationality, age and study year are included to be able to discover significant differences. Moreover, it is wise to make use of the snowball method for data collection because people are more likely to participate when they are addressed personally by someone they know.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ready for recovery: Hoteliers' insights into the impact of COVID-19 on the Indian hotel industry

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ABSTRACT: This research studies the hotel manager perspective of COVID-19 (the novel coronavirus) on the Indian hotel industry by qualitatively analysing inputs from the human resources department, general management and top management of five-star hotels across India. In doing so, it advances knowledge on the impact of the COVID-19 situation in the domains of human resources (HR), strategy and business operations in the hospitality industry. The study analyses qualitative data collected through online interviews with 17 top-level managers of five-star hotels spread across India. Content analysis is done and the key findings with practical implications have been highlighted. This initial study on the hotel industry in India uncovers how the hoteliers are currently dealing with the pandemic across the country. Findings show that there is a massive negative impact on the Indian hotel industry, in terms of the revenue per available room (RevPAR) and occupancy rates. However, the study also highlights how hoteliers look forward to a phased re-opening of hotels with an increased focus on safety and hygiene after the COVID-19 crisis. The study provides a significant contribution to academic practitioners, hoteliers, and policymakers by examining the future plans in areas of hotels' HR, strategy and business plans.

KEYWORDS: business strategy, hospitality, hotels, re-opening

Introduction

The hotel industry of India, consisting of branded as well as hotel chains, is spread across the length and breadth of the country. It caters to 1.8 billion domestic tourists and 9.5 million foreign visitors to India. The southern state of Tamil Nadu and the northern state of Uttar Pradesh contribute more than 35% to the domestic hotel industry in India. The organised hotels in India include more than 55% of the hotels in the three-star categories or higher. The market size of the hotel industry in India (including the unorganised market) was estimated at $22 billion in 2019, growing at 8.6% until 2025 (Mobility Foresights, n.d.). However, the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world in 2020 has affected world businesses and organisations in a devastating manner. Of all the industries to bear the brunt of the losses, it is the hospitality industry that has been most severely hit. With travel coming to a standstill, hotels worldwide had to shut their doors to contain the pandemic. Layoffs and furloughs are at an all-time high and there is no immediate respite in sight. The depressing picture is especially pertinent to developing countries like India where the contribution of the tourism and hospitality industry to the national GDP is substantial.

This research looks at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel industry in India. Research reveals that the overall occupancy rates in the five-star hotels of India are estimated to have declined by 16.7–20.5% over 2019, while the RevPAR is estimated to have declined by 31–36.2% (Lamba, 2020). The effects on the Indian hotel industry started being visible when the bookings for hotels started declining towards the end of February 2020, even when there was a lot of tourist traffic still going to other countries. With the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the beginning of March, the Indian government suspended visas to tourists until 15 April 2020. In a report published by Hotelier India in 2020, it was predicted that the demand for Indian hotels was unlikely to pick up anytime soon during the year 2020; this became clear with the cancellation of tourist bookings for October to March 2021. The bleak situation is compounded by uncertainty and an unprecedented recession that has impacted the world in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides the actual business losses, hotel owners will also incur losses due to fixed operating expenses, debt repayments, interest payments and several other compliances required to be undertaken as part of the sector.

Literature review

The hotel industry in India

The hotel industry in India was a result of the British colonial rule. India, being a tropical country, meant that the British felt the need to set up hotels in cooler spots of the country, leading to the establishment of the first hotels in Shimla and Mussoorie in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The hotel industry grew during colonial times when Indians such as Jamshedji Tata and Rai Bahadur Man Singh took over prominent hotels that had been established by the British (Sufi & Singh, 2019). Post-independence, in addition to the establishment of hotels for government and foreign dignitaries, the hotel industry saw a boom when the Asian Games were held in India in 1982. Many hotels were built at this time to cater for the numbers of visitors to the event. With the growing demand for tourism to India, and after the "Incredible India" campaign (launched by the Indian government in 2002), there was an unprecedented growth of hotels due to the rise in tourists to the country. Star hotels came to be preferred as they provided a sense of luxury, utility and convenience. The ranking for these hotels was based on parameters like food services, entertainment, view, room variations such as size and additional amenities, spas and fitness facilities, hygiene, ease of access and location (Hotelier India, 2010). The boom in the information technology industry, and its related services, was another reason for the growth of the hotel industry in India. Today, India is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the world in terms of leisure and business. The hospitality industry of India alone contributes to 9.2% of the Gross Domestic Product of the country (Equitymaster, 2020).

The COVID-19 scenario in India

The hotel industry faced major crises at various points in earlier times. In the time frame of 2000 to 2015, the hotel industry saw several crises such as the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001, the SARS outbreak, the MERS outbreak and the global recession of 2008. However, the tourism and hotel industry proved its resilience by getting businesses back to normal (Gössling et al., 2020). The COVID-19 situation is different as such an unprecedented and massive shutdown of the world has not happened recently. The first case of COVID-19 in India was reported in January 2020. The number of infected people rose rapidly as governmental bodies struggled to contain the spread of the virus. In October 2020, there were 8 088 851 confirmed cases and 121 090 deaths (MyGov.in, 2020). Of all the business sectors that have seen massive increases in unemployment, sectors which are hedonic in nature and require the physical presence of people have been the most affected (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). Most tourists who had booked hotels in advance had to cancel or reschedule due to cancellation of air travel and the governmental lockdown in India. Since the travel industry was affected, 80 per cent of hotel rooms around the world were empty (Asmelash & Cooper, 2020). The transient demand diminished and what demand remained was because of long-stay guests or the government-prescribed quarantine hotels for returning international travellers (Lamba, 2020). With the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2020) advising people to avoid travel and shared spaces, the hotel industry of India was at a standstill. The major business hotspots in India like Bangalore, Jaipur, Delhi, Calcutta and Hyderabad saw drops in the occupancy level as well as the RevPAR (*Deccan Chronicle*, 2020). The Indian tourism and hospitality industry is predicted to lose at least 70% of its workforce due to redundancies, indicating the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on this sector. Industry experts predict that the hotel industry at large will suffer substantial losses unless there is major governmental intervention (Mazumdar, 2020). The International Air Transport Association (IATA, 2020) estimates that an emergency fund of at least USD 200 billion should be set up to mitigate the loss that has arisen out of the pandemic. This article seeks to understand the first-hand perspectives of employees in five-star, deluxe hotels in India through personal interviews.

Research design

To understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indian hotel industry, the researchers employed a primary mode of data collection. Interviews were conducted from April 2020 to June 2020 online. The respondents and researchers used telephones, Skype and emails to obtain detailed information from the management of three-star, four-star and five-star hotels. The physical visiting of these hotels during the development of this paper was restricted because of the lockdown and travel restrictions due to the pandemic. The hotels that were chosen have high occupancy rates and tourist influx and were chosen using purposive sampling facilitated by the researchers' contacts in the hotel industry. This sampling method consists of the respondents being intentionally sampled as the researchers feel that the respondents holding these designations in management are in a better position to share first-hand information about the current situation. The informants consisted of 17 managers who headed the human resources department, the marketing department and general management in the various hotels spread across the country. The data collected are qualitative in nature. The researchers chose this method, as qualitative research was best suited to provide descriptions of perceptions and experiences to understand this phenomenon (Ezzy, 2002; Scerri & Presbury, 2020). To reach the participants, the researchers employed snowball sampling. Köseoglu et al. (2020) state that the ideal sample size for a qualitative study is between 15 and 40 participants. After 15 interviews were completed, the researchers observed certain common themes beginning to emerge. To confirm this saturation level, two more interviews were conducted. The profile of the respondents can be seen in Table 1. All respondents were assured of anonymity and the data presented have coded the respondents as R1, R2, and so forth to R17.

The interviews were conducted in English as it is the most widely spoken language used for business across India. The impact of COVID-19 was studied from three operational angles, namely general management during the pandemic, the role of HR in hotels during the pandemic and business strategy of the hotels post-COVID. The results drawn for this study were done using compiled notes to the questions and summarised interview transcripts. The key words were identified in the transcripts, giving an insight into the situation of the hotels in the current times. The researchers also attended the BW Hoteliers webinar on 22 May 2020. This provided insights to the impact of COVID-19 on the hotel industry in India. In addition to the primary mode of data collection, various secondary sources such as journal articles, news articles and websites dedicated to tracking information on COVID-19 were used. To set the context, the following initial research questions (RQ) were asked:

- RQ 1: How has your hotel been affected by the pandemic? What is your first line of defence against COVID-19?

TABLE 1: Respondent profile

Name of hotel	Location in India	Hotel star rating
The Oberoi Udaivilas Palace	Udaipur, Rajasthan	5
JayPeePalace Hotel and Convention Centre	Agra, Uttar Pradesh	5
Taj Vivanta	Dwarka, New Delhi	5
The Lalit	Jaipur, Rajasthan	5
Radisson Blu Udaipur Palace Resort and Spa	Udaipur, Rajasthan	5
Le Meridien	Cochin, Kerala	5
Radisson Jass Hotel	Shimla, Himachal Pradesh	5
ITC Windsor	Bengaluru, Karnataka	5
The Oberoi Vanyavilas	Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan	5
White Mushroom Resorts	Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan	4
Park Hyatt	Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh	5
The Marriot	Jaipur, Rajasthan	5
Four Points Sheraton	Jaipur, Rajasthan	5
Umaid Bhavan Palace	Jodhpur, Rajasthan	5
JW Marriot Hotel	Kolkata, West Bengal	5
Four Seasons Hotel	Mumbai, Maharashtra	5
Hilton Mumbai International	Mumbai, Maharashtra	5

- RQ 2: How are you dealing with your employees in coping with the situation? Do you see any new approaches to the hiring/training practices for new recruits in your hotel?
- RQ 3: What is your opinion of the government policies and support system to the Indian hotel industry?
- RQ 4: Are you considering modifying your hotel's business strategy after this pandemic? If so, how would you prepare to combat such events from affecting your hotel in the future?

The study, being exploratory in nature, was manually analysed as this had the advantage of an interpretive approach. The authors' experiences and immersion in the data collection process contributed to the interpretative analysis rather than a mechanised approach using qualitative software. The data were fed verbatim into a table from where the authors reviewed each respondent's answers individually. This led to finding the similarities and differences between the respondents' answers to the research questions. Codes which were pertinent to the research were developed form this table. The most useful quotations which represented the theme of the research were presented in the final table. A partial diagram shows how the conclusions were drawn from the themes (Table 2).

Findings and discussion

Compliance to standards

All hotels followed protocol as their first line of defence. The outbreak of COVID-19 is unprecedented and the hotels followed the international health protocols and government-issued guidelines of health and safety. These include social distancing, frequent hand washing, enhanced hygiene and food safety standards along with ensuring the WHO standards for linen/uniforms and towels, empowering teams with training and safety protocols. Hotels emphasised that, for example,

> *it is mandatory that all staff are in masks and wear gloves and maintain adequate distance. Public areas and rooms are well equipped with sanitisers. The list of COVID-19 registered hospitals and ambulance service is with the front desk team. The hotel cars are being regularly sanitised to keep up with the safety standards* (R6).

Occupancy rates and RevPAR

In terms of RevPAR, all major cities of India showed steep falls. The maximum fall was seen in Bengaluru at 28.5%, followed by Delhi (20.3%), Mumbai (20%), Kolkata (19.8%), Jaipur (19.6%), Gurugram (19.5%), Goa (15.3%), Chennai (14.8%), Hyderabad (13.6%), Pune (13.4%) and Ahmedabad (13.2%) (*Deccan Chronicle*, 2020). The respondents all responded uniformly to the dismal occupancy rates and revenue of the hotels during the COVID-19 crisis. The tourist influx being zero, all hotels responded that their revenue at this point was zero. A selection of relevant responses included: "

> *The hotels were completely closed; we would roughly take a hit of 15% on RevPAR and probably we would clock 20–25% occupancy in this quarter. We only expect the demand to improve September 2020 onwards; however, it will not be a significant improvement – majorly in negative which can't be expressed, since there was no business which is going to affect us the entire year.*

TABLE 2: Partial table showing the data analysis

Selected quotation	Code/business area in the hotel	Theme/implication
"...as we are on complete lockdown for the past few weeks, revenue is nil..." (R6)	General management	Overall impact on hotel
"We try to keep them engaged by using various online platforms such as WhatsApp to keep morale high" (R1)	Human resources (Employee engagement)	How HR is coping
"...we are prepared with innovative business models to ensure we remain at the forefront of change and face the new normal with a significant progressive view" (R3)	Business strategy	Business strategy re-engineering
"The one important lesson it [COVID-19] has taught is self-sustainability is the key and along with that comes multiple sub sectors like reduced manpower and energy conservation" (R2)	Business strategy	Business strategy re-engineering
"...of course, we did expect some respite from the government, but it is disappointing to note that nothing has come out yet" (R11)	General management	Government policies and intervention
"We have been actively involved in training and SOPs designing. Staff, executives and HODs are attending regular training sessions and webinars to keep themselves updated completely" (R7)	Human resources	How HR is coping
"We are trying to make a handbook of whatever we are doing. There will be a few ticks and crosses, on the basis that we will have a contingency plan for the future" (R9)	General management	Business strategy re-engineering

The surge of cases in the last week of May 2020 saw the Delhi government converting five-star hotel banquet rooms into makeshift COVID-19 wards attached to various hospitals in Delhi. Patients with moderate symptoms of COVID-19 could opt for these facilities at a cost of approximately INR 70 000 (USD 920) per week in addition to other discretionary costs depending on the services provided (Goswami, 2020). The restaurant business in the hotels also suffered losses with the lockdowns and restrictions being imposed. Respondents stated, for example, that "*the only source of revenue is takeaway or home delivery, which was never the forte of any hotel*".

How HR is coping

The HR function has emerged as a leader in the trying times of COVID-19. All the respondents interviewed attested to the importance of keeping employees engaged and keeping a positive thought process. Respondents stated

> *We have been actively involved in training and designing new standard operating procedures in accordance with the new normal. Staff, executives and HODs are attending regular training sessions and webinars to keep them updated completely. During these unprecedented times, it is important to be positive and keep a positive thought process so that it travels further down in the team. There are a set of practices that will be developed for individual departments. One example would be not to enter a departure room until 48 hours have passed.*

Respondents also emphasised the importance of staying connected via social media platforms and WhatsApp groups. Additionally, online training and development on the post-pandemic situation has been the key in adapting to the "new normal". The work from home concept cannot be applied to the hotel industry due to logistical and operational issues. Hotel chains are devising ways to relieve employee anxiety even as they work to deal with the economic turmoil of COVID-19. From 24/7 tele-counselling and housing employees in hotels to cope with psychological distress to enrolling them in e-learning programmes and even supplying essentials to their doorstep, several large brands in the hospitality industry have initiated measures to keep their staff mentally fit and motivated during the pandemic (Chaturvedi, 2020). Hiring and recruitment in the hotel industry has currently come to a standstill. Respondents stated that the new hiring approach will purely focus of multitasking and cross-functional skills. In addition, training will also endeavour to achieve efficiency from the minimum number of staff by making all current employees multiskilled.

Government policies and intervention

All respondents expressed their disappointment that the government was not doing anything concrete for the revival of the hospitality industry. All hoteliers expected some relaxation regarding high amounts of recurring taxes or fees for renewal (Dash, 2020). In the words of the respondents,

> *The government could have given a greater deal of attention to the hospitality industry as it is one of the largest employers in the nation. The support system to the hotel is weak so far and needs more financial/marketing inputs. Being honest, there is no relief which has come from the government; we at least expect loan tenures to be increased, easy borrowings and debt restructuring which is necessary at this point of time. We also expect a tax waiver for initial fee months; however, these till now are nothing but expectations. They definitely had the opportunity to do more and have an effective system of revival of the tourism and hospitality sectors, but have so far failed to do anything concrete for the industry.*

Business strategy re-engineering

Hotels across the country agree that there is an urgent need to restructure businesses, keeping in mind the new challenges that the post-COVID world will bring. There is more focus on redefining the term "people-friendly" to incorporate safety and hygiene as an essential part of welcoming guests. The respondents in this research emphasised that

> *...a lot of re-imagining is required. For instance, we need to really relook at all our ratios again; be it manpower to rooms or cost per occupied room, adequate temperature setting for HVAC, etc. to control the cost. This pandemic has allowed us to rethink our costs as well as revenue. In terms of revenue, we are focusing on food delivery and expect it to ramp up soon, we are looking at tying up with parking companies to give them space to park inside our premises and if any company is keen to do branding in our premises, same way we are looking at new ways of focusing on different segments of businesses to drive room and F & B sales.*

One of the respondents, a senior manager in Taj Hotels also stated that

> *uncertainty brings out the best in people and new business solutions and new avenues of converting cost centres to revenue hubs in the post-COVID era is our way forward. The one important lesson it has taught is self-sustainability is the key and along with that comes multiple sub-sectors like reduced manpower/energy conservation/multiskilling of employees.*

Implication and conclusions

The results of the interviews with hotel managers show a strong negative impact of COVID on the Indian hotel industry. However, it is our observation that since such an unprecedented crisis has come about, the hoteliers have discussed in detail strategies which optimistically aim at opening hotels with socially distanced but warm welcomes. Crisis management teams could be set up to make action plans to deal with situations which require swift judgments and actions. Hotels are highly prone to the infectious spread of disease and it is important to contain the spread of viruses (Chien & Law, 2003). Regular meetings and brainstorming to combat new challenges should be held to ensure the smooth functioning of hotels. Preventive measures must be emphasised and strictly adhered to for at least the coming two years until the world is completely rid of the virus. Another deciding factor for the revival of the Indian hotel industry is governmental support and schemes for the same. It is estimated that at least 40 million jobs in the hospitality industry are at stake if revival measures are not put in place (*The Indian Express*, 2020). In addition to these measures, we also suggest that hoteliers need to work together with the government to revive the industry with necessary strategies and confidence-boosting techniques for travellers.

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RESEARCH
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Customer behaviour in restaurants before and during COVID-19: A study in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT: The foodservice industry is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world and it contributes to the development of the Vietnamese economy. However, with the appearance of COVID-19, this industry has been affected. The purpose of this study is twofold, to find out if there is a difference in customer behaviour before and during COVID-19, and to determine the most important factor that customers consider before and during their visit to a restaurant. To reach this aim, a quantitative method is conducted together with a snowball, and volunteer sampling method in which 117 people have participated from different age groups. The study found out that layout /design has the biggest influence on customer satisfaction and cleanliness is the factor that guests care about the most when choosing a restaurant to dine out. Additionally, safety regulations affect customer experience and their decision on restaurant selection. Moreover, delivery service is proved to continuously develop after the quarantine starts. Thus, restaurant managers are recommended to pay more attention to the cleanliness and safety regulations of the outlets during COVID-19. Regarding delivery companies, they should have competitive prices to attract more users.

KEYWORDS: cleanliness, customer satisfaction, hospitality industry, online delivery, restaurant selection

Introduction

The food service industry is all the food and drink outlets, such as restaurants, coffee shops, pubs, clubs, bars, and accommodation venues. This industry has been recorded as growing significantly in recent years and is expected to continue this positive development in the future (MarketLine, 2019). It is one of the fastest growing industries in the world with an increasing demand for eating out, and it is contributing to global and national economic growth.

Focusing specifically on the Vietnamese market, it is considered "one of the fastest growing economies in Asia" (Vo, 2019, p. 2). In the same report, the figures show that the GDP increased by 6.2% in 2016 and showed a 7.1% growth over ten years in 2018 (ibid.). Together with the forward pace of its economy, the foodservice industry noted a considerable expansion in the past three years. Research done in 2016 in the three main cities in Vietnam, namely Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang, concluded that the number of people going to restaurants is 340 million, contributing $1.1 billion to the total revenue of the second quarter. Research from Vietnam Credit (2020) shows that the Vietnamese care most about food quality, whether it is tasty and attractive, when going to a food and drink outlet. Meanwhile, service quality achieves 45% and only 5% care about health factors even though it relates to the safety area. Moreover, when looking at the Vietnamese foodservice industry, the coffee shop market is an important outlet to emphasise because it is never going to be redundant. Indeed, coffee shops are popping up like mushrooms all over the world, accounting for a large number of customers, and it promises to be a potential factor to national economic growth (Cekindo, 2020).

Nevertheless, with the appearance of COVID-19, the world has been severely affected. It is a global pandemic that has negatively influenced many aspects of life, resulting in the closure of borders of countries all over the world. As a result, the physical connection is temporarily lost. The hospitality industry has been notably affected. Restaurants and other outlets in the industry have been locked down due to the quarantine regulations aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Therefore, the whole industry has experienced a delay in its development. Before COVID-19, several pieces of research have stated that food quality, service quality and physical environment are the three main factors that affect customer behaviour when going to a restaurant, as mentioned above. However, Tiedt (2020) found that among all the elements which influence customer satisfaction, cleanliness has achieved the highest percentage during the pandemic. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has probably changed the main consideration of customers when going to a food or drink outlet based on health protection. Yu (cited in Dutta et al., 2014) states that customer satisfaction is when the customer goes back and recommends others to visit the place. As a result, it relates to the level of customer loyalty and future intentions. Furthermore, delivery has become more common and has recorded a rise in demand due to home quarantines and distancing regulations.

Therefore, this study has been conducted in the Vietnamese foodservice market to emphasise and find out what factors affect customer behaviour, including customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and behavioural intentions, and how it has changed compared to before and during the COVID-19 crisis. Additionally, the study is also aimed at understanding whether both the delivery option and physical environment — especially cleanliness — have a role in determining these behaviours.

Dube et al. (cited in Dutta et al., 2014) mention that whether a customer will return to a restaurant depends on the satisfaction of their previous experience. Therefore, it is essential to know which elements will affect customer satisfaction the most during their customer experience when visiting a restaurant to eat. Recognising how customer behaviour has changed during the COVID-19 situation will enable restaurant managers to make suitable improvements to ensure customer satisfaction in this difficult time. Thus, they probably could enhance the brand image and attract more customers. The result can help to create recommendations for innovations and new policies according to the changes in customer behaviour. Consequently, this article focuses on what has changed in customer considerations before making decisions and during their visits.

The project decided to emphasise factors affecting customer satisfaction, including food quality, service quality, physical environment and delivery service. The following problem statement is formulated to learn if there are any changes: Finding out the differences between what affects customer behaviour in restaurants normally and during COVID-19 in Vietnam.

Four questions have been formulated to help answer this problem statement:

- Research question 1: What factor has the biggest influence on customer satisfaction and is it aligned with customer loyalty and behavioural intention?
- Research question 2: To what extent does the physical environment affect customer behaviour during COVID-19?
- Research question 3: How has customer behaviour towards online delivery changed during COVID-19?
- Research question 4: Is there a difference in customer behaviour when choosing a restaurant during COVID-19?

Academic literature

Food quality

Sulek and Hensley (cited in Marković et al., 2010) stated that among the factors of service quality, food quality, and physical environment, food quality is the most important concerning customer satisfaction. Food quality is an essential part of the whole restaurant experience which contributes to customer satisfaction and whether they will return to the restaurant (Namkung & Jang, 2007). Moreover, different research has the same result on the importance of food quality to how loyal customers are and to how they think about a brand (Marković et al., 2010). Similarly, food quality is believed to be one of the main components that influences the way customers value a place (Susskind & Chan, 2000). In the same report, they listed presentation, taste, freshness and temperature as the main elements for assessing food quality. Presentation is defined as how appealing the food's appearance is on the plate, and that can increase guest loyalty (Namkung & Jang, 2007). Taste and freshness are also considered to be among those essential factors in determining food quality. Taste can affect customer satisfaction and the future potential for retaining customers (Péneau et al., 2006). Finally, together with taste, smell and sight, temperature creates the overall flavour for the meals and thus decides the positivity of guest satisfaction (Delwiche, 2004). Indeed, customers have become more demanding and, consequently, improving food quality is necessary now than ever for a restaurant's success.

Service quality

Santouridis and Trivellas (cited in Al-Tit, 2015) point out that service quality is measured by the difference between customer expectation and experience when going to a restaurant. Service quality has become even more valuable when the number of restaurants recently increased dramatically (Hsieh et al., 2015). Furthermore, customer quality perception about a restaurant can be decided by how an employee delivers service to each customer (Ryu et al.; cited in Petzer & Mackay, 2014). In the end, this influences customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and their future revisit decision for a restaurant (Petzer & Mackay, 2014).

Based on the SERVQUAL model, there are five attributes included in assessing a restaurant's service quality: *tangibility*, *reliability*, *responsiveness*, *assurance* and *empathy* (Nguyen et al., 2015). *Tangibility* is defined as the physical environment of the property. This will be discussed in the next part of this study. This part is focused on the other four dimensions of the SERVQUAL model. As stated by Kasapila (cited in Naude & Rudansky-Kloppers, 2016), the way to achieve these attributes is as follows. First, the accuracy in service delivered shapes the *reliability* of that restaurant, for instance, an accurate bill presented or food items served. Second, *responsiveness* is the time that customers need to wait to receive their orders, and the staff's willingness to answer any questions or solve any problems. It can be understood that the shorter the time, the better the solution, which leads to satisfied customers. Third, it is necessary for the restaurant staff to be equipped with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the menu. This leads to having good assurance; and therefore, the staff can recommend dishes depending on the preference and wishes of the customer. This is linked to the last attribute of having strong empathy. In a nutshell, each dimension plays an important role in bringing complete satisfaction in service quality to customers.

Physical environment

An enjoyable and unique physical environment is a key element in deciding a restaurant's success (Canny, 2013). Together with maintaining the current number of customers, an attractive atmosphere can attract new ones. Additionally, the physical environment is a crucial advantage for restaurants when compared with their competitors (Hanaysha, 2016). Ryu and Han (cited in Hanaysha, 2016) said that people are more attracted to restaurants with an appealing appearance, resulting in more customers. Furthermore, a restaurant's physical environment can be measured by DINESCAPE — a scale for customers' perception of dining environments, with several dimensions, including *facilities*, *ambiance*, *layout*, *table settings* and *service staff* (Ryu & Han, 2011). As the restaurant market is more diverse with a fast-increasing number of properties, the facilities have become an essential factor in pre-purchase behaviour. The art of designing and arranging restaurant facilities can decide the number of people visiting and how likely it is for them to go back (Cobe, 2007). This is aligned with what was written by Ryu and Jang (cited in Ryu & Han, 2011) in which the attractiveness of facilities can make a change in future customer behaviour. *Ambiance* relates to the invisible environment such as scent, music and temperature. A pleasant smell can raise a customer's feeling and comfort when having a meal and interacting with others (Ryu & Han, 2010). Similarly, background music has a notable influence on customer satisfaction and even on how they perceive a restaurant's tangibles (Magnini & Thelen, 2008). The lower the level of lightning, the more comfortable the guests are (Ryu & Han, 2011). Coming to the next factor, *layout* refers to how seats and other furniture are placed in a restaurant. It is claimed to have aa noteworthy impact on customer experience as it decides the desired environment (Ryu & Han, 2011). *Table settings* is the last dimension and refers to how objects are placed on the table, including cutlery or any other decorative objects such as candles or flowers.

Additionally, Yuksel (cited in Josiam et al., 2014) showed that hygiene and cleanliness also contribute to the level of pleasure. It has been shown in a large number of papers that cleanliness is one of the contributors to how customers review restaurant quality, revealing the levels of customer satisfaction (Yoo, 2012).

Delivery option

Technological innovation and economic development go hand in hand and have positively affected many other fields. Specifically, in restaurant settings, online delivery is becoming more common. "Convenience is key" is an accurate sentence for this modern service where people can get food without stepping out of their homes. Several studies found that there is a close relationship between customer satisfaction and their potential behaviour because of its convenience and time saving potential (Yeo et al., 2017). It decreases the time and effort needed to buy a product, thus enhancing the service quality. Chorneukar (cited in Mohanapriya et al., 2020) discovered that customer satisfaction is now measured digitally. The delivery person's attitude, the food quality, and the waiting time will determine the level of satisfaction for the customer. is based on the delivery person's attitude, food quality and the waiting time. These are predicted to be the most important factors for food delivery. Although COVID-19 has negatively impacted many aspects of life, it can be seen as an advantage for the delivery industry. Online market research by Asia Plus Inc. shows that among 75% of respondents who use online delivery apps, 25% started to use it during COVID-19 (Q&Me, 2020). Thus, this study is aimed at finding out if the demand for a delivery service has increased because of COVID-19.

Customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and behavioural intention

Customer satisfaction is achieved by meeting or exceeding customer expectations whenever going to a restaurant. In other words, it is the difference between expected service and experience. Customer satisfaction is defined by all the positive feelings when they leave after a visit, such as "happiness, acceptance, relief, delight, and pleasure" (Rahman et al., 2012, p. 9). Besides, customer satisfaction has become the most essential factor in deciding whether a business is profitable or not (Sabir et al., 2014).

Behavioural intention is directly affected by customer satisfaction (Baker & Crompton, 2000) and customer satisfaction has a strong influence in determining customer trust and potential behaviour (Hanaysha, 2016). Having the same opinion, Canny (2013) claimed that customer satisfaction is a determinant in business development as it affects whether a customer will decide to purchase a product twice, resulting in an advantageous or disadvantageous situation for a restaurant. Based on the level of satisfaction, a restaurant can forecast a customer's future purchase decisions. Customer loyalty is more likely to appear when a restaurant can gain more customer satisfaction, involving the repurchase intention and willingness to pay (Ryu & Han, 2011). To be clearer, customer loyalty leads to the positive spread of a restaurant's reputation by satisfied customers giving compliments to others.

Restaurant selection

Food quality has proved to be the most important factor when customers decide where to have a meal (Beard, 2020). Similarly, food quality, service and/or product quality together with ambiance are factors that play an essential role in determining customers' restaurant choices (Duarte Alonso et al., 2013). These authors also said that price and physical environment are the main contributors to customer decision-making. It can be said that atmosphere and style have become crucial and are what customers pay attention to when product type and quality delivered are similar. Lewis (cited in Kim & Chung, 2011) showed that food quality and atmosphere, which can also be understood as physical environment, are among the five factors determining where guests want to dine out. Likewise, the quality of food is the most crucial factor deciding customer choice regarding where to go for dining (Kim & Chung, 2011). It is again proved by Islam et al. (2018) that an appropriate service, physical environment and food quality are three out of four factors that restaurant selection depends on.

