



NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
TOURISM MANAGEMENT

**THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS ON HOTELS GUEST
SATISFACTION DURING COVID-19**

MUSTAFA ALIAN

MASTER'S THESIS

NICOSIA
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MASTER'S THESIS

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2021

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DECLARATION

I Mustafa Alian, hereby declare that this dissertation entitled 'THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS ON HOTELS GUEST SATISFACTION DURING COVID-19' has been prepared by myself under the guidance and supervision of Asst. Prof. Günay Sadıkoğlu in partial fulfillment of the Near East University, Graduate School of Social Sciences regulations and does not to the best of my knowledge breach and Law of Copyrights and has been tested for plagiarism and a copy of the result can be found in the Thesis.

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“Let us fight to free the world, to do away with national barriers, to do away with greed, with hate and intolerance. Let us fight for a world of reason, a world where science and progress will lead to all men’s happiness”.

[The Great Dictator (final speech), Charlie Chaplin].

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS ON HOTELS GUEST SATISFACTION DURING COVID-19

Since the World Health Organization announced it as a global threat, the coronavirus has been the number one global problem. The world has never experienced such danger throughout history. Consequently, The tourism industry has suffered the most of the negative impact caused by the coronavirus in all countries. This study highlights the impact of employees' communication skills on guest satisfaction in the hotel sector of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus during the pandemic. In the study to be conducted, answers to the questions of 1) how can employees' communication play a role in increasing future selling volume and 2) how management can maintain employee performance during COVID-19. Data was collected from different sources and analyzed using the Qualitative Document Analysis (QDA) method. The study revealed that understanding and practicing various communication strategies is crucial for hotel employees to satisfy guests' changing needs and expectations and develop relationships with them.

Keywords: Communication Skills, Guest Satisfaction, Hotel Industry, Hotel Employee, COVID-19

ÖZ

COVID-19 Pandemisi Sırasında Otelcilik Sektöründe İletişim Becerilerinin Misafir Memnuniyeti Üzerindeki Rolü

Koronavirüs, Dünya Sağlık Örgütü tarafından küresel bir tehdit olarak ilan edildiğinden beri bir numaralı küresel sorun haline gelmiştir. Dünya, tarih boyunca böyle bir tehlike yaşamamıştır. Bunun sonucunda, hassas bir yapıya sahip olan turizm sektörü bütün ülkelerde olumsuz bir şekilde etkilenmiştir. Bu çalışma, pandemi sürecinde Kuzey Kıbrıs Türk Cumhuriyeti'ndeki otel sektörü çalışanlarının gelişmiş iletişim becerilerinin misafir memnuniyeti üzerindeki etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Yapılan çalışmada, 1) etkili çalışan iletişiminin satış hacmini artırmada nasıl bir rol oynayabileceği 2) otel yöneticilerinin COVID-19 sırasında çalışan performansını nasıl koruyabileceği irdelenmiştir. Nitel araştırma yönteminin kullanıldığı bu çalışmada veriler farklı kaynaklardan toplanarak doküman analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışma, otel çalışanlarının misafirlerin değişen ihtiyaç ve beklentilerini karşılamaları, onlarla daha iyi ilişkiler geliştirebilmeleri adına çeşitli iletişim stratejilerinin anlaşılması ve uygulanması gerektiğini ortaya koymuştur.

AnahtarKelimeler: İletişim Becerileri, Misafir Memnuniyeti, Otel Sektörü, Otel Çalışanları, COVID- 19

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ABBREVIATIONS

TRNC	Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
AECS	Advanced Employees' Communication Skills
GS	Guest Satisfaction
RG	Repetitive Guests
MI	Management Involvement
SSS	Sea, Sand and Sun
OM	Operations Management
WOM	Word of Mouth
SIT	Social-Identity Theory
SWTC	Shannon-Weaver Theory of Communication

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

After the end of the Second World War, the world has gone through drastic changes from different perspectives, namely political, economic, and demographic. These changes led to increase in cultural interaction among different people. In the 1960s the need of travel has risen due to many factors; such as an increase in income, increase of personal free time and the development in the aircraft industry, which resulted in the risen number of airline companies in the aviation that created competition in that market. All these factors have led to the need for travelling and discovering new places by people. Yi (1993) stated, "in the 1960s, a growing number of people had disposable incomes, and with this extra money came a desire for a different lifestyle. At the same time, reasonably-priced commercial aircraft were able to carry passengers to and from any airport in the world" (Yi, 1993).

Based on these facts, tourism became one of the biggest industries around the world if not the biggest, with all of its sub-industries, generating 10.4% of the global GDP in 2018, and responsible for 319M job opportunity worldwide, apportion of 10% of the worldwide percentage (Turner & Jus, 2019). Hence, it is important to give a clear definition to the term tourism, which is any activity that includes movement from one place to another for any purpose, leisure, work, and study. Tourist can be defined as a person, who travels for pleasure, usually sightseeing and staying in the hotels (Collins Dictionary, 2020). By speaking specifically about hotel sector, the main goal of any organization became generating profit and become successful. However, to achieve these goals the hotel should follow certain steps. One of the essential steps is to attain the operational efficiency by managing service quality, which is a fundamental factor that provides a successful performance for the employees of the establishment as well as customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be interpreted as a measure of how happy customers feel when they do business with a company (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Eventually, that will lead to increase in the hotel's market share and to the generation of more significant profit margin that ensures the continuation of the establishment and creation of repetitive customer who can be defined as someone who buys

again from a company that they have used before (Mehta, Lalwani, & Han, 2000).

With all the technological development and world globalization artificial intelligence is still not able to perform the same tasks as human beings; therefore, the human being is the fundamental aspect for the tourism industry. In everyday life, people are communicating with each other by two main types, verbal and non-verbal communication. The verbal communication is taking a share of 45% of our daily communication, 7% are spoken words, and 38% is the other factors like the voice, the tone, the stresses on the words; non-verbal communication is 55% of daily human communication, it includes gestures, facial expressions, body language (Kuhnke, 2007). Since daily interaction among customers and service provider is done through the communications on different channels, it is significant for the hotel employees to possess advanced communication skills, which are certain skills going beyond ordinary day to day communication, in order to be able to meet the needs and desires of the hotel's guests. Moreover, when there is an additional factor management involvement, which is management practices aimed to develop distinct capabilities in employees, leading to superior firm performance, then the impact of advanced employees' communication skills on the guest satisfaction will only get stronger.

Moreover, it is important to note that consumer satisfaction can be achieved through employee satisfaction. Establishment's management should keep their employees satisfied, that will result in delighted customers by the service provided to them by the employees. Hence, there is a need of creating an excellent working atmosphere in order to help the employees to give their best performance, encourage them to increase their output and give a good, fast, and reliable responses to serve the customers with the highest quality offered.

Due to the fact that our research study focused on examining the hotels in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, it is important to mention that island's location and climate, various types of tourism and services offered by the government increase the number of tourists arrivals every year. Base on this fact, tourism has become a crucial aspect of the economical income in North Cyprus. TRNC offers different types of accommodation facilities in the island

vary from five-star hotels to guesthouses. The total number of guest facilities is 161 with a total of 25648 bed capacity across the country (Ekici & Caner, 2017). The following statistical data, presented in Table 1, shows more complete information regarding the distribution of accommodation by type and bed capacity on the territory of TRNC.

	A: Establishment			B: Bed		
2014	2015	2016	2017	2018		
133	140	134	138	147A	1. Tourist Accommodation Establishments ¹
19,276	20,393	21,543	21,845	25,241B	
14	14	14	11	14A	2. Other Accommodation Establishments
581	581	555	413	443B	
47.6	48.4	48.3	58.5	51.3		3. Rate of Occupancy
147	154	148	149	161A	Total
19,857	20,974	22,098	22,258	25,684B	

Table 1: Distribution of Accommodation by Type and Bed Capacity
Source: Tourism Planning Office, State Planning Organization

Unfortunately, earlier in this year (2020), an unpredicted crisis emerged from the east side of the globe (Wuhan, China). The new COVID-19 virus paralyzed the world, spreading very quickly around the world. More than 19500000 people caught the disease and more than 750000 died all around the world (World Health Organization, 2020). We can state that the pandemic has seriously disrupted the tourism industry around the world; not only financial disturb but also it has caused the change millions of travel plans and also change the human perspective of traveling and what to expect from both service providers and consumers. Not only the whole service model of the

industry has changed due to the pandemic but also, the needs, demands and expectations of customers have changed. However, it is relatively early to assess how significant the impact of the pandemic is and how hard it has hit tourism sector around the world and the TRNC in particular, as the pandemic is still in full swing.

Aim and Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore and highlight the impact of communication skills of employees on guest satisfaction and the impact of guest satisfaction on the repetitive visits in the hotel sector of TRNC during the pandemic and during it. To provide clear view of the future after the time of coronavirus is over and how hotels in North Cyprus can adapt new service model and marketing strategies to gain big portion from the market share of the Mediterranean Sea area. Moreover, the impact of advanced employees' communications skills on guest satisfaction will increase with additional strengthening variable management involvement.

Objectives of the study are the following:

- 1- To analyze the impact of advanced employees' communication skills on guest satisfaction during and after the time of coronavirus.
- 2- To shade the light on management involvement and its role in boosting employees' potentials to achieve guest satisfaction during Covid-19.
- 3- To examine the impact of coronavirus on global economy in general and tourism sector in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and provide more anticipation about the period after the pandemic finishes.

Significance of the Study

The importance of the current study refers to the aim of advanced employees' communication skills, namely to satisfy guests' needs and create repetitive guests later. In order to strengthen the impact of advanced employees' communication skills on customer satisfaction we should know the role of management involvement in this relationship. Our research study is aimed at

highlighting the importance of advanced employees' communication skills to the hotels of TRNC in meeting the needs of customers, before and during coronavirus, which can be achieved by providing specific training programs aimed at improving the communication skills of staff and the application of prevention measures for protecting the customers and guests from any risks, or perhaps even recruiting personnel that already possess this particular skill. This activity will help to improve the level of hotel service, thereby spurring the economy and increasing the island's gross domestic product through the tourism industry.

Research questions.

- 1- How the improvement of employees' communication skills can be utilized in generating customer satisfaction?
- 2- What is the role of management involvement in increasing employees' productivity?

Structure of the Thesis

The first part of the thesis is introduction to the study, which consists of background of the study that can also be called as thesis problem, the aim and objective, significance of the study as well as structure of the thesis. In this part, general information about the research topic will be given, this research will spot the light about the reason of performing this particular research, after that, all the chapters that this research study will be given.

Chapter 1 is providing information about the hospitality industry in (TRNC), where the research was conducted. Mentioning the background of the hospitality industry of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and speak about the hotel sector specifically.

Chapter 2 is literature review this part focuses on the debates that analyzed and took place in our field to explain the research problem, namely the relationship among study variables.

Chapter 3 is talking about methodology and limitations of the study. the techniques of collecting and interpreting data and see the possibility of

applying the findings on the hotel sector in North Cyprus. Then it will mention where the research paper is limited.