Along with factors related to the restaurant itself, restaurant selection is believed to also be affected by demographic factors such as age and gender. Kivela (cited in Duarte Alonso et al., 2013, p. 552) demonstrated that age is among the contributors to "the particular importance and/or order of preference". Moreover, while young customers do not consider food quality as the most important factor, customers above the age of 60 years do. The difference regarding gender is also recognised since male customers are "more utilitarian" when choosing a place (Kim & Chung, 2011, p. 3). Young customers care most about price, service quality and ambiance. These are factors determining their choice of having fast food at restaurants (Islam et al., 2018). These authors also point out that age and gender are two determinants for restaurant selection, between which the age difference is more influential. In short, this study aims to research how food quality, service quality, physical environment, or delivery options influence restaurant selection decisions and if gender creates any significant difference in this process.

Conceptual model

The conceptual model starts with food quality, service quality, the physical environment and delivery service, which are believed to be the main contributors to customer satisfaction. Among these, the first three dimensions are discussed in a lot of research, while delivery is becoming increasingly common during the COVID-19 crisis. The better these elements are delivered, the higher the customer satisfaction is. As a result, customer behaviour, including customer loyalty and behavioural intention, is impacted. These factors have a close relationship with each other. Food quality, service quality and physical environment are also three dominant attributes of restaurant selection, together with customer demographics.

Method

To examine our research question, we took a positivist philosophical stance. The quantitative survey method was applied to determine customer behaviour before and during COVID-19. A deductive and exploratory strategy was adopted to collect standardised data from a sizeable population. In this study, the non-probability volunteer sampling method was used because of the time and cost factors. There were different types of questions, based on multiple-choice and Likert scale questions. These diverse questions were used to gain insight into how a customer considers and reacts towards restaurant products and services. The survey was published online via Google Survey, which made it easier and faster to reach a large number of people and made it more convenient for respondents to access the survey. The population consists of Vietnamese people who have visited a restaurant or a coffee shop at least once. As a Vietnamese person, one of the authors was able to use their network to reach the largest possible number of people from different age groups. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was used to analyse the data. Descriptive measures including mean and standard deviations were chosen to find out what the most chosen answers were for several questions. Frequency tests were used to see the difference in customer behaviour and consideration before and during COVID-19. Additionally, chi-square was used to find the relationship between variables. Participants were asked before taking part in the survey whether they feel comfortable with giving their opinions for this study. The privacy of respondents was guaranteed as no personal information was recorded. The survey was distributed in two languages, English and Vietnamese.

Results

Firstly, the characteristics of the participants are analysed. As can be seen in Table 1, out of 117 respondents, 77 were female, which accounts for 65.80%. Thus, 34.20% are male. The statistics indicate that more than half of the respondents are 18 to 24 years old. The data was collected from other age groups too, including people who were younger than 18 years old (5.10%), 25–34 years old (10.30%), 35–44 years old (11.10%), and older than 44 years old (15.40%). Respondents were asked if the outlet they went to was a coffee shop or a restaurant. Two-thirds of the answers were coffee shops (66.70%) and 33.30% were restaurants. This is also aligned with the reality of the hospitality market in Vietnam currently where going out for a coffee is starting to become more popular.

Table 2 compares how often customers used a delivery service before and during COVID-19. The majority of people used delivery one to three times per week (46.20%) during COVID-19 instead of once or twice per month (70.10%) as before. More people used it even more than three times per week, from 3.40% to 12.00%. The results show that respondents started to use delivery more when the pandemic appeared.

TABLE 1: Characteristics of the respondents involved in this study ($N = 117$)

Characteristics	*n*	%
Age		
<18 years	6	5.10
18–24 years	68	58.10
25–34 years old	12	10.30
35–44 years old	13	11.10
>44 years old	18	15.40
Gender		
Female	77	65.80
Male	40	34.20
Outlet type		
Coffee shop	78	66.70
Restaurant	39	33.30

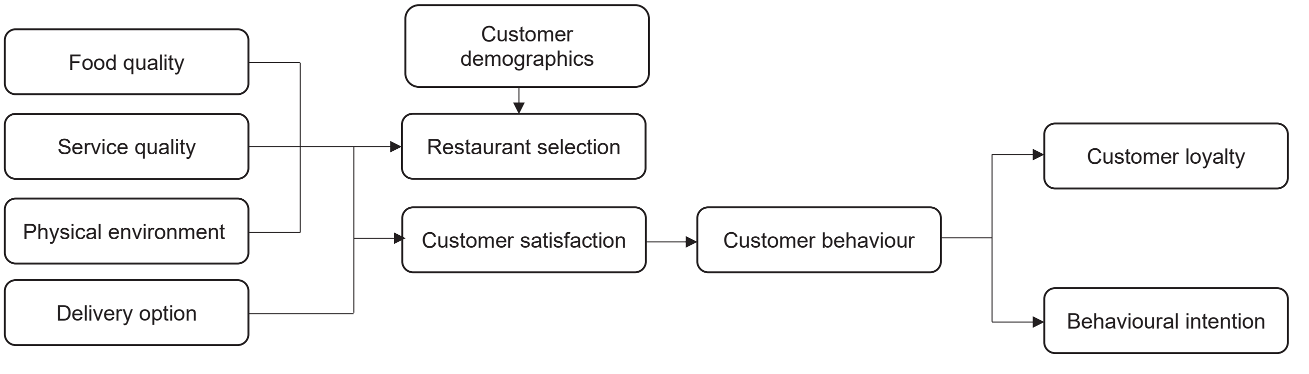

FIGURE 1: Conceptual model

TABLE 2: Delivery usage frequency before and during COVID-19 ($N = 117$)

Delivery usage frequency	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19	
	n	%	*n*	%
Once or twice per month	82	70.10	49	41.90
1–3 times week	31	26.50	54	46.20
> 3 times per week	4	3.40	14	12.00

Table 3 shows the extent to which customers agree with the statement of "I started using the delivery app only after the quarantine had started". All the respondents who chose "Slightly agree" (16.2%), "Agree" (24.8%), and "Strongly agree" (10.3%) liked the statement and there were 51.6% who only started using delivery apps after the quarantine had started.

Table 4 presents a descriptive test calculating the frequency of each factor before COVID-19 and during COVID-19, showing how it changed with respect to customer behaviour. It can be seen that before COVID-19, people cared most about product quality when choosing a restaurant to visit, accounting for more than half of the answers (58.1%), while during COVID-19, the most chosen factor is cleanliness (46.2%). From being the least important aspect before the pandemic, cleanliness became the most important one. This shows how much COVID-19 has influenced customer decisions.

Table 5 shows that almost 73% of respondents chose coffee quality over interior design.

TABLE 3: Delivery usage after quarantine started ($N = 117$)

Delivery use	"I started using the delivery app only after the quarantine had started"	
	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	29	24.8
Disagree	12	10.3
Slightly disagree	16	13.7
Slightly agree	19	16.2
Agree	29	24.8
Strongly agree	12	10.3

TABLE 4: Factors that guests cared the most about when choosing an outlet before and during COVID-19 ($N = 117$)

Factors	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Product quality	68	58.1	42	35.9
Service quality	18	15.4	16	13.7
Interior design	18	15.4	5	4.3
Cleanliness	13	11.1	54	46.2

TABLE 5: Comparing well-decorated coffee shop with a sidewalk/pavement coffee shop ($N = 117$)

Between a well-decorated coffee shop with poorer coffee quality and a sidewalk/pavement coffee shop with good coffee quality, I will choose	Frequency	%
Sidewalk/pavement coffee shop	85	72.6
Well-decorated coffee shop	32	27.4

Regarding the physical environment in this study, research focused mainly on cleanliness and other existing safety regulations. Table 6 shows how customers agree on different statements about how they pay attention to these factors when going to a restaurant.

Almost every question scored higher than 5 and the other two are only just below 5. This is aligned with the results shown in Table 4 where cleanliness is chosen to be the factor that guests care about the most during COVID-19 (46.2%). To conclude, people pay considerable attention to cleanliness and other safety regulations when going to or choosing a restaurant during COVID-19.

Table 7 presents to what extent people agree with different statements regarding delivery options during COVID-19.

To the question of "I started using the delivery app only after the quarantine had started" ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.75$), most people disagreed with this, meaning that the delivery app had been used before COVID-19. In Table 8, the availability of delivery options affects customer preferences but does not decide if they want to choose the outlet or not. To conclude, people started to use delivery apps more frequently during COVID-19, some even only started to use it after COVID-19 appeared. However, the number

TABLE 6: Customer behaviour towards cleanliness in a restaurant during COVID-19 ($N = 117$)

Customer attention to different factors when coming to a restaurant	Mean	Std. deviation
I really pay attention to the cleanliness of the place I choose BEFORE COVID-19	5.03	0.93
I really pay attention to the cleanliness of the place I choose DURING COVID-19	5.43	0.80
I care about cleanliness the most during COVID-19, rather than food quality, service quality and physical environment	4.9	1.07
During COVID-19, I feel safer if there are solutions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (disinfect hand gel, one-metre distancing, employees wearing face masks)	5.31	0.91
During COVID-19, existing safety regulations at the outlet decide if I want to go there or not	5.01	0.96
During COVID-19, I decide not to go to that outlet if I see/feel that it is going to be crowded (spreading of COVID-19)	4.71	1.17

TABLE 7: Customer behaviour towards delivery option during COVID-19 ($N = 117$)

Customer behaviour towards delivery option	Mean	Std. deviation
I use the delivery app more frequently during COVID-19	4.82	1.18
I started using the delivery app only after the quarantine had started	3.37	1.75
I prefer outlets which have delivery service more than others during COVID-19	4.48	1.38
A delivery option decides if I want to choose that outlet or not	3.5	1.46
A delivery option starts to be one of the factors deciding my overall satisfaction after COVID-19 appeared	4.16	1.3

TABLE 8: Interior design and a delivery option in restaurant selection ($N = 117$)

Factors affecting customer preferences	Mean	Std. Deviation
Interior design is the first thing I look at when choosing a restaurant	4.56	1.08
I care about interior design rather than coffee quality when choosing a coffee shop to try	3.78	1.46
During COVID-19, existing safety regulations at the outlet decide if I want to go there or not	5.01	0.96
I prefer outlets which have a delivery service more than others during COVID-19	4.48	1.38
A delivery option decides if I want to choose that outlet or not	3.5	1.46

is not that significant. Nevertheless, the increase in delivery usage makes it one of the factors deciding overall customer satisfaction.

Table 8 shows people's agreement with different statements about different factors when it comes to choosing a restaurant, including interior design, safety regulations and a delivery option. Interior design and safety regulations belong to the physical environment.

Looking back at the survey, it can be concluded that interior design is the first thing that customers look at when making a decision. During COVID-19, a delivery option started to determine customer preferences. However, the last statement of "A delivery option decides if I want to choose that outlet or not" ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.46$) illustrates a slight disagreement, from which it can be understood that even though customers might prefer outlets which have a delivery service more than others during COVID-19, the availability of a delivery option does not decide their restaurant choice. In other words, it does not have that big an influence on the restaurant selection process.

Together with Table 5, the statement of "I care about interior design rather than coffee quality when choosing a coffee shop to try" ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.463$) shows customer considerations in terms of choosing a coffee shop. Having a mean of 3.78, it is seen by the majority of people that interior design plays an important role when choosing a coffee shop to try. Nevertheless, Table 5 shows that almost 73% of respondents chose coffee quality over interior design. All in all, interior design might determine a customer's decision to try a coffee shop, but to maintain the visit frequency, coffee quality is the fundamental factor.

It can be seen that the physical environment has the strongest relationship to the overall guest satisfaction ($r = 0.39$, $p < 0.01$), and its sub-dimension — layout has the highest correlation among all variables ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.01$). Other variables under the physical environment also have strong relationships with guest satisfaction including the facilities and interior design ($r = 0.35$, $p < 0.01$), ambiance ($r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$) and cleanliness ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$). Product quality is seen to have the weakest relationship with guest satisfaction among all the variables ($r = 0.23$, $p = 0.01$). All of its sub-dimensions are also among the lowest: presentation ($r = 0.28$, $p = 0.02$), taste ($r = 0.27$, $p = 0.03$), freshness ($r = 0.18$, $p = 0.05$) and temperature ($r = 0.19$, $p = 0.03$).

Table 10 shows that there are significant relationships between guest recommendation decision ($r = 0.52$, $p < 0.01$) and guest returning decision ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$) with overall guest satisfaction, especially their returning decision as its

TABLE 9: Correlation of variables with overall guest satisfaction ($N = 117$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1 Presentation																	
2 Taste	0.726**																
3 Freshness	0.720**	0.757**															
4 Temperature	0.782**	0.732**	0.836**														
5 Overall product quality	0.766**	0.868**	0.826**	0.820**													
6 Tangibles	0.684**	0.623**	0.558**	0.608**	0.649**												
7 Responsiveness	0.588**	0.560**	0.618**	0.653**	0.632**	0.645**											
8 Assurance	0.597**	0.621**	0.598**	0.642**	0.675**	0.573**	0.715**										
9 Empathy	0.521**	0.470**	0.519**	0.565**	0.568**	0.573**	0.759**	0.716**									
10 Overall service quality	0.630**	0.628**	0.555**	0.610**	0.666**	0.707**	0.840**	0.809**	0.793**								
11 Facility and interior design	0.675**	0.541**	0.540**	0.607**	0.620**	0.757**	0.614**	0.519**	0.503**	0.602**							
12 Ambiance	0.625**	0.534**	0.516**	0.577**	0.631**	0.662**	0.624**	0.592**	0.575**	0.633**	0.817**						
13 Layout	0.668**	0.526**	0.516**	0.575**	0.609**	0.732**	0.617**	0.572**	0.537**	0.604**	0.850**	0.851**					
14 Table settings	0.718**	0.518**	0.545**	0.650**	0.577**	0.659**	0.596**	0.577**	0.537**	0.554**	0.761**	0.764**	0.798**				
15 Cleanliness	0.630**	0.606**	0.552**	0.566**	0.654**	0.707**	0.708**	0.605**	0.603**	0.681**	0.758**	0.785**	0.788**	0.696**			
16 Overall physical environment	0.713**	0.600**	0.592**	0.655**	0.675**	0.720**	0.697**	0.607**	0.568**	0.646**	0.847**	0.845**	0.858**	0.780**	0.861**		
17 Overall guest satisfaction	0.285**	0.273**	0.185*	0.199*	0.232*	0.350**	0.236*	0.207*	0.389**	0.313**	0.347**	0.370**	0.408**	0.280**	0.308**	0.393**	

Note: *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$

relationship is considered to be strong ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$). It can be concluded that the higher the guest satisfaction is, the more likely they are to go back and recommend the restaurant to others.

Table 11 presents the correlation of different delivery option sub-dimensions with overall delivery satisfaction.

The relationship is strong between each sub-dimension and overall delivery satisfaction. It can be understood that price has the strongest relationship to the overall delivery satisfaction ($r = 0.87$, $p < 0.01$). The weakest relationship belongs to the delivery person's attitude ($r = 0.79$, $p < 0.01$). Overall, every sub-dimension is considered to have a strong relationship to the overall delivery satisfaction.

The results show that there is no significant relationship between gender and the factor that guests care about the most when choosing a restaurant, in other words, gender does not affect guests' decision, $\chi^2(3, N = 117) = 1.59$, $p = 0.66$. Table 12 presents how different it is between females and males when making a restaurant selection.

Both genders pay the most attention to product quality and cleanliness, yet, while females pay more attention to cleanliness (48.10%), this percentage of product quality and cleanliness is equal for males (42.50%). Interior design received the least attention when choosing a restaurant for both genders. It was chosen by three females, accounting for 3.90%, and two males, accounting for 5%.

The results shows that there is a significant relationship between age and the factor that guests care about the most when choosing a restaurant, in other words, age affects guests' decision, $\chi^2(12, N = 117) = 23.02$, $p = 0.03$. Table 13 shows how different age groups consider different factors when choosing a restaurant during COVID-19.

The 18–24-year-old group and being older than 44 years are the two biggest age groups that participated in this study. They also represent two generations. Both age groups pay more attention to the cleanliness and product quality of the restaurant. While people from 18 to 24 years old care more about cleanliness (44.10%), people who are older than 44 years old care more about product quality (44.40%). Looking at the table, interior design is not taken into consideration when choosing a restaurant for almost every group except for those who are under 18 years old where people pay equal attention to every factor.

In conclusion, cleanliness and product quality are the most important factors for customers when choosing a restaurant and interior design is not that essential, regardless of age or gender.

Discussion

What factor has the biggest influence on customer satisfaction and is it aligned with customer loyalty and behavioural intention?

The objective of this study was to find out what factors affect customer behaviour, including customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and behavioural intention. The results indicate that the physical environment has the biggest influence on guest satisfaction, among which layout has the highest relationship with $r = 0.41$. This is similar to what has been found by Ryu and Han (2011), i.e. that layout has a noteworthy impact on guest satisfaction. Meanwhile, food quality is found to have the least

TABLE 10: Correlation of variables with overall guest satisfaction ($N = 117$)

Variable	Correlation
Guest recommendation decision	0.52*
Guest returning decision	0.65*

*$p < 0.01$

TABLE 11: Correlation of delivery option variables with overall delivery satisfaction ($N = 117$)

Variable	Correlation
Delivery person attitude	0.79*
Food quality	0.85*
Waiting time	0.81*
Price	0.87*

*$p < 0.01$

TABLE 12: Comparing gender with a factor that guests care about the most when choosing a restaurant during COVID-19 ($N = 117$)

A factor that guests care about the most when choosing a restaurant during COVID-19 * gender cross-tabulation	Female	Male
Product quality	25 32.50%	17 42.50%
Service quality	12 15.60%	4 10.00%
Interior design	3 3.90%	2 5.00%
Cleanliness	37 48.10%	17 42.50%

TABLE 13: Comparing age and the factor that guests care about the most when choosing a restaurant during COVID-19 ($N = 117$)

A factor that guests care about the most when choosing a restaurant during COVID-19 * age cross-tabulation	< 18 years old	18–24 years old	25–34 years old	35–44 years old	> 44 years old
Product quality	2 33.30%	26 38.20%	1 8.30%	5 38.50%	8 44.40%
Service quality	0 0.00%	9 13.20%	1 8.30%	3 23.10%	3 16.70%
Interior design	2 33.30%	3 4.40%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%
Cleanliness	2 33.30%	30 44.10%	10 83.30%	5 38.50%	7 38.90%

impact on guest satisfaction when going to a restaurant when compared to service quality and physical environment. This contrasts with some previous research where food quality was stated to be the most important factor deciding guest satisfaction (Marković et al., 2010). Freshness and temperature were considered to be among the most essential factors when determining food quality, thus, affecting customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Delwiche, 2004; Péneau et al., 2006). However, this study shows that these are two factors that have the least influence on guest satisfaction. Furthermore, although it was found by Petzer and Mackay (2014) that service quality decides customer loyalty and their future intention, it has only the second-highest correlation ($r = 0.31$) regarding the three elements and is lower than several sub-dimensions. Hanaysha (2016) mentioned that restaurants with an appealing appearance will be more attractive, thus increasing guest satisfaction. This is aligned to the findings where facility and interior design are also among the highest correlations ($r = 0.35$). Ambiance has a strong relationship to guest satisfaction ($r = 0.37$) and this is aligned with previous research which mentioned that background music has a significant impact on guest satisfaction.

The results show that there is a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty as well as between customer satisfaction and behavioural intention. This aligns with several pieces of research in the past which claim that customer satisfaction has a direct influence on customer repurchase intention (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Canny, 2013; Hanaysha, 2016) and it leads to higher customer loyalty (Ryu & Han, 2011).

To what extent does the physical environment affect customer behaviour during COVID-19?

Another purpose of this study was to understand whether the physical environment, especially cleanliness, has a role in determining customer behaviour during COVID-19, as it can be seen in reality that people have started to care more about cleanliness and safety regulations when going to a restaurant after the pandemic started. The results pointed out that 46.2% of the respondents care a lot about cleanliness when they choose a restaurant to visit. The majority agrees that they pay attention to the cleanliness of the places they choose to visit during COVID-19. Moreover, safety regulations are proven to be essential in deciding if they want to go to the outlet, and they admitted that they feel safer if there are efficient safety regulations at the outlet. This is similar to previous research which indicates that hygiene and cleanliness also contribute to the levels of satisfaction (Josiam et al., 2014). In addition, cleanliness is an essential factor when customers assess restaurant quality (Yoo, 2012). This also proves that Tiedt (2020) was right when mentioning that cleanliness is the biggest influence on customer satisfaction during COVID-19 compared to other factors. Indeed, during COVID-19, customers care more about their health and also want to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Thus, it is understandable that cleanliness has started to be an important factor that they consider when going to a restaurant.

How has customer behaviour towards online delivery changed during COVID-19?

The third objective of this research was to find out if online delivery contributed to customer behaviour during COVID-19 when it became more popular once the quarantine started. Mohanapriya et al. (2020) mentioned that the delivery person's attitude, food quality and waiting time are three factors that decide overall delivery satisfaction. However, the results indicate that price has the biggest influence of these three variables. The findings show that people started using delivery more during COVID-19. Before COVID-19, 70.10% of respondents only used it once or twice per month, however, during the pandemic, the majority used it one to three times per week (46.2%). While Q&Me (2020) concluded that 25% of the respondents who use delivery apps only used them after COVID-19 appeared, the number in this study is 51.6%. This is the reality of the increasing demand for online delivery during COVID-19.

Is there a difference in customer behaviour when choosing a restaurant during COVID-19?

This study also aimed to find out differences in customer behaviour before and during COVID-19. In this case, it was in their restaurant selection process. The results indicate that before COVID-19, 58.1% of respondents saw product quality as the most important factor when choosing a restaurant. This is the same in several pieces of research which state that food quality is the most essential factor (Auty, 1992; Sulek & Hensley, 2004; Namkung & Jang, 2007; Kim & Chung, 2011). However, during COVID-19, cleanliness took over from product quality and became the most important factor, accounting for 46.2%. This is aligned with Tiedt's (2020) findings which mentioned that cleanliness has the highest percentages when deciding guest satisfaction. It can be concluded that cleanliness must be given more attention during the pandemic to attract more customers.

Age and gender play an important role in determining customers' restaurant choices and there is a significant difference among age groups. The results lead to the same conclusion. There is a small difference in the percentages of what customers care about the most when choosing a restaurant between two genders. However, both genders cared most about product quality and cared least about interior design during COVID-19. However, the difference is clearer among age groups. While 44.10% of people from 18–24 years old and 83.30% people from 25–34 years old cared about cleanliness, the majority of people who were older than 44 years cared more about product quality (44.40%). Kim and Chung (2011) have said that young customers do not consider food quality as the most important factor, but people who are older than 60 years old do. This similarity appears here as the old people usually pay more attention to the product quality of what they receive when spending their money.

Limitations, future directions, and conclusions

Some limitations that influenced the final result were recognised during the research. The sampling method gave the researchers an easy and low-cost connection to the respondents. However, people had the right to choose if they wanted to participate. As a result, some decided to respond and some did not. Furthermore, based on the age and networks of the Vietnamese researcher, there were more respondents from the younger age group, creating an imbalance among age groups. Consequently, the number of respondents was not as large as expected ($N = 117$) and mainly focused on people from 18–24 years old.

In conclusion, restaurant owners should pay more attention to cleanliness and other safety regulations during COVID-19. As customers will feel safer if this is true, higher satisfaction is expected and more customers will visit. The layout and interior design is another factor to focus on to attract new customers. Yet, product quality cannot be forgotten to increase customer loyalty. It can be assumed that paying attention to both interior design and product quality can lead to huge success for restaurants in Vietnam. In terms of delivery service, companies need to have competitive prices as this has the biggest relationship to the overall delivery satisfaction and it is believed to be the reason Vietnamese customers choose which brand they would like to use.

The outcomes of this study show that layout and physical environment have the biggest influence on customer satisfaction and they affect customer loyalty and their behavioural intentions in future purchases. They also have a close relationship with customer recommendation decisions. During the pandemic, cleanliness appears to be the factor that customers care about the most, even above food quality, service quality or interior design. In addition, customers have started to care if there are safety regulations at the outlet. Examples include disinfectant hand gel before entering the restaurants, maintaining a one-metre distance or wearing masks. Furthermore, delivery service is becoming more popular and developing during COVID-19, with more users and higher frequency of use. It can be established that due to the reality of staying at home and in quarantine people have an increasing demand for ordering food for delivery at home. In short, COVID-19 has brought some changes in customer behaviour when choosing and visiting a restaurant. This mainly focuses on the restaurant's physical environment, where the layout is proved to be the most important factor for customer satisfaction and cleanliness is the most cared about when choosing a restaurant to visit.

Furthermore, some additional findings appeared during the research which can be helpful for the development of coffee shops. Interior design was agreed to be the first thing that customers pay attention to when they visit a new coffee shop. Nonetheless, to maintain the number of customers visiting, the coffee quality is found to be the most important factor, as people are still willing to go to the sidewalk/pavement coffee shop even though there is no attention paid to the interior design. To obtain a larger response, we suggest that the survey can also be distributed manually, reaching more people from different age groups, genders and backgrounds.

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To act or not to act: Cultural hesitation in the multicultural hospitality workplace

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to describe the behaviour, feelings and emotions of hospitality professionals regarding the phenomenon of *handelingsverlegenheid* (which we translate as "awkwardness to act") in intercultural professional settings. The overall purpose of this study is to understand how middle management employees of the rooms division department of a small-scale commercial learning hotel in Leeuwarden in the Netherlands lead their team in a cross-cultural working environment. *Handelingsverlegenheid* is strongly related to anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory and implies a professional's lack of proficiency in responding to a multicultural situation at work. This article describes how hospitality professionals experience this phenomenon. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with middle managers who were asked to share their feelings, thoughts and emotions about topics such as cross-cultural communication and leading a diverse team to provide an insight into *handelingsverlegenheid* and their personal experiences of it. The results suggest that low levels of cultural proficiency and lack of experiences communicating with others from a different culture are the main causes of the manifestation of *handelingsverlegenheid* in the workplace. Implementation of training to increase cultural sensitivity is important to develop required skills and capabilities of the employees. For further research, it is recommended to broaden the focus on *handelingsverlegenheid* in staff and guest interactions from one small-scale hotel to different types of hospitality organisations. For management practices, it is recommended to support operational staff and the experiences they have dealing with awkward situations stemming from cross-cultural situations at work.

KEYWORDS: anxiety and uncertainty management, cross-cultural communication, cultural diversity, handelingsverlegenheid, hospitality industry

Introduction

This study focuses on hospitality managers' sense of awkwardness due to cultural hesitation. It started with a situation in which a female Bulgarian hospitality management student involuntarily experienced *handelingsverlegenheid*. Her starting point was a casual, well-intentioned, initially pleasant conversation with a male Bangladeshi peer on culture and religion. However, it soon evolved into an upsetting situation:

> I experienced feelings of uncomfortableness, awkwardness, guilt, and regret. I felt apologetic for the situation I put both of us in. I also noticed that my inability to cover such an essential topic made him feel uncomfortable. I observed that he changed his posture, started looking around and avoided eye contact. All these signs made me realize that instead of showing interest and appreciation, I left him a feeling of being examined or even maybe being judged (Ivanova, 2021, p. 5).

Handelingsverlegenheid (literally: action-shyness in Dutch) is a concept originating from (social) health care and is also known in education. It indicates a sense of awkwardness which hampers confident acting. There is no straightforward, unambiguous translation for this Dutch composition of two words in English, hence we will use the Dutch term in this article. *Handelingsverlegenheid* means that the professional does not act or does not know how to act despite being worried or concerned in intercultural interactions. For example, a professional may worry that a staff member from another cultural background will misinterpret well-intended feedback yet does not know how to resolve this dilemma. It arises from the inability to act adequately and is rooted in hesitation in the professional self (Van der Meer, 2010). The Bulgarian student's experience of *handelingsverlegenheid* did not occur in the context of health care, but in a multicultural hospitality company, a commercial learning hotel with staff and students originally rooted in Dutch culture. Although her description clearly illustrates *handelingsverlegenheid*, it also matches well with anxiety and uncertainty management theory (AUM; Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Gudykunst, 2004; Duronto et al., 2005; Samochowiec & Florack, 2010; Ni & Wang, 2011; Neuliep, 2012; Logan et al., 2015). Despite the considerable body of theoretical knowledge on AUM and limited literature on *handelingsverlegenheid* (Van der Meer, 2010; Jonkers & Machielse, 2012; Van der Meulen, 2016; Spieker, 2019), little is known about how hospitality professionals such as (middle) managers experience *handelingsverlegenheid* in the increasingly globalised and diversifying workplace.

This article therefore aims to explore how *handelingsverlegenheid* is experienced by professionals in the context of professional hospitality, where diversity might trigger cultural hesitation in (often) young managers. Thus, we seek to advance the understanding of perceived *handelingsverlegenheid* and intend to contribute to both theory and practice. We deem this important, as diversity is still increasing in hospitality (Gong, 2008) and integrating cultural diversity into an organisation is difficult (Devine et al., 2007). The purpose of this qualitative study therefore was to understand how managers in the rooms division department of a small-scale hotel experience *handelingsverlegenheid* in intercultural settings at work.

This article is in five sections. In the first section, starting from a generic point of view, we review literature on increased diversity in organisations, its characteristics, management and challenges before we zoom in on AUM theory and *handelingsverlegenheid*. We then contextualise the theory in the second section and place it in a hospitality environment in professional hospitality education and focus on *handelingsverlegenheid* that is experienced by hospitality managers. In the third section, we present our data collection method and subsequent thematic data analysis, followed by the fourth section, in which we discuss our emergent findings in the context of the existing literature. We then identify both a theoretical and a management practice gap in the final section, for which we offer our theoretical contribution and recommendations for management practice before we indicate avenues for further research.

Literature review

Increased diversity in the workforce

Over fourteen years ago, Devine et al. (2007) identified that it is a complicated process to integrate cultural diversity into an organisation. They concluded that it must be part of a long-term strategy to be effective. A more recent article in a Dutch newspaper (De Ruiter, 2020) described the challenges associated with having a diverse workforce, and the fact that in this specific company, staff with a non-Western background and females are less satisfied, drop out more often and have less career growth than male Dutch natives. Even though the importance of diversity in the workplace is understood, the integration of people with diverse backgrounds is still challenging.

For this research, it is important to consider the concept of diversity. Diversity is a multidimensional concept and has many definitions. Shin and Park (2013) use three categories to define workforce diversity: demographic, organisational and socio-cognitive diversity. Demographic diversity refers to easily recognised attributes such as age, gender or ethnicity; organisational diversity refers to the context of diverse perspectives based on seniority and functions, and socio-cognitive diversity refers to aspects like cultural values and personality characteristics. Lambert and Bell (2012) make a distinction between surface-level and deep-level diversity. Surface-level describes the visible attributes such as demographic and organisation diversity, and deep-level diversity refers to the category of socio-cognitive diversity as defined by Shin and Park (2013).

It is also important to consider general misconceptions about diversity. The misconceptions are that diversity is culture, or it is affirmative action or an absence of standards (Bates et al., 2006). By considering diversity as culture, and teaching what other cultures are like, stereotypes may be reinforced. As diversity is a human characteristic, it cannot be defined as affirmative action, which is imposed by law and organisations. Lastly, diversity management is about creating boundaries within which all employees can do their work.

Research has been conducted on the effectiveness of diverse teams in multinational corporations, less so in national organisations where diversity also plays a role (Adler & Gundersen, 2008; Shin & Park, 2013; Virzi, 2018; Wang et al., 2020). With continuing migration worldwide, diversity will penetrate every profession. Hence, dealing with diversity will become important for the whole of society, yet even more so for team leaders and senior management. Virzi (2018) stated that one of the major challenges for multinational corporations was organisational leadership in the field of relationship building, which could be regarded as one of the success factors for multinational corporations.

Challenges of managing a diverse workforce

"The productivity of a team does not depend on the presence or absence of diversity, but rather on how well diversity is managed" (Adler & Gundersen, 2008, p. 140). The impact of hiring a diverse workforce can be either positive or negative on organisational performance and productivity. It requires careful management of both differences and similarities (Raithel, 2016; Elshaer & Marzouk, 2019). A benefit of a diverse workforce is that the organisation is better equipped to deal with the needs of a diverse clientele (Raithel, 2016). Humanitarian, economic and social migration will lead to an increasingly multicultural workforce (Devine et al., 2007). Seymen (2006) claims that migrants are beneficial for organisations in terms of knowledge transfer and competitiveness, increases in productivity, and a better image. This is confirmed by Adler and Gundersen (2008), who contend that cross-cultural teams can potentially be highly effective as diversity stimulates creativity, yields more alternatives and better solutions and encourages a wider range of perspectives if synergy can be achieved. However, even though there are highly skilled non-nationals, the tendency is for them to be hired in low positions (Cummins et al., 2004). While Lim and Noriega (2007) defined workplace diversity as a unique action where different features and similarities of individuals are combined, Devine et al. (2007) claim that managing cultural diversity might be challenging since it goes beyond accepting differences. Adler and Gundersen (2008) found that diverse teams also run the risk of being highly ineffective due to miscommunication, mistrust and stress, and thus face substantially greater challenges than monocultural teams. Managers should recognise their own cultural context and bias (Elshaer & Marzouk, 2019), as diversity is about differences between individuals rather than groups. Özbilgin and Tatli (2008) add that people should also be given the opportunity to show their unique skills.

Although techniques on how to manage cultural diversity have not been agreed upon, there are several authors who share similar thoughts. According to Gong (2008), executives need to be aware of the cultural differences and be sensitive to the nuances which may affect the relationship with others.

Executives must be aware of the differences among cultures which will enable them to set the right perceptions and minimise conflicts. While Devine et al. (2007) claim that conflicts may be caused by prejudice or stereotyping, others believe that friction is a result of cultural differences and people's perspectives regarding right or wrong statements (Sy et al., 2005). This suggests that diversity training is essential at all levels and should be part of the overall strategy of the organisation.

Anxiety and uncertainty management

Research indicates that intercultural interactions may lead to anxiety and uncertainty (Logan et al., 2016). Anxiety and uncertainty management (AUM) theory postulates that if individuals can manage their levels of anxiety successfully and predict the behaviours of others correctly, they can communicate more effectively (Gudykunst, 1995; 2004; 2005; Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001; Logan et al., 2016; Presbitero & Attar, 2018). Anxiety is an affective phenomenon (Stephan et al., 1999; Duronto et al., 2005; Presbitero & Attar, 2018) which can evoke emotions like apprehension, misgivings and disquiet and, moreover, discomfort, fear, resentment, or even indignation and disgust in an individual (Stephan & Stephan, 1985). Anxiety can manifest itself between minimum (low) and maximum (high) levels. Samochowiec and Florack (2010) report two types of anxiety: integral (intergroup) anxiety and incidental (trait) anxiety. Integral anxiety is provoked during an encounter with an out-group member in intercultural settings, whereas incidental anxiety "resides" in the individual — it is not provoked by the intercultural situation, but rather "brought in" by the anxious person (intrapersonal).

Uncertainty is a cognitive phenomenon pertaining to the perceived inability to predict or explain other people's behaviour and attitudes (Gudykunst, 2004). Uncertainty influences how individuals perceive and think about others, and how they make sense of their behaviour.

In situations of uncertainty, there are often mismatches between "what one intends" (intention), "what one can put into practice" (implementation), and "what emerges and how one perceives" (realization), which block and hinder effective cross-cultural interaction (Presbitero & Attar, 2018, p. 36).

Whether the individual perceives uncertainty as "threatening or challenging" depends on personality traits and "their tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity between situations" (Samochowiec & Florack, 2010, p. 508). Both anxiety and uncertainty influence the willingness to interact, depending on the manifestation levels in an individual. High anxiety and uncertainty may lead to individuals trying to avoid intercultural interaction or to withdraw from such interaction as soon as possible, whereas low anxiety and uncertainty may limit the motivation to engage (Duronto et al., 2005). Gudykunst (2005) refers to this as thresholds. Effective communication can only take place within the minimum and maximum threshold, and these thresholds differ across cultures (Gudykunst, 2005; Neuliep, 2012). Logan et al. (2015, p. 41) contend that ethnocentrism can also predict the (un-)readiness to engage in intercultural encounters due to "intolerance of uncertainty in intercultural interactions".

As the hospitality industry is international by definition, fostering diversity is a strategic endeavour, since the industry is labour and capital intensive and customer satisfaction is crucial for survival (Manoharan & Singal, 2017). Elshaer and Marzouk (2019) state that hospitality organisations need to secure workforce diversity to maintain a competitive advantage. As a result of demographic developments, which indicate that the population in Europe is set to decline in the next three decades, and growth is predicted in Africa, North, Latin and South America, Oceania, and Asia (PricewaterhouseCoopers [PwC], 2020) diversity in the workforce is also needed to fill all job vacancies (Gong, 2008). Nowadays, most hospitality organisations operate internationally, which creates challenges in terms of interaction and effective intercultural communication. According to Grobelna (2016), intercultural communication is an issue that has recently had an increasing impact in the industry. Diversity management research in the hospitality industry is still limited and has not yet informed managerial practices (Manoharan & Singal, 2017), which may result in professionals failing to act, feeling inadequate to act, or wanting to abandon the situation, and thus experience a sense of *handelingsverlegenheid* (Jonkers & Machielse, 2012). Only limited academic research is available on *handelingsverlegenheid*, mostly stemming from pedagogics, sociology or (social) health care (Van der Meer, 2010; Sieckelink & De Winter, 2015; Van der Meulen, 2016). However, *handelingsverlegenheid* and *handelingsvaardigheid* (awkwardness to act versus ability to act) are frequently used in these academic fields.

As described earlier, *handelingsverlegenheid* occurs in intercultural situations, affecting the willingness to engage in the interaction or avoid it altogether. Given the stated affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects of *handelingsverlegenheid*, we have therefore connected it with Gudykunst's AUM theory (1995; 2004). Moreover, Burch's notion of conscious incompetence, albeit developed for training purposes and in that sense not "academic", is also related to *handelingsverlegenheid*. The professional's awareness of (their own) conscious incompetence — the third phase of the conscious competence ladder model Burch developed for Gordon Training International in the 1970s as described by Aguilar (2018) — undoubtedly shares characteristics with *handelingsverlegenheid*.

Case description

The awkward situation experienced in this case study in the rooms division department at a small-scale hotel is an example of interaction problems that may occur in a team. The hotel is a commercial learning company run by students: first-year students with no previous experience in the company as operational staff; second-year students with 10 weeks of experience in the company fulfilling the role of supervisors; and third-year students with at least 10 weeks experience in a supervisory position in the company as managers at department level. The hotel is a highly diverse company, and the rooms division employees often deal with different nationalities. Even though the hotel is run commercially, it is well known for its concept of being run by young professionals. Students are supported by practical instructors (PIs) who are employed by the hotel. Their main task is to lead all students in their department. The PIs fulfil the role of middle management and are responsible for planning, delegating and leading the students in the department and helping them throughout the learning process. Additionally, PIs work closely with the front office department, revenue team and reservations and are responsible for the deployment of personnel. Due to the nature of education, every two weeks new trainees are assigned and every five weeks the student management team (supervisors and managers) is changed. This changing environment challenges the PIs to develop skills which ensure effective communication in teams and a favourable work environment. On the other hand, the frequent changes entail a high risk for the occurrence of *handelingsverlegenheid* as the groups are diverse and communication might be challenging. For this reason, it is essential to have the right abilities and skills to effectively manage the multicultural workforce (Grobelna, 2016). Raithel (2016) found in her research that the cultural background of the leader of diverse teams plays a key role in the success of a team, and that team performance is better when the leader is non-native to the host country, although this effect diminishes when team leaders are longer in place and local leaders have more experience in cross-cultural interactions in the team. Foreign team leaders have the advantage of their own experience as a foreigner in the host country, and as such part of a minority with a diverse cultural background. They can use this experience in the management of a diverse team.

Handelingsverlegenheid is a concept that is still unknown in the hospitality industry. There is a gap in literature regarding the experience of *handelingsverlegenheid* and AUM in hospitality. This was the reason to further investigate to what extent this phenomenon is experienced by hospitality employees. Reviewing the existing literature, the assumption was that management employees are the ones mostly experiencing *handelingsverlegenheid*. As a result, the focus of this research is on the middle management employees of a small-scale hotel with the aim to try to understand whether they experience *handelingsverlegenheid*, what feelings and emotions they have and how they deal with them. In short, to understand when and why hospitality professionals feel awkward and shy in a cross-cultural environment. Some similar studies on *handelingsverlegenheid* experienced by hospitality professionals were performed by undergraduate students, from which we will also use some findings (Jonk, 2021; Van der Schuit et al., 2021).

Research approach

In this interpretative qualitative study, we explored the experiences of practical instructors of the rooms division department of a small-scale commercial learning hotel as well as of some other hospitality professionals. In line with Merriam and Grenier (2019, p. 33), we acknowledge that "qualitative research is embedded in a worldview that sees meaning constructed by individuals in interaction with their world". Given the starting point for the research, initial heuristic inquiry inspired semi-structured, in-depth qualitative interviews with individuals sharing similar positions. The focus of the study was to understand what feelings and emotions the rooms division management employees (PIs) of the hotel experienced towards *handelingsverlegenheid* and how they responded to it. The main questions were: (1) Do the PIs experience awkwardness to act or feelings of anxiety and insecurity in working with a diverse and regularly changing workforce?; and, if so, (2) can this be attributed to *handelingsverlegenheid*? Moreover, (3) how do these PIs manage evoked feelings; (4) what kind of incidents caused awkwardness; and finally, (5) how do they behave in situations of *handelingsverlegenheid*?

Sample and method

The population consisted of 15 employees from the rooms division department. A sample of six PIs was chosen with the purposeful convenience sampling method. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted in October and November 2020. Additionally, an intern who researched her own *handelingsverlegenheid* in an autoethnographic approach while among cultural others during her practice in Curaçao as a junior manager was interviewed in March 2021 as this further contributed to the findings of this article (Jonk, 2021). During the face-to-face interviews, which allowed observation of facial expressions and other body movements, the concept of *handelingsverlegenheid* was not introduced to the participants to permit genuine emotions, responses and assumptions. The additional interview was held online and this participant was familiar with the concept of *handelingsverlegenheid*. Participation in the interviews was voluntary and participants gave their informed consent.

Data analysis

The interviews were captured in verbatim transcripts and observation notes in English, which allowed us to interpret the data and look for patterns. The main tool for data analysis was reflective thematic analysis. Following an inductive approach and by constantly comparing the data, we developed themes based on the content of the data and their relationships. After an initial familiarisation phase, we coded the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldaña, 2015) and, via a pattern-seeking process, developed four major themes: (1) emotional responses in situations of *handelingsverlegenheid*; (2) behavioural responses to *handelingsverlegenheid* including stereotyping; (3) attributed causes of *handelingsverlegenheid*; and (4) presumed qualities to successfully manage *handelingsverlegenheid*.

Findings and discussion

Emotional responses to handelingsverlegenheid

Emotional responses formed the first major theme when it comes to *handelingsverlegenheid* of middle managers in cross-cultural settings in hospitality environments. Practical instructors reported feelings of frustration, anger, nervousness, awkwardness, fear, sadness and confusion, as illustrated by Interviewee 1: *I was a bit nervous and scary and then you feel also getting warm*, and Interviewee 7: *I was just really surprised by what had happened and felt very sad*.

Other feelings that were articulated and associated with *handelingsverlegenheid* were embarrassment, insecurity and agitation, stemming from the uncertainty of why people react in a specific way. For example, a practical instructor felt thrown in a situation where he unintentionally made an inappropriate joke with his colleagues, causing an awkward situation. At that moment, the individual felt anxious and insecure as he did not know how to get out of the situation: "*This situation was so embarrassing. I really did not know what I should do to bring the nice atmosphere back*" (Interviewee 6). Unconsciously, he offended his colleagues and as a result an uncomfortable situation was observed: "*I felt embarrassed, I felt awkward, and I was afraid that I really offended them*" (Interviewee 6). Berger and Calabrese (1975) consider uncertainty to be a cognitive phenomenon related to the (in-)ability to predict "others' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, values, and behaviours" which, in turn, can lead to anxiety, "the affective (emotional) equivalent of uncertainty" (Gudykunst & Nishida, 2001, p. 59). As stated by Duronto et al. (2005), anxiety is a stage where individuals may feel worried, insecure and uncomfortable in an environment. Our findings not only support AUM theory, the reported inability to act typifies *handelingsverlegenheid* as well.

Another example reinforcing this is a situation experienced by Interviewee 7, who felt excluded due to her nationality while leading a team of employees. A situation in which one of the team members raised her voice and accused her of lying regarding a certain situation made her feel insecure and unhappy: *I was very insecure to be honest and a bit sad too* (Interviewee 7). This situation is an example of integral anxiety which occurs when an individual engages in conflict with a member from a social group with which they do not identify (Samochowiec & Florack, 2010). Gudykunst and Nishida (2001) state that communicating with members of different groups leads to more uncertainty than communicating with members of our own groups. As noted by Virzi (2018), a big challenge experienced in multinational organisations is relationship building. Even though strong relationships among employees with cultural differences is essential and a success factor, they cannot be achieved easily as illustrated by Interviewee 7 who observed that there was limited contact between her and her colleagues due to her nationality. Since the team consisted of local employees, Interviewee 7 was left out of the daily conversations and interactions: *you just have to work really hard to be part of their group* (Interviewee 7). In the beginning, limited contact and no desire for any interaction could be seen from the local team members:

> *They weren't asking any questions, they weren't interested. They would just answer if I would ask a question about their weekend, or their family or what they do in their free time. They would just answer and that was it, there was no question back to me* (Interviewee 7).

As a result, Interviewee 7 experienced feelings of sadness and unhappiness:

> *They wouldn't let me in or agree with what I said because they just felt like I was coming along for three months, and I would leave again. So, if I just asked them to do something they would just be like no, whatever.*

Behavioural responses to handelingsverlegenheid

Once middle managers in hospitality experience *handelingsverlegenheid*, they behave in different ways. One of the findings derived from the interviews is related to stereotyping as a supportive tool when interacting with others from a different culture. While PIs see stereotyping as a supportive tool to deal with integral anxiety, the literature describes stereotyping as a potentially negative aspect which can affect interaction. Otaye-Ebede and Akobo (2019, p. 18) view stereotyping as "biased generalisations" which, if based on negative assumptions, can lead to stereotype threat (Spencer et al., 1999; 2015). Stereotype threat can hinder the performance and ambitions of those stigmatised, especially when the stereotype is negative. Devine et al. (2007) believe that conflicts in a team can occur because of prejudice or stereotyping. Stereotyping — a common human response to the unknown — involves social categorisation and is a cognitive construct. Stereotyping can induce prejudice, an affective state from which negative emotions such as "anger, fear, dislike, discomfort, and even hatred" can emerge (Otaye-Ebede & Akobo, 2019, p. 19). Bates et al. (2006) believe that there are general misconceptions about diversity which can reinforce stereotypes. From the interviews, it could be seen that PIs perceive that shared beliefs regarding cultures help them to find the right approach and ensure smooth and effective communication: "*Dutch people are direct*" (Interviewee 5); "*I am Dutch, I am Frisian, and I am maybe a bit direct*" (Interviewee 4). Most of the participants are convinced that stereotyping makes them feel more aware about others' behaviours: "*I thought I knew the* [Curaçao] *culture because I always based it on the Dutch people*" (Interviewee 7). Indeed, most of the participants standardise and label different behaviours per culture based on repetitive, selectively seen behaviours which help them reduce levels of uncertainty and anticipate possible situations and reactions: "*What also is very difficult with the Asian culture is that people very quickly say yes and then they do the opposite*" (Interviewee 2). This shows that cultural stereotyping can be detrimental. Even though some of the statements are not proven to be right, the participants believe that such standardisation can prevent the presence of *handelingsverlegenheid*. Shared beliefs regarding certain cultures often serve as social expectations too. The PIs experience that such paradigms help them to find the right approach when interacting with others from a different culture. They believe that being aware of behaviours can prevent or minimise awkward situations.

Additionally, during the interviews, it was observed that stereotyping boosts the confidence of employees as they feel more secure judging others. This indicates a false sense of security to help them deal with uncertainty. The PIs experience that social categorisation helps them to choose the right approach when interacting with individuals with different cultural backgrounds:

> *They see me as someone way above them, so they do everything I say and I believe it has to do with their culture* (Interviewee 2).
>
> *In our front office team, we have employees from Asia and from South Africa. And yes, you need to have a different approach to them. You need to check them more often and make sure that yes is a yes and no is a no* (Interviewee 4).

Avoiding confrontation was another behavioural response retrieved from the interviews. PIs observed students who would only speak up if someone else approached them. Such behaviour could signal uncertainty to interact with others from a different culture. It is unclear whether this observation is an example of *handelingsverlegenheid*, or whether other factors are at play, and whether the PIs use this observation to enrich the learning environment of students. As stated by Duronto et al. (2005), high levels of anxiety and uncertainty may result in individuals avoiding intercultural interactions. Jonkers and Machielse (2012) noted a sense of *handelingsverlegenheid* is experienced by individuals when they fail to act or salvage a situation. In the abovementioned example, the professional felt excluded, unhappy and insecure in her role, which had an influence on her actions and made her feel *handelingsverlegen*:

> *I got very handelingsverlegen because I did not even know what was appropriate to do in that situation* (Interviewee 7).

Prevention of awkward situations was another theme which surfaced in the interviews, such as avoiding certain situations (Interviewee 7), or holding back on the jokes (Interviewee 6).

Attributed causes of handelingsverlegenheid

Interviewees articulated several reasons that can be attributed to *handelingsverlegenheid*: language barriers; the unawareness of others and their cultures; poor cultural sensitivity; and lack of experience interacting with others from a different culture. Van der Schuit et al. (2021, p. 23) identified language barriers and miscommunication as reasons for *handelingsverlegenheid* to occur: "Sometimes…some conflict or miscommunication can happen. One says this and the other one interpreted it differently, so it can cause misunderstanding or that sometimes leads to, for example, miscommunication between me and them because they would speak in their own language". The same authors mentioned non-verbal communication issues as causes for cultural hesitation: "One of the interviewees mentioned the cultural difference of the head shaking gesture '*in Bulgaria, we have this weird thing where we have the head gestures. So, when we say yes, we move our head from left to right and we say no, then move our head up and down*', which is opposite of the standard interpretation, this leading to an uncomfortable situation".

Mourik Broekman (2021, p. 24) also mentioned uncertainty about the expected response to negative feedback: "it can result in *handelingsverlegenheid* as the floor managers are hesitant to approach the employee who gave a negative reaction", thus leading to avoidance. Gudykunst and Nishida (2001, p. 59) contend that "[w]e avoid others because it allows us to manage our anxiety. When we are experiencing anxiety and cannot avoid others, we often terminate the interaction as soon as we can". A separate study on *handelingsverlegenheid* of managers in a local restaurant described similar situations of cultural hesitation, for example: "The next interviewee was hesitant to disagree with the other person [an employee from another culture], due to the awkward situation created 'so sometimes there was a point, I was not agreeing with that…but still, I couldn't disagree with her'" (Van der Schuit et al., 2021, p. 23). The perceived inability to act, namely, to disagree with the employee was also identified by Logan et al. (2015), who mentioned that managers who experienced high anxiety are more prone to acts of cultural hesitation and less willing to act in those situations.

Presumed qualities enabling successful management of handelingsverlegenheid

The participants in this study described some capabilities that supposedly enable managers of a diverse workforce to communicate and act effectively and appropriately, such as cultural competence and cultural intelligence (including empathy and self-management).

To effectively manage a highly diverse team, it is important to have the right abilities and skills (Grobelna, 2016). According to the interviewees, mutual respect and openness to different situations will contribute to the better management of *handelingsverlegenheid* in the workplace. They mentioned that being conscious, open-minded and using the right approach will minimise the presence of *handelingsverlegenheid* in the workplace:

> *The approach needs to differ per employee…you also need to have an eye for the people who do not speak up and try to find the right approach to them, so you make them feel comfortable* (Interviewee 4).

Asking for clarification or letting team members repeat what has been said is a tool that confirms for leaders that the message has been received accordingly. This is identified by Interviewee 3, who stated that "*not every conflict is necessarily a conflict* and *maybe I perceive it differently, maybe I see it in the wrong way*". He believes it is essential as a leader to be conscious and have an open discussion with both parties before jumping to conclusions. This is also the behaviour that most of the PIs demonstrate when dealing with *handelingsverlegenheid*: have a conversation with the people involved in the situation and identify the source of the problem. This is done from their frame of reference, rooted in their cultural values and, while well-intentioned, may not always be the right way to handle the situation. Even though people appear to be confident when *handelingsverlegenheid* occurs, it is not guaranteed that what is seen are the real feelings and emotions being experienced. Individuals try to demonstrate confidence while feeling anxious and as a result, in some cases, situations cannot be handled effectively. Actions such as mutual respect and open-mindedness can accelerate effective interaction among cultures and if uncertainty as well as intention, implementation and realisation are maintained sufficiently, cross-cultural interaction can be achieved (Presbitero & Attar, 2018). For example, Interviewee 4 claimed that individuals need to be sensitive when meeting a person from another culture and should be open to the way others perceive things. She believes that conversations related to personal life and culture should stay on the surface. People should not go into detail as they might touch a sensitive area which can result in an awkward situation. Raithel (2016) believes that the cultural background of leaders in a diverse team plays a significant role and contributes to better team performance. For instance, foreign leaders have their own experiences being non-native in the host company which is to their benefit when managing a diverse team. Moreover, they are predisposed towards interacting with others from a different culture and therefore perhaps can better understand their needs. Inversely, Interviewee 5 takes for granted that having intercultural experience does not necessarily mean that an individual went abroad: "*An international experience can also be in Amsterdam, working with internationals, you know you do not have to necessarily go abroad*" (Interviewee 5). Thus, intercultural experiences are essential when working in a cross-cultural environment, yet it is perceived to be less important where they were obtained.

On the other hand, Interviewee 5 believes that being culturally sensitive is a skill every leader in the company should have to be able to deal with *handelingsverlegenheid*. Low levels of sensitivity are perceived as potential causes for awkward situations. According to Devine et al. (2007), to become a culturally diverse organisation, companies should implement a long-term strategy to achieve success. Numerous interviewees believe that levels of sensitivity and awareness as well as open-mindedness and mutual understanding are crucial when leading highly diverse team: "*It comes from lack of knowledge about the other people's culture*" (Interviewee 5); "*The approach needs to differ per employee*" (Interviewee 4). Rød (2012) identified that an essential element is knowing what one's triggers are and to develop strategies to manage reactions more skilfully, without losing ourselves. Presbitero and Attar (2018) contend that knowledge sharing and cultural intelligence are key in reducing anxiety. Moreover, Van der Schuit et al. (2021, p. 24) emphasise patience and openness as desirable qualities: "Another interviewee mentioned that in these awkward situations, one should acknowledge it and be willing to solve it: 'I never faced it before and now it is front of me, so I'm willing to face it'". They also advise individual "one-on-one" talks, as well as a cultural training programme. In the research with the PIs, one of the employees believes that to find the right approach, leaders should be able to identify the differences among students and have an eye for those who do not speak. An observation shared in interview 6 is related to the importance of cultural intelligence levels when being a leader. This claim is substantiated by Devine et al. (2007), who believe that the integration of cultural diversity in an organisation is a complicated process. According to Interviewee 6: "C*ultural intelligence levels are important because the more sensitive you are to other cultures, it might help you prevent such situations"*. From a didactive perspective, one of the interviewees believes that "*if we let* handelingsverlegenheid *be part of our environment, it will be so educational for them [students]*" (Interviewee 5). She also thinks that there should be a person who can manage and properly guide the process of letting *handelingsverlegenheid* happen before reflecting on it. She could not say if those who do not have intercultural experiences are more likely to be involved or to create awkward situations, yet she truly believes that individuals who are less experienced will be less capable of managing such situations.

Conclusion

This section summarises the findings and management implications to offer advice for the hospitality industry and for further research. As identified in the findings and discussion section, mismatches between encoding and decoding of messages and between sender intentions and what receivers ultimately perceived lead to feelings of embarrassment, nervousness, uncertainty and anger in the cross-cultural environment of a small-scale hotel and can be associated with *handelingsverlegenheid*. Language barriers, lack of mutual understanding and awareness and low levels of sensitivity and cultural awareness are identified as reasons for *handelingsverlegenheid*. Different perceptions in cultures regarding right and wrong, normal and strange, authority and equality, implicit and explicit communication, and assumptions on concepts like politeness often cause *handelingsverlegenheid*. When the levels of uncertainty are high, individuals react to messages differently. Uncertainty can occur because of reasons identified above and the inability to predict behaviours and reactions. From the shared experiences, uncertainty elicits anxiety which manifests itself in feelings of embarrassment and frustration. When an individual is oblivious to others' behaviour and communication, they tend to feel frustrated or even angry. This case study has shown that *handelingsverlegenheid* is a concept that is not limited to the context of health care and education; on the contrary, it is to be expected in any diverse workforce if the complexity of diversity is not acknowledged, and underlying assumptions and values which drive behaviour are not considered. *Handelingsverlegenheid* presupposes the incapacity of the professional to act appropriately based on intrinsic uncertainty and hesitation. *Handelingsverlegenheid* can be experienced by professionals as conscious incompetence, the third phase of the conscious competence ladder model that Burch developed for Gordon Training International in the 1970s (see Aguilar, 2018), and the organisation has a duty of care to enable their staff to manage diversity well. This would include reducing the risk of stereotyping, as this is a very risky tool to use because, even though it may boost confidence of individuals, it can also increase the risk of conflicts. The hospitality industry is highly diverse in staff, guests and business partners, and grouping people and having perceptions based on culture, religion or colour can actually cause conflicts rather than prevent *handelingsverlegenheid*. Individuals should not be judged based on their culture but on their potential and personality. Thus, even though self-fulfilling prophecy and stereotyping are considered useful to prevent awkward situations, there are many risks involved which can decrease the full potential of a diverse workforce. The presence of *handelingsverlegenheid* is a stage which individuals do not feel comfortable with, yet it is seen as an opportunity for further personal development of cultural intelligence and organisational development. It can be concluded that the presence of *handelingsverlegenheid* can have a significant impact on the relationships of individuals and effective communication in an organisation. Being conscious of this in awkward situations and having the right skills can contribute to self-efficacy in dealing with *handelingsverlegenheid*. For this reason, it is highly recommended that organisations invest in managing diversity to ensure a safe and financially stable working environment. This requires training for all levels of employees, from interns to senior management, and careful continuous attention to prevent the management employees using tools that carry a high risk, such as stereotyping. A diverse team has the potential to be highly effective, but the risk to management is high if employees are not well trained. Training could include dealing with dilemmas through role playing or informed perspective switching. Also, giving the possibility to the employees to share personal insecurities in peer reviews and working with them towards making sense of incidents may result in personal improvement and confidence. As a result, employees will feel more capable and less afraid of leading international teams and will experience less *handelingsverlegenheid*.

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Hospitality in a theatre: The role of physical warmth

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ABSTRACT: Insight into psychological mechanisms offers service organisations the opportunity to increase their hospitality performance. The present research shows that physical warmth positively contributes to people's experience of hospitality. In a field experiment among 127 visitors to a theatre, the effects of cold versus hot drinks and furniture on the experience of hospitality were examined using the Experience of Hospitality Scale (EH scale), measuring the three experiential factors of hospitality: *inviting*, *care* and *comfort*. In line with embodiment theory, hot drinks positively influenced the experience of the *care* factor of hospitality in the theatre foyer by triggering the abstract metaphor of mental warmth. However, warm furniture showed no effect, which supports the assumption that the effects of short- and long-term exposure to physical warmth are different. This study is the first to show a relationship between physically warm objects and the experience of hospitality in a service-oriented environment.