The last part is results and conclusion of the research study. The importance of the topic is highlighted by the theoretical and practical contribution made by the research, which will bring an important aspect to the studies of previous scholars. Moreover, suggestions for future study may provide good information for hotel managers and investors to the time when the Covid-19 situation finishes and, in addition of providing new insights to other scholars helping to expand generalizability of this research study.

CHAPTER 1

TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS

1.1. General Information

The Turkish Republic of North Cyprus is a hidden gem in the Mediterranean Sea, a real hidden treasure, due to its richness of heritage sites and magnificent beaches with white sands and blue water, full of virgin nature and wildlife. Those aspects have led the Northern part of the island to be a new tourist destination in the recent years. The island of Cyprus is the third biggest island in the East of the Mediterranean Sea, with a great geopolitical location. It stands in the middle among three continents and next to the modern trading road linking the East with the West, Cyprus is divided into two parts. The northern part is TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus), and the Southern part (Republic of Cyprus). TRNC is located in the north of the island and occupies around one-third of the whole island, with an estimation of 326000 people (Hatay, 2017). Because of the political situation of the island. Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a recognized country only by the Turkey government.

The climate in Cyprus is Subtropical Mediterranean with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. According to TRNC Public information office, the economy of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a free market type. The most significant share of GDP is coming from the service sector, (Ekici & Caner, 2017) agriculture, and, local light industries, where tourism is an essential component of the service sector, as it relays heavily on the tourism

industry as the primary source of income for locals as well as the government. There are vast types of tourism in Northern Cyprus like gambling, study, tourism in addition to the typical sun, sea and sand tourism.

The residence of the TRNC can be considered as an isolated population because there is no direct access to the world. The only country that recognizes the part of North Cyprus is Turkey, Hatay (2017). but, since 2006 the relations with southern have developed, and the movement restrictions have been removed between the north and the south. That refreshed the economy of the northern part due to the trade movement and the ease of transportation of the southern part tourism who are allowed to cross the buffer zone and visit the Northern part.

The tourism sector of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus can be mainly categorized into five main categories, such as Sun Sea and Sand, Educational, Retirement, and gambling tourism. In recent years the educational sector became one of the most important sectors contributing to the local economy more than 300,000,000\$ in every fiscal year. This sector serves mainly Middle Eastern due to the Arabic spring movement and the collapse of dictators' leaderships in the region, which destabilized the safeness and created a migration wave for the locals from those countries to find a safe place for them and their children after them. Turkish citizens moved to North Cyprus mainly for work, as well as students from the African continent are residing in North Cyprus for educational purposes, however, recently the number of new students dropped down due to the increase in inflation rates which led to increasing in the living expenses, the decrease in educational quality, and the new rules of entering the country which the government put for the new student. Another reason for the declining the number of arrivals is the new COVID-19 breakdown which was the reason of restricting and controlling the number of new arrivals, the effect of the pandemic on tourism in North Cyprus. In addition of the dependency on distant online learning, this also will lead to a decrease in the number of students who left the country. When taking the aforementioned factors, this will lead to create a gap missing the contribution of this sector in the economy.

Due to its location, weather, and natural habitat. The Northern Republic of Northern Cyprus can be seen as a gambling destination from neighboring countries such as Israel, Turkey, Lebanon, Russia, South Cyprus and China, the contribution of this sector is not released into the economy (Scott & Asikoglu, 2015).

1.2 Geographical and Historical Information

The mass land of the TRNC is estimated as one-third of the island, covering 3.555 square kilometers from the total landmass, neighboring Turkey from the North, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine from the East, the Republic of Cyprus from the South. The island is located in a strategic place politically and geographically, due to this fact, the island has suffered over the years from different sovereignty control, Ottomans Empire (1571-1878), and after that, Great Britani took over the island (1878-1959). (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021)

The Republic of Cyprus was declared in 1960 and found a constitution that preserved the rights for both Muslims (majority Turks) and Christians (majority Greeks). The constitution adopted that both Muslims and Christians have a political right in the country, which led to the tensions between Muslims and Christians communities, in 1974. The ruling Junta of Greece tried to take over the island, Turkey used constitutional right to fight back and took over the Northern part of the island, ever since this incident, the two communities got apart socially and geographically.

1.3 Main Types of Tourism and their Effect on the Economy of TRNC

The tourism sector can be seen as an essential element of income, in spite of the geographical and natural resources potentials within the country, which can lead to a competitive tourism market. The tourism in the TRNC is offering a wide variety of different types of tourism, because of its geographical location and breath-taking scenery locations, the tourism sector can be divided into main four categories, educational, gambling, retirement, and SSS tourism (sea, sand and sun). The government tried to increase the SSS tourism in the

TRNC through running and advertisements campaigns to promote the tourism in the country, but still, the educational sector still takes the most significant piece of the pie.

As the recognition situation of the country, still the same since the end of the war, the TRNC does not have any direct access to trade freely. Turkey is the only trading gate to North Cyprus; all trades are made through/from Turkey, which is disturbing due to the time consumption and more costs are added to the trade.

1.3.1 Contribution of Educational Sector to TRNC Economy

In the year 2015-2016, the Northern part of Cyprus recorded 81000 students, out of a number there were 13770 Cypriots, and 67230 are foreigners (Deputy Prime Ministry And Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020), and each student of these foreigners spends in average 10.000 USD as tuition fees, plus, rents and living such as accommodation rents and food, expenditures yearly. That accounted as an annual contribution to the in total 672300000 USD.

According to the Figure 1, in the academic year, the number of foreigner students has increased by 66%, that means the economic contribution is nearly 1 billion USD in the year 2018 (Büke, 2018).

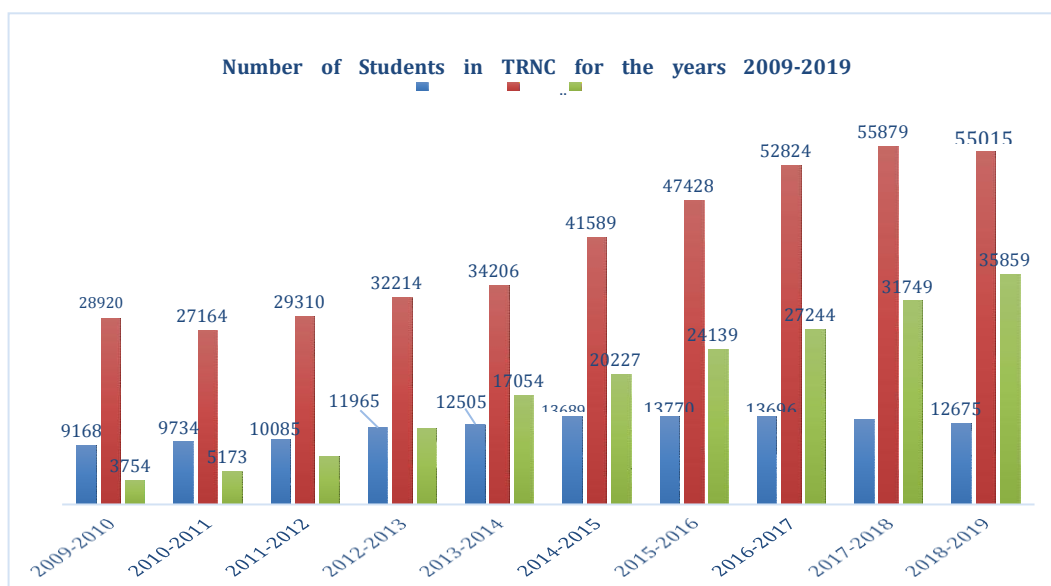


Figure 1: The Number of Students in TRNC, 2009-2019
Source adapted from Tourism planning Office Statistical yearbooks

According to an online article. The government of the TRNC predicted that the annual contribution of the higher education sector to rise up to one billion USD from students' expenses and tuition fees. (Daily Sabah, 2019).

1.3.2 Gambling Sector in TRNC

Gambling sector in TRNC is divided into casinos and betting offices. According to the world casino directory, there are 25 legalized casinos in the northern part of the island plus of 5 betting companies spreading their outlets in the majority of the living areas (world casino directory, 2020).

According to the numbers announced by Forbes in 2007, the gambling sector generated 900 Billion USD worldwide, 30% of their incomes go to the government as operation taxes. world casino directory, (2020). In the TRNC there are more than 25 active casinos, distributed around the whole country with the biggest share of casinos located in Kyrenia are with around 15 casinos, generating around 200 million USD each year. Gamblers are coming from Middle Eastern countries, South Cyprus and students whom it is forbidden for them to gamble. Scott & Asikoglu, (2015)

1.3.3 Sun, Sea and Sand, Retirement and Sex Tourism

According to figures published in 2008, there are 9000 people retiring in North Cyprus, and the majority is coming from England due to the good weather, low prices, good quality houses, and excellent health facilities, the estimation of the expenditures is 24000 pounds for each person every year. Unfortunately, this movement has drastically dropped after some problems emerged, especially about the house registrations between the two sides.

In spite of the fact that there are no official reports regarding the SSS tourists' arrivals in North Cyprus, it can be estimated from the occupancy rate of the hotels. In 2006 bed capacity in TRNC were 12.839 beds, in 2005, the number of overnight stays reached to 1.566.580 nights in total. Excluding 35% of these nights for tourists, which their motive is gambling, the remaining can be considered as SSS overnights that equals to 1018277 nights in total, in average the price is 80 USD that equals to 81.462.160 USD goes to the economy of TRNC. In addition to living expenses during the stay, which can

be estimated as half of the accommodation price, that will result in around 12.500.000 USD also added to the economy of Northern Cyprus.

1.4 Hotel Sector in TRNC

1.4.1 Hotel Demand

The tourism sector is vital for the TRNC economy. The current political situation of the country has forbidden tourism from showing the full potentials. The country is popular among the Turkish gamblers who are frequently coming to the northern part of the island for gambling and relaxation. In addition to the foreigners' majority coming for the weather, they do not have in their countries plus the low prices comparing for their income in their country.

The average of nights sold by hotels in North Cyprus is a good indication of the impact of tourism on the economy in total. The more is the tourists stay in the country, and the higher their expenditures will be, this will lead to an increase in the induced effect of tourism into the economy.

1.4.2 Hotel Supply

Bed capacity has increased drastically between 2005 and 2015. The number have doubled in numbers, in addition to the increasing in the number of accommodation establishments due to the roles and regulations taken by the government in 2005 regarding licensing casinos. A law has been passed and approved by the government in 2009, which states that no casino permit will be given unless it is five stars hotel and should have a bed capacity of 500 beds Sans Oyunlari Yasasi (Gambling Law) 31/2009.

In 2015, the total number of bed capacity was over 16000, comparing to 10000 beds in the year 2000. At the beginning of the new millennium, the starred hotels dominated the market for the past 15 years. Although the starred hotel share has decreased after 2006 due to the increasing numbers of touristic bungalows and second-class holiday villages.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Importance of Communication Skills.

Communication is the means by which the information is being transmitted from one party to another, from the sender to the receiver. The communication is successful when the receiving end is on the same wave with the sender (Newstorm, 2011). The communication process has seven steps, where the first one is the source, which is the sender, second, the message, it is the information desired to be transferred to the other. The third is encode, it is the transformation of the information into something the other end can decode and understand, the fourth step is channel, which is the way of transferring the message. The fifth is receiving, when the other part gets the message, and then starts to decode the message to understand it, and then the seventh and final step is feedback, is to give the feedback of the received message.

Communication consists of two main components, verbal communication and non-verbal communications. Verbal communications are used in everyday life communications. Such as speaking, listening and understanding. This type of communication is only 7 percent of our daily communications, while 38 percent is vocal elements and 55 percent for facial expressions (Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967).

Non-verbal communication includes everyone movement expect using words, anything that can convey the message, face expression, hand gestures, dances and fashion is considered as non-verbal communication (Mandal, 2014). Non-verbal communication includes any communication done with the

body, subconsciously or consciously, body posture, hand gestures, a gaze of the eye, and paralinguistic (Argyle, 1969), the behavior of self-touching or touching others, and environmental boosters such as the scent, the colors also considered as non-verbal communication (Knapp, 1972).

Non-verbal communications can be divided into three main categories, semiotics, Proxemics, and Kinesics. Semiotics is defined as the study of the relation between the signs and their meanings. Proxemics is the science of distance between two individuals having a conversation, it changes from one culture to another, and it is different depending on the environment that it is happening in, for example, the distance between two people having a business meeting is different in Japan from what is acceptable in the United Kingdom. While kinesics deals with everybody movement, body postures, the expressions of the face, the way of walking (Otu, 2015).

The sensory channels, a combination of verbal and non-verbal, can categorize the non-verbal communication and, the situation that requires this communication to be done. Sensory channels are divided into visual sense, olfactory sense and tactile. Those categories are verbal-vocal, non-verbal-vocal, and, non-verbal non-vocal (Poyatos, 1977).

Body gestures show the close relationship between verbal and non-verbal communications, cultural gestures as the Japanese bow for greeting, the hand positioning in "Namaste", touching noses when two men greeting in Persian Gulf region, smile while handshake. These behaviors are part in the communication and are interpreted subconsciously by the showing affection or feelings, those also can help to know when the speech starts and ends, is the person trying to explain more or finish faster (Ekman & Friesen, 1969).

Non-verbal communication creates an environment that defines the time and the place to use it. Cues will emerge in terms of what to use and by whom towards whom (George & Jones, 2008).

As Ekman and Friesen (1969) claim, there are five functions that specifies non-verbal Communication: Repetition, Contradiction, Complementation, Accent, and, Regulation. The non-verbal communication is not something that was invented by anyone. It is a result of developing in the process of being human using multi-channel methods to communicate, both languages and paralinguistics (Birdwhistell, 1970).

The branch of knowledge, which deals with the space that should be taken between two people, is called Proxemics, the Proxemics has increased the number of non-verbal communications and gave the scientists the space to make experiments on non-verbal behaviors, Proxemics has increased the importance of non-verbal communication and revolutionized ideas, and it is assumptions. Thus, non-verbal became a wide area for experimental investigations (Hall, 1976).

Hall's approach is exceptional includes integrated cultures, which considers culture as bio-basic with a root in natural exercises and from an ethnographic and robust point. In spite of the fact that the human is a culture-producing creature, within the farther past, there was no human and no culture. People into culture expounded this infra-culture. Hall's fundamental examinations centre on men utilizes of boundaries. Each living creature has physical a space that isolates it from the surrounding environment. That space is well recognized in all social orders. Utilize of space is closely connected with status as well. He finds that truly thousands of our encounters educate us subconsciously that space communicates.

Individuals in all societies utilize non-verbal communication as a mean to communicate. A few expressions are specific to the people in a specific geographical area. Cross-cultural similitude and significant contrasts in body dialect exist and the degree of the body dialect utilization and translation. The head movement for "Agree" and "Disagree" are different among societies. The physical separate kept between two people having a conversation also changes from culture to culture. Utilize of signals changes with person mental factors. Personality strikingly affects the quality, amount, and sort of motions utilized. Also, the growing-up environment plays a role in developing non-verbal communication skills. For example, Girls raised without fathers show more self-touching behavior than girls raised with fathers do (Mandal, 2014). Keeping up eye contact can pass on a message of openness or candor, whereas looking down may be a sign of humility. Looking up could be a sign that the person just are attempting to keep in mind information, and unwillingness for eye contact may be a sign that the person simply is not telling the truth (Gabor, Baritz, & Repanovici, The study of stimulated visual behaviour related to nonverbal communication, 2015).

Body Language quirks may influence work environment situations. In a work organization environment, when there is a diversity of societies, different state of minds, ages, sexual orientation, and feelings are demonstrated. For illustration, a sort of nonverbal communication is expressed through touch. Distinctive societies perceive this behavior as a disturbing thing to do. Social touching depends intensely on the personal culture background from; for, within the United States, it is common to end a business meeting with a handshake, where in Japan it is standard to end a conversation with a slight bow and a handshake with two hands (Henley, 1980).

A survey conducted by Gut, Wilezewski, and Gorbaniuk (2017) in a Chinese company to measure the cultural differences, generalization and communication, the members had negative feelings toward social communications that are one-sided but had positive attitudes toward intercultural interactions. Participants were delighted and having social interactions with individuals from other societies, but disdained the stretch that it caused inside the workplace. All members communicated that culture is imperative to everybody, but they have experienced negative impacts from differing social qualities. Communication may be compulsory and is regularly lost through the intelligent of distinctive societies. Participants were delighted during the interactions with individuals from other different cultures, but they did not like the stress that it caused inside the organization. All participants commented that culture is a primary thing for everybody, but they have experienced a negative impact on social in cultural interaction. In this case, communication is regularly lost through the intelligent of the distinctive societies, when people from different cultural background come together in interaction, it is opportunity to perceive problems from different angles and expand the suggested solutions (Gut, Wilczewski, & Gorbaniuk, 2017). This might lead to an increase in employees' loyalty and decrease employees' turnover rate in accommodation organization.

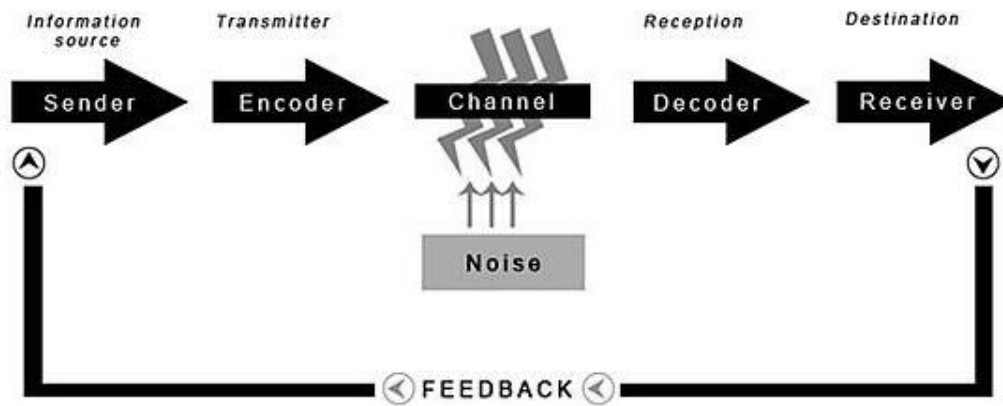
Body language, hand gestures, facial expressions, the tone of voice and the speed rate of speech can convey the message to the target audience to convince them (Cesario & Higgins, 2008). While leaning backwards, speak slowly, tapping hand on the table, the posture of sitting, this action conveys a

message that the target needs consider the message carefully Cesario ,(2008).

A study done by Henley (1980), this study concluded that women interpret non-verbal behaviours more than there peer men (Henley, 1980). One practical field is using the interpretation of non-verbal communication heavily is the criminal justice field, although, working in this field is very rewarding, but it can be dangerous at the same time. When law enforcement officers are dealing with criminals, they need to know how to interpret the body language of the suspects, which they are interrogating. Law officers should be aware of body language through this phase. Officers should utilize their body language intentionally and understand the suspect's body language to have the best outcome of interrogating. For example, in terms of non-verbal communication forms, in semiotics, crossing hands is a sign of defence or resistance, in the Proxemics is important, if the suspect leans toward the interrogator, it shows confidence or aggressiveness, in kinesics as body posture, hand gestures, facial expressions, if the person who is being interrogated is in a hysterical way that means the suspect is guilty if he is in an emotional condition that means the interrogated is innocent (Otu, 2015).

2.1.1 Shannon-Weaver Theory of Communication

The present thesis extends the application of the Shannon-Weaver Theory of Communication (SWTC) in advanced employees' communication skills and guest satisfaction by testing the moderating role of management involvement. According to SWTC, communication consists of five main constructs, which are sender, encoder, decoder, receiver and feedback, noise is considered as an additional construct (Fig. 4) (Richard G. , 2013).



*Figure 2: Shannon-Weaver Communication Model
Source adapted from Shannon & Weaver (1949)*

The theory states that sender is an individual who makes up the message and chooses the method of communication. Encoder is the process of turning thoughts into communication, namely by using computer, cell phone, face to face or any other method. Decoder is the process of receiving the message and translating it into thoughts. Receiver is an individual receiving the message. Feedback is the way of understanding by the sender from the receiver how successfully the message was transmitted. Noise can be considered as something that may interrupt the delivery of the message (Reuben & Steward, 2006).

Based on SWTC and from this research point of view, studying the model communication is a fundamental process, since by understanding all chain links of communication, employees have a higher chance to improve their skills. Moreover, employees will know in advance the obstacles they may face that will result in preventing effective communication with customers, which in turn may leave hotel guests misunderstood and unsatisfied. We propose that management involvement enhances the impact of AECS on GS, namely when hotel management takes control of the development of communication skills of hotel staff, they will apply the right methods of communication with guests, which will contribute to improving the overall service of the hotel subsequently leading to guest satisfaction

2.2 Customer Satisfaction

The days of generating a satisfied customer by smiling and the word "please" or "with pleasure" are over, the living on a globalized world and competitive markets have affected the consumer behavior, and the customers are perspective for the provided services, especially in the tourism industry.

The tourism industry is growing steadily. However, after the pandemic started, this grows has been restrained. Tourism sector was the first to take the hit by it, many countries closed their doors for tourist arrivals limiting their arrivals with their own citizens, cancelling flights to another countries, and preventing their citizens from travelling abroad, people changed their travel plans and so on. Tourism industry can be seen as one from the biggest industries in the world if not the biggest, because of its vast subdivisions. Which is vital for the governments to increase the country's GDP and bring more foreign exchange into the economy of the country. To ensure the continuation of an establishment to generate more profit and more wealth to the locals. The accommodation establishment needs to gain customer loyalty and trust by providing a high standard service through knowledgeable management and customer wise employees to meet the customer needs and desires and gain a loyal customer who will come again seeking to be served again.