KEYWORDS: customer experience, embodiment, hospitable environment, service delivery, service environment

Introduction

Hospitality is an essential part of service quality these days. In the field of hospitality management, more and more literature is being published on the subject. This literature examines hospitality mainly from the host's point of view, focusing on how service organisations can organise their services in such a way that they increase their hospitality performance. However, do we not first need to know what customers experience as hospitality before we can increase the hospitality performance of organisations? Despite the large amount of literature on hospitality, little attention has been paid to the viewpoint of the guest, i.e. the experience of hospitality and the psychological mechanisms involved. The research presented in this article is part of a project on understanding the influence of environmental stimuli on the experience of hospitality in service-providing environments. This article specifically focuses on the influence of perceptions of warm environmental objects on the hospitality experienced in a theatre foyer.

Although service organisations are paying increasingly attention to hospitality, they lack the tools to improve their hospitality performance. Despite all the knowledge that already exists, understanding of the concept of hospitality is still in its infancy (Brotherton & Wood, 2008; Lynch et al., 2011; Tasci & Semrad, 2016). A few studies delved into the meaning of hospitality from a customer's perspective, specifically focusing on service staff behaviour in the hospitality industry (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Blain & Lashley, 2014; Tasci & Semrad, 2016). Pijls et al. (2017) took a broader perspective by concentrating on services in general and incorporating the whole servicescape, including the physical service environment. Their research resulted in an instrument that measures hospitality and distinguishes three factors of the experience of hospitality in service environments: *inviting*, *care*, and *comfort*. *Inviting* refers to the experience of openness, freedom and feeling invited. *Care* refers to aspects such as experiencing involvement, effort, interest, relief, importance and support. *Comfort* is about feeling at ease, relaxed and comfortable.

In addition to existing knowledge on the behaviour of service staff, how can service organisations communicate hospitality by means of their physical environment? And more specifically, which sensory stimuli increase the hospitality experienced by service customers?

Hospitality and warmth

Descriptions of hospitality often contain words that refer to sensory stimuli. The literature shows that *warmth* is one of the most frequently mentioned words when describing hospitality. Hospitality is associated with a warm welcome (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Tasci & Semrad, 2016), warmth and friendliness (Brotherton, 2005), warm services (Brotherton & Wood, 2008) and a warm ambience (Sim et al., 2006). Additionally, Tasci and Semrad (2016) discern a hospitality dimension which they call *heart-warming*, which includes polite, welcoming, friendly, courteous, helpful, respectful and kind. Ariffin and Maghzi (2012, p. 194) state that "hospitality is not only about greeting and helping guests but the 'warmth' of the greeting and sincerity and the 'all out' nature of the help offered". In addition, Burgess (1982, p. 50) describes hospitality as a "social relationship fostered by the warm, friendly, welcoming, courteous, open, generous behaviour of the host".

As can be seen in the examples above, warmth in relation to hospitality is used in the psychological sense and seems principally related to the *care* factor of the experience of hospitality as described by Pijls et al. (2017). Literature outside the field of hospitality also provides support for the link between psychological or mental warmth and *care*-related aspects. Ackerman et al. (2010), for example, describe mental warmth in terms of caring, and an emotionally warm person is generous, friendly, helpful and trustworthy (Asch, 1946; Fiske et al., 2007; Williams & Bargh, 2008).

But is this abstract concept of *mental warmth* linked to the physical sensation of warmth? There is some evidence for this connection. In 1958, Asch stated that most abstract mental concepts are metaphorically based on concrete physical experiences. Murphy (1996) and Williams et al. (2009) also argued that cognitive concepts are fundamentally grounded in the physical context and perceptual processes. According to this theory of embodied cognition, abstract mental concepts are given meaning by metaphorically connecting them with a physical experience. For example, some studies provide evidence that the physical perception of weight (heaviness as opposed to lightness) is metaphorically associated with concepts of seriousness and importance (Ackerman et al., 2010; Chandler et al., 2012), and the experience of physical space impacts the experienced psychological space or freedom (Meyers-Levy & Zhu, 2007; Okken et al., 2012). Returning to warmth, it has also been suggested that the perception of physical warmth is metaphorically associated with mental warmth (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Williams & Bargh, 2008; Fenko et al., 2010; Bargh & Shalev, 2012; Zwebner et al., 2014).

However, it should be noted that in recent years replication studies have been published that failed to reproduce the findings of, for instance, the weight-importance relationship (Beek et al., 2018) and the physical warmth-psychological warmth relationship (Lynott et al., 2014; Donnellan et al., 2015; Lynott et al., 2017). Notwithstanding, assuming that embodied concepts exist, concrete physical perceptions may help to define service elements that contribute to a hospitable experience.

The present research elaborates on the embodied concept of warmth. It examines whether the embodied perception of warm environmental objects enhances people's experience of hospitality. It is expected that physical warmth will influence the *care*-factor of hospitality by activating the mental representation of warmth.

The embodied concept of warmth

Mental warmth is an example of an abstract metaphor grounded in a concrete physical experience, in this case in the sensation of physical warmth (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Williams & Bargh, 2008). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that such a specific relationship between body and mind stems from early moments in life. In childhood, people get to know and experience the concept of affection (mental warmth) through the physical experience of physical warmth. When crying babies are comforted, they simultaneously experience both physical and mental warmth because of the affection in the action of being held and caressed by their parents. Fay and Maner (2012) indicate that an important element of the experience of physical warmth is that warmth is spatially limited. Heat can only be perceived when the source of the heat is close. They state, "for example, human bodies are warm, but one must be close to a body to feel its warmth" (Fay & Maner, 2012, p. 1369). This may be the reason that physical warmth may evoke abstract concepts such as social closeness or intimacy (Williams et al., 2009; Fay & Maner, 2012; IJzerman et al., 2013).

Studies on the embodied relationship between physical and mental warmth can be divided into two main categories: studies examining effects of short-term exposure to warmth (such as warm drinks and therapeutic pads [products that are designed to relieve pain]) and studies examining the effects of warmth stimuli with long-term exposure (such as ambient temperature). These two types of warmth stimuli are different bodily experiences, and therefore should be distinguished theoretically (e.g. IJzerman et al., 2013; Lynott et al., 2017).

Concerning the first type of stimuli, the findings suggest a positive relationship between physical warmth and mental warmth, the so-called "warmer is better" effects (Lynott et al., 2017). The most well-known experiment is that of Williams and Bargh (2008), who found that subjects who briefly held a warm cup of coffee were more likely to perceive someone else as mentally "warm" (i.e. friendly, helpful and trustworthy) compared to subjects who held a cup of iced coffee. IJzerman and Semin (2009) additionally showed that subjects who were holding a hot beverage perceived a person in mind as mentally closer to them than did those who were holding a cold beverage. Furthermore, Miyajima and Meng (2017) showed that touching a warm cup, as opposed to a cold cup, leads to helping behaviour, but only for women.

Besides the effect of holding hot versus cold drinks, the effects of briefly holding (therapeutic) pads have also been found. Williams and Bargh (2008) showed that people who briefly held a warm (versus cold) therapeutic pad were more likely to choose a gift for friends instead of for themselves. Furthermore, evidence was found that briefly holding a warm pack led to higher connection with others (Inagaki & Eisenberger, 2013) and increased interpersonal trust in computer games (Kang et al., 2010; Storey & Workman, 2013). Additionally, Bargh and Shalev (2012) showed that, at the other end of the continuum, physical coldness leads to mental coldness. They found that briefly holding a cold pad, as opposed to a warm or neutral pad, increased feelings of loneliness.

In replication studies, however, some effects have been questioned. Despite the use of sample sizes of hundreds of participants at multiple test sites, Lynott et al. (2014) failed to reproduce the findings of the Williams and Bargh (2008) study with the therapeutic pad. Lynott et al. (2017) also found no evidence for this effect. Chabris et al. (2019) recently published an article presenting replications of both experiments of Williams and Bargh (2008). In neither of the studies did they find evidence that physical warmth leads to interpersonal warmth. Nevertheless, all the positive evidence for effects of momentary physical contact with warmth belongs to the category "warmer is better".

Regarding the second type of stimuli, the long-term exposure to warmth, there are different types of effects, which seem to be related to whether the temperature perception is comfortable or not. First, the literature shows, just as for the effects of short-term exposure to warmth, the "warmer is better" effects of comfortable warmth perceptions. Prolonged exposure to physical warmth leads to mental warmth, such as interpersonal warmth (Fetterman et al., 2017), social affiliation (Fay & Maner, 2012) and social proximity (IJzerman & Semin, 2009; Huang et al., 2013; Schilder et al., 2014). To illustrate, IJzerman and Semin (2009) found that participants in a warm room (22–24˚C) felt significantly closer to the experimenter than participants in a cold room (15–18 ˚C). In a replication study, these findings were confirmed (Schilder et al., 2014). Huang et al. (2013) showed a positive effect of ambient temperature, via perceptions of social closeness, on conformity to others' opinions. Furthermore, Lynott et al. (2017) investigated the influence of outside ambient temperatures in one of their studies and found a slightly positive relationship with prosocial behaviour. Additionally, Fay and Maner (2012) showed that a chair with a heat pad leads to higher levels of social affiliative motivation, increasing people's desire for social bonding. However, this effect was only found for people low in avoidance attachment (feeling comfortable with intimacy) and people high in anxiety attachment, with the explanation that anxious people are especially motivated to maintain and increase intimacy with others.

Secondly, while comfortable warmth shows "warmer is better" effects, uncomfortable heat shows "warmer is worse" effects. For example, Belkin and Kouchaki (2017) found that high outdoor temperatures (up to 34°C), as opposed to normal temperatures, made prosocial behaviour less likely. Heat led to fatigue, which reduced prosocial behaviour. Outside the embodiment literature, epidemiological research has also shown that under uncomfortable heat conditions people's discomfort may lead to negative societal behaviour such as hostility and aggression (see Lynott et al. [2017] for an overview of the literature on this topic).

Thirdly, for uncomfortable physical coldness, a different embodied mechanism seems to play a role. The literature suggests that in addition to prosocial behaviour stimulated by comfortable physical warmth, physical coldness can also lead to prosocial behaviour (Hong & Sun, 2012; Kolb et al., 2012; Lee et al., 2013; Rai et al., 2017). An explanation for this seemingly opposite effect is that physical coldness induces the desire for mental warmth and the corresponding behaviour. People are inclined to compensate for the physical coldness by seeking mental warmth. To illustrate, Rai et al. (2017) showed that low ambient temperature (15–17°C), as opposed to higher ambient temperature (22–24°C), leads to a need for social connection, which in turn leads to a higher intention to donate money and to an increase in the amount of money. In another study, they found that watching pictures of people suffering from cold leads to a need for social connection, which in turn increases the likelihood of donating money to charities. Furthermore, Hong and Sun (2012) showed that physical coldness leads to an increased liking of romance movies for people who associate romance movies with psychological warmth.

Compensating for physical coldness also seems to work the other way around, with mental coldness producing a desire for physical warmth. It was found, for example, that social exclusion (mental coldness) leads to a desire for warm food and hot drinks (Zhong & Leonardelli, 2008). Furthermore, chronic loneliness is associated with an increased tendency to take warm baths or showers (Bargh & Shalev, 2012; Shalev & Bargh, 2015). However, Donnellan et al. (2015) failed to reproduce this effect.

Overall, the literature on the embodiment of warmth suggests a relationship between physical and mental warmth, distinguishing between effects of short-term contact with warmth and prolonged contact with warmth. When confronted with prolonged warmth, the effects seem to depend on the comfort of the temperature sensation. Table 1 provides an overview of the effects found in the various studies on the embodiment of warmth. The table distinguishes between studies showing effects of short-term exposure to warmth (hot drinks and hot/cold pads) and long-term exposure to warmth (e.g. ambient temperature, physical warmth/coldness, warm furniture).

However, there is also criticism of the evidence in favour of the embodied cognition hypotheses. Discussions on whether there is an embodied relationship between physical and mental warmth mainly concern methodological issues in the experimental research, such as sample sizes, type and order of questions and potential confounding variables. Nevertheless, some studies examined the phenomenon using different types of methods. For example, Fetterman et al. (2017) performed two diary studies in which people reported their felt temperature and their interpersonal warmth on a daily basis. On days when participants felt physically warmer, they perceived themselves to be interpersonally warmer and more agreeable, irrespective of the outdoor temperature. Inagaki and Eisenberger (2013) additionally measured brain activity in an MRI to ascertain a possible relationship between physical and social warmth. Physical and mental warmth showed simultaneous activation of two brain areas: the middle insula and the ventral striatum. This suggests a common neural mechanism underlying physical and social warmth.

Thus, although evidence should be interpreted with caution, there is support for the assumption that physical sensations of warmth generate feelings of mental warmth, measured by related concepts such as a warm personality, social closeness, emotional closeness and prosocial behaviour. The current research builds on the studies examining the embodied relationship between physical and mental warmth by exploring the effect of physical perceptions of warmth on the experience of hospitality in a real-life setting of a theatre, thereby focusing on the effects of comfortable sensations of warmth.

Aim of the study

The present study explores the role of the embodied concept of warmth. Based on people's associations and descriptions of hospitality, this seems to be the embodied concept that is most closely linked to the experience of hospitality. The study focuses on the effect of perceptions of physical warmth on the experience of hospitality as perceived in a theatre foyer.

Because it is unknown what type of warmth stimulus results in the experience of hospitality, it was also investigated whether it matters how physical warmth is primed. Elaborating on Lynott et al. (2017), who also examined the effects of two types of heat sources in one experiment, the effect of physical warmth is explored by two types of environmental stimuli: one providing momentary physical contact and one providing long-term physical contact.

Firstly, elaborating on Williams and Bargh (2008) and IJzerman and Semin (2009), the effect of briefly holding hot versus cold drinks is examined. As warmth is conceptually especially close to the *care* factor of the experience of hospitality, the effect is expected to be specific to *care*, not to *inviting* and *comfort*. It is expected that:

TABLE 1: Overview of studies examining physical warmth as independent variable, for warmth stimuli of brief and of prolonged exposure (AT = ambient temperature)

Exposure	Type of stimulus	Effect	Publications
Brief exposure	Hot drink	Briefly holding a cup of coffee, as opposed to iced coffee, leads to interpersonal warmth. However, the replication study showed no effect.	Williams and Bargh (2008); replication study: Chabris et al. (2019)
	Hot drink	Warm drinks, as opposed to cold drinks, lead to social proximity	IJzerman and Semin (2009)
	Hot cup	Touching a warm cup leads to helping behaviour, but only for females	Miyajima and Meng (2017)
	Warm pad	Briefly holding a warm pad, as opposed to a cold pad, leads to prosocial behaviour (gift for someone else instead of for themselves). However, both replication studies showed no effect	Williams and Bargh (2008); replication studies: Lynott et al. (2014); Chabris et al. (2019)
	Warm pad	Briefly holding warm pad, as opposed to a cold pad, leads to interpersonal trust, additional neurological support	Kang et al. (2010); Storey and Workman (2013)
	Cold Pad	Briefly holding a cold pad, as opposed to a warm or neutral pad, increased feelings of loneliness	Bargh and Shalev (2012)
	Warm pad	Briefly holding a warm pad, as opposed to a neutral ball, leads to higher connection with others, additional neurological evidence	Inagaki and Eisenberger (2013)
Prolonged exposure	Ambient temperature	High AT (22–24°C), as opposed to low AT (15–18°C), leads to more social proximity	IJzerman and Semin (2009); replication study: Schilder et al. (2014)
	Ambient temperature	High AT (24–25°C), as opposed to low AT (16–17°C) leads to perceptions of social closeness, which leads to conformity to others' opinions	Huang et al. (2013)
	Ambient temperature	Higher outside AT (max. 24°C) leads to more prosocial behaviour (weak effect)	Lynott et al. (2017)
	Ambient temperature	Low AT (mean 20.22°C), compared to high AT (mean 25,96°C) lead to more helping behaviour and giving of higher discounts to customers	Kolb et al. (2012)
	Ambient temperature	Social exclusion leads to lower perceived AT and to a desire for warm food and drinks	Zhong and Leonardelli (2008)
	Ambient temperature	Eating alone leads to lower perceived AT than eating with a partner	Lee et al. (2013)
	Ambient temperature & pictures of people suffering from heat/cold	Study 1: with hot outside temperatures (up to 34°C), as opposed to normal temperatures, prosocial behaviour is less likely. Study 2: heat leads to fatigue, which decreases prosocial behaviour.	Belkin and Kouchaki (2017)
	Ambient temperature & pictures of people suffering from heat/cold	Study 1: low AT (15–17°C), as opposed to high AT (22–24°C), leads to a need for social connection, which in turn leads to 1) a higher intention to donate money; and to 2) an increased the amount of money. Study 2: watching pictures of people suffering from cold leads to a need for social connection, which in turn increases the likelihood of donating money to charities	Rai et al. (2017)
	Physical warmth (body)	On days when participants felt physically warmer, they perceived themselves to be interpersonally warmer	Fetterman et al. (2017)
	Physical warmth (body)	Reading positive messages about close friends/family leads to feeling physically warmer	Inagaki and Eisenberger (2013)
	Physical coldness (body)	Physical coldness leads to the desire for a social consumption setting, whereas physical warmth leads to a desire for eating alone	Lee et al. (2013)
	Physical coldness (body)	Physical coldness leads to liking of and willingness to pay for romantic movies (when associated with psychological warmth)	Hong and Sun (2012)
	Warm pad in a chair	A chair with a heat pad, as opposed to a non-heated pad, leads to higher levels of social affiliative motivation, but is only found for people low in avoidance attachment and people high in anxiety attachment.	Fay and Maner (2012)
	Tendency to take warm baths & showers	Loneliness (social coldness) leads to the tendency to take warm baths or showers. However, the replication study showed no effect.	Bargh and Shalev (2012); Shalev and Bargh (2015); replication study: Donnellan et al. (2015)

- Hypothesis 1: Touching and drinking a hot drink leads to an increased experience of the *care* factor of the experience of hospitality compared to touching and drinking a cold drink.

Secondly, for the heat source providing continuous physical contact, it seemed most obvious to manipulate the ambient temperature. However, since it is difficult to control the ambient temperature in a field study, inspired by Fay and Maner (2012) and Fenko et al. (2010), the effect of cold versus warm furniture is studied instead. Again, the effects are expected to be specific to *care*:

- Hypothesis 2: Sitting on heated furniture leads to an increased experience of the *care* factor of the experience of hospitality compared to sitting on non-heated furniture.

Based on the studies by Williams and Bargh (2008) and IJzerman and Semin (2009) on the effect of holding a cold versus a hot drink, it is expected that the effects of touching and drinking a hot beverage on the experience of hospitality are mediated by mental warmth. This leads to the next hypothesis:

- Hypothesis 3: The effect of the type of drink on the experience of the *care* factor of the experience of hospitality is mediated by the experience of mental warmth.

Furthermore, based on, among others, Fenko et al. (2010) and Fay and Maner (2012), comfortable warm furniture is also expected to lead to the experience of *care* via mental warmth. This leads to the fourth hypothesis:

- Hypothesis 4: The effect of the temperature of furniture on the *care* factor of the experience of hospitality is mediated by the experience of mental warmth.

Material and methods

Design and participants

A 2 (warm versus cold drink) x 2 (heated versus non-heated furniture) between-subjects quasi-experimental design was employed. On eight days in May and June, 145 visitors of 11 different theatre performances participated in the experiment. Participants were randomly assigned to the conditions of furniture material; on each day, half of the seats was heated and half of the seats was non-heated. Visitors were either offered a hot drink or a cold drink: on days 1, 3, 5 and 7, they could choose between hot coffee or hot tea, and on days 2, 4, 6 and 8, between iced coffee or iced tea. The indoor ambient temperature did not differ between the days on which warm drinks (M = 23.9°C) and the days on which cold drinks (M = 23.8°C) were offered.

Prior to the analysis, data from 18 participants were deleted from the analytic sample (two because they took the questionnaire to a table outside the research area, two because they received a second drink from someone else, and 14 because they declined the drink), yielding a sample of 127 participants (74 female; 53 male).

Environmental manipulation

The *drink* variable was manipulated by the type of drinks participants received before filling out a questionnaire on their experience of hospitality. The participants received either a paper cup with a hot drink (they could choose between tea or coffee) or a cold drink (they could choose between iced tea or iced coffee). Hot drinks were served from a thermos, cold drinks from a carafe placed in a cooler with ice cubes.

The *furniture* variable was manipulated through the temperature of the furniture on which participants were sitting while filling out the questionnaire. A manufacturer of heated seat cushions supplied them for the study. In the *heated* condition, participants sat at a table with a wooden tabletop on a wooden chair with a seat cushion slightly heated to 36°C. In the *non-heated* condition, the table and chair were identical, but the heating of the cushion was turned off (22–26°C, depending on the indoor air temperature). Thus, unlike the cold condition in the drink manipulation, this represented a neutral control condition.

Measures

For all statements in this study, the participants were required to indicate on a seven-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed with the statement (ranging from *strong disagreement* (1) to *strong agreement* (7)).

Experience of hospitality

The experience of hospitality was measured by the 13-item Experience of Hospitality Scale (EH scale) (Pijls et al., 2017) with three factors. The *inviting* factor consisted of three items on experiencing openness, freedom and feeling invited (Cronbach's α = 0.83). The *care* factor comprised seven items measuring among others the experience of involvement, effort, interest and support (Cronbach's α = 0.89). The *comfort* factor was measured by three items on feeling comfortable, at ease and relaxed (Cronbach's α = 0.87). The study was performed before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mental warmth

Mental warmth was measured by the experienced mental warmth in the foyer ("the foyer of the theatre has a warm atmosphere" and "the foyer of the theatre has an intimate atmosphere", two statements, Pearson correlation r = 0.72).

Demographics

Additionally, the demographics of gender, age, frequency of visit and cultural background were registered.

Other measures

Three items served as manipulation checks. To assess the *perceived temperature of drinks*, respondents rated the statement "while drinking, my drink feels cold/warm" and "the cup of my drink feels cold/warm". To assess the perceived temperature of the furniture, respondents rated the statement "the furniture feels cold/warm". These questions were answered on an Osgood semantic differential (1 to 7: very cold/very warm). Furthermore, to avoid drawing attention to the manipulation and to control for potential confounders, some additional questions were asked about the furniture (attractiveness, matching the organisation and comfort), about the drinks (the type and the taste of the drink) and about the foyer (its perceived modernity and attractiveness). Finally, to avoid possible confounding effects of air temperature, the perceived ambient warmth in the foyer and the indoor air temperature were measured. The warm weather during the period the research was carried out resulted in a relatively warm indoor temperature in the foyer. At table height, the temperature range was 22°C to 26°C, with a mean temperature of 23.9°C. However, the mean indoor temperature did not differ between the conditions of drink (F(1,123) = 0.00, p > 0.10). Both furniture conditions were administered at the same time, so the indoor temperature was the same for both conditions.

Procedure
The procedure of the experiment was based on those carried out by Williams and Bargh (2008) and Lynott et al. (2014), who also examined the effect of physical warmth on psychological warmth. They first asked participants to evaluate a new product (a therapeutic pad), and then they asked questions about their main dependent variable (a reward choice).

Visitors were approached on entering the foyer from the cloakroom. They were asked to participate in the study. They were told that they would be taking part in a drink evaluation study combined with an evaluation of the theatre experience thus far. Participation took about 5 to 10 minutes. First, the participants were asked to choose a warm drink (tea or coffee) or a cold drink (iced tea or iced coffee) and bring it to an allocated seat. There they received the questionnaire containing an informed consent section, questions on the drink, questions on the experienced hospitality in the foyer, questions on the furniture and demographics. After completing the questionnaire, the participants were thanked for their participation and were told about the possibility to contact the researchers for more information about the research. The experimental situation is depicted in Figure 1.

Results

Manipulation check
The first aspect to be checked was whether the manipulations of physical warmth had been successful by performing a 2 (drink) x 2 (furniture) MANOVA. The *F*-test for the overall effect of both drink (Wilks's Λ = 0.215, $F(3,112) = 136.35$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.79$) and furniture (Wilks's Λ = 0.796, $F(3,112) = 9.59$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.204$) were significant. The univariate ANOVAs showed that the cups with hot drinks felt significantly warmer ($M = 6.00$, SD = 0.90) than the cups with cold drinks ($M = 2.79$, SD = 1.10; $F(1,114) = 291.02$, $p < 0.001$ $\eta_p^2 = 0.72$). In addition, the temperature of the hot drinks was rated significantly higher ($M = 5.85$, SD = 0.84) than the temperature of the cold drinks ($M = 3.07$, SD = 0.90; $F(1,114) = 291.83$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.72$). Furthermore, participants perceived the heated furniture condition ($M = 5.73$, SD = 1.08) as warmer than the non-heated furniture condition ($M = 4.81$, SD = 0.89; $F(1,114) = 26.46$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.19$).

FIGURE 1: Experimental setup in the foyer

Correlations factors EH scale and mental warmth
Table 2 shows the correlations between the factors of the experience of hospitality scale (EH scale) and mental warmth. The factors *inviting*, *care* and *comfort* of the EH scale are related, but the correlations between the factors are lower than the threshold of 0.85 (Kline, 2005), indicating discriminant validity. Additionally, all hospitality factors significantly correlate with mental warmth, but also remain below the threshold of 0.85.

Effects of drink and furniture
First, the hypothesised direct effects of drink and furniture on the experiential factors of hospitality were examined by performing a 2 (drink) x 2 (furniture) MANOVA. The *F*-test for the overall effect of drink approached significance (Wilks's Λ = 0.930, $F(3,107) = 2.67$, $p = 0.05$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.070$). The univariate ANOVAs showed an effect of *drink* on the *care* factor of the EH scale ($F(1,109) = 6.98$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.060$). People who received a hot drink experienced more *care* ($M_{hotdrink} = 5.10$, SD = 1.12, versus $M_{colddrink} = 4.54$, SD = 1.03) than people who received a cold drink. In line with Hypothesis 1, no effects of drink were found on the factors *inviting* ($F(1,109) = 0.62$, $p > 0.05$), and *comfort* ($F(1,109) = 1.44$, $p > 0.05$).

MANCOVA (multivariate analysis of covariance) revealed that these effects of *drink* on the experience of hospitality did not result from the administered factors *liking of the drink*, *indoor temperature* and *perceived ambient temperature* in the foyer. Furthermore, MANOVA showed that effects of *drink* were only found for the measures of the experience of hospitality in the foyer, and not on the *perceived modernity*, *perceived luxury* and *attractiveness* of the foyer.

For *furniture*, no main effects were found in the experience of *care*, nor in the experience of *inviting* and *comfort*. Furthermore, no interactions between *furniture* and *drink* were found.

In conclusion, people who were served a hot drink experienced more *care* in the theatre foyer compared to people who were served a cold drink. However, the temperature of the drink did not affect the other two factors of the experience of hospitality

TABLE 2: Pearson Correlation between the factors of the EH scale and mental warmth

Variable	*M*	SD	1	2	3
1. Inviting	5.30	1.09			
2. Care	4.84	1.09	0.62		
3. Comfort	5.71	1.06	0.69	0.64	
4. Mental warmth	5.30	1.04	0.70	0.59	0.54

Note: All correlations are significant at $p < 0.01$

(*inviting* and *comfort*). These findings provide support for Hypothesis 1. No support was found for Hypothesis 2.

Mental warmth

Next, a mediation analysis using SPSS PROCESS was performed to test the mediating role of the experienced *mental warmth* on the influence of *drink* on the experience of *care*. The indirect effect was tested using a bootstrap estimation approach with 5 000 samples (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Zhao et al., 2010). The unstandardised path coefficients are shown in Figure 2.

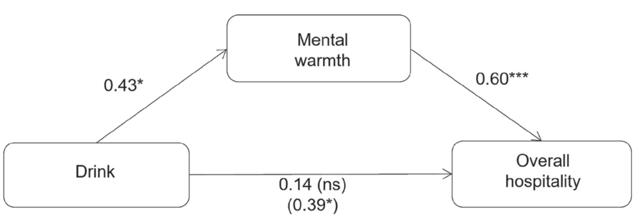
The direct effect of *drink* on the experience of *care* was fully mediated by the experience of *mental warmth* (Figure 2); indirect effects were found for *drink* on *care* ($b = 0.24$, SE = 0.117, *95%* CI [0.0356, 0.4884]), with 95% confidence intervals, excluding 0. When including *mental warmth* in the model, *drink* was no longer a significant predictor of the *care* factor of the EH scale.

Thus, in line with Hypothesis 3, hot drinks increased the experience of *care* via the mental warmth experienced in the theatre foyer, providing support for embodied cognition as an underlying mechanism for the effect. Because we did not find an effect of furniture on the experience of hospitality-factors, no support was found for Hypothesis 4.

Discussion

Firstly, the study contributes to the literature on hospitality and provides support for our main hypothesis that the sensory perception of physical warmth perceived in a service environment has an impact on people's experience of hospitality, particularly on the experience of the *care* factor. This confirms the idea that not only interaction with service staff, but also atmospheric service attributes contribute to people's experience of hospitality. The impact of atmospherics was already known for customer experience in general (Ellis, 1982; Countryman & Jang, 2006; Lin, 2016), but now it is shown that this also applies specifically to the experience of hospitality, which people traditionally associate with staff behaviour (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Blain & Lashley, 2014; Tasci & Semrad, 2016).

Secondly, this article contributes to the literature on the psychological mechanism of embodied cognition, as it has been demonstrated by mediation analysis that mental warmth is triggered by holding and drinking a hot drink. The present study additionally shows that physical sensations of warmth not only activate mental warmth attributed to a person (Williams & Bargh, 2008; Huang et al., 2013) or an object (Zwebner et al., 2014), but



Note: unstandardised coefficients and significance values (*$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$) are reported. The unstandardised coefficients in brackets indicate the effect ignoring the mediator

FIGURE 2: Mediation analyses in the effects of drink on care, with emotional warmth in the Foyer as mediator

also to mental warmth associated with an environment, such as a theatre foyer.