The establishment's management should consider the importance of the powerful and nearly free advertisement tool which is the word of mouth (WOM). If the management was successful in meeting the customer's needs, and the customer is satisfied with the product or services provided, the establishment will gain this powerful tool, otherwise, the establishment will lose this by not meeting the expectations and this will lead to a loss of a potential customers.

According to Peters (2005), the employees play a major role in customer satisfaction by ensuring that the needs and expectations are met, the establishment's management should seek consistent feedback from the customers about the employees, and depending on the feedback the managers should set the standards of an ideal employee (Peters, 2005).

As indicated by (Mahony & Morrison,2002), the level of satisfaction of a hotel's customer and the level of product quality can be measured by the level of responsiveness of the employee and how fast is the employees are responding for the customer with their requests and how they are doing it.

Guzzo and Dominici (2010) stated that the creation of value of the customer is a result of the customer satisfaction business philosophy, and to obtain the leadership of the market they should maintain their customer satisfaction and create a loyalty relationship with guests through the continues development of their staff through training programs. Jana and Chandra (2016) illustrate that the customer perceives the value depending on what is given and what is taken. In marketing perceived value has been defined as an overall assessment made by the customers on the utility of a product or service based on the perception of what is received and what is given. In today's world, the population of the world is increasing, and with this increase, the needs for the people have increased as well. This led to the creation of a competitive market in each field. In the tourism sector, it has become a necessity to know and point at each customer's specific needs (Homburg, Wieseke, & Bornemann, 2009). In order to meet these needs and desires, the organizations are putting a tough effort and implant strategies to achieve this goal. As the research done by (Machuca, Aguilar-Escobar, & Zamora, 2007) which looked in the field of operations management (OM), the establishment's effort has been focused increasing and optimizing the service delivery process to gain more profit and to not only meet the customer needs, but to go beyond this and exceed the customer's expectations.

As a result of the creation of value for the customers, believe in it and work hard to achieve it, customer satisfaction has become a business philosophy.

Establishments within the accommodation sector have two very critical aspects in the hotel industry, these factors are quality service and customer satisfaction, those two aspects determine the success and the continuation of the establishment (Gronroos, 1990).

In the old days, tourism was viewed as a natural result of resources, environmental and social. Back at that time, management did not play any role

in the creation of the demand process or influence it at any level. In a study done by LeBlanc and Nguyen (1996), the results suggest that the marketing effort should focus more on the environmental surroundings of the establishment to draw the attention of potential new customers.

Customer needs and desires have developed over time. Because of increasing the tourist demand, the higher standards the establishments are offering. However, in recent years the marketing strategies tend to attract different types of customers to the establishment to achieve the highest possible occupancy rate (Guzzo, Customer Satisfaction in the Hotel Industry: A Case Study from Sicily, 2010). Thus, the facilities are providing high-end service and developing strategies to increase customer satisfaction and create a potentiality of the repetitive customer (Barsky & Labagh, A strategy for customer satisfaction, 1992).

One of the most important things to do in order to move ahead of the competitors and acquire a more significant market share is customer loyalty. Accommodation establishments should provide a higher service standard for their customers (Guzzo, Customer Satisfaction in the Hotel Industry: A Case Study from Sicily, 2010).

According to Wuest, Tas, and Emenheiser (1996), the perception hotel characteristic can be defined as "the degree to which guests may find various services and facilities critical for their stay in a hotel", hotel characteristics such as hygiene, affordability, location, surroundings, facilities and safeness are critical attributes by the customers to determine the quality of the supplier (Barsky & Labagh, A strategy for customer satisfaction, 1992).

Service supplier should determine characteristics they need to obtain in order to affect the customer buying intention (Richard & Allaway, 1993). Those characteristics are essential components to affect customer purchase experience, post-purchase behavior of the tourist and the organization's most loved factor, which is word of mouth (WOM). With no expense, customer satisfaction leads to promote the establishment's reputation through customers' word of mouth, which considered as a cubed effect advertisement through World Wide Web and modern social media (Dominici, 2009).

In addition, in order to build a good relationship between service providers and customers. The management should:

- 1- Understand the importance of the role of customer satisfaction in keeping the establishment operating in order to achieve its financial goals.
- 2- Explore the vital accommodation facility characteristics that are important for the customer.
- 3- Conduct internal research with the customers to measure the level of customer satisfaction and to point at the establishment's weak points from a customer perspective from guests' point of view.
- 4- The importance of managers from different levels to involve in daily transactions within the establishment for more understanding for the level of service quality of the establishment and create a better picture of the establishment for employees and customers at the same time.

Customer satisfaction is considered as a start-up point for a long-term relationship between the customer and service provider. It is a starting point of building customer loyalty. This is why the management should focus on the primary source of income and the main source of increasing the establishment's reputation, which is customer satisfaction. This will lead to:

- 1- Increase in repetitive customer
- 2- Risen the WOM as a free advertisement tool for better reach to potential customers;
- 3- Increase in the profits and a guarantee of the organization's cash inflow.

2.2.1 Customer satisfaction systematic review in 5 years pre-covid-19 (2015-2019) & during pandemic of covid-19.

- Pre-covid-19 pandemic.

A study done by (Manhas & Tukamushaba, 2015) concluded that the way of achieving customer satisfaction in hotel industry is going directly through the employees and the values if vision and mission of the establishment. Furthermore, this will find a suitable environment for the employees to perform in a more professional way to achieve customer satisfaction. As well, this study offers an understanding of the importance of customers' common expectation

during their stay and how it reflects on the brand image of the establishment to increase the customer satisfaction which will lead to more reparative customers. On the other hand, a study has been done in India on 494 employees working in three- and four-stars hotels in the area of Uttarakhand. This study aimed to spot the perceived value of employee training programs from two perspectives, management and employees. The finding of this study can be summarized that there is a strong link between the quality of services provided to the customers and the training conducted by the employees. As well as providing suggestion of practical application for training programs in the aforementioned area (Dhar, 2015).

(Terglav, Ruzzier, & Kase, 2016) states that customer satisfaction within the hotel industry relies heavily on the level of management's perception for their employees and the importance of the value of the brand of the establishment in the perception of the employees. This study results in showing the importance of the role of top management in the internal branding process and how it will increase the emotional commitment for the employees to extract the employees' potentials to increase the service quality provided. (Su, Swanson, & Chen, 2016) tested the integrated model to measure the perception of Chinese tourists' service quality and the services that it is provided for them. Also, this study explores the links between the customer satisfaction and the re-purchase behaviors for the customers. This study findings support the proposed integrated model. The following study focused more on the financial gains of the establishment through the role of top management practices on frontline employees' behavior with the customers. The findings of this study support the service-profit chain theory which states that the good practices of top management will result in the creation of Harmonious environment through the middle class management, practical force, then the customer which will result in creating good reputation of the establishment and will increase the cash-flow (Qian, Lin, & Wu, 2016).

With focusing more on the selling channels and its role in increasing the volume of customers in small and less known hotel (Tian & Wang, 2017) reveals the role of electronic customer relation management application in showing the unseen services of the establishment for current customers and attract more

potential customers to the establishment. This study of e-CRM has found that applying an efficient CRM system in the hotel will help the establishment to be located in the market of their segment. While (Lin, Wu, & Ling, 2017) focused more on the value of the empowerment and power delegation to the employees in the generation of loyalty value within the staff and utilize this ability to gain more reputation for the establishment and increase the quality services offered by the representatives of the establishment.

It is vital for each and every establishment to know their employees. (Ha & Lee, 2018) studied the importance of the online reviews has been done on social network platforms and review sites. This ability is used by establishment's management to determine the perception of consumers about the quality service provided after their visit and to get to know more the trends of potential customers and to know exactly what is the perception of potential future consumers demands and needs.

The world is changing around us day by day. The companies with no physical assets is taking over the old fashioned companies (e.g. Uber, ghost kitchens, and Airbnb), the need for good service with low price aroused after the general economic situation in the countries. Airbnb is a new way for cheap accommodation around the world. (Ju, Back, Choi, & Lee, 2018) studied the service quality attributes that determines the service quality and customer satisfaction in peer to peer accommodation industry. while (Hu, Zhang, Gao, & Bose, 2019) focused more on the consumers actual complaints on review web sites -such as trip advisor- to identify the problems within the establishment. This study concluded that in 5 stars hotel the majority of complaints about services provided, while less hotels complaints were about facility related issues.

As seen majority of research papers focuses mainly on the customer/consumer satisfaction through various aspects. Since tourism industry is vast and was growing gradually but fast tempo, the aspects which should be taken into consideration from the establishment is changing every day and becoming more complex. From this relevant literature most of the authors and researchers did not provide a clear definition and measurement

tools of customer satisfaction because the fact that each and every customer have different perception about the quality of services provided.

- During covid-19 pandemic

Title	Segment of Industry	Geographic Location	Approach	Author
Pandemics, tourism and global change: A rapid assessment of COVID-19	Airlines, Accommodation, sports events, restaurants, cruises	Global	Comparing COVID-19 with previous public health crises	(Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020)
Hedging feasibility perspectives against the COVID-19 for the international tourism sector	Tourism expenditure, inbound and outbound tourism, conference tourism, pilgrimage tourism, virtual reality tourism	Global	Comparing COVID-19 with previous public health crises	(Menegaki, 2020)
How are small businesses adjusting to COVID-19? Early evidence from a survey	Restaurant industry	United States	Conducting surveys	(Fang, et al., 2021)
COVID-19 crises and tourist travel risk perceptions	Inbound and outbound tourism, tourist's hygiene and safety	China	Conducting surveys	(Mizumoto & Chowell, 1 Transmission potential of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) onboard the Diamond Princess Cruises Ship, 2020)
Social costs of tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic	The social cost of tourism	China	Conducting surveys	(Mizumoto, Kagaya, Zarebski, & Chowell, 2020)
Effect of COVID-19 on preference for private dining facilities in restaurants	Private dining facilities in restaurants	United States	Conducting surveys	(keunKim & JacobLee, 2020)

COVID-19, aftermath, impacts, and hospitality firms: An international perspective	Hospitality firms including hotels, restaurants, bars, winery, and agritourism	Global	Conducting surveys	(Alonso, et al., 2020)
Tracking labor market developments during the COVID-19 pandemic: A preliminary assessment	Hospitality job loss	United States	Measuring the impact of COVID -19	(Cajner, Crane, Decke, Puertolas, & Kurz, 2020)
how much did the tourism industry lost? estimating earning loss of tourism in the Philippines	Foreign visitor arrivals	Philippine	Measuring the impact of COVID -19	(Centeno & Marquez, 2020)
Assessing the Short-term Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Foreign Visitor's Demand for Turkey: A Scenario Analysis	Foreign Visitor Arrivals and Foreign Visitor's Demand	Turkey	Measuring the impact of COVID -19	(Günay, Bayraktaroğlu, & Özkul, 2020)
COVID-19: A nightmare for the Indian economy	Hospitality job loss	India	Measuring the impact of COVID -19	(Mehta & Swaroop, 2020)
A Survey on some of the global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic	Hotel industry, aviation industry	Global	Measuring the impact of COVID-19	(Priyadarshini, 2020)
How many infections of COVID-19 there will be in the "diamond princess"-predicted by a virus transmission model based on the simulation of crowd flow	Cruise industry	The Diamond Princess cruise ship	Developing simulation & scenario modeling	(Mizumoto, Kagaya, Zarebski, & Chowell, 2020)

Table 2. List of publications about the effect of Covid-19 pandemic during the year 2020

In these times which the world is facing, researchers are trying to study the possible outcome of the current pandemic and how it will change the world. The tourism sector is suffering because of this pandemic due to the travel restrictions and the characteristics of the tourism industry such as rigidity and sensitivity. Majority of those studies tried to measure the impact of covid-19 on the tourism industry through comparing various approaches, the literature from previous pandemics and imagining different scenarios based on different factors such as location, governmental policies, health policies, travel restrictions etc. this studies are trying to raise awareness to cope with the new normal that the world is witnessing.