The study further contributes to the need for the relatively new field of embodied cognition research to shift from descriptive research on the existence of the phenomenon of embodiment to explanatory research focusing on how and under which conditions embodiment occurs (Landau et al., 2010; Meier et al., 2012; Dijkstra et al., 2014). The present study provides additional evidence that different types of warmth stimuli differently affect people's experience of hospitality. The effect of physical warmth on the experience of hospitality was found for the temperature of drinks, affecting the experience of *care* through the mental warmth mediator. No effect was found for the temperature of the furniture.

The difference in the results of both types of warmth sensations might concern the duration of the physical sensation; consuming a hot drink concerns a momentary perception of warmth, while sitting on warm furniture concerns a prolonged exposure to warmth. Both the exposure to a hot drink and the slightly heated seat cushions were intended to produce comfortable warmth stimuli, which both were expected to cause a "warmer is better" effect. However, because of the exceptionally warm ambient temperature in the theatre foyer, the prolonged perception of the heated cushion may have turned out to be not as comfortable as in normal ambient circumstances, which could explain the absence of the effect of warm furniture in the present study. Apparently, the warm ambient temperature had no influence on the short exposure to the hot drinks. This in in line with previous research. The temperature of the hot drinks or pads seems to matter less than long-term exposure to warmth such as warm furniture or ambient temperatures.

Another explanation for the absence of the effect of warm furniture may be the smaller difference in temperature between the warm and the neutral condition, compared to the hot and cold drink conditions. Perhaps the difference in temperature of the seat cushions was, although significant, too small to cause an effect.

A third explanation for the difference in the effect of both types of physical heat might be the substantive association people have between offering coffee or tea and hospitality, which does not apply to warm furniture. Perhaps the habit (in the Netherlands) of offering coffee and tea in itself produces a hospitable feeling, because of its associations with cosiness, welcome and caring. In that case, it is not the warm temperature, but the symbolic meaning of coffee and tea that contributes to people's experience of hospitality. This is in line with ideas of authors who have a critical attitude towards embodied cognition and point to alternative explanations (e.g. Mahon, 2015; Dove, 2016).

Thus, the present findings are consistent with embodied cognition theory; physical warmth (hot drink) significantly influences the experience of the *care* factor of the experience of hospitality and not the experience of the *inviting* factor and the *comfort* factor, which are conceptually further from the concept of warmth. Moreover, the effect on *care* was mediated by mental warmth.

Furthermore, the findings support the idea that short-term and long-term exposure to warmth work out differently. However, the findings do not yet offer conclusive evidence for embodiment as an underlying mechanism of the effects. As with previous studies, in this study there could also be alternative explanations.

Practical implications

The present study is the first endeavour in applying embodied cognition to the context of hospitality. It contributes to the ongoing attempts to understand if and how embodied cognition plays a role in people's cognitive representations. In a real-life setting, the study shows that priming people with physical warmth leads to mental warmth, which in turn affects people's experience of *care*.

The present research is unique in examining embodiment in the applied setting of a theatre. Most research on embodied cognition concerns laboratory settings (e.g. Williams & Bargh, 2008; Hong & Sun, 2012; Huang et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2013). In a complex real-world environment, it is difficult to demonstrate effects. However, the present study shows that even in a practical setting like a theatre, specific relations between variables are observable.

For practitioners, the findings provide guidelines for creating hospitable service environments. The study underlines the importance of the physical aspects for the hospitality performance of an organisation by showing that atmospheric attributes, in this case hot drinks, influence the hospitality experienced in that environment. It furthermore shows that through research, abstract concepts such as hospitality can be translated into concrete environmental features. Service experts and designers can use these concrete insights for the design of hospitable service environments.

Concluding remarks

The body of knowledge on embodied cognition research shows that it is a phenomenon that is difficult to comprehend. Lynott et al. (2014) argued that research on the embodiment of warmth generally shows small effects which often hover around significance at a level of $p = 0.05$ (e.g. Williams & Bargh, 2008; IJzerman & Semin, 2009). This also applies to our study. As in every type of experimental setting, but maybe even more in a real-life setting such as this, it is important to replicate such studies to see whether the present findings can be confirmed. Additionally, more research must be done to further understand the mechanism of embodied cognition (Fay & Maner, 2014) and its relevance for the concept of hospitality.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Identifying the willingness to pay for eco-certified wine by South African consumers: A comparison of biodynamic, fair trade and sustainably produced wines

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ABSTRACT: As eco-certified wines are being produced in increasing quantities and varieties, so are the definitions and the labels that accompany them. This has resulted in confusion with regard to what type of eco-certified wines customers prefer and what prices they are prepared to pay for such wines. The purpose of the research is to provide clarity regarding consumer knowledge about eco-certified wines and their preferences for each category as expressed by their willingness to pay (WTP). Specifically, the goal of the research was to identify the willingness to pay for South African eco-certified wine with a focus on three labels: biodynamic, fair trade and sustainable. The methodology used by the study was to identify the willingness to pay for the wines by using contingency valuation modelling. A survey was administered using the Qualtrics platform. It consisted of three sections: the first set of questions included questions about purchasing behaviour and important considerations when buying wine. The second set of questions collected perspectives and opinions about the multiple wine certifications discussed in this article and the third set of questions collected demographic data. The research focused on South African consumers and consisted of 267 respondents. Three WTP models were run separately for biodynamic, fair trade and sustainable wines. The study found that younger individuals with higher incomes, higher levels of education, previous eco-labelled product purchases and better knowledge of eco-certified wines have a positive impact on the WTP. The only exception seems to be the in case of biodynamic wines where previous knowledge of eco-certification has a negative effect on the WTP. The research outcomes provide guidelines to producers, retailers and restaurateurs about their output, marketing and sales efforts towards the ever-growing consumer demand for such wines.

KEYWORDS: contingency valuation, eco-certification, market, preferences, sustainable, wine growing

Introduction

Environmental sustainability is quickly becoming one of the key factors for the future development of the wine industry (Moscovici et al., 2020). As a result, various eco-certified labels have been introduced, each associated with a different production process requirement. An important factor to take into account is that as eco-certified wine production increases, the number of wine consumers interested in ecological farming is growing, further generating additional income for the wine producers that follow such practices through the development of tourism (Pomarici & Vecchio, 2014).

The level of competition in the global wine market has steadily increased over the last two decades as many new producers entered the market. This is also the case for wines that have eco-friendly attributes, where different producers try to gain a competitive advantage to consolidate a share of the market (Getz & Brown, 2006; Orsolini & Boksberger, 2009; Holohan & Remaud, 2014).

As the growth in interest in eco-sustainable wine has been increasing, so has the certification that defines the production of wines that are associated with this concept. The result is that there are many different types of eco-certified wines and that it is difficult for the consumer to correctly define and understand what they are purchasing. This is also one of the reasons that the market share of eco-certified wines is underdeveloped (Willer, 2000). The research objective in this paper was to identify whether there is a willingness by South African consumers to purchase South African eco-certified wine. This specific analysis focused on the biodynamic, fair trade and sustainable labels as they were among the most recognisable eco-labels by the South African consumers.

An overview of environmental certification

Eco-certifications, or labels, are widely used to inform consumers about the environmental attributes of food and beverage products (Delmas & Gergaud, 2021). The goal of these eco-labels is to provide the consumer with trustworthy and transparent information on the reduced environmental impact of the product. This can be used to inform consumers and encourage an increase in their demand for such products (Heyes et al., 2020).

One major problem associated with the production of eco-friendly wines is the need for credibility with the consumers. This is a result of the inability of the consumers to assess the sustainability-friendliness of production. One way of reducing this information asymmetry from the part of the consumers is the use of clear labels and other sources of information that should provide credible information related to the sustainable credentials of the wine (Leire & Thidell, 2005). The most important labels are organic wines, biodynamic wines, natural wines, fair-trade wines and sustainable wines (Moscovici et al, 2020).

Organic wine production and consumption has been steadily increasing in recent years. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM, 2014) defines organic agriculture, including viticulture and wine-making, as a process that relies on ecological processes, biodiversity and cycles. This implies the elimination of products such as pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and fertilisers. There is a wide range of legislation governing the production of organic wine in different countries. The French definition does not allow for additives, such as sulphites or yeast, or genetically modified organisms. In South Africa, organic means wine that has been made with organically produced grapes. It focuses on what happens in the vineyard, the growing of the grapes, rather than in the winery, the production of the actual wine. This allows for preservatives such as sulphur dioxide to still be used (Ponte & Ewert, 2007)

Biodynamic wine production is governed by the same rules that regulate organic wine production (Castellini et al., 2017). In general, biodynamic production follows stricter guidelines than organic certification rules. The concept of biodynamic winemaking incorporates homeopathic treatments as well as astrological considerations. The wine growers aim is to find the most suitable timing for each wine producing process according to natural cycles (ibid.). Despite its less scientific production process, the market for biodynamic wine in Europe is growing with an increasing number of wineries including this concept in their wine-making operations (Bigolin, 2017).

Natural wines are made according to the standard of original farming techniques and producers follow the concept of minimal chemical and technological intervention. This involves using native vines and indigenous yeasts, instead of added yeasts, which leads to spontaneous fermentation. Another characteristics of natural wines is the lack of additives such as sulphites (Maykish et al., 2021).

Even though there are standards for the production of natural wine, there is no legal definition of natural wine. This introduces a substantial level of vagueness to the term (CBI Market Intelligence, 2016). This has the potential to distort the choices of consumers and lead to non-optimal production and consumption patterns. One example of lessening this effect is the idea introduced by the French government in 2020 through the inclusion of "Vin méthode nature" as a wine category (Gray, 2020). In South Africa, natural wine has been produced since 1935; however, it has been largely marginalised due to the favouring of more traditional mass-market procedures (Garrett, 1995).

Fair trade wines involve wines that have been certified by Fairtrade International which relate to fair prices and improving social conditions for wine producers and communities (CBI Market Intelligence, 2016). Fair trade wine standards need to include factors of an economic and social nature. These factors include ownership for the workers, minimum wages and trade equity. Few wineries receive a fair trade certification because the costs of complying with all the requirements are often regarded as prohibitive (Moseley, 2008). The concept of fair trade has been strongly promoted in South Africa, where a number of organisations have been established: Wine & Agricultural Industry Ethical Trade Association (WIETA), Fairtrade Label South Africa and the Cape Winemakers Guild (CWG) (Metivier, 2020).

The concept of sustainable wines encompasses more definitions and is a combination of the implementation of so-called sustainable methods throughout the whole production chain and the whole ecosystem. For a wine to be sustainable, it needs to achieve a combination of social, environmental and economic goals (Moscovici et al., 2020). In the production of wine, water use, chemical use and soil erosion are important environmental sustainability concerns. From an economic perspective, the benefits and costs of implementing sustainable wine-making practices need to be considered to take into account levels of investment needed as well as changes in the welfare of both producers and consumers. Finally, social sustainability issues will intensify as changes occur in the vineyards (Gbejewoh et al., 2021)

Willingness to pay and consumer preferences for eco-labelled wines

As shown earlier, there are five main definitions of environmental and sustainable certification, each associated with different methods that need to be followed by producers to qualify. One major problem associated with the production of these types of wines is the need for credibility on the part of the consumers. This is a result of their inability to assess whether the wine production follows the rules required to obtain a certain label. One way of reducing this information asymmetry from the part of the consumers is the use of clear labels and other sources of information that should provide credible information related to the sustainable credentials of the wine (Leire & Thidell, 2005).

Research conducted in this field reveals different outcomes regarding willingness to pay (WTP) for organic wines. Bazoche et al. (2008) found in their study of French wine consumers that wines produced in environmentally sustainable way were valued similarly to any other type of wine. There is also evidence found by Loureiro and Hine (2002) of American consumers that were not willing to pay more for the environmentally friendly wines due to the perceived difference in quality. A different outcome is derived from research results on willingness to pay for sustainable Italian wines, which indicate that consumers value sustainability attributes of wine positively (Pomarici & Vecchio, 2014). It also showed that WTP for sustainable wines was significantly higher than the WTP for conventionally produced wine. This is supported by research done by Hoekstra et al. (2015) who found that a high level of wine knowledge positively influenced organic wine appreciation. Previous research done by Mihailescu (2015) regarding preferences for organic wine in South Africa indicates a positive relation between income and WTPs for both white and red organic wine.

Research shows that the characteristics of the consumers are also of great importance in influencing their preferences and WTP for ecologically produced wines. For example, age seems to be an important factor, where older generations seem to be more willing to pay for sustainable wines (Pomarici & Vecchio, 2014). There are some indications that the younger generation (millennials and generation Z) tend to prefer the eco-labelled wines (Moscovici et al., 2020). Additionally, the WTP for eco-certified wine and the extra purchase amount differs from country to country and needs to be carefully interpreted to properly inform the producers of the potential revenue increases if they were to adopt such measures and certifications.

Another major problem associated with sustainable/organic wines is their higher production costs that can amount to 25–30% above the costs of more conventionally produced wines (Sellers-Rubio & Nicolau-Gonzalbez, 2016). These production costs can be mitigated by the willingness of the consumer to pay a premium for the organic wines. Such a premium can be justified by the potential benefits that sustainable production can bring to the consumer, such as wines that contains fewer health-damaging ingredients and an increased sustainability of production. A positive willingness to pay for eco-labelled wine could act as a signal to producers in their quest to attract more consumers.

Purpose of the study

As just indicated, a positive willingness to pay would act as a signal to the wine producers for resource allocation towards an increase in biodynamic, fair trade or sustainable production. This research focuses on measuring and comparing the potential willingness to pay (WTP) for biodynamic, fair trade and sustainable wine revealed by wine consumers through the use of a contingency valuation method. In this context, five hypotheses were formulated:

1. An increase in age of the respondents has a negative effect on the WTP for the three chosen wine labels.
2. An increase in income levels will positively influence the WTP of the consumer that purchases any of the three labels.
3. A higher level of income leads to a higher WTP by consumers for the three chosen wine labels.
4. Knowledge of eco-certified labelled wine by consumers leads to a higher WTP for eco-certified wines.
5. Consumers that have previously purchased eco-certified products will have a higher WTP for eco-certified wine.

Methodology

We used the contingent valuation method (CVM). To reveal the willingness to pay for a product or service, CVM creates a hypothetical market situation for a given good or service, in this case the eco-labelled wine. The method results in a quantification of the value consumers confer on products by associating that value with the sum of money they are willing to pay (Kawagoe & Fukunaga, 2001; Sellers-Rubio & Nicolau-Gonzalbez, 2016).

A tobit model was fitted to the data collected for each eco-label to generate predictive models of willingness-to-pay (WTP), rather than using an ordinary least squares method (OLS). The tobit model is commonly used in CVM studies to describe the relationship between WTP (i.e. the dependent variable) which is non-negative, and a vector of explanatory variables (age, income, wine knowledge and previous purchase of eco-labelled products). The use of the ordinary least squares method (OLS) regression would, in this case, produce negative predicted WTP values, which is incorrect from a theoretical perspective (Mitchell & Carson, 1989).

The data from the respondents were collected by posting an online web survey using the Qualtrics survey platform. The survey was run concomitantly in a number of countries, including the USA, the Netherlands, Chile, South Africa, Australia, France and Italy. The data were analysed separately for each country using a different methodology. The focus of this article is the analysis of the South African consumer preferences. Future research will also compare the data among the countries.

The survey consisted of three sections. The first section asked respondents about their background and habits with wine consumption and purchasing behaviour. The second set of questions collected perspectives and opinions about the multiple wine certifications discussed in this article. These questions asked consumers if they bought certified food and how often, their knowledge of the wine certifications, their purchasing behaviour with respect to the certifications and how much more they would be willing to pay for the certified bottles. Finally, the demographics of the respondents was collected based on age, gender, education levels and income. The sample size consisted of 267 respondents. The model was run separately for biodynamic, fair trade and sustainable wines.

Characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 shows that more than half of the respondents (around 57%) were female, and over 64% having either a bachelor's or a master's degree. The age range of the sample is composed mainly of generation Z respondents (36.70%) and of millennials (23.57%), which is indicative of the young composition of South African wine consumers. A high 31% of the respondents reported an annual income of less than R200 000 (€12 000), with another 43.29% reporting an annual income between R200 000 (€12 000) and R649 999 (€39 000).

Willingness-to-pay functions

Of the respondents questioned, 29.96% in the case of biodynamic labels, 21.72% for fair trade and 24.71% for sustainable wines submitted zero willingness-to-pay values. These were considered to be protest bids; in other words, these were consumers who did not want to answer as they did not agree about paying a premium. The protest bids were retained for analysis purposes as it is statistically incorrect to exclude them. The reason for this is the sample selection bias that occurs as a result of the non-inclusion of zero bids. The results could be that the empirical analysis of the valuation function may produce inconsistent parameter estimates, and the calculated benefit measures may also be biased (Sale et al., 2009). The results of the WTP valuation for each of the eco-labels are illustrated in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

TABLE 1: Profile of respondents (N = 267)

Characteristic	%
Gender	
Female	57
Male	43
Age	
18–24 years old	36.70
25–34 years old	23.57
35–44 years old	8.61
45–54 years old	15.40
55–64 years old	13.10
65–74 years old	2.62
Education	
High school	16.10
Some tertiary education, no degree	7.86
National Diploma	10.86
Bachelor's degree (e.g. BA, BS)	40.84
Master's degree (e.g. MA, MS, MBA, Med)	23.22
Doctorate (e.g. PhD, EdD)	1.12
Annual income (Rands)	
Less than 200 000	31.08
200 000 to 349 999	16.47
350 000 to 499 999	13.52
500 000 to 649 999	13.30
650 000 to 799 999	8.90
800 000 to 949 999	7.73
950 000 to 1 099 999	0
1 100 000 to 1 249 999	4.50
1 250 000 to 1 399 999	0
1 400 000 to 1 649 999	1.8
1 650 000 or more	0.7

The sign of the coefficients regarding education, income, age and previous purchases are supportive of the predictions made in the hypotheses. It can be seen that for every year's increase in educational level attained, the willingness to pay increases by about R5.00. Income and previous purchases are also positively correlated – for example, the model shows that for each extra rand previously spent by respondents on eco-labelled products, the willingness to pay for biodynamic wines increased by 21 cents. In the case of knowledge, the model shows a negative WTP, which rejects the hypothesis in the case of biodynamic wines.

The WTP formula for biodynamic wines is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{WTP (biodynamic)} = {} & -95.939 + 4.696\,\text{Education} + 0.447\,\text{Income} \\ & - 0.358\,\text{Age} + 0.021\,\text{Previous purchase} \\ & - 3.950\,\text{Knowledge}\end{aligned}$$

Table 3 shows that coefficients regarding education, income, age, knowledge and previous purchases are according to the predictions made. In the case of fair trade labelled wines, the willingness to pay associated with education levels increases to R5.62 for every year attained in education level. Income, previous knowledge and previous purchases are also positively correlated – for example, the model shows that for each extra rand previously spent by respondents on eco-labelled products the willingness to pay for fair trade wines increased by 71 cents. As in the case of biodynamic wines, age is negatively corelated to the WTP for fair trade.

The WTP formula for fair trade wines is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{WTP (fair trade)} = {} & -104.419 + 5.622\,\text{Education} + 0.706\,\text{Income} \\ & - 0.323\,\text{Age} + 0.071\,\text{Previous purchase} \\ & + 1.066\,\text{Knowledge}\end{aligned}$$

Similar to fair trade, sustainably labelled wine coefficients regarding education, income, age, knowledge and previous purchases are according to the predictions made, as illustrated

TABLE 2: The fit of the WTP function for the biodynamic wine using a tobit model where WTP is the dependent variable

Variable	Coefficient	Std. error	z-statistic	p-value
Constant	–95.939	58.151	–1.555	0.038
Education	4.696	2.180	1.058	0.040
Income	0.447	0.195	2.288	0.022
Age	–0.358	1.482	–1.100	0.027
Previous purchase	0.021	0.000	2.735	0.006
Knowledge	–3.950	1.156	–1.800	0.050
R^2	0.291			
Adjusted R^2	0.217			

TABLE 3: The fit of the WTP function for fair trade wine using a tobit model where WTP is the dependent variable

Variable	Coefficient	Std. error	z-statistic	p-value
Constant	–104.419	56.686	–2.444	0.008
Education	5.622	4.873	1.403	0.261
Income	0.706	0.331	5.513	0.005
Age	–0.323	0.170	–1.777	0.050
Previous purchase	0.071	0.000	3.791	0.000
Knowledge	1.066	3.923	1.972	0.049
R^2	0.658			
Adjusted R^2	0.589			

in Table 4. In this case, the willingness to pay associated with education levels is lower, with an increase of R2.78 for every year attained in education level. Income, previous knowledge and previous purchases are again positively correlated and supportive of the predictions. In this case, previous knowledge of sustainable labels increases the willingness to pay the most.

The WTP formula for sustainable wines is as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{WTP (sustainable)} = &-188.323 + 2.788\,\text{Education} + 0.699\,\text{Income} \\ &- 0.102\,\text{Age} + 0.411\,\text{Previous purchase} \\ &+ 2.332\,\text{Knowledge}\end{aligned}$$

Conclusion

The premise of the research was that consumers are willing to pay some sort of premium for eco-labelled wines. The WTP models run in the case of the biodynamic, fair trade and sustainable labelled wines show that consumer profiles are important determinants in the size of the amount they are willing to spend. In the case of biodynamic wines, previous knowledge of eco-labels seems to have quite a negative impact on the WTP model and rejects the hypothesis that knowledge is positively related to willingness to pay. A possible explanation of this might be the misconception associated with the definition of this type of wine.

The WTP results for the other two eco-labelled wines do not show the same impact and are fully supportive of the predictions. In all cases, an increase in age of respondents has a negative effect on the total willingness to pay for eco-labelled wines. The sustainable labelled wines seem to have the lowest age-negative effect from all three types of wine. In general, all three WTP models show an overall increase in the willingness to pay a premium for purchasing the wines associated with each label.

Research implications and limitations

The results of the research send a signal for the wine producers in their quest to produce and sell more eco-labelled wine products. In the marketing and distribution of these types of wines, the producers and retailers need to pay particular attention to the customers' profiles and the type of wine they wish to produce. As shown, not all the factors have the same directional and size impact on the willingness to pay.

A more comprehensive analysis should also consider the other two labels identified, namely natural and organic wines. The results need to be compared with the marginal costs incurred in making eco-labelled wines to provide producers with clear information as they make decisions in the allocation of resources necessary for output.

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TABLE 4: The fit of the WTP function for the sustainable wine using a tobit model where WTP is the dependent variable

Variable	Coefficient	Std. error	*z*-statistic	*p*-value
Constant	–188.323	79.375	–2.146	0.045
Education	2.788	1.210	1.058	0.040
Income	0.699	0.596	1.332	0.038
Age	–0.102	0.000	–1.211	0.108
Previous purchase	0.411	0.107	2.843	0.030
Knowledge	2.332	1.005	2.230	0.025
R^2	0.380			
Adjusted R^2	0.291			

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Digitalisation and temporary agencies: Impact on the business model and internal organisation

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the potential impact of upcoming technologies on the business model of temporary agencies, as well as the required organisational changes to effectively digitalise. Although this research does not focus on temporary agencies in hospitality specifically, the outcomes underline previous research undertaken by others on the future of hospitality jobs, in which for example artificial intelligence-driven technology is identified as a disruptor in the labour market. For this research, semi-structured interviews were conducted with industry experts and digitalisation experts. The main findings of this study are that technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things and blockchain will have a large impact on temporary agencies – mostly on back-office processes, which will be made more efficient and less labour intensive. To effectively digitalise, cultural elements are of importance, such as a strong customer centricity and well-defined change management trajectories. Additionally, C-level executives (e.g. CEO, CFO, COO, etc.) diversity, digital savvy and willingness to invest are key elements. The positive effects of digitalisation should be clearly communicated: it will make work more fun, easier, and it will free up time to spend on human contact and teamwork. The key to success is adopting the opportunities that digitalisation brings, but making a difference by building true human connections.

KEYWORDS: artificial intelligence, company culture, digital developments, digital transition, flexible workers, new technologies

Introduction

Temporary agencies

This study underlines previous research undertaken by others on the future of hospitality jobs. In this research, for example, AI-driven technology is identified as a disruptor of the labour market (El Hajal & Rowson, 2020). In the Netherlands, agency work has grown rapidly in the past decades (Koene et al., 2006). There is a clear difference between "standard" employment contracts (which can be either open-ended or limited-duration) and the construct of temporary agency work. Bergström and Storrie (2003) call this "contingent employment", meaning that an employment relationship can be terminated within a set period of time, at minimal costs.

In the case of temporary agencies, there is a formal contract between an employee and a temporary agency, and between a temporary agency and an end user, but not directly between the end user and the employee. It allows workers easy access to different work experiences and allows them to combine work with other life choices and responsibilities. By using agency work, businesses can quickly find new workers and easily expand human resources when needed (World Employment Confederation [WEC], n.d.).

"Variable frequency" is an important driver for temporary work (Koene et al., 2006). Working with agencies can be appropriate for jobs that are temporary, with unexpected peaks, high seasonality or economic cycles.

Digitalisation and temporary agencies

There are some examples of (platform) companies active in temporary staffing that use digitalisation to their advantage. Syft (based in the United Kingdom) uses algorithms to connect hospitality employers to flexible workers. Workers are employed by Syft, and through an online platform they choose when they want to work and at which location (Syft, 2020). Dutch company Temper takes it even further, making their workers self-employed freelancers and only providing the platform to match freelancers to employers for temporary jobs. Employers pay a fee per hour worked through Temper, in addition to the payment of the freelancer (Temper, 2019).

The rise of companies like Syft and Temper left traditional temporary agencies with concerns. The Dutch association of temporary agencies sounded the alarm in 2019, pointing out that platforms operate like agencies, but are barely regulated and do not pay social security contributions. Additionally, they mentioned how platform workers are not insured and do not build up a pension entitlement. Platform companies, on the other hand, see their role merely as a "bulletin board" (Leupen, 2018).

In 2018, ING banking group released a publication which stated that temporary agencies, employment agencies and payrolling companies could lose 20% to 70% of their market to digital platforms within the next decade (ING, 2018b). Whether this number will be closer to 20% or to 70% depends on two factors: the speed of technological development and the flexibility of labour law. ING state that they see (large) players in the temporary sector developing their own platforms, but they question whether traditional companies will be able to compete with the platforms.

The main aim of this study is to investigate the potential impact of digitalisation on the business model of temporary agencies, as well as the required organisational changes to effectively digitalise.

By investigating the impact of digitalisation on the business model of temporary agencies, depth is added to existing research on digitalisation and its impact on organisations. This study provides a more tailored approach for temporary agencies, looking beyond platform business models and exploring the impact of specific technologies on the business model.

Literature review

The business model of temporary agencies

To provide an accurate overview of the current business model of temporary agencies, the business model canvas as determined by Osterwalder and Pigneur (2010) was used as starting point. Key elements of the business model in the context of this study are outlined below.

Value proposition

The value proposition of temporary agencies can be summarised as delivering staffing solutions to various types of customers. Their services vary: temporary staffing, payrolling, training, recruitment and selection, career transition, project-based workforce solutions and talent management, among others (Manpower Group, 2019; Randstad, 2019; The Adecco Group, 2019). In the case of temporary staffing, the focus of this study, companies provide staff to clients on a temporary basis. This provides flexibility, as the focus is on "helping clients to structure and manage their workforce for flexibility, productivity and growth" (The Adecco Group, 2019, p. 41).

Customer segments

According to Koene et al. (2006), "variable frequency" is an important driver for temporary work. In their opinion, working with agencies can be appropriate for jobs that are temporary, with unexpected peaks, high seasonality or economic cycles. Large temporary agencies have developed dedicated labels for specific industries like health care, IT, transport, hospitality or logistics. There are also niche players that focus on one specific customer segment.

Key resources

The key resource for any temporary agency is people. This is a challenge in today's world, with an ageing population. Across Europe, there is a projected decline in the working-age population of 10% by 2020 (WEC, 2016), and in the Netherlands over 50% of temporary agencies consider the lack of workers a challenge (ING, 2019). Temporary agencies are therefore increasing their activities to recruit and retain workers.

Key activities

The key activities of temporary agencies entail finding workers (supply), finding clients (demand) and matching them through a planning process. This leads to invoicing the client and paying the worker. At the heart of the process lies matching: finding the right candidate for the client. Randstad (2019) provides a detailed overview of its matching process in the company's annual report.

Triggers for change

In May 2018, ING bank in the Netherlands released a report on platform companies in the staffing business. It mentions three competitive advantages of platforms: (1) they lower transaction costs; (2) they provide insight into quality by using a rating system; and (3) they make pricing dynamic (ING, 2018a). The report outlines how platforms can potentially perform better on recruitment and selection (through algorithms), as well as on relieving customers of time-consuming tasks when it comes to administrative matters (contracting, payments and hour registration).

These platform companies are key examples of companies working in the "gig economy", "using digital platforms to connect customers and freelancers, to provide short-term services or asset-sharing" (Charlton, 2021).

The World Employment Confederation states how "rapidly growing online platforms have created a new marketplace for work by unbundling a job into discrete tasks and directly connecting individual sellers with consumers" (WEC, 2016, p. 26). They identify a "hyper-connected workforce" as a key trend, with new technologies allowing much more flexibility in terms of work. The WEC encourages a level playing field between new business models and traditional business models, to "ensure that the dynamic potential of the sharing and collaborative economy is not hindered by strict and outdated rules", but also to "ensure a level playing field between labour market intermediaries" (WEC, 2016, p. 27). Their message for temporary agencies is clear: there is an urgent need for digitalisation, which goes beyond simply adopting "platform thinking". To truly remain competitive, companies need to think ahead and be willing to embrace how digitalisation can aid them in running their business efficiently and effectively.

Digitalisation

"Digitalisation is the use of digital technologies to change a business model and provide new revenue and value-producing opportunities; it is the process of moving to a digital business" (Gartner, n.d.). It was named as one of the "key trends for the future of work" by the WEC (2016).