2.3 Management Involvement

Management involvement can be defined as a wide range of high involvement management practices, such as self-managed teams, incentive pay schemes, and employer-provided training have been shown to boost firms' productivity and financial performance. The hotel industry is a multi-dimension industry. There are different aspects to determine the success of the institution. Therefore, there are a lot of different things to be considered by the manager, how to behave with employees, how to deal with customers desires and wants, what image the manager is drawing in the mind of the customers. One of the proudest terms used in organizations is "happy employee equals a happy customer". Tourism industry is using human resources intensively, and, due to the nature of hotel sector, low wages, long working hours, low benefit and great work insecurity, to maintain a low employee's turnover rate is a challenging and hard task to achieve by the organizations. Thus, managing a successful institution requires a manager has a set of skills to deal with different people, different cultural background, moreover, to know the impact of his/her behavior on the subordinates.

Hotel industry relies heavily on the human being as a resource of the continuation of money inflow, thus, to maintain the same staff is a managerial quest always appearing on the surface (Davidson, McPhail, & Barry, Hospitality HRM: past, present, 2011). To ensure the low turnover rate within

the organization is to make the employee feels connected to the organization. One of the measurements used to assure this connection is "job embeddedness", which suggests that there are combined forces that help the employee to stay at work and keep them away from leaving their jobs (Yao, Lee, Mitchell, & Burton, 2004). Those bonds are links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, & Sablinski, 2011). Links refer to the "formal or informal connection between the person and institution or other people". Fit can be defined as "an employee's perceived compatibility or comfort with an organization and with his or her environment", while sacrifice refers to "the perceived cost of material or psychological benefits that may be forfeited by leaving a job" (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, & Sablinski, 2011). As the amount of personal connection with team members increases, the organization loyalty will increase as simultaneously, when the organizational objective, plans and values are the same for the employee, this employee shows more job embeddedness and vice versa when the plans and visions do not match with the employee that will drive them to leave the organization (Karatepe, The Importance of Supervisor Support for Effective Hotel Employees: An Empirical Investigation in Cameroon, 2014).

Depending on the organization's human resource system, the employees show their job satisfaction and developing behavioral reaction. Human resource attribution is defined as "causal explanations that employees make regarding management's motivations for using particular human resource practices" (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2008).

To increase the employees' job-embedded, the organization needs to invest in their staff (e.g. training programs, incentives, and work-life balance, the employees will perceive positive work attribution in a good way, this will result in increased job-embedded and will reflex positively on job performance (Tracy, 2012).

Jon embeddedness reinforces the employees' desire to keep working for an organization and help managers to keep talented employees and benefit from their talent (Holtom, Mitchell, & Lee, Increasing human and social capital by applying job embeddedness theory, 2006). Supervisor behavior towards

subordinates related casually to employees' job embeddedness. Supervisor support, related training programs, opportunity to increase self-actualization will lead to increase of employees' job embeddedness (Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenney, & Taylor, 2009).

Incentives, the delegation of power and training programs are perceived as proof of the organization's commitment to increase the service quality and increase the front-line employees' job embeddedness (Karatepe & Karadas, 2012). Disagree with the supervisor can cause to decrease in employees' intention of staying on the job and cause a negative shock to the employees (Holtom, Burston, & Crossley, How negative affectivity moderates the relationship between shocks, embeddedness & worker behaviors, 2012).

In industries that intensity, labor force, scarce resources, rigidity, brutal competition, and, the fast-technological development, these factors make it easy for the service sector to have a high turnover rate. The retention of a loyal employee will be in its best when the employees feel like they are working for their own company (Gil, Hudson, & Teresa, 2006).

Significant role lied on the front-line employees in delivering the quality service of the customer while having substantial interaction with the customer (Yavas, Karatepe, Babakus, & Avci, 2004). Under these reasons as mentioned earlier, managers are always encountering a problem, which is keeping the skilled front-line employees (Karatepe, Kilic, & Isiksel, An Examination of the Selected Antecedents and Outcomes of Work-Family Conflict and Family-Work Conflict in Frontline Service Jobs, 2008). Since the front-line employees have an extreme role in representing the organization and determining the level of quality offered for customers, the organization should perceive them as strategic partners in the process of service delivery. However, since the deal here with the human factor, mistakes can happen, and failures can be encountered, this why organizations should make the right procedures not to make the same mistake again (de Ruyter & Wetzels, 2000), or the organization will face with the consequences like a bad reputation or even lose loyal clients or create unhappy customer (Davidow, 2003).

The front-line employees must perceive the organization's good intentions and desires as they are; those desires should be defined from the employees' perspective. Otherwise, the organization's desires are worthless. Management commitment can be defined as "employees' appraisal of an organization's commitment to nurture, develop, support, and reward its employees for achieving service excellence" (Babakus, Yavas, & Karatepe, The Effects of Job Demands, Job Resources and Intrinsic Motivation on Emotional Exhaustion and Turnover Intentions: A Study in the Turkish Hotel Industry, 2008).

In a research done in 2003 listed the best Human Resources practices to increase employees' job satisfaction are, which are related training programs, deligation of power and incentive systems. Those practices can be seen as a determent indicator for organization commitment towards its front-line employees to increase their performance and give their best in order to deliver high-quality service to the customers (Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, & Avci, The Effect of Management Commitment to Service Quality on Employees' Affective and Performance Outcomes, 2003).

Another study shade the light on the organization's human resources management practices and employees' performance. This study claims that there are other indicators in addition of the aforementioned indicators to show management commitment towards its employees which are: training and development, contingent pay and incentives, empowerment and job involvement (Boselie, Dietz, & Boon, 2005).

It is crucial for accommodation organizations to handle customers' complaints as the guests are more involved emotionally in the service provided (Smith & Bolton, 2002).

2.3.1 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) provides perspective on the relationship between advanced employees' communication skills and guest satisfaction as well as between guest satisfaction and repetitive guests. According to the Social Identity Theory, there are certain circumstances in which people think of

themselves as individuals (ME) or as a part of a group (WE) that can be predicted and anticipated results. (Figure. 3).

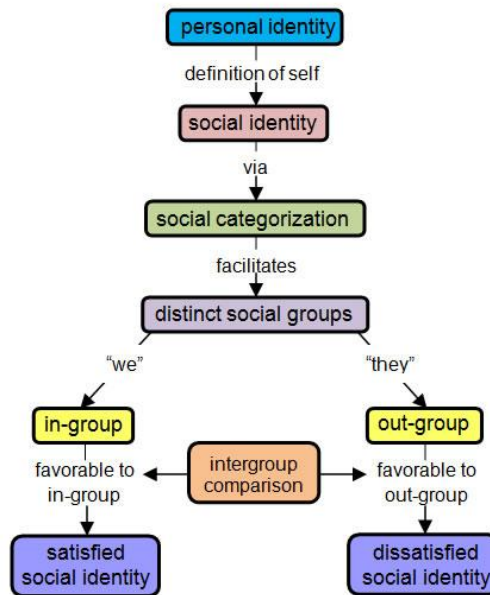


Figure 3: Social Identity Theory Model
Source was adapted from Tajfel & Turner (1979)

In the early '70s and after a chain of studies done by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues, participants were divided to groups in a non-systematic and random way, when they were asked to assign marks to other research participants; they chose to give more points to people within their groups than to people from other groups. The interpretation of group study shows that only dividing subjects into groups is enough for them to stop thinking individually and start thinking as a part of a group, that means the individuals started thinking in an intergroup way rather than central way. The theory of social personality was developed as an integrative theory in the medical psychology field to look deeply in behavioral motivation and ended up focusing on intergroup relations and conflict, so from the beginning it was called as "Social Identity Theory of Intergroup relations".

Based on the SIT there are three psychological factors taken into considerations: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. *Social categorization* is the amount of which people tend to perceive themselves in terms of individual and in terms as a part of a group,

and how people perceive individual people from the same group instead of divided from the group. *Social identification* refers to the fact that generally people do not look at social events as an outer observer, instead, their perception about their social identity and how they relate to others involves the way they perceive individuals and groups around them. The process of which the individuals determine the value of a particular social group is called as *social comparison*. For example, university professors can perceive themselves in a higher social position than high school teachers, and high school teachers can perceive their social position as higher than the position of kindergarten teachers.

According to SIT, individuals, in our case hotel guests, are divided into different groups by gender, race and position; therefore, we imply that there are certain approaches to communicating with each group in a certain way. Based on the theory, when a guest comes individually or in a group, his/her behavior varies greatly. This is the reason we claim that hotel employees with advanced communication skills are more likely to find the right way to communicate with a guest from any social group, regardless of the fact that he/she may be alone or part of a group. In addition, when the right approach to guests has been found, they are more likely to be satisfied; therefore, they are more likely to become repetitive guests in the future.

2.4 Repetitive Customers

Generating repetitive customer has become increasingly important to the hotel industry because of the competition in the market. Establishments which are able to attract and keep they customers are more to ensure the continuation to their existence in the market (Choi & Chu, 2001). Generally, the longer the relationship between a service provider and the customer, the more profit the organization will generate (Sim, Mak, & Jones, 2008). The process of attracting new customers is costing seven times more than to keep a good relation with the already existed customer (Choi & Chu, 2001).

A study finding explain the result of maintaining the customer (customer retention), 5% increase in the number repetitive customer is responsible for a 25% to 125% in more profit generated because of the repetitive customers

(Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). New customers buy less than a long-term customer because they are not aware of the quality of the goods are being delivered for them. Repetitive customers also spread a good reputation for the company they are satisfied with. Thus, they are responsible for increasing the number of establishment's customer on behalf of service providers (Reichheld, Learning from customer defections, 1996).

It is important for the establishment's management to understand the relationship between customer satisfaction and repetitive customers in order to enhance this relation and increase the number of repetitive customers. Many studies have examined and reported a significant relationship between customer satisfaction and repetitive customers (Bolton, 1998; Cornin & Taylor, 1992). Sirgy and Taygi (1986) reported that there is a close association between repeat purchase behavior and the high level of customer satisfaction. Choi and Chu (2001) indicated the factors that influence customers to visit the same destination again. However, Skogland and Siguaw (2004) have reported that there is a weak link between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. Customer loyalty can be identified as a measure of a customer's likeliness to do repeat business with a company or brand. It is the result of customer satisfaction, positive customer experiences, and the overall value of the goods or services a customer receives from a business (sendpulse, 2020). There are different types of loyalty where a customer is using only one brand even if it is not the best option for him/her. Another type of customer loyalty as a social advocacy, for instance when a customer uses a product once and because of the level of satisfaction, they tend to be outspoken advocate.

2.5 The Role of Communication Skills on Hotels Guest Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction in the hotel industry can be achieved through different approaches, since the hotel industry is multi-dimensional; there is a lot to be taken into consideration by the management. Oliver (1980) defines customer satisfaction as "a measure of the discrepancy between customers' expectations before purchasing a service/product and their evaluation of this service/product after consumption". With those two factors, it can be seen that achieving customer satisfaction is not an easy work to do; managers should

work hard, supervise, and come up with new ideas. According to Nunkoo, and Teeroovengadum and Ringle, and Sunnasse (2019), there are ten dimensions should be taken into consideration during the phase of implementing new strategic plans to ensure the delivery of high-quality service.

Those dimensions are:

- 1- Customer satisfaction is influenced by the employees' behaviors and attitudes; attitude refers to the employees' characteristics such as honesty, social skills, care and tenderness (Czepiel, Solomon, & Surprenant, 1985).
- 2- Customer satisfaction is influenced positively by customer interaction as Ko and Pastore (2007) suggest that in the phase of delivering service process, the determination of customer satisfaction is the customer interaction with the service delivery person as well as customer interaction with other customers.
- 3- Customer satisfaction is influenced positively by the employees' experiences and knowledge. Employees' problem-solving skills and experience in helping the customer is crucial for the quality evaluation by the customer (Czepiel, et al., 1985).
- 4- Customer satisfaction is influenced positively by the quality of food and beverage services within the establishment (Akbaba, 2006). According to Chu and Choi (2000), the availability of different types and the variety food and beverages options within the establishment is related to customer satisfaction.
- 5- Customer satisfaction is influenced positively by the quality of the front desk. The quality of check-in procedures, escorting to the room, luggage service quality can contribute to the quality evaluation process (Hartline & Jones, 1996).
- 6- Customer satisfaction is influenced positively by the room quality. For example, room quality such as the space of the room, size of the bed, the softness of the mattress, room temperature, and covers cleanliness. Those factors can be considered as the most important factor, which determines the level of customer satisfaction (Min & Min, 1997).

- 7- Customer satisfaction is influenced positively by safety and security, in general means the of the customers safeness, but safeness of the property can be included from customer's belongings to the safety systems and cameras in the establishments can be included in this term (Nunkoo, Teeroovengadum, Ringle, & Sunnasee, 2019).
- 8- Customer satisfaction is influenced positively by sociability. Sociability can be defined as "a positive social experiences gained from a sense of fulfillment from being with other people whom all participate in the same activity and share the enjoyment. From this perspective, family members, friends, and other acquaintances should be considered significant social factors with regard to the accommodation's guests" (Baldacchino, 1995).
- 9- Customer satisfaction is influenced positively by the short waiting time, customers inside service establishments have certain expectations about the proper waiting time for service to be delivered such as check-in duration, food waiting, problem solving and handling customer complaints (McDougall & Levesque, 1999).

CHAPTER 3

COVID-19 AND ITS EFFECTS ON TOURISM INDUSTRY

Since the moment it started, the world has been under the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. World Health organization announced covid-19 as a pandemic in March 2020. In light of these events, we can assume that the modern world has never experienced such events that led the economy to go down globally. This led to the precautionary measures to limit international travel and prevent the countries from benefitting from its impact on the local economy (Sultanoglu, Baddal, Suer, & Sanlidag, 2020).

It all started in China when the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission announced the first case of Covid-19 or Coronavirus after a 60 years old man has been reported to have symptoms of it (China reports first death from mysterious outbreak in Wuhan, 2020). After that, the first case in the United States has appeared on January 20th after a businessman came back from a trip to Whan-China, and it was the first case appeared in the USA (Nedelman, 2020). Within this day, 200 more people with Covid-19 symptoms were reported in around the world (World Health Organization, 2020).

On the 22nd of January, several countries neighbouring China have started to imposed travel restrictions to China, starting with North Korea, where the North Korean government have restricted the tourist inbound to the country through China. (North Korea bans foreign tourists over China virus: Tour agency, 2020). On January 24th, China has restricted the travel between 13 cities populated with 35 million people in prevention measures to control the spread

of Coronavirus and within the same day. China applied restrictions for the tourist entering China.

The tourism industry is known as one of the most fragile industries around the world. Any change in politics, natural disasters, epidemics and terrorist attacks, or even bad weather conditions can change travelers' plans. With the end of the year 2019, a new disease was arising from the East of Asia. In the beginning, it was kept as a secret, starting from China and exported out to the world in the speed of light through travelers who were going to China and out of China without any restrictions from the Chinese government.

Tourism industry took the most vital hit among all the industries; the pandemic affected all tourism sectors. Some researchers suggest that the tourism industry needs three years to come back to where it was in pre-Covid-19

3.1 Covid-19 and Economic effect in the world.

Covid-19 is the cause of the damage that has never been seen in the tourism industry; international arrivals have dropped 60 to 80%, jeopardizing 120 million jobs worldwide. The estimation of tourism spending to get to the pre-covid-19 levels is until the year 2024.

The high speed of the spread of Covid-19 affected the global economy down to the near-paralyze state. It was causing millions of people to lose their jobs and live in a vague prediction of the future. Countries imposed travel restrictions to decrease the number of newly infected people with Covid-19—the report (Global Economic Prospect, 2020).

Until the recent date, no one knows how the economy's rescission will look or when it will happen. The global shares in the stock market have suffered during the pandemic. A massive shift in the market occurred, sold and bought by different companies; this may impact the ISAs (Individual savings accounts). The Nikkei and D.J industrial average has seen significant jumps down as the number of infected people grew (Jones, Palumbo, & Brown, 2020)(Figure 4).

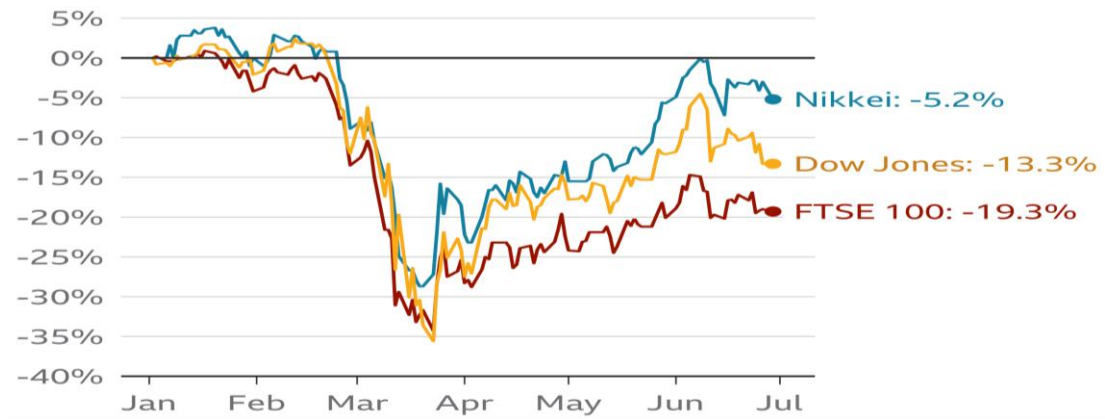


Figure 4 The impact of coronavirus on stock markets since the start of the outbreak
source: Bloomberg, 29 June 2020

The stock market has suffered, but the pandemic also had Reverberating waves that effected every economic activity in every country around the globe. The most significant industry has been affected is the Tourism industry due to travelling restrictions applied by the governments to contain the disease, people cancelling their business plans and holidays increased the number of cancelled flights, the following figure shows the number of flights during the pandemic comparing to the previous years, the steep drop in the year 2020 happened after the World Health Organization announced the Covid-19 as a global pandemic. Moreover, how it started recovering but in a very slow and small jumps. (Figure 5).

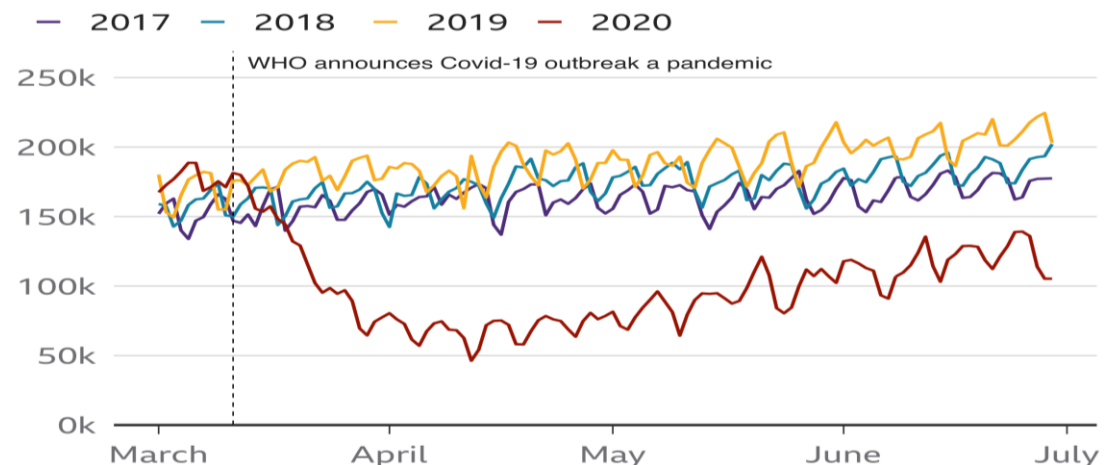


Figure 5 Number of total daily flight
source: flightradar24, 29 June2020.

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak and the reasons above, the tourism companies, airlines and hotels started laying people off their work to minimize their loses.

This resulted in an increase in the unemployment rate worldwide in all industries. The following visual representation shows the percentages of the unemployment rate around the world after the pandemic started, this is a result of companies laying off employees.