For this study, the "essential eight" emerging technologies determined by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (n.d.) are used. Researchers analysed over 250 emerging technologies for their business impact, potential to become mainstream, growth potential and commercial viability. This resulted in eight core technologies being expected to have the most impact on business. These are artificial intelligence (AI), augmented reality (AR), blockchain, drones, the internet of things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality (VR) and 3-D printing.

Organisational impact of digitalisation

Organisational culture

Duerr et al. (2018) stress the impact of organisational culture on digitalisation efforts in a company, even speaking of organisational culture as an obstacle in adopting digitalisation. They define five artifacts of effective organisational culture in digitalising firms: (1) cross-functional teams, ensuring transparency and collaborative decision-making; (2) physical and virtual collaboration (allowing to collaborate regardless of business unit); (3) "dual structures" (parallel development of breakthrough innovations and improvements of existing business); (4) external collaboration (collaborating more extensively with start-ups, with partners and even with competitors); and (5) a strong focus on customers, "integrating customers into the innovation chain and external collaboration" (Duerr et al., 2018, p. 5130). Besides these five visible products of organisational culture, Duerr et al. (2018) also identify a set of beliefs and values of successful digitalising firms: a start-up mentality; a culture where failure is accepted; employees that embrace digital skills; and mutual decision-making (at lower levels in the firm).

C-level executive

The Chief Information Officer (CIO) plays a vital role in the board of the future, as they are expected to lead the digital business strategy in formulation and execution. According to Gottlieb and Willmott (2014, p. 2), "CEOs and other C-level executives – CIOs in particular – are devoting more of their personal attention and are more directly involved in digital initiatives now than ever before".

Furthermore, research by Cortellazzo et al. (2019) defines multiple skills that characterise leaders in the digital era, including high-speed decision-making, managing disruptive change and managing connectivity. Scott et al. (2017, p. 5) give further insight into changes of the roles and requirements of leaders. They state that "the vast majority of leaders identified agility (91%), authenticity (openness and transparency) (87%), emotional intelligence (86%), and the ability to embrace diversity (84%) as the most important capabilities for leaders in the future".

Employee competences and capabilities

In their study on the implications of digitalisation for job descriptions, competencies and quality of working life, Rintala and Suolanen (2005, p. 55) define competence requirements as "skill demands that the employee needs to obtain in order to successfully perform the job description". PwC (2018) elaborates on the required competences and capabilities for digitalisation, emphasising how digitalisation results in a greater need for social and creative intelligence, as well as innovative capacity, cooperation and problem-solving capacity. Although the need for specific knowledge remains, it seems to be surpassed by the need for social and creative intelligence. Interestingly, STEM skills (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) are not in the top five of important future skills mentioned by the respondents (although they form the basis of most technological innovations, according to PwC).

Quality of working life

Rintala and Suolanen (2005, p. 55) define quality of working life as "the employee's subjective psychological experience of all aspects of work, which is determined by the proportion and relevance of work-related stress and well-being". Their research shows that people in certain roles (particularly specialised roles whose job descriptions changed as a result of digitalisation) experienced "a heavier workload, feelings of isolation and decreased job security" due to digitalisation (Rintala & Suolanen, 2005, p. 54). They state that learning to use new technologies is also related to employees experiencing stress. In particular, insecurity and fear were brought on as a result of having to learn and meet new competence requirements (Rintala & Suolanen, 2005).

The PwC Global Digital IQ Survey (PwC, 2017, p. 17) shares this conclusion and states how digital work is taking a toll on employees, "from burnout related to constant connectivity to the fear (and reality) of losing jobs to disruptive new competitors and automation". The advice is clear: organisations that combine the adoption of technological changes with a personal approach to their employees will win.

Methodology

This study follows an exploratory approach, linking findings of a literature review and field research to answer the research questions. A qualitative study was conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews, covering three themes: the business model of temporary agencies, upcoming technologies and their potential impact on the business model of temporary agencies and the organisational requirements related to digitalisation. These three themes link back to the main research question: "What is the impact of digitalisation on the business model and internal organisation of temporary agencies?".

The sample universe consisted of two types of respondents: industry experts from temporary agencies and experts in the field of digitalisation. The industry experts had at least 10 years of work experience at a director or senior management level and represented a mix of companies and segments. The digitalisation experts had at least 10 years' experience with digitalisation, either as an independent expert or in a corporate role.

The intended sample size was 16 respondents: eight industry experts and eight digitalisation experts. A combination of two sampling techniques was used: purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The final sample consisted of 15 respondents, seven digitalisation experts and eight industry experts, who were interviewed between November 2019 and February 2020. It is important to note that this study took place pre-COVID, and that the pandemic has had quite a large impact on temporary agencies, particularly those active in hospitality.

The chosen data analysis strategy for this study was template analysis. This entails thematically organising and analysing textual data, resulting in a list of codes (King, 2004). One of the reasons that template analysis was chosen is that it works well when comparing the data and perspectives of two or more groups in a specific context (King, 2004; King & Horrocks, 2010). A priori themes were used as a starting point for this research. The interview questions were based on the themes and sub-themes of this model as defined via literature research. To start the template analysis process, an initial template was defined, entailing a first overview of the codes that were used in the coding process. Waring and Wainwright (2008, p. 2) mention three approaches to start template analysis: "using predefined codes based on the theoretical position, developing codes after exploration of the data, and taking a half-way position by using some initial codes and refining them" . For this research, the last approach was chosen. Themes that were mentioned by a minimum of 25% of the respondents were included in the final template (Butterfield et al., 2009). In some cases, themes were mentioned by over 25% of the respondents in one of the two groups of respondents, but the theme was not mentioned by over 25% of all respondents. Some of these themes have still been included in the final template because they were considered of added value to this research (Butterfield et al., 2009).

Results and discussion

Business model

To describe the business model, the literature research used the business model canvas by Osterwalder et al. (2010) as a starting point. All respondents were asked to discuss the current business model, after which industry experts were asked how they expect the business model to change in the future.

With regard to the value proposition, respondents identified a need for temporary agencies to have specific knowledge and to act proactively as a result of increased competition in the temporary staffing market. Although the majority of industry experts believes that the core of the value proposition will remain unchanged (matching supply and demand), the scope of temporary agencies is expected to change. The industry is expected to become more solution focused by including more services around labour and thus unburdening clients. This might result in a rise of contract types, such as self-employment, besides fixed and flexible contracts.

A potential rise in self-employment also stems from the shortage in the labour market, which is expected to increase as a result of the shrinking labour force. Respondents indicate a loyalty issue with staff and a challenge to recruit and retain flexible workers. The new generation is aware of the fact that they are in demand and want to work on their own terms, focusing on money and convenience. Although the triangular employment relationship will continue to exist, employers are expected to shift their focus from clients to workers, including training and educating them.

Participants mention how revenues are closely related to the economic cycle, leading to increasing or decreasing demand. Some participants mention how it was "too easy" to make money in the past, resulting in a lack of innovation. As a result of the rise of payroll and platform companies, there is now pressure on the margins. This is also the case for large players, who are battling for volume and losing profit margins as a result of it. It is considered increasingly difficult to become a large player as a temporary agency.

> *Growing is incredibly hard. The 10 million turnover mark is difficult, but 50 million turnover is extremely difficult. Reaching that in a profitable way, with satisfied clients, workers and own employees, is almost undoable. We have around 14 000 temporary agencies in the Netherlands and the top 100 represents over half of the market. So there are 100 companies that have a combined revenue of 18 billion, and then there are 14 000 that also do 18 billion turnover.* (Respondent IE6)

When exploring the future of the business model, respondents state how technology and digitalisation will make key activities and processes run more efficiently. Linking this to revenue streams, some respondents proposed that temporary agencies should either charge higher prices or work more efficiently, while other respondents argued prices should be lowered as a result of digitalisation. Generally, respondents believe that dynamic pricing is part of the future business model as a result of varying wages and potentially varying service models.

Although some respondents saw platforms as a threat (how much value will a temporary agency still have?), most doubted the future of these business models. The main reason for this is the fact that governments will likely undertake action, as platforms are unfair competition, sometimes undercut prices and might not follow safety regulations. Additionally, governments might take action to protect self-employed workers (as has already happened in the UK with Uber drivers). Several respondents state how temporary agencies could support self-employed workers more or better than platform companies do, as platforms merely want to match supply and demand.

> *So what we need to do going forward, if we want to compete with these people, is create a process that is similar to the process that they have, which is the digitalisation process, but have the ability for us to add our magic. – Respondent IE3*

Respondents also underline the importance of human connection in the future business model. They stress that if digitalisation is done well, it can enable more human connection: "high tech strengthening high touch". The less that temporary agencies show the added value of this high touch and human connection, the more disruptive digitalisation can be. A temporary agency acting as "agent" for a temporary worker, supporting them in building a portfolio and helping them transition between different types of jobs, can become a truly unique selling point (USP) for temporary agencies.

Industry experts seem very focused on the value proposition (delivering staffing solutions), key activities undertaken to deliver that value (the matching process) and the key resources that are needed (people). When describing the future, they take the customer into consideration. They expect an increased need for strategic partners and niche players. Major influencing factors on the future business model are described by the literature as well as by industry experts. These factors are the shortage in the labour market and the rise of the gig economy. Both literature and field research show how work is becoming increasingly flexible, how workers have changing demands, and how technology allows for more flexibility. The rise of the gig economy can therefore be seen as both a threat and an opportunity. Most industry experts believe that the true added value of temporary agencies remains on the people side. They see an opportunity for temporary agencies, because they expect them to be able to support self-employed workers much better than platforms can (who do not want the hassle).

Digitalisation

Digitalisation was extensively discussed with the industry and digitalisation experts, resulting in a concise overview of impacting technologies for temporary agencies, as well as risks associated with digitalisation. In the analysis below, only the most impactful technologies are included.

Impacting technologies

Artificial intelligence is considered the most impactful technology on the business model of temporary agencies. It encompasses multiple technologies, among which are machine learning, natural language processing and voice recognition.

The main impact of AI will be supporting staff in carrying out their activities more efficiently, optimising matching of supply and demand and supporting (career) development of temporary workers in a more personalised manner. Potential applications mentioned were using AI in interviewing processes, using voice recognition (speech to text) to operate planning systems and having AI take over part of the initial application process. Not only can AI optimise the match between supply and demand, it can also identify profiles and determine which types of workers are a match for a specific agency. Metrics like reliability (will someone show up) and expertise (is someone suitable for this job) can also help determine the perfect match.

During template analysis, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) were combined in one theme. Respondents mostly see added value in the training environment, where AR and VR can help prepare workers for assignments (giving a realistic view of the job, location and activities), train them for certain technical or people skills and decrease errors as a result of that. AR and VR are not expected to significantly change or disrupt the business model of temporary agencies, but the technology might enable the industry to distribute knowledge better by applying AR and VR for training purposes.

With regard to blockchain – "[a] shared, immutable ledger that facilitates the process of recording transactions and tracking assets in a business network" (IBM, n.d.) – respondents see potential applications in three main areas: the financial side of the business (less human intervention might be needed), the candidate side of the business (candidates can take ownership of their data, authorisation of resumes and data is made easier) and the matching side of the business (through blockchain, skills can be validated and matching can be optimised). The fact that data in the blockchain is always correct is the main enabler of these potential applications. Several participants doubt the (speed of) development of blockchain. They are also clear about implementation. All respondents that mentioned blockchain stated how companies should adopt existing technology and not invest in developing it themselves.

The potential impact of robotics was mentioned by the majority of respondents, who expect robotics to have a great influence on the labour market, and therefore on temporary agencies as well. Activities that robots could take over from humans include lower-skilled, physically heavy and repetitive types of work. Robotic process automation is also expected to play a role in this, through which back-office processes can be taken over by robots.

> *Uneducated workers, for example, will disappear from the labour market. So for temporary work as well, it will be only premium employees. Temporary agencies will need to either deliver work that is tough to have robots do, so work where a social element is important, or deliver work that requires a higher level of thinking and knowledge.* (Respondent DE2)

The theme of big data was included in the final template because it is of importance, according to industry executives. There are many potential applications for big data at temporary agencies, for example, to improve the matching process and to feed the AI systems that might be implemented. Data can also be used to predict career paths for temporary agency workers, to add value to the development potential of employees and to optimise the matching process. Respondents stress the importance of being able to collect relevant data, to manage the data and to put it to use. This requires specific skills of employees and a certain "data savviness" throughout a company. Temporary agencies do not seem to be ready for that, according to the respondents.

Risks

The sub-theme "Risks" was added to the final template, as it was frequently mentioned by both groups of respondents. Privacy risks were mentioned by respondents, in particular in relation to artificial intelligence and blockchain. In the case of AI, there are many uncertainties around regulations, for example, general data protection regulation (GDPR). Blockchain is seen as a more positive influence on privacy. The technology is said to provide data ownership to anyone – enabling people to control their data and fitting in well with the European GDPR.

The risk of bias was mentioned by various industry executives and was therefore included in the final template. Temporary agencies are susceptible to bias, being in a people's business. Respondents link this to AI, stating how important it is to ensure that AI systems are not biased. There might be a need for a "code" about non-biased artificial intelligence at temporary agencies.

Organisational impact

Organisational culture

By asking about the required organisational culture to effectively digitalise, field research uncovered four main topics. The first topic is "dual structures" (parallel development), which emphasises the importance of placing innovation outside of core activities to avoid the company culture limiting innovation. Secondly, there is "failure acceptance" which the respondents linked to a culture where learning by doing is key. Encouraging people to share failures fosters adaptability and learning.

"Low hierarchy" was mostly mentioned by digitalisation experts, focusing on placing decision-making authority as low in the organisation as possible. Low hierarchy also means organising teams and collaboration in a different way: small, project-based teams that do not require hierarchy. This fosters agility and adaptability. The fourth factor for effective digitalisation from an organisational culture perspective is "change management". Respondents mentioned how companies that have been successful at digitalisation have had well-established change management trajectories, combined with a certain capacity to change (which should live among all employees).

C-level executives

The required changes at the company executive level to successfully digitalise can be summarised in four capabilities. Firstly, there is the ability and willingness to manage disruptive change, which entails "*having an eye for the possibilities of technology*" combined with "*great insight into industry trends and developments*" and "*placing digitalisation high on the board agenda*". Secondly, embracing diversity (in terms of age, digital savviness, gender and/or viewpoints) at executive level and ensuring that decisions are made by a diverse and representative group is important. Formulating a clear vision is the third factor. Not just the ability to look ahead, but having ambition and creating clarity about where you are heading. Furthermore, C-level executives should possess solid digital knowledge. The final capability is a willingness to invest.

McKinsey's Three Horizons Model can be used as a guideline for investing in digitalisation.

> *I do think it's important for senior executives of staffing firms to be thinking about digital strategy, innovation… And not just thinking about it and talking about it, but actually taking money and resources and allocating them. Because your strategy is where you spend. If you're not spending in technology, it's not a part of your strategy.* (Respondent IE5)

Employee competences and capabilities

With regard to employee competences and capabilities, four main factors were mentioned by respondents. Firstly, social and creative intelligence was described by respondents as creativity, social skills and a growth mindset. Secondly, the importance of STEM skills like engineering and programming was referred to, although this was only by digitalisation experts. Thirdly, the capability of "willingness to change" was mentioned. This includes the ability of a generation as a whole to embrace change, to dare and to execute. To do so, constant, incremental change is important. Lastly, structured thinking was mentioned. This competence was linked to "logical thinking", which is a prerequisite for anyone working on business process engineering or process flows. Knowledge about processes, the ability to describe them in detail and to understand what they mean is a key element of structured thinking.

Quality of working life

When asked about the impact of digitalisation on the quality of working life, industry experts mentioned a heavier workload as an important topic. They mentioned three main developments: decreasing productivity (which negatively influences work-life balance); clients requiring instant attention (which leads to feelings of anxiety); and how digitalisation can be perceived as adding to the workload of employees. Secondly, decreased job security was mentioned. This was described as an ethical dilemma. Jobs will be lost due to digitalisation, but new jobs will also be created. Thirdly, the perception of constant connectivity was mentioned, which is seen as a source of new stress. In general, there is a sense of "blurred lines" between work and private life. This has positive sides, such as being able to work anywhere and anytime, but also negative sides, such as not being able to disconnect due to perceived pressure. Fourthly, respondents mentioned positive effects of digitalisation, the most important one being the fact that digitalisation will make work more fun, or easier, because mundane tasks can be digitalised. This can increase productivity of employees and decrease the sense of pressure. The fact that digitalisation enables flexibility in when, where and how to work was also stated as a positive factor. Finally, respondents mentioned how the time saved by digitalising or automating manual labour could be spent on more teamwork and human contact. There would be more room for personal connection as a result of digitalisation.

Conclusions

In this segment, the conclusions of the research are summarised and linked to the three research questions determined previously.

What are the characteristics of the current business model of temporary agencies and how is the business model expected to change in the future?

The current business model has a focus on key resources (people), key activities (matching them to clients) and revenue streams (which are closely related to economic cycles). This leads to the value proposition: finding and recruiting talent, sending them to work on short-term projects and providing clients with flexibility regarding resource planning. The industry does not appear to have enough focus on the customer side of the business model, which is dangerous in a digitalising world. A combination of a recruitment challenge (as a result of the shortage on the labour market), the rise of digitalisation and an increase in contract types (such as self-employment) is pressuring the industry to change.

Although the core of the business model (matching supply and demand in the labour market) is not expected to change, temporary agencies will be forced to take a more customer-centric approach. This includes a larger focus on unburdening clients by offering solutions that might include multiple contract types, various supporting technologies and potentially digital platforms. The future business model is expected to include niche players that act as a proactive, strategic partner for staffing conversations in an increasingly complex labour market.

Besides a customer focus, temporary agencies need to increase the focus on their key resource, i.e. people. A shrinking labour force and new generations entering the workforce are factors to consider. The gig economy and the rise of self-employment are an opportunity for temporary agencies to make a difference in one of their core strengths: being people-oriented. By ensuring this people focus, temporary agencies will be able to remain competitive despite the rise of platform companies. The key is in adopting the opportunities of digitalisation, but making a difference by building human connections. Counterintuitively, if digitalisation is done well, it can actually enable more human connection. Taking up an "agent" role for flexible workers, supporting them in building their portfolio and helping them transition between jobs is likely to become a differentiating USP.

Which digital developments are relevant to the business model of temporary agencies, and what is their potential impact?

Various technologies are expected to impact the business model of temporary agencies at different levels and with either a primary or a secondary impact. AI, blockchain and AR/VR will have a primary impact on the business model and are mostly expected to impact back-office processes. AI is the most impactful technology and will be able to optimise multiple core processes as a result of potential applications in recruitment, matching and personalised support. Dynamic pricing can also be implemented as a result of AI. Furthermore, AR/VR will enable temporary agencies to recruit, select, train and prepare their workers better. This will not only help temporary agencies attract more, better qualified or better functioning workers, it will also improve client satisfaction. Blockchain will have a dual impact. It is expected that the technology will improve back-office processes (in particular financial processes) and, in combination with AI, it can also improve matching (because it enables skill validation). There will also be an impact related to data ownership. If blockchain is to develop in the direction of an HR network in which all data of workers is stored, temporary agencies will greatly benefit. How long it will take before blockchain applications for temporary agencies exist is questionable though. Temporary agencies are advised to not develop their own blockchain applications, but to "jump on the bandwagon" when third parties start offering blockchain solutions.

The technologies that will have a secondary effect on the business model are AI and robotics. With regard to robotics, the impact will be on the demand side. Temporary agencies that are active in niche areas like production or warehousing could be affected as a result of changing labour market dynamics. If clients of temporary agencies in those niche areas adopt these technologies, this will negatively affect the demand for temporary workers. With regard to AI, the secondary effect relates to both workers and clients, as it can be used to optimise the interaction with them. By implementing AI in core processes and freeing up time for human connections, AI can become a reason for a worker or client to choose a specific company. This can be a key advantage in the current shortage in the labour market.

Temporary agencies should also focus on big data, as otherwise, for example, AI systems cannot be implemented. Although temporary agencies might be aware of its importance, the question is whether they are prepared to start working on it and whether they have the required knowledge and skills available.

Finally, there are risks associated with digitalisation. These include privacy aspects and bias and are particularly related to AI and blockchain. Whether temporary agencies are allowed to collect and analyse data is important – in particular because they handle a considerable amount of confidential data. Additionally, the way that, for example, AI handles and analyses this data should be free of bias. Temporary agencies should emphasise this and perhaps even develop industry guidelines on the implementation of AI to avoid sensitive situations as a result of biased AI.

What are the requirements for the internal organisation of temporary agencies to effectively digitalise?

The most important factor in organisational culture is a strong customer focus, i.e. user-centricity and the ability to quickly respond to customer needs. In addition, agility is important. This is the ability to adapt quickly and continuously pivot. Furthermore, having well-defined change management trajectories, combined with a capacity to change, will drive effective digitalisation. Other factors related to organisational culture include a focus on dual structures (placing digitalisation outside of the core activities of a company – either by acquiring start-ups/scale-ups, or by setting them up separately) and failure acceptance (the ability to fail fast and often). Finally, a culture of low hierarchy is required, which includes delegating decision-making authority to low levels in the organisation.

C-level executives should have a sense of authenticity. They should practise what they preach. An ability to embrace diversity is particularly important, mainly with regard to the composition of the board. This relates to factors like gender, age, digital savviness and viewpoints. Having a clear vision is another necessity to commit younger generations to the company, but also to create clarity for employees. Finally, C-level executives should be able to manage disruptive change (recognising possibilities and placing digitalisation high on the board's agenda) and be willing to invest in digitalisation, both from a financial and a time perspective.

Multiple employee competences and capabilities are required for effective digitalisation. Social and creative intelligence, i.e. creativity, interpersonal skills and a growth mind set are main factors. Employees should also be willing to change, approaching it as constant and incremental. The skill of structured thinking is also required, in particular related to business process engineering, with knowledge about processes, the ability to describe them in detail and to understand what they actually mean as important aspects. Lastly, they should possess STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills. A need for certain hard skills is required for a solid foundation for digitalisation, but soft skills are necessary to drive effective digitalisation.

Temporary agencies should take the impact of digitalisation on the quality of working life into consideration. With productivity decreasing and negatively affecting the work-life balance, as well as clients and workers requiring constant attention, a perception of digitalisation adding to the workload of employees can exist. Employees might also have a decreased sense of job security. The fact that constant connectivity can be perceived as having a negative influence on the quality of working life should not be ignored, despite the fact that blurring boundaries between work and private life also has advantages. The key is in effective communication about the positive effects of digitalisation. It will make work more fun, easier, and will decrease the sense of pressure. The time saved through digitalisation will create more room for personal connection, which can be a key competitive advantage for temporary agencies in the digitalising world.

What is the impact of digitalisation on the business model and internal organisation of temporary agencies?

Digitalisation will primarily impact back-office processes like recruitment, selection, matching and administration, which will be made more efficient and less labour intensive. It will also affect the demand side of the business, both negatively (through technologies replacing workers at client companies) and positively (effective digitalisation can create a competitive advantage).

As a result of digitalisation, the shortage in the labour market and an increase in the variety of contract types, the business model of temporary agencies will change, not at its core (the matching of supply and demand), but in the way temporary agencies undertake their activities. As digitalisation can enable efficiency in core processes, temporary agencies will be able to increase their people focus and human connection. This people centricity towards customers as well as workers will help them evolve into a strategic partner for staffing in an increasingly complex labour market. The key is in adopting the opportunities that digitalisation brings, but making a difference by building true human connections.

Executives at digitalising companies are advised to build a culture with a strong focus on customers as well as flexible workers, the ability to respond to customer needs in an agile way and well-defined change management trajectories. Diversity is an important theme, in particular at executive-level (where diversity in age, gender, digital savviness and viewpoints is required). On an employee level, a basis of hard skills is needed for a solid foundation, but soft skills are required to drive digitalisation in the most effective way. Social and creative intelligence are key. Placing digitalisation high on the board's agenda, in combination with solid digital knowledge at the executive-level and a clear vision (and authenticity) regarding digitalisation, is of great importance.

Finally, the positive effects of digitalisation should be clearly communicated. Digitalisation will make work more fun, easier and will free up time to spend on human contact and teamwork. In particular, the fact that digitalisation will create room for more human connection should be clearly communicated, as the ability to connect on a human level is a key differentiating factor in this digitalising world.

Limitations and future research

The completeness of knowledge extraction is a potential limitation of this study, as it is possible that not all relevant themes were mentioned by the respondents. This might be a result of the fact that certain topics are "common sense" to respondents. Additionally, respondents sometimes struggled to separate themes like temporary agencies and generic employment agencies (focused on permanent placement). The topics of automation and digitalisation were sometimes used interchangeably.

A suggestion for future research would be to follow a quantitative approach, to validate the findings from this qualitative study with a larger sample size. With regard to organisational requirements, for example, depth could be added by broadening the focus of the field research. This could be done by including employees, as opposed to only interviewing industry and digitalisation experts. Furthermore, it would be interesting to target the research on either niche players or large international players to make the results more suitable for specific types of companies. A narrower approach, but with a larger sample size and a quantitative method, might result in additional findings for a specific segment.

Additional research on specific technologies and their impact and potential applications on temporary agencies is also advised. This is particularly true regarding AI, IoT and blockchain, as these technologies are still developing and new knowledge and applications are constantly evolving. It was not the purpose of this study to explore the in-depth applicability of these technologies, but it would definitely be of added value to industry executives to explore this in future research.

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The value of volunteers in tourism and events: A leadership perspective

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ABSTRACT: This article is part of a three-year research project on volunteerism and the value for organisations employing volunteers, volunteers themselves and finally the tourists who meet the volunteers in various settings. Employing a mixed methods approach, we conducted a mutual research collaboration between the Danish Destination Management Office (DMO) VisitAarhus and Dania Academy within the Frascati research frame. The focus of this article is on the leaders of the volunteers and how they facilitate the conditions that enable volunteers to create the aforementioned value. This was done through in-depth semi-structured interviews with volunteer leaders from across Europe. We focus specifically on how leaders perceive the volunteers, how they assess the value that the volunteers create and, finally on what motivates the volunteers. The result of this article is a conceptual model that creates insights into the elements that help foster an identity among the volunteers and thereby increases the value that they produce.

KEYWORDS: European capital of culture, experience economy, hospitality, volunteerism

Introduction

Volunteerism has been an integral part of Danish society for several decades. Whether it be the volunteer that spends several evenings a week coaching the local football team, or the volunteer that helps out at the local community centre, volunteerism has been an integral part of Danish society for the past 30 to 40 years. In this article, we will investigate volunteerism in a tourism setting, and specifically how volunteer leaders from the European Capital of Culture (ECoC; see https://ec.europa.eu/culture/da/node/635) perceive the value that their volunteers contribute. We conducted the interviews presented in the article with the volunteer leaders throughout 2020/2021, and this is the final result of that process.

Methodology

The research design in the overall project with VisitAarhus is a mixed methods approach rooted in the pragmatic research paradigm. During the three-year period, quantitative and qualitative data collected from the various stakeholder groups — the organisations employing the volunteers (in the case of this article, the leaders of volunteers), the volunteers themselves and finally the tourists that meet the volunteers in various settings — will form part of this study. The research method employed in this article is semi-structured interviews.

The respondents in this article were chosen based on the following criteria: 1) they must have worked with volunteers on a managerial level for more than five years; 2) they currently work with volunteers; and 3) they must have worked with volunteers in a similar setting (tourism/events) as the volunteers that we focus on in our research. To fulfil the criteria above, we chose to do interviews with the leaders of volunteers in the ECoC. We conducted ten online expert interviews with the respondents from across Europe. The interviews were conducted during 2020 and 2021 through the online video service Zoom, as physical meetings were not possible due to COVID-19.

Exploration of current literature

Before embarking on the expert interviews, a literature review was conducted. It showed that the amount of prevailing literature on the specific research topic (intrinsic value of volunteerism) is very scarce. Overall, we found that the bulk of research in the field of "value and volunteerism" concerned the economic value that volunteers contribute. Among the most cited was the research done by Sajardo and Serra (2011), Salamon et al. (2011) and Orlowski and Wicker (2014), who all focused primarily on measuring the monetary value that volunteers bring and how this could be measured. Apart from the connection between economic value and volunteerism, other researchers have focused on the social value of volunteers in different settings, for example, Gallarza et al. (2013), who investigated the value contributed by volunteers in a consumer value-based approach. Finally, Handy et al. (2010) focused on the intrinsic value added by volunteerism by looking at the connection between working as a volunteer and the subsequent benefits that this would have on a CV.

Results and analysis

In this section, we will present the results of the interviews with the volunteer leaders from the ECoC. After transcribing and analysing the interviews, which were conducted in English, we identified several patterns in the way the volunteer leaders perceive their volunteers, the value they bring to the organisation and the city, and the motivational strategy which they adopt. It is important to stress that even though the overall aim of our research focused on the value contributed by the volunteers, the perception and motivation of volunteers plays a key part in understanding the issue of value contribution.

Leaders' perception of working with volunteers

In this sub-section, we will investigate the positive and negative aspects of working with volunteers. All leaders were posed questions regarding the positive and negative aspects of working with volunteers to understand how they perceive volunteers, their work and their contribution to the organisation. Consequently, the answers were compared and patterns were identified. It may be worth noting that when talking about how the volunteers were perceived, the ECoC volunteer leaders were predominantly seeking to project a positive picture, portraying the volunteers as the core of the organisation. To counterbalance this predominantly positive view, we asked them specifically to address the positive as well as the negative aspects.

Positive aspects

There were three recurring themes when talking about the positive aspects of having volunteers — ambassadors, community and relationship — supporting the assumption that volunteers play a big role in the organisation's culture and development.

Firstly, volunteers are seen as the "face" of the organisation (ambassadors), and in events and different programmes, they are also the promoters of their city. For example, in Aarhus (cultural capital 2017), volunteers identify as "rethinkers" (a name given to them by the DMO in Aarhus to identify them as a specific group of volunteers). When the cruise ships arrive in the port of Aarhus, the rethinkers are the first to greet the cruise guests and give them a tour of the city. They are easily recognisable due to their badges and same colour T-shirts, and they play a pivotal role for the image of the city. The volunteers in their "uniforms" create the first impression for the visitors, and the way they present themselves has a strong initial impact on the visitors' perception of the city as a whole.

Showing enthusiasm, being easily visible and displaying a "sense of pride" in their work are good indicators that volunteers are seen as "ambassadors" of the organisation and therefore also of the city they represent. Elena Toniato (All participants signed full consent forms allowing their names to be used), the volunteer leader from ECoC in Galway, elaborates:

> *First of all, the thing that comes to mind is the enthusiasm that volunteers bring and the will to help and often to go the extra mile. According to my experience, I also find that most of the time, they have a sense of pride, and really try to own the project. They also become ambassadors for the organisation, which is a very positive element.*

Additionally, the volunteer leaders perceived and presented volunteers as an energetic and enthusiastic community. Intentionally or not, the volunteers managed to create a community that is held together by shared goals, interests and visions. The community is to a certain degree formed and sustained by the volunteers, who manage to influence people with similar interests to join the organisation. Franz Kadiri, the volunteer leader from ECoC in Bulgaria, elaborates:

> *There is an opportunity to create a society, a special society among the people, a learning experience for our younger volunteers. Here with us, they have an opportunity to work in a team in a real working environment without being judged in any way. Creating friendships, that's the most important outcome I can point out, friendships among themselves and with us.*

The creation of a sense of community was, of course, also greatly aided by the volunteer leaders. However, the continued maintenance of a strong sense of community stemmed primarily from the volunteers themselves. Volunteerism offers a whole new life world to the volunteers in which they can play, experiment, meet people and learn valuable skills and competencies relevant for their personal as well as professional development. This life world not only attracts volunteers, it also charges the volunteers with passions and motivation which makes the job of leading and motivating volunteers more meaningful. The findings from our interviews challenged this article's instrumental management perspective in which the value of volunteers is in focus. This can be seen from the interview with Ajsa Brusic, the volunteer leader from ECoC Rijeka:

> *"Using" volunteers is not exactly the appropriate term, I prefer "including" volunteers. Volunteers are persons who decided to put their free time at your disposal. They are generous and open people who want to make this world (in our case, the city of Rijeka) a better place for all of us.*

This understanding of volunteers should make leaders reconsider how they conceptualise their personal leadership of volunteers. The fact that volunteers' value and approach to their contribution can be characterised as giving, honest and transparent offers new perspectives and opens a door to a new way of reimagining and reconceptualising leadership of volunteers. If leaders neglect this opportunity and instead "copy-paste" their usual leadership approach, they miss out on understanding the unique, potential value that volunteers bring to the table. This value is a potential asset as volunteer leaders have to understand the uniqueness of leading, guiding and facilitating volunteers and at the same time be able to adjust leadership styles and communication to this ethical, authentic and powerful free-spirited group of volunteers.

The management

Finally, the specific word "relationship" was not used directly by all the volunteer leaders, yet the relationships that are created between the volunteers are strongly underlined throughout the interviews. The volunteer leaders highlight that people with similar interests, values and passions meet through volunteerism, and those similarities constitute a strong foundation for long-lasting relationships among the volunteers. These relationships are beneficial in the long term for the organisation — if volunteers trust the organisation and their peers, chances are that they perform better, are more involved and are thus able to recruit new volunteers through their networks. Additionally, this also has a significant impact on the retention of volunteers.

Overall, the volunteer leaders emphasised elements of ambassadorship, community and relationship building when talking about the positive perception of their volunteers.

Challenges

The volunteer leaders all agreed that working with volunteers is not exempt from challenges. Some challenges were predominantly cultural, whereas others were associated with a specific problem in the city hosting the ECoC event. Below, we look at the common obstacles faced by the volunteer leaders collectively. A major underlying obstacle is the financial aspect, which almost all the leaders emphasised to a varying degree, together with obstacles in building trust and handling expectations.

Most ECoCs count on volunteers to create events in the city for the long term — not just in the year of being the ECoC. This is seen as part of the subsequent "legacy" that is created from the events. Event legacy refers to the longevity of the event. All the volunteer leaders expressed hopes that their ECoC event was not a standalone event, but rather something that would be viable for several years to come.

However, even though the work of volunteers is not paid per se, the organisations face considerable financial challenges because there is an inherent need to invest in their volunteers indirectly. All the volunteer leaders agreed that for the events to be successfully carried out, there is a need for motivated, involved and determined volunteer teams. Here, finances play a pivotal role. Without a budget for uniforms, recognition and development, it can become impossible for volunteer leaders to create an organisation where volunteers find structure, uniformity and feel appreciated. Elena Toniato, the volunteer leader from ECoC in Galway, elaborates:

> *From the budget you have to have the organisation to really embrace the idea of volunteers and support them and fight the little battles. I suppose to have a budget that can cover enough for uniforms, for recognition, for feeding the volunteers can be an obstacle sometimes, depending on the scale and on the motivation and the budget of the organisation.*

Ulla Lund, the volunteer leader from ECoC in Aarhus, agrees:

> *We always need to look at our finances. If you have the idea that volunteering is for free, then you are wrong. You need to be very organised, to communicate, and operate on schedule. If you have a task the needs four volunteers, don't ask 20 because you are wasting their time. So, if you don't have the money to put into the organisation, you will lose your volunteers. They don't want to waste their time, have too little information, too little to do, too much to do.*

When discussing trust as an obstacle, the leaders emphasised that it goes both ways, as there is an inherent need for the volunteers and volunteer leaders to be able to trust each other. Unlike paid work, the "contract" between the volunteer and leader is based on trust, and it is hard to keep each other accountable in many other ways. The absence of trust might thus lead to a sense of breach of contract, resulting in demotivation from both parties.

Handling expectations seems to be both a challenge and a strategy that the volunteer leaders try to handle by making sure that they clearly communicate their expectations to the volunteers and that they understand the expectations of the volunteers. When expectations are not met, the volunteers lose motivation, and as a side effect, they lose their trust in the organisation. To avoid this from happening, leaders must make sure that the content of the job tasks fits with the motivation and values of the volunteers. This can be done in many ways, and one key theme that several respondents talk about is the word *meaning*. By imparting the volunteers with the sense that their work has meaning, and by handling the expectations of the volunteers, the leaders used this as a motivational device.

Working with volunteers is thus by no means exempt from challenges. The positive aspects, however, seem to have a more powerful effect than the obstacles. Overall, the volunteer leaders present the financial aspect as the biggest challenge that they face, although this has nothing to do with the volunteers' involvement, performance or motivation directly. Having enough resources to keep the volunteers engaged and motivated can help in resolving other obstacles, which is why it may have a substantial impact on the success of the organisation.

Perceived value

In this sub-section, we will look into the answers given by the volunteer leaders regarding the specific value volunteers bring to the organisation they work for, and to the city where they volunteer. What was interesting to notice during the analysis of the interviews was the fact that while all the volunteer leaders agreed that volunteers bring value to the organisation they work for and, indeed, to the city they are volunteering in, it is difficult to find consensus among the volunteer leaders on how to define this value. This will be further elaborated below.

Multifaceted value to the organisation

When asked about value in the organisational setting, several volunteer leaders once again mentioned that they view the volunteers as the "ambassadors" of the organisation. However, none of them focused on the exact jobs that the volunteers do. The value was more indirectly inferred in terms of 1) new input, by bringing together volunteers with different skills, 2) new audiences, by promoting the events and attracting different attendees, and 3) networking, by "recruiting" new volunteers with similar values and drive as themselves for the organisation. As Ajsa Brusic, the volunteer leader from ECoC Rijeka, says:

> *Those people volunteering is your voice among other people in your city, among their friends, among their families. They spread positive energy and good news, good information about you if you are connected with them in a good way. They are, as I said, ambassadors of your project.*

Value to the city

The ECoC leaders acknowledged the value that volunteers bring not just to their organizations, but also to the ECoC city. Being the energetic and visible actors in the events and bringing new audiences to the events that the organisation is planning, volunteers are once again seen as ambassadors. They are the ones that interact with visitors from around the country and from abroad, and the way they present themselves shapes how tourists perceive the ECoC city. One can argue that due to the increasing influence of social media and word-of-mouth, the value of engaging volunteers as ambassadors increases because the volunteers act as opinion leaders in their social networks online and offline. In this way, volunteers shape and influence tourists' perceptions and guest satisfaction via their dialogues and services.

Another interesting aspect that the volunteer leaders mentioned was the help that the community in the city received from their volunteers during the 2020 pandemic. Volunteers offered their support by going to buy groceries for the elderly because there were restrictions and fear of the virus. Volunteers thereby proved to be valuable in a time of crisis and thereby vastly extending the original purpose of their effort.

As we mentioned in the beginning of this sub-section, all the volunteer leaders agree that the volunteers contribute value. This value is seen in the way volunteers present themselves, the city and the organisation. Acting as ambassadors, they are the ones that can change perceptions for guests, and through their work, they can create memorable experiences for those who visit their community and their city.

Motivational strategy

The focus of this sub-section will be the motivational strategy applied by the volunteer leaders as well as the elements of motivation and demotivation that affect the volunteers. Overall, the findings from our interviews show that the volunteer leaders had different approaches in their motivational strategies. However, they all emphasised the recruitment process as a crucial part of their strategy. There is also clear evidence that future ECoC organisations learn from strategies that worked for previous ECoC organisations and adopt them.

Motivation

According to the volunteer leaders, the overall principle of volunteering seems to be reciprocity — whether it is getting free things, recognition or something else, there is a need for a mutual understanding of reciprocity. Because motivation of volunteers plays a crucial role in the success of the events, the volunteer leaders try to understand what motivates and demotivates their volunteers.

Even though the volunteer leaders have different motivational approaches, they agreed on several issues that can be used in a motivational strategy. Among these, the need for creating an identity among the volunteers was paramount as it kept their volunteers motivated, loyal and proud of being part of that organisation. Ulla Lund from the rethinkers in Aarhus stressed her experience at the Smukfest (a festival in Denmark), where the volunteer leaders were able to create an identity for their volunteers as a model for working with the identity issue of the volunteers from ECoC:

> *...we have been working a lot on creating an identity for the volunteers at ECoC. I often wondered what was going on with volunteers at Smukfest because they are on waiting lists there to be a volunteer, and I thought it couldn't only have something to do with the ticket. And then I came to the conclusion that we have actually done a lot to create this identity. They are very proud of being a volunteer, the whole communication to them was full of energy.*

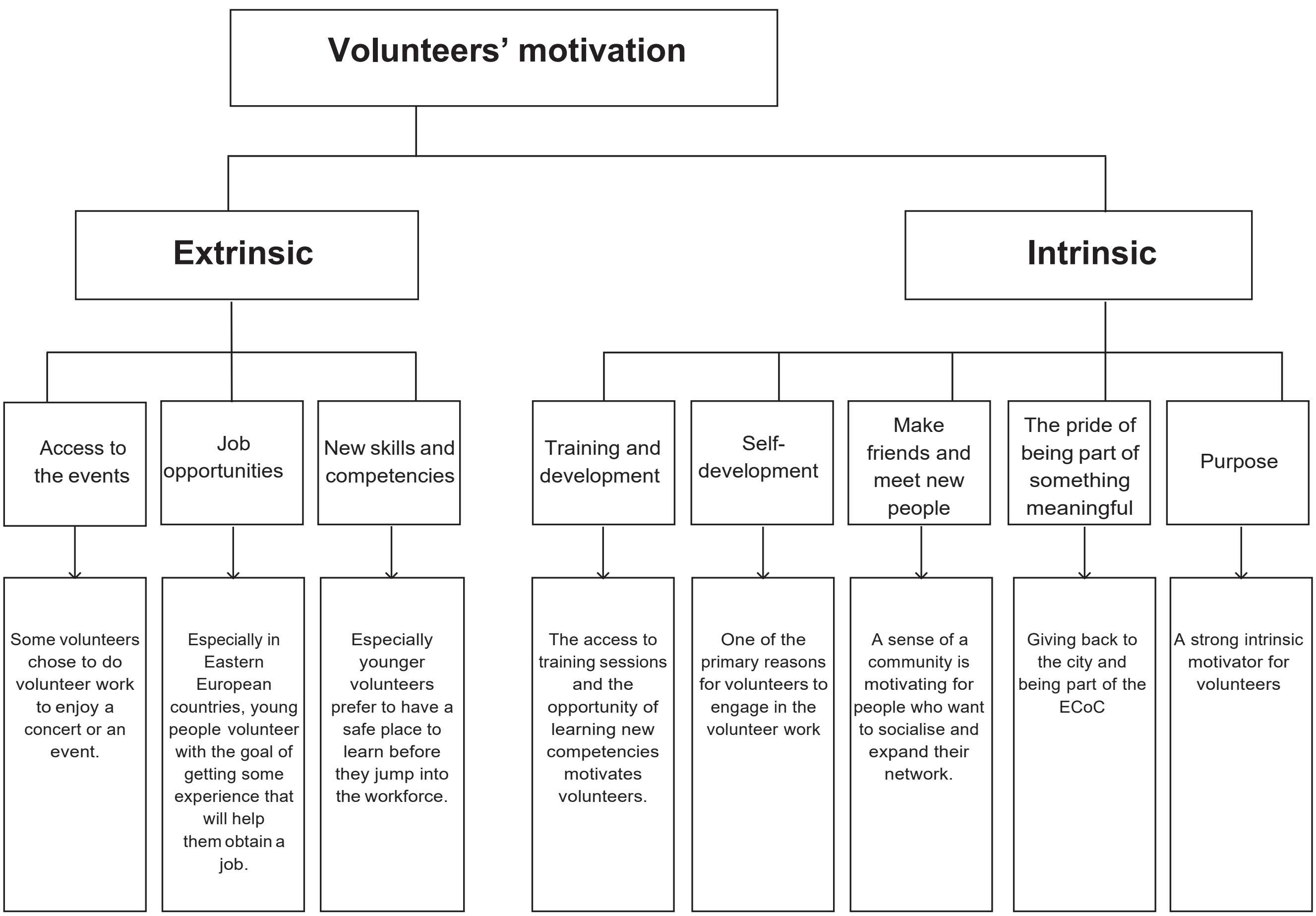

FIGURE 1: Conceptual model of volunteer motivation

A reward system was also used as an integral part of their strategy on the ECoC. Since there is no monetary payment, other incentives are offered. Some of these are tangible: A ticket to a show, a T-shirt with a logo — something that shows that a person is part of the volunteering community. Others are intangible: new skills and competencies, a community and a sense of belonging.

There is a common understanding among the volunteer leaders that the motivation of the volunteers is both intrinsic and extrinsic. While some become volunteers because they want to attend a certain event, others volunteer because they desire to be part of a community. Based on the interviews, we identified the most common reasons and motives that volunteers have when volunteering in the ECoC.

Overview

Demotivation

There are, however, also several aspects that demotivate volunteers. Volunteer leaders identified them as a mismatch of expectations, experiencing a lack of meaning in the work they do, a feeling of being misused as free labour and wasting their time.

Aligning expectations seems to be essential when working with volunteers. When expectations are aligned, volunteers understand why they need to do a certain job, and their tasks become meaningful to a much larger degree. On the other hand, a mismatch of expectations can lead to frustration and a lack of meaning among the volunteers at the ECoC. The latter was accentuated as having a substantial effect on the levels of motivation.

Another substantial factor of demotivation identified by the volunteer leaders was the fact that volunteers can be misused as nothing more than free labour by the organisations. This could lead to frustration and disappointment, ultimately affecting the reputation of the organisation for which they have volunteered.

As volunteers are not employees in a traditional sense, they choose to invest their time and energy in certain activities, expecting different outcomes in return. If there is a sense of "wasting their time" with meaningless tasks, this will also be experienced as a substantial demotivational factor.

Conclusion

We have summarised our findings in the "onion" circle (Figure 2). In many ways this is reminiscent of the Culture Onion proposed by Edgar Schein, as the further one delves into the layers of the "onion", the more complex the leadership task becomes. Below the circle we have added an explanation for the different layers.

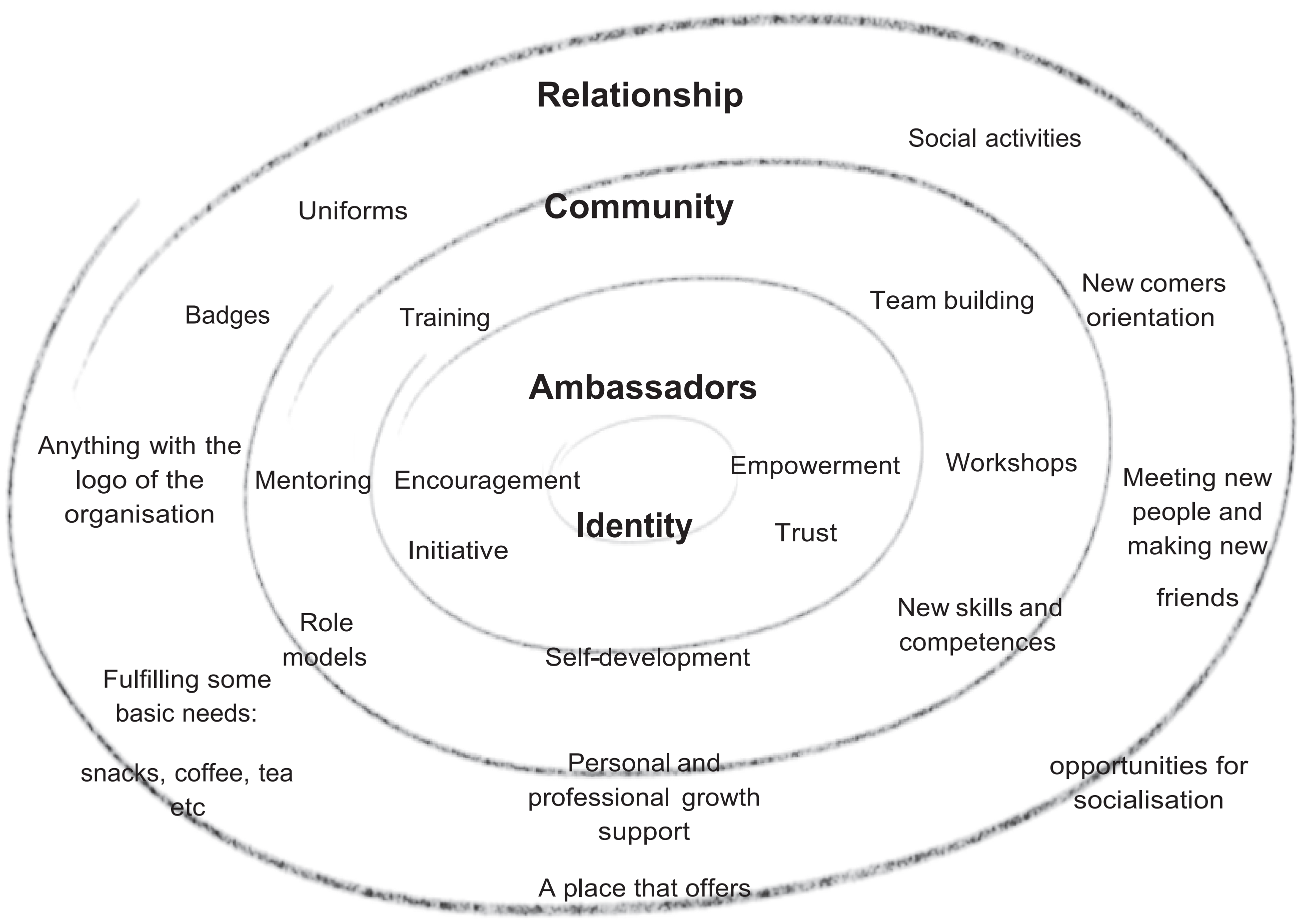

FIGURE 2: Onion model

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Pragmatic restaurant tipping in star-rated hotels in Kenya

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ABSTRACT: Tipping can be traced to Tudor England in the sixteenth century. This act transformed into a custom, spreading to many countries. However, tipping is observed differently from one country to the other and thus is not homogeneous from a global perspective. The act of tipping is thought to be motivated by various predictors, which were studied and are thought to influence peoples' tipping behaviour. They include gender, income level, religion, nationality, hospitality exposure, alcohol consumption and the weather conditions of the day. The study applied a cross-sectional survey design and was carried out in Kenya during from December 2019 to February 2020 in eight star-rated hotels. A questionnaire was applied in this study. The study has results showing that data is distributed close to the mean values. Further, the study results show that the independent variable explains 78.4% of the variability in the tipping practice. Thus the variable of "Patronage frequency" gave the strongest significant and unique contribution in explaining the dependent variable ($B = 0.515$, Sig. = 0.000, $t = 15.363$). However, religion gave the weakest unique and non-significant contribution ($B = 0.013$, Sig. = 0.770, $t = 0.293$). For hotel restaurants to achieve high levels of tipping, there is a need to adjust these predictors depending on the effect of each on the outcome variable. Thus, the study established a significant relationship between the determinants of tipping and the tipping practices in the sampled star-rated hotels in Kenya.

KEYWORDS: alcohol consumption, behavior, hospitality exposure, income level, nationality, religion, weather

Introduction

Tipping is thought to have originated from Tudor England in the sixteenth century, where patrons in coffee houses were expected to offer incentives, which were mainly coins, to food servers (Brewster, 2015; Lynn, 2015; 2016; Wiles, 2015; McKenzie, 2016; Jacobs, 2017; Jahan, 2018). However, during these ancient times, tips formed the only compensation that food servers received for their service (Lynn, 2006a; 2006b; Gumbihi, 2016). Nonetheless, formal wages and salaries were introduced in 1760 and thus tipping ended. However, the act of tipping bounced back and is still in practice in some countries of the world (Lynn & McCall, 2000). A further attempt for the second time to end tipping in the 1900s failed. It bounced back and is practised to this day (Azer, 2010).

Tipping transformed into a custom, spreading to many countries of the world (Lynn, 2017; Gössling et al., 2020; Were et al., 2020). However, the practice of tipping is observed differently from one country to the other and thus is not homogeneous from a global perspective. Russia, Romania, Slovenia and Lithuania endorse the norm of 5% to 10% for tipping, and the same is conventional in Argentina, Austria, Turkey and India. In other countries such as Cuba, Uruguay, Bulgaria, Columbia, Slovakia and Estonia, a 10% tip is observed, while it varies between 10% and 15% for Canada, Mexico, Chile, Poland, Ukraine, Egypt, Armenia and Serbia (Melia, 2011; Abukhalifeh & Som, 2012; Whaley et al., 2014; Lynn & Brewster, 2015; Jacobs, 2017). However, some countries such as Japan, South Korea, Georgia, Spain, Peru, Thailand and Kazakhstan believe that tipping is an abuse and considered unusual because it is unacceptable (Wiles, 2015).

The tipping exercise is thought to be motivated by various factors which are thought to constitute variables that influence peoples' tipping behaviour (Jahan, 2018). Accordingly, Jahan (2018) categorised this behaviour range into organisational, interpersonal and on the basis of the product. For the purpose of this study, organisational and interpersonal behaviours include gender, income level, religion, nationality, hospitality exposure, alcohol consumption and the weather conditions of the day. Thus, these formed the predictor variables, while tipping formed the outcome variable for the study.

For a long time, the act of tipping has been a mystery as it is not clear what the motivation behind the tipping behaviour of hotel restaurant clients is. Some scholars have alluded to the idea that the organisational and interpersonal behaviours listed above may explain the differences in the tipping pattern in hotel restaurants. Nonetheless, few studies have been carried out to investigate the effects of these organisational and interpersonal factors on the tipping behaviour of hotel restaurant clientele. This study addressed the effect of these factors on the tipping patterns of hotel restaurant clientele in Kenya.

Theoretical underpinnings

Academia and practice lack a theory that may be applied to explain the act of tipping (Lynn, 2015). This suggests that tipping has remained a mystery to many scholars in the multidisciplinary fields that have attempted to carry out investigations on the topic. According to Lynn (2015), restaurant consumers pay as little as they are willing or able to in tips when patronising and therefore buying hotel services. Thus, when buying food and beverages in restaurants, many patrons often pay more than legally required, including tips and service charges. The explanation and the motivations for this tipping practice remain unclear (Lynn, 2015). Thus ,for this study, reciprocity theory was applied since this theory fits well with the explanation for the relationship between the tipper and the tipped.

Reciprocity is an ancient concept found in the Hammurabi Code of ancient Babylonia comprising 282 laws and standards (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006). According to Seltzer (2016), reciprocity is a social norm of responding to a constructive action with another constructive action. Reciprocity therefore amounts to rewarding kind actions of excellent food service through tipping (Seltzer, 2016). Thus in the context of tipping, there is a symbiotic relationship between the food server and the restaurant clientele.

In this context, the fairness in the restaurant tipping motivation is recorded between the tipped (food server) and the tipper. Thus, according to this theory, the food server and the restaurant patron exhibit a symbiotic relationship. The patron is obligated by the social norms to show gratitude for the services received, and this is through tipping. In relation to tipping, Falk and Fischbacher (2006) and Seltzer (2016) found evidence of a collective reciprocity norm obligating people to pay for the favours others do for them.

Determinants of tipping

Our study sought to investigate the determinants of restaurant tipping. So, for the purposes of this study, the studied determinants of tipping included nationality, patronage frequency, gender, income, religion, hospitality experience, alcohol consumption and weather.

Nationality

People across the globe are categorised in accordance to a series of collective physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society. However, there are some social traits that are common across borders, especially among citizens of neighbouring countries. In some regions, individuals from the same social setting are only separated by geographical boundaries, but with similar cultural as well as social ties. It is, however, difficult to distinguish the specific nationality of an individual on the basis of these common traits which in some cases may be common across borders of neighbouring countries.

Nonetheless, Asians, blacks and Hispanics are widely perceived to be poor tippers (Lynn & Thomas-Haysbert, 2003; Lynn & Williams, 2012; Lynn et al., 2012; Lynn, 2014). Thus, an assumption that clients from these ethnic backgrounds either give small tips or completely fail to tip, irrespective of food service quality. However, studies on this subject are biased towards the US restaurant industry which is probably not the same in other nations of the world. Further, the world has become a global village and thus such ethnic norms are no longer practised as a result of acculturation (Were et al., 2020). Following weaknesses in such studies in the United States, the study results should be applied with caution in the context of Kenyan hotel tipping behaviour.

Even so, the results of a study by Kruger and Saayman (2016) carried out on the tipping ability of black South Africans overturned the perception that black restaurant diners are poor tippers. From their study, the results show that this restaurant clientele market segment cannot be regarded as bad tippers (ibid.). The study provides a basis that contradicts the results of studies carried out by Lynn and Thomas-Haysbert (2003), Lynn and Williams (2012), Lynn et al. (2012), and Lynn (2014). This could be explained on the basis of dynamism of national, regional, racial and continental cultures relative to acculturation, diffusion and adaptation, which as a result has contributed to the general, globally witnessed assimilation, cultural heterogeneity, multiculturalism and polyethnicity (Were et. al., 2017).

Religion

According to Lynn and Katz (2013), religion is perceived to influence hospitality restaurant clienteles' willingness to give tips on the basis of an individual's religious faith and beliefs. Religion is thought to determine whether one gives or fails to give tips and the magnitude of the tip as well. The world comprises people who subscribe to different religions (Lynn & Katz, 2013). It is the doctrines of these religions that are thought to influence individual tipping patterns and the magnitude of the tip (Palmer & Brian, 2013).

According to Palmer and Brian (2013), a Pastor Alois Bell, from the Christian Pentecostal faith, is widely used as a reference point. It is this pastor who indicated on a restaurant bill after crossing out the eighteen per cent gratuity, that he gives 10% to God as his tithe, and questioned why he is required to tip 18% (Palmer & Brian, 2013). From Pastor Alois Bell's perception, tipping should be any amount below 10% of the client's income, normally called the tithe. This is an indication that some Pentecostal Christians are most likely to estimate the amount of a tip based on the magnitude of their total tithe, and thus anything lower than the tithe. However, it remains unclear on the basis of estimating the tip amount by this group of clients.

In reality, there is a scarcity of literature available on the relation of other faiths (Islam, Buddhism, etc.) and restaurant tipping although there is scanty literature on Christianity in relation to restaurant tipping as well. Similarly, few studies have been carried out and documented in relation to Christianity and tipping in addition to these few studies being region-specific. Therefore, this cannot be used as the basis upon which conclusive resolutions could be made that Christians are poor tippers. For these reasons therefore, this study investigated the effect of religion on restaurant tipping.

Gender

Gender is an important characteristic that cannot be overlooked, especially in gastronomy in a restaurant operations business. Restaurant tipping is a social behaviour that customarily involves groups of the opposite gender or sex, and thus it may be affected by the principal forces of sexual attraction (Lynn & Simons, 2000).

According to Lynn and Simons (2000), Lynn (2006a; 2015; 2016), Lynn and Sturman (2010) and Nelson (2017), male patrons were found to tip more than female patrons, and therefore the perception that men leave larger tips than women, while waitresses receive larger tips than waiters. However, this assumption needs statistical backing through research in an attempt to assess the statistical significance of the relationship between gender and the tip amount.

Income

Net monthly income, together with other factors, determine an individuals' disposable income and, to an extent, whether they tip or not. Accordingly, Jahan (2018) argues that in countries where incomes are very low, restaurant tipping is perceived as a much esteemed act, and food and beverage service and other restaurant staff are thought to earn a lot more from tips than from salaries and wages. However, this might only be true if disposable income allows one to venture into the act of tipping.

However, Jahan's (2018) argument may not be true since tipping is also practised in many first world countries including the United States of America, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Sweden, France, Italy, Hungary, Greece, Russia, Romania, Slovenia, Lithuania, Argentina, Austria, Turkey, India, Cuba, Uruguay, Bulgaria, Columbia, Slovakia, Estonia, Canada, Mexico, Chile, Poland, Ukraine, Armenia and Serbia (Melia, 2011; Abukhalifeh & Som, 2012; Whaley et al., 2014; Lynn & Brewster, 2015; Jacobs, 2017; Jahan, 2018). This therefore implies that tipping might not be on the basis of minimum income for the residents of any country, though it could be on the basis of other factors and thus the justification of this investigation.