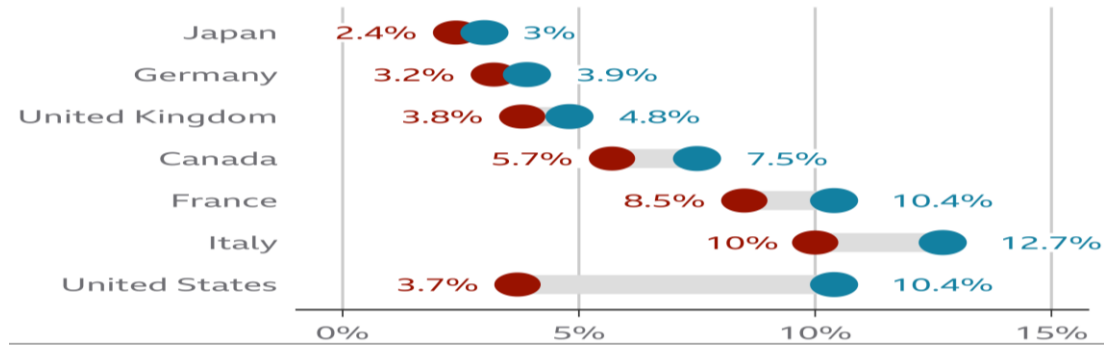


Figure 6 Yearly unemployment rate 2019-2020
Source: IMF, 29 June 2020.

The outbreak is the cause of the massive downfall of the customers' confidence and raised the re-evaluation of customer needs, the demand dropped down, and the buying abilities have shown decrease according to shopper Trak this was a result of the people staying at home to protect themselves from the getting infected by the new disease and due to work at home

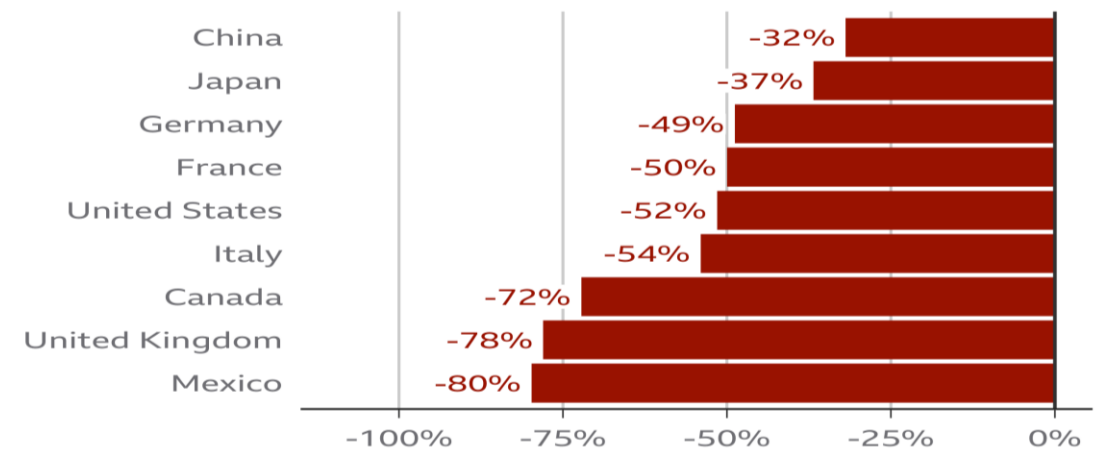


Figure 7 Annual percentage change of foot fall between 2014-2020
source: shopperTrak, 29 June 2020

Even by the World Health Organization (WHO), the borders and the checkpoints were getting closed from and to Turkey in this small unrecognized area. Moreover, every person who came to the island had to stay in quarantine for 14 days. On 21 March, Turkey announced that TRNC is a forbidden

country. As all of these closing the country from every side and the need of the virus's test kits, the countries that produce the kits making exporting it illegal and the prices of it in the black markets go so high; all of this made the coming of the banker with the test kits a legendary view after the fair of the repeating of the wars time.

3.2 Covid-19 And Global Tourism Changes.

The coronavirus is one of the biggest humanitarian crises throughout history, which triggered an economic crisis. Those crises were tangibles and immediate, where everyone started feeling them immediately. As known about the tourism industry, the main aim of it is to generate foreign exchange in the country, which later on will be invested in the development of the destination. Plus, the tourism industry is responsible for a big chunk of jobs and business of the host community

The tourism industry is responsible for 10 per cent of the world's GDP; in 2019, these numbers can be translated to be around 9 trillion USD, generating more than two times more than agriculture. Moreover, the industry is divided into a chain of supply, intermediaries and suppliers. Thus, governments played a small role in the tourism sector, with supervising and small-touch of managing (Constantin, Saxon, & Yu, 2020).

As one of the tourism characteristics is that the industry is a labour-intensive sector, with 10% of the labour force worldwide. It varies from one country to another. For example, the share of tourism labour in Iceland is 15.7% of the labour force, 9.8% in Portugal, and 13.5% in Spain (OECD, 2020).

Since the 8th of March, international aviation has been paralyzed. The sector took the first and the strongest hit led to the immediate shut down for attraction, public gathering, and travel restrictions. Tourism and tourism-related were the first to be introduced to contain the spread of the virus. As tourism needs people-to-people interactions, those measures were essential to reopen the businesses.

This paper deals with the change in the tourism sector from three dimensions:

3.2.1 Changing the perception of travellers about travelling during Covid-19.

The increasing of the importance of the tourism sector resulted from the development of airplanes and the spare time and increased income of people. The number of tourist arrivals increased to 1.4 billion compared to 25 million in 1950; the tourist industry's global income was equivalent to 1.7 trillion USD.

One of the critical characteristics of the tourism industry is fragility. The tourism industry is vulnerable against anything that threatens the safeness of any destination, such as terrorist attacks, epidemics, and natural disasters. Previous researches have investigated the negative relationship between epidemics and tourism demand (Pine & McKercher, 2004; Smith W. , 2006).

The recent pandemic has negatively affected the economies around the globe and the tourism sector due to its nature and the long incubation period. Thus, the governments-imposed travel restrictions, curfew in the cities, and to take new healthy measures represented in wearing a face mask in the closed area, limitation to the number of people within one place, the usage of hand sanitisers and disinfection procedures to decrease the number of infected people.

According to a study done by (Nazneen, Hong, & Ud Din, 2020). The study revealed that the number of travellers had decreased the anticipated number of outbound tourism for the Chinese spring festivals from 3 billion people to travel by different means, unfortunately, at the beginning of February, China was forced to impose travel restrictions in 72 states to control the disease (Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Situation Report - 18 7, 2020) The perception of travellers has changed on two different dimensions:

A- Travel Risk: the pandemic changed the travellers' attitude towards travel. Now the travellers are more concerned about their health, which caused a significant adverse effect on making decisions about travelling because of the uncertainty about travel arrangements and the fear of being infected. The disease has raised concern in the

world; travelling can expose the person to different threats. This resulted in decreasing in travel plans and taking decisions of travelling. Also, suppose there is a necessity to travel. In that case, people tend to travel solely by different means (driving) and not with groups anymore and stay the minimum days in the destination.

B- Hygiene and safeness: according to a study done in china by (Nazneen, Hong, & Ud Din, 2020), study results reveal that the Covid-19 situation has increased the peoples' awareness about the importance of hygiene and safeness of the hotels, recreational sites and public transportation facilities. Furthermore, to re-boost the tourism in any destination, and increase the level of touristic demand and supply, the government should work hand in hand with the relevant organizations to make sure that the procedures of regular disinfection of the touristic spots are met.

3.2.2 Changes in the hotel industry.

the need for information and guidance for the public is needed more than ever during the Covid-19 pandemic times to help and support the public to protect themselves and their beloved ones. The source of information should be trustable to make the public feel safe and secure when the environment around is uncertain. In the hotel industry, the establishments should keep their values and visions towards their employees, employees and society. Which are the fundamentals of the industry.

World health organization has established a new policy to help protect the establishments' workers and guests. Those policies can be used whatever the destination is. (World Health Organization, 2020). This policy describes how the establishments should manage day-to-day activities in the shade of the pandemic of Covid-19.

3.2.3 The introduction of Artificial intelligence to the industry and its role in protecting the employees and customers.

The pandemic of Covid-19 is a tragedy in human history throughout the years; millions lost their lives; billions are suffering from the consequences and the pandemic's effect. However, human nature is a survival nature, especially with all the academic development that humanity has achieved until the moment.

One of the positive effects of Covid-19 on the tourism industry is the need for AI (Artificial Intelligence) and robotics to perform human-to-human tasks to minimize the amount of human interaction to disintegrate the contamination factor. Thus the "recession of the Covid19 is an excellent opportunity for scholars to invent new technology and gave them new space for new research topics. The need is the mother of any invention, Thus, the need for a new systematic approach to minimize -not to alter- the human factor within the hotel industry to maintain the guests' health and the employees of the establishments.

The tourism industry's natures open for any changes towards more efficient and brilliant ways to produce delighted customers through artificial intelligence and robots (Ming-Hui Huang & Rust, 2018). the usage of new technology is a reliable representation new advantage of the service concept (Kuo, Chen, & Tseng, 2017).

Researchers have studied the effect of Artificial intelligent from different perspectives. For instance, Kuo *et al.* finding reveals that the implication of Artificial intelligence and robots can maintain the "sustainable competitiveness", they looked in-depth and identified six aspects that can affect the application and the development of service robots in the accommodation industry. These factors are: "government support, market development and the development of the robotic industry, hotel capabilities for technology development, rising money and talent development". (Kuo, *et al.*, 2017). Other researchers approached the robotic experience from a different and more narrow perspective. For example (Li, Bonn, & Ye, 2019).looked at Artificial intelligence and robotics in the hotel industry from different prepective where they found that employees' awarness about AI and robotics

helped the establishment to decrease the turnover intention. This link was moderated by the establishment's support for the psychological factors in the working environment. Besides, the AI experience on establishments' guests' experience as indicated by (Tung & Law, 2017) which predicted the future of the customer experiences with human-Artificial Intelligence interactions.

Health crisis as what the world is going through now because of covid-19, researchers need to look for new ways to investigate how to utilize the current robots and to develop more advanced ones integrated with Artificial intelligence to help hotel staff totally or to help them in the risky areas such as disinfecting the rooms after the guests leave or to monitor the high traffic areas within the establishments such as aisles and reception area. Besides the customer perspective when they have more contactless services, plus the option of having less human contact while receiving the hotel services.

3.3 Measures by TRNC Government to decrease the spread of Covid-19.

On the 8th of march 2020, a German tourist group arrived to North Cyprus, among them an patient who has the Covid-19 symptoms, all the members of the touristic group and everyone who dealt with them, 800 people were quarantined in three establishments in Famagusta which were rented by the government for such situation, after making the required tests, the infected female was diagnosed with the coronavirus with another person who was 82 years old. They were hospitalized afterword. The early detection of this patient was a lucky strike which allowed the government to control the spread of the virus in the country.