Hospitality experience

Tipping has developed and spread across the world as a sign of gratitude, encouraging restaurant clients to behave in a socially acceptable manner (Wang, 2010). However, in some countries of the world, tipping is seldomly practised (Jahan, 2018). Currently, two main norms that dictate tipping behaviour are predominantly observed by the world population, with part of the population embracing the tipping norms, while others embrace the anti-tipping norms.

Travelling and the free interaction of citizens of the world leads to exposure to acculturation, assimilation and integration which directly influences tipping norms (Were et al., 2017). On a global level therefore hospitality experience may be categorised as local, national and international. As a result of restaurant clientele's exposure to extensive global hospitality tipping norms, they are bound to shift (Were et al., 2017.) from their original norms to the standardised globally acceptable norms of tipping practice.

Patronage frequency

According to Lynn (2010), regular clients are most likely to tip than first time or irregular patrons. However, it is possible that one could be a loyal and/or regular client but one's culture does not allow one to tip as a result of the norms against tipping. On the other hand, the reasoning behind this principle does not adequately cover first time clients who also tip. Thus, patronage frequency may not sufficiently explain the act of restaurant tipping. Conversely, due to increased global market competition, many hotels are facing challenges in building brand loyalty and retaining customers and this can undermine efforts by hotel managers to increase customer patronage frequency (Chakraborty & Bezborah, 2017).

Alcohol consumption

The ability of a client to give tips varies depending on levels of intoxication. These levels have been called green, yellow and red (Dahmer & Kahl, 2009). The red level of intoxication is characterised by the effect on a variety of anti-social and pro-social behaviours (Lynn, 1988). The literature on this subject presents two potential explanations for alcohol's effects on tipping ability, including that alcohol consumption improves people's moods (McCollan et al., 1980), which happens to be a positive consequence and thus may increase tipping behaviour (Isen & Levin, 1972). Nonetheless, alcohol is also known for decreasing people's ability to process information (Moskowitz & DePry, 1968; Miller et al., 1978) and thus, as a result, people under the influence of alcohol will give out tips not because they willingly desire to do so, but because of their mental disconnect. Thus from this school of thought, alcohol consumption may not be the best indicator of tipping.

Weather

Rind and Strohmetz (2001) carried out a study to investigate the effect of weather on tipping and found that in sunny weather, diners give larger tips — hence a suggestion that weather influences tipping behaviour. Nonetheless, Rind and Strohmetz's (2001) study was mainly on projections basing on future weather conditions and its effect on the ultimate tipping behaviour of restaurant clients. However, there is a need for a follow-up study to confirm whether what was projected is actually what ends up being practised or if there could be any variations from the anticipated trend.

Even so, the motivation behind weather and tipping behaviour was not clearly explained by Rind and Strohmetz (2001). Further, more tipping is assumed to take place during warm weather. However, even during warm weather conditions, there could be some deviations observed in the tipping pattern of restaurant clients, with some who would still not give tips. Moreover, this study results might not be representative of the population as Rind and Strohmetz's (2001) sampling captured independent midscale restaurants, which represents a small fraction of the restaurant business. In addition, the sampling design they applied does not sufficiently support why the study specifically focused on the independent midscale restaurants and the study population as well.

Methodology

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design which is concerned with examining variation across cases (Henn et al., 2009). Further, the study used a descriptive correlation research survey. According to Rindfleisch et al. (2008), cross-sectional research survey involves using different groups of people who differ in the variable of interest, which formed the dependent variable of the study (tipping) but shared other characteristics. Consequently, descriptive correlation research design was instrumental in examining the variations in tipping of hospitality clientele in the sampled hotels, and was therefore chosen for its appropriateness in yielding accurate information (Kothari, 2010).

The study was carried out in Kenya over three months, from December 2019 to February 2020, with eight star-rated hotels. This represented 3.7% (215 classified hotels) of the population. The hotels were sampled from all the regions, with two hotels from the Nairobi region due to a higher concentration of hotels there. The probability sampling method was applied in the study. This sampling method ensured the application of a random selection of subjects which allowed us to make statistical inferences about the study population (Henn et al., 2009). Further, the sample size of the study was calculated using Fisher's formula (Fisher, 1935), thus yielding a relatively large sample size of 384 respondents with the intention of generating more accurate data (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999; Henn et al., 2009).

Research instruments

A questionnaire was used to obtain data on the predictors of tipping (Henn et. al., 2009; Kothari, 2010). The questionnaire comprised closed and open-ended questions and had two sections. The first section, which formed the independent variable for the study, had the determinants of tipping: gender, nationality, income level, religion, hospitality experience, alcohol consumption, weather and patronage frequency. The second section represented the tipping practices, which formed the dependent variable of the study. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents' attitudes by asking the extent to which they agree or disagree.

Results

The study sought to investigate the distribution of data on the eight determinants of tipping and thus descriptive statistics was applied in the analysis of data. The results are presented in Table 1.

The study gave the mean and standard deviation values for the eight predictors: weather (2.47, 1.196), alcohol (2.42, 1.169), hospitality exposure (1.39, 0.688), income level (2.08, 0.802), patronage frequency (2.04, 0.934), gender (1.39, 0.488) and religion (1.29, 0.599), here in descending order or value.

To establish the relationship between the determinants of tipping and the tipping practice, a multiple regression analysis was applied and the results are presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4.

The study findings yielded the model summary which gave a multiple correlation $R = 0.886$ and coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.784$. Further, the multiple regression analysis on the determinants of tipping and the tipping practice yielded an ANOVA table. The study finding on the multiple regression analysis on the determinants of tipping and the tipping practice was summarised and is presented in Table 3.

The study gave results showing an F value of 121.883 and a significance (Sig.) of 0.000 at the degree of freedom of 8 (df = 8). Finally, the multiple regression analysis on the determinants of tipping and the tipping exercise yielded a coefficients summary presented in Table 4.

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics on tipping antecedents (N = 277)

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Religion	1	3	1.29	0.599
Gender	1	2	1.39	0.488
Income	1	3	2.08	0.802
Hospitality exposure	1	3	2.29	0.688
Alcohol	1	5	2.42	1.169
Weather	1	5	2.47	1.196
Nationality	1	5	1.58	1.072
Patronage frequency	1	5	2.04	0.934

TABLE 2: Multiple regression model summary

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.886*	0.784	0.778	0.401

Note: *Predictors: (Constant), weather, nationality, gender, income, religion, hospitality experience, patronage frequency, alcohol

TABLE 3: Multiple regression ANOVA

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	156.632	8	19.579	121.883	0.000**
	Residual	43.051	268	0.161		
	Total	199.682	276			

Note: Dependent Variable: Tipping
**Predictors: (Constant), weather, nationality, gender, income, religion, hospitality experience, patronage frequency, alcohol

TABLE 4: Multiple regression coefficients (Dependent variable: tipping)

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	t-value	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
		B	Std. error	Beta			Tolerance	Value inflation factor
1	(Constant)	0.823	0.146		5.632	0.000		
	Nationality	−0.024	0.025	−0.030	−0.968	0.334	0.842	1.187
	Religion	0.013	0.043	0.009	0.293	0.770	0.864	1.158
	Gender	−0.126	0.050	−0.072	−2.512	0.013	0.978	1.022
	Income	−0.047	0.034	−0.044	−1.404	0.161	0.801	1.248
	Hos-experience	−0.066	0.039	−0.054	−1.685	0.093	0.796	1.256
	Patronage	0.515	0.034	0.566	15.363	0.000	0.594	1.685
	Alcohol	0.111	0.037	0.153	2.996	0.003	0.308	3.243
	Weather	0.192	0.034	0.270	5.653	0.000	0.353	2.836

The coefficients table gives different significance levels (Sig.), *B* values and *t*-values for the eight ingredients that constitute the determinants of tipping: weather, alcohol consumption, hospitality exposure, income level, patronage frequency, gender and religion.

Discussion

The study was carried out on a total of 384 respondents, out of which only 277 responses were collected, recording a response rate of 72.14%. According to Jackson (2009), Kothari (2010), O'Leary (2014) and Stehlik-Barry and Babinec (2017), over 60% response rates are acceptable for survey studies like this one. Thus the achieved response rate of 72.14% for this study is within an acceptable range.

From the study results, weather, alcohol consumption, nationality, income level and patronage frequency were measured at minimum and maximum values of 1 and 5, hospitality exposure and religion at 1 and 3. The study yielded the mean and standard deviation values for weather (2.47, 1.196), alcohol (2.42, 1.169), hospitality exposure (1.39, 0.688), income level (2.08, 0.802), patronage frequency (2.04, 0.934), gender (1.39, 0.488) and religion (1.29, 0.599). The study results therefore depict that weather gave the highest mean, while religion gave the lowest mean among the eight predictors under investigation. However, the study results show that data distribution is near the means for all the determinants of tipping under investigation.

To find out the relationship between each of the eight determinants of tipping and the tipping act, a multiple regression analysis was applied. However, before undertaking the regression analysis, it was important to meet the preconditions for regression if the variables were correlated (Jackson, 2009; Kothari, 2010; O'Leary, 2014; Stehlik-Barry & Babinec, 2017). To test the correlation between the study variables, multicollinearity tests were applied. From the study results, the variables under test gave variance inflation factor (VIF) values between ≥ 1 and ≤ 10, which implies that there was no multicollinearity (Jackson, 2009; Kothari, 2010; O'Leary, 2014; Stehlik-Barry & Babinec, 2017). Further, the study gave tolerance values >0.100 <1.00 for all the study constructs. This implies that there was no multicollinearity (Jackson, 2009; O'Leary, 2014; Kothari, 2010; Pallant, 2010; Stehlik-Barry & Babinec, 2017).

Further, the study findings on the relationship between the determinants of tipping and the tipping practice yielded the model summary which gave a multiple correlation R = 0.886. This indicates a high, positive and good level of prediction of the relationship between the determinants of tipping and the tipping practice. Further, the results generated the coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.784$, which shows the proportion of variance (78.4%) in the dependent variable — determinants of tipping — that can be explained by the independent variable — the tipping practice. Thus, from the multiple regression output, the independent variable — determinants of tipping (weather, alcohol consumption, hospitality exposure, income level, patronage frequency, gender and religion) explains 78.4% of the variability in the tipping practice. This is therefore a clear indication that the tipping practice is mainly dependent on the determinants of tipping in the sampled star-rated hotels in Kenya.

The ANOVA table gave an *F* value of 121.883 and a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000 at the degree of freedom of 8 (df = 8). Thus from these results, the study established a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between the determinants of tipping and the tipping practice in the sampled star-rated hotels.

The coefficients table results, on the other hand, gave results which imply that patronage frequency (0.515), weather (0.192), gender (0.126), alcohol consumption (0.111), income level (0.047), nationality (0.024), religion (0.013) and hospitality exposure –0.066) gave a unique contribution to the tipping exercise in the order presented. Thus patronage frequency (0.515) gave the strongest unique contribution in explaining tipping, while hospitality exposure (–0.066) gave the weakest unique contribution among the eight determinants of tipping. Thus in view of the study results, a change in patronage frequency, weather, gender, alcohol consumption, income level, nationality and religion would lead to a corresponding increase in the tipping exercise. Nonetheless, hospitality exposure yielded a negative value (-0.066), which implies that this predictor variable has the weakest negative contribution to the tipping exercise. Thus, an increase in hospitality exposure would result in a corresponding decline in the tipping exercise

Further, the study results indicate that patronage frequency generated a significant value (0.000), weather (0.000), gender (0.013) and alcohol consumption (0.003) ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the study results show that these (patronage frequency, weather, gender and alcohol consumption) have a significant unique contribution to the tipping exercise in the sampled star-rated hotels in Kenya ($p < 0.05$).

However, the results of the study show that hospitality exposure ($p = 0093$), income level ($p = 0.161$), nationality ($p = 0.334$) and religion ($p = 0.770$) do not make any significant unique contribution to the dependent variable. Thus, there is no significant relationship between these predictor variables and tipping in the sampled star-rated hotels in Kenya.

A handful of scholars across the globe have carried out studies on these predictors of tipping in relation to the tipping exercise. Lynn (2010) found a relationship between hotel clientele's patronage frequency and tipping. Lynn (2010) established that tipping was stronger for regular than non-regular clients, thus in agreement with the results of this study.

Rind and Strohmetz (2001) carried out a study to investigate the effect of weather on tipping. According to the study results, they found that in sunny weather, diners give larger tips — hence, a suggestion that there is a relationship between weather and tipping behaviour. However, the study did not establish the motivation behind tipping as a result of the weather. Nonetheless, the study results from Rind and Strohmetz (2001) are in agreement with these study results.

According to the study results on gender by Lynn and Simons (2000), Lynn (2006a; 2006b; 2015; 2016), Lynn and Sturman (2010) and Nelson (2017), male patrons were found to tip more than female patrons, and therefore there is the perception that men leave larger tips than women, while waitresses receive larger tips than waiters. This suggests that a relationship was found between gender and the tipping exercise, and therefore in agreement with these study results.

In relation to alcohol's effects on tipping, two explanations were given by Moskowitz and DePry (1968), Miller et al. (1978) and McCollan et al. (1980), which include that alcohol improves people's moods and decreases people's ability to process information. From the results on alcohol consumption, a relationship was established between alcohol consumption and the tipping exercise which is in agreement with these study results.

On the other hand, the study established no relationship between hospitality exposure and the tipping exercise. This means that whether extensively travelled or not, this has no relation with the tipping exercise. Maybe this could be explained on the basis of the social norms of tipping which demand that one participate for social approval, irrespective of the extensiveness of global hospitality exposure. Tipping is therefore practised as a sign of gratitude and allows restaurant clients to behave in a socially acceptable manner (Wang, 2010). However, in some countries, the act of tipping is seldomly practised and thus the hospitality exposure of citizens from these countries does not change their norms (Jahan, 2018).

A study by Jahan (2018) found that countries in which income for the residents is low, restaurant tipping is perceived as a much esteemed act. This implies that tipping should be extensively practised in the third world and developing countries such as Kenya as a result of low income level. However, this might not be true since tipping is highly esteemed in the United States of America (Lynn, 2015), one of the world's well-established economies. Nonetheless, the study established that there was no relationship between income level and the tipping practice, which is in disagreement with the results from previous studies.

Furthermore, Lynn and Thomas-Haysbert (2003), Lynn and Williams (2012), Lynn et al. (2012) and Lynn (2014) carried out studies on ethnicity and tipping behaviour. These studies established that Asians, blacks and Hispanics are widely perceived to be poor tippers. However, Kruger and Saayman (2016) carried out a counter study on the tipping ability of black South Africans and found that this restaurant clientele market segment cannot be regarded as bad tippers. Thus according to the Kruger and Saayman (2016) study, there was no relationship between nationality and the tipping act, which is in agreement with this study results.

Lynn and Katz (2013) carried out studies on religion and established that there was a relationship between religion and restaurant clienteles' willingness to give tips. In view of these study results, we are in disagreement with Lynn and Katz (2013).

Conclusion

The study established that the tipping act can be explained by the predictors of tipping by over 78%, while 22% of the tipping practice can be explained by other factors beyond the scope of this study. Thus, the tipping practice in hotel restaurants in Kenya is highly dependent on the predictors of tipping. Further, the study established a significant relationship between the predictors of tipping and the tipping practice, and therefore an indication of the effect of these predictors on the tipping practice. Moreover, patronage frequency gave the greatest contribution, while religion gave the least unique contribution and significance in the relationship between each of the predictor variables and restaurant clienteles' tipping practice. Thus, the tipping practice was found to be dependent on patronage frequency, weather, gender and alcohol consumption of respondents in the sampled star-rated hotels in Kenya.

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BOOK
REVIEW

Scoff: A History of Food and Class in Britain

By Pen Vogler

2020. London: Atlantic Books. 470 pages; ISBN hardback 978 1–78649–647–8; EBook 978 1–78649–648–5; £20.00

Pen Vogler's book exploring food and social class in Britain is not written primarily for academics and students engaged with hospitality management, or food and beverage education, yet this is a book that presents a massive resource for the development of understanding of the social context of eating and dining. The work shares insights into dining that rounds out the somewhat pragmatic content of the preparation and service of food and drink in hospitality education courses. Indeed, the pragmatic and uncritical, "how to do" agenda of much hospitality management education has long been a concern because it tends to squeeze out critical, theoretical content essential for the development of graduates who are reflective practitioners. Vogler's book is a rich resource of insights into the social, cultural, historical and political influences that determine who eats what, and what this says about them and the social context in which they eat and dine.

The title of Vogler's text plays with the double meaning of the word "scoff" in English. Scoff is a slang term for food or a meal, and is also a word meaning mockery of another person or persons. In this way, Vogler makes a valuable point that dining and eating are an important means by which the ruling elite use meals and the manners associated with the activity as a form of conspicuous consumption, which at the same time confirms their exclusive and elevated status and excludes those deemed to be ordinary and of lower status.

The book is structured around a series of fascinating themes, each of which then explore topics that develop an understanding of the words used to describe dining activities, and how they shape the eating experiences, but also differentiate the few from the many.

The book is well written with an accessible style that students will find comfortable and informative. Vogler uses a rich variety of information about dining habits, dining occasions and the evolution of fads and fashions entering culinary culture and disappearing or becoming less significant. The section exploring the evolution of fish and chips provides a valuable exemplar of the way the British diet has been influenced by migrants and by the diet of the poor. Battered fish was a popular dish, probably introduced by Jewish migrants, that was then combined with fried chipped potatoes, probably introduced from France but popular with the north of England's working class. As in many other aspects of a traditional British diet, the quintessentially British fish and chip meal was the by-product of international contact and immigration. *Scoff* provides a sociological, historical and cultural account of dining that will help understand that fads and fashions change and develop, and that today's norms are transient and the result of the social dynamics where eating is employed as device for establishing the elite club rules, identifying those who are members and those who are not. Given that many graduates will have careers in luxury hotels and restaurants, it is essential that they have a clear understanding of the status and symbolism that their clientele is buying into. *Scoff* helps to develop such an understanding.

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BOOK
REVIEW

Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think

By Brian Wansink

2011, London: Hay House. ISBN: 0345526880. Price: €13.89

Do you think you are the one who controls why, when and how much you eat on a daily basis? Brian Wansink, an American professor and director of a food psychology lab, shows that many of the 200 food-related decisions we make every day are made without much conscious thought. In his book *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think*, research and experiments offer disconcerting illustrations of the decision-making processes involved in our eating behaviour. Rather than follow the familiar pattern of dieting books with calorie counting and exercise plans, this book pays more attention to the psychology behind eating, and overeating, and displays an in-depth analysis of our subconscious decision-making processes. Wansink explores the invisible influences of factors like size of plates, names of the dishes, presence of other people, environmental settings, decorations and use of colours.

Field experiments show that subconscious factors have a dominant impact on decision-making. Wansink not only exposes our many blind spots, but ends every chapter with some useful and practical recommendations on how to counteract or get rid of bad habits, increasing awareness and promoting healthier eating.

An interesting survey showed the relationship between food and mood, going further than the traditional thinking that comfort food brings happiness to people. According to Wansink's findings, men and women prefer different comfort foods. Women prefer hassle-free foods that do not need to be cleaned up, such as sweets, biscuits or ice cream. On the other hand, men prefer pizza, pasta or cakes which require more time to prepare and clean up. These types of food make men feel spoiled, pampered and taken care of.

Wansink also introduces the concept of the "mindless margin" as the amount we can overeat or undereat each day without noticing. The margin is set at 100 calories above or below your daily caloric requirement. On an annual basis that would mean the difference between gaining or losing 4.5 kg.

The book raises a potential dilemma for the hospitality industry: Should a restaurant promote healthy eating to their customers or should they try to sell an extra starter or that lavish desert? Do they suggest the healthy menu item or the one with the better profit margin? Wansink points out that the choice is not that simple. Even restaurants that actively support a healthy choice for their customers might not succeed if the guests do not bother to process or act on the information provided.

A psychological way to have customers pay more in a restaurant is to use exotic names for a product or a dish. Wansink's studies showed that a cake named "Belgian Black Forest Double Chocolate Cake" had a 27 per cent higher order rate than the one simply named "Chocolate Cake".

Generally, the book is very well written, entertaining and easy to relate to, since food consumption is one of the essential activities that we all experience in our daily lives. In addition, in each chapter, Wansink offers helpful and practical tips to control our diets. For example, reducing 100 calories a day does not make people depressed or lose motivation, but makes a huge difference on the weight scale. As the author mentions, reengineering strategies can help people improve their eating. "The best diet is the one you don't know you're on" (p. 219).

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BOOK
REVIEW

The Five Dysfunctions of a Team — A Leadership Fable

By Patrick Lencioni

2002, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN: 0787960756. Price: €17.99

"Not finance. Not strategy. Not technology. It is teamwork that remains the ultimate competitive advantage, both because it is so powerful and so rare" (p. vii). This is the opening statement of Lencioni's book on teamwork. A special book that has been rightfully applauded by many entrepreneurs and became a New York Times best-seller. Lencioni really knows how to draw the reader into the story by incorporating theory into a novel-like structure. The story is divided into four parts: Underachievement, Lighting the fire, Heavy lifting and Traction. The book ends with an overview of the model, a team assessment questionnaire and recommendations on how to overcome the five dysfunctions.

Lencioni shows that teamwork does not come easily and that it should not be taken lightly. As he rightfully mentions, teamwork comes down to mastering a set of behaviours that look theoretically simple at first but appear to be extremely difficult to put into practice consistently. This message is passed on very well by taking the reader into the story about DecisionTech, a fictitious company that is not doing too well anymore. Due to the deterioration in performance, CEO and founder Jeff Shanley had to step down and a new CEO was appointed. This is where the main character Kathryn Petersen comes in. She is a 57-year-old retired woman with a lot of managerial experience. The board is, however, not cheering for their new CEO. She does not seem to fit the high-tech culture and has a lack of in-depth software experience. Nonetheless, she decides to take on the challenge to build a team out of the seven board members: Jeff Shanley — former CEO (now business development), Michele Bebe (Mikey) — marketing, Martin Gilmore — chief technologist, Jeff Rawlins (JR) — sales, Carlos Amador — customer support, Jan — CFO and Nick — COO. The whole team is introduced in the first part of the book, based on Kathryn's careful observations.

In the second part, Kathryn faces some hiccups with a few board members, before heading off to Napa Valley for the first of a series of off-site sessions. The tension and resistance are almost tangible. During their first off-site session, Kathryn explains the five dysfunctions of a team:
(1) Absence of trust
(2) Fear of conflict
(3) Lack of commitment
(4) Avoidance of accountability
(5) Inattention to results

These dysfunctions are accompanied by their "symptoms", invulnerability, artificial harmony, ambiguity, low standards and status plus ego respectively.

In part three, when returned to the office, JR — head of sales — quits his job. After the second off-site session takes place, another team member leaves the team. Marketing director Mikey is forced to leave DecisionTech due to her sarcastic and destructive demeanour. In the fourth and final part, things start to calm down. During the last off-site session, the team's progress is assessed. Three months later, at the end of the book, Joseph Charles, a new board member and replacement of Mikey, is introduced during a two-day staff meeting. A competitor called "Green Banana" wants to buy DecisionTech. The group refuses the interesting offer, since no one wants to let go of a team they put so much effort in to. Finally, Kathryn re-organises and downsizes the executive team. Former CEO Jeff chose to work in Nick's COO team to do what is best for the company. His transfer shows his ability to tackle the fifth dysfunction, putting his ego and (former) status aside.

The book gives insights into the habits people have, and their pitfalls. The need for harmony, self-protection, status and recognition can disrupt a team and the effectiveness of their work. This can easily be linked to psychological issues in hospitality where employees are in constant contact with people, whether they are guests or colleagues. An effective hospitality business will stand or fall by the team performance of the employees. When team members know how to cooperate effectively with colleagues to achieve results together and how to work together with guests to cocreate, the business will thrive. To achieve this, team members should trust each other and dare to be vulnerable, engage in honest conflict without holding back, be committed, hold each other accountable and pay attention to results.

This book is readable, compelling and relevant for everyone who works in a team, whether you are a student, manager, or just an interested reader. It can guide you towards a more pleasant collaboration or will help you as a manager to understand human behaviour in the workplace and how to get the best out of a team. As Lencioni compellingly shows: It is teamwork that matters most in generating sustainable business success.

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CORRIGENDUM

Corrigendum

Steriopoulos, E. & Wrathall, J. (2021). Re-imagining and transforming events: Insights from the Australian events industry. *Research in Hospitality Management, 11*(2), 77–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/22243534.2021.1917809

Page 81, column 1, paragraph 1 incorrectly refers to Participant 16 instead of Participant 8. The paragraph should read:

The emphasis on personal well-being was a key factor for P8. Under normal circumstances and prior to the pandemic, P8 worked long hours in order to deliver successful business events. He now feels that the pandemic presented the opportunity to reset and determine key strategies for ensuring his own well-being. To date, the issue of personal well-being in the events industry has been overlooked; therefore, P8 recommends taking the time to learn effective time-management skills in order to reduce the level of stress experienced when delivering events.

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RETRACTION

Statement of Retraction

A thorough investigation has determined that the article "The moving finger: Asian international hotel school students developing English language writing skills" by Peter Graham published in *Research in Hospitality Management* (2012) Volume 1 Issue 2, pp. 53–63, is substantially similar to that of an already published article "The impact of studying in a second language (L2) medium university on the development of L2 writing" by Neomy Storch published in *Journal of Second Language Writing* (2009) Volume 18, pp. 103–118, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2009.02.003.

As a result, the article published in *Research in Hospitality Management* has been retracted and should not be cited in the electronic or print version of the journal.

The article to which this statement of retraction relates can be found here https://doi.org/10.1080/22243534.2012.11828277.

Erwin Losekoot
Editor-in-Chief

Research in **Hospitality Management**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS*

Aims and scope

Research in Hospitality Management (RHM) is a peer-reviewed open access journal publishing articles that make an original contribution to the understanding of hospitality and to the theory and practice of international hospitality management.

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Contributions must conform to the principles outlined in **Ethical considerations in research publication*** dealing with authorship, conflicts of interest, originality and protocols for research that involves human and animal subjects.

Submission of a manuscript implies that the material has not previously been published, nor is it being submitted elsewhere for publication. Contributions are accepted with the understanding that the authors have the authority for publication.

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   - Author details — full names, institutional affiliation at time of research (and current if since changed), email address
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Write in plain English (UK spelling — see the Oxford English Dictionary). Make use of language editing services if necessary to ensure that your work is of an appropriate standard.

Use double quotation marks for direct quotes. Direct verbatim speech from interviews should also be italicised.

Consult the **Guidelines for the presentation of mathematical and statistical data***. Use a leading zero and the period (.) as the decimal indicator.

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References

All sources must be attributed with the AUTHOR–DATE method in the APA (7th edition) style. Sources must all be cited in the text and arranged alphabetically in the corresponding list of references.

Journal article

Everett, S. (2019). Theoretical turns through tourism taste-scapes: the evolution of food tourism research. *Research in Hospitality Management, 9*(1), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/22243534.2019.1653589

Book

Rowson, B. & Lashley, C. (Eds.) (2019). *Experiencing Hospitality*. Nova Science Publishers.

Chapter in edited book

Eringa, K. (2019). Ladies and gentlemen serving ladies and gentlemen. In B. Rowson & C. Lashley (Eds.), *Experiencing Hospitality* (pp. 229–246). Nova Science.

Conference paper

De Boer, M. R. (2020, May 3–7). *Draw the curtains. Anthropological participant observation in undergraduate traineeship. A different route to teaching and learning.* Paper presented at the 4th European Congress Qualitative Inquiry 2020. University of Malta.

Online reference

World Health Organization. (2021, March 18). *WHO European Region: COVID-19 case incidence on the rise as deaths edge towards 1 million* [press release]. https://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/statements/2021/statement-who-european-region-covid-19-case-incidence-on-the-rise-as-deaths-edge-towards-1-million

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A pre-publication proof will be emailed to corresponding authors. Only essential corrections are permitted. Prompt return of proofs will minimise the risk of an article being held over to a later issue.

On publication, authors will receive an alert from T&FOnline where the version of record can be downloaded and shared.

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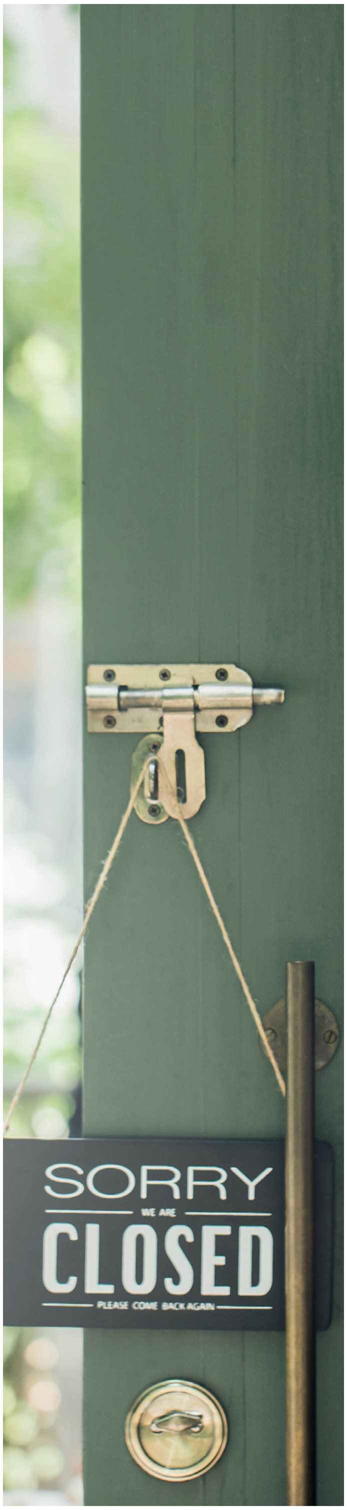

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