With the announcement of the first coronavirus case in North Cyprus, the public were terrified and people started demanding for a full curfew to protect themselves and beloved ones. It was a luck strike for the government to find the first case of Covid-19 in the country. The government afterwards took fast action and imposed a series of rules to prevent the spread of the virus on the island. It can be summarized as following (Figure1):

- 1- Majority of the public sector with few exceptions were considered on administrative leave.
- 2- All shops, betting offices, sport venues and entertainment centers except of shops which provide primary needs for the public such as bakery, supermarkets, pharmacies and petrol stations were closed until other notice.
- 3- To close worship houses, forbid funerals, weddings and all sport events.
- 4- Restrictions on arrival to the country, only Cypriots and who has legal permission in North Cyprus was allowed to enter the country, after signing a pledge to self-quarantine themselves for 14 days. Whoever do not comply with the pledge, legal actions were taking place under the communicable diseases law No 45/2018.
- 5- Locals who are studying abroad and citizens to be repatriated to the country with a charter flight and to be quarantined in hotels for 14 days and to make new tests for antibodies and polymerase chain reaction (PCR) after the 14 days.
- 6- Impose a full curfew in the country from 21:00 until 06:00, until a further notice.
- 7- Mandatory use of face mask, face shields and hand sanitizers in all public places.
- 8- Three villages were quarantined after identifying cases in the area of Karapasias.

despite all the precaution measures were taken rapidly in North Cyprus, the number of infected people was increasing after the identification of the first case (Table2), until the 4th of May, when the last patient left the Burhan Nalbantoğlu state hospital after recovery from coronavirus.

Total number of tests performed in Northern Cyprus:	15 428
Total number of positive cases:	108
Nationality:	Northern Cyprus citizens: 76 German citizens: 31 Turkmenistan citizen: 1
Discharged patients:	29 (German citizens) 1 (Turkmenistan citizen) 73 (Northern Cyprus citizens)
Ongoing treatment:	1 Northern Cyprus citizen
Covid-19 related deaths:	2 German citizens 2 Northern Cyprus citizens

Table 3 SARS-CoV-2 cases identified in the Northern Cyprus from 9 March to 4 May 2020.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

4.1 Methodology

This study aims to discover the relationship of frontline employees' communication skills on the procedure of generating customer satisfaction in the hotel sector in North Cyprus. The literature in Chapter 2 supports the direct relationship between communication skills and hotels guest satisfaction. Also, this research focuses on the consequential damage of the novel coronavirus and to show its effects on the tourism industry in the TRNC. It does so by clarifying the exact nature of the problem to be solved. The literature in Chapter 3 shows the effects of COVID-19 on the tourism industry. The discussion section compiles the two and shows that communication skills are even more important during the catastrophic events the world is going through.

4.2 Method of Research

This study is depending on online information gathering about communication skills, customer satisfaction, management involvement, and coronavirus of recent papers. A qualitative document analysis (QDA), which is defined as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), Qualitative document analysis approach was used to investigate the relationship of communication skills and the management

involvement in customer satisfaction by gathering information from primary sources. As part of this research, a comprehensive literature review has been undertaken. Knowledge used in this study is mostly obtained from books, journals, conference papers, reports and master's degree/doctoral theses.

More specifically, the information in this study were gathered from different online sources where it has been read and analyzed in deep to provide a clearer picture of the relationship between communication skills and the level of customer satisfaction and the overall stay-in experience in the hotels of Northern Cyprus.

4.3 Limitations

Initially this study aimed to examine the relationship of communication skills and customer satisfaction in hotel industry in North Cyprus. The plan was to use qualitative research utilizing computerized analyzing systems and focusing on the communication dimension and how it affects the customer experience. Unfortunately, coronavirus hit in the beginning of March 2020 and because of the uncertainty of the situation the researcher decided to delay the research until a light at the end of the tunnel appears. This did not happen, unfortunately; therefore, the methodology of the study had to be changed to Qualitative Document Analysis approach (QDA). The limitations are: first, since Covid-19 is new topic, the lack of recent qualitative and quantitative data about the subject to lead this study. Secondly, the lake of official statistical data about the tourism in North Cyprus.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The Relationship between Communication Skills and Hotels Guest Satisfaction

Communication skills have a direct relationship with hotels guest satisfaction level. The better the communication skills, the higher the satisfaction level of hotel guests. Honesty, social skills, care and tenderness are the set of behaviors that hotel employees could utilize in order to increase hotel guest satisfaction (Czepiel, Solomon, & Surprenant, 1985). Interaction quality is determined during the service encounter (front desk, food & beverage, room service) and customers' perception of the interactions which take place during this period are directly dependent on the behavior and attitude of hotel employees (Ko & Pastore, 2007). Employees' problem-solving skills and experience in helping the hotel guest positively influence customer satisfaction (Czepiel, et al., 1985). The quality of the front desk, check-in procedures, escorting to the room, luggage service quality all contribute to customer satisfaction (Hartline & Jones, 1996). Sociability of employees, or the positive social experiences gained from a sense of fulfillment from being with other people whom all participate in the same activity and share the enjoyment add to the stay-in experience of hotel guests (Baldacchino, 1995). Last but the least, customer satisfaction is influenced positively by the short waiting time, which can lead to a better experience only if communication is handled properly. They involve certain expectations about the proper waiting time for service to be delivered such as check-in duration, food waiting, problem solving and handling customer complaints (McDougall & Levesque, 1999).

Customer satisfaction in the hotel industry can be achieved through different approaches, since the hotel industry is multi-dimensional; there is a lot to be taken into consideration by the management. Oliver (1980) defines customer satisfaction as "a measure of the discrepancy between customers' expectations before purchasing a service/product and their evaluation of this service/product after consumption". With those two factors, it can be seen that

achieving customer satisfaction is not an easy work to do; managers should work hard, supervise, and come up with new ideas.

There is a close relationship between the level of applying communication skills strategies and gaining customer satisfaction in hotel industry in TRNC. Since the tourism services is being prepared, offered, provided, bought and consumed by human beings. Thus, the managers should know the desires and needs of employees after determining their establishments' characteristics and knowing roughly the type of tourists are using their facility frequently. In addition, at the same time to empathies with the employees to help them take out their maximum potentials to help and take good care with all the customers accommodating within their establishment. Thus, we can conclude the following:

- 1- As mentioned in the discussion part there are nine aspects of customer satisfaction in hotel industry, five of them is related to the human factor and how employees are dealing with the customer. Thus, the managers of any accommodation establishment should focus on the human factor while planning and executing the plans and strategies to increase the quality standards within the establishment.
- 2- The managers may set training programs for their employees who are dealing personally with the customers during their stay. Moreover, create a helpful oriented mentality with their employees to use the maximum of the five human factors mentioned above.
- 3- The management should not neglect the other factors as well such as room equipment and cleanliness, safety and food and beverage variety because customer satisfaction has different aspects and some are more important than others are for some customers. Thus, the management should achieve all the aspects to ensure that all customer's wants and desires are met.
- 4- Managers should involve themselves in work with their staff and grow the teamwork mentality among their employees this will teach the employees the sense of being a part of a team.

The hotels in North Cyprus have taken employees into consideration as an asset to the establishment, this is why majority of five stars hotels provided training programs for their employees to ensure that their service model is applied in attempt to produce a satisfied customer, therefore this customer can be considered as a free advertisement tool for promoting the hotel within his/her social circle (word of mouth).

The Tourism Industry during COVID times

Coronavirus has changed the rules of the game and added more aspects to look into and take into considerations in order to create a memorable experience for the customers. The new procedures be followed to protect the guests and the employees, the change in the perception of customers about the service how it should be and what to expect from the service provider.

The rapid global transformation in the tourism industry has created unprecedented uncertainties. Unlike other changes since the year 2000, like terrorism and climate change, the industry is going through a transformation on a systemic level (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020). Moreover, with travel restrictions around the world, due to travel and tourism being contributors to disease spread, tourism as an industry is shrinking. As a consequence, competition among service providers increases. Both phenomena challenge the markets toward scaling down as well as giving quality of service more importance than before. Managers, therefore, emphasize on training their employees to focus more customer satisfaction. As seen earlier in our discussion, an important factor in increasing customer satisfaction is better communication skills. Thus, it is suggested here that improving those skills is a crucial success factor for hotels during COVID times.

Before the emerge of coronavirus in the world, customer satisfaction was depended on the purpose of the visit (Diebner, Silliman, Ungerman, & Vancauwenberghe, 2020). For example, a gambling tourist who is visiting North Cyprus from Turkey did not care much about the service provided by the accommodation establishment as much the location of the establishment and how far it is from the casinos. A family who are coming for relaxation vacation,

the household do care about the location, the safeness, the quality of food and beverage provided and hygienic aspects.

Now and after the existence of coronavirus these expectations have changed and the priorities have changed as well. The application of hygienic procedures such as ventilate and disinfection the room after the guest leaves, the application of social distancing, the application of separating glass between the customer and the service provider, wearing the mask or protective face shield, and providing disinfection dispensers around the establishment became a priority for the service provider and the customer at the same time.

Nowadays we can provide an insight about the tourism in North Cyprus from two times, before and during the time of coronavirus. The hotels in North Cyprus have targeted different segments to promote the country mainly as tourist destination known for relaxing and gambling, due to the fact that the location, weather and the historic attractions attract people from Europe countries, United Kingdom and Australia. On the other hand, gamblers were coming majority from turkey due to the fact that gambling is prohibited in Turkey. Hotels have used different selling channels to reach the potential customers through different channels such as travel agencies in the United Kingdom and Germany, who were seeking relaxation and sightseeing.

The level of hygiene within the hotels was high before the pandemic, every room was ventilated, cleaned, provided with new clean towels and bed sheets, the last stage was the inspection from a house keeping supervisor to make sure that the room is suitable and ready for the new customer.

Accommodation establishments made sure that the feedback of the customers is taken into considerations to heighten the level of the services provided through different methods. Such as small quaternary during the check-out, following the comments on TripAdvisor which is known to be the most well-reviewing known internet cite reading accommodation establishments in the world.

During the pandemic, the effect was very heartfelt, especially for a country that depends heavily on Tourism as a source of income as North Cyprus. When

the lockdown started on the 10th March 2020, traveling plans of the customer have changed, a new rules were published by the Supreme Committee for Infectious Diseases regarding the travelers who are coming to North Cyprus and it ended with the suspend of all the activities of the Main and only airport under service in TRNC, Ercan airport. majority of the employees were lied off during this time due to the uncertainty about the situation and the high cost operating expenses where the operating expenses of a five stars hotel can be estimated around 35000 USD. The hotels did not have any other option but to close their doors and suspend all the operations.

Afterwards when the contamination was controlled and North Cyprus had zero cases in the country, the ministry of health have published new rules to the accommodation establishments to turn some of them to a quarantine centers for the people who are coming to the country where the new rules were that people who are coming from abroad had to provide a negative PCR test in addition of PCR test in the Airport and stay in the quarantine centers for 14 days maximum and again a PCR test after this period and all of the PCR tests should be with negative results. The new procedures regarding of the employees and the establishments itself, the application of separation glass between customers and employees, social distance stickers, measure the temperature of people who are coming from outside the establishment and keep a record of name and phone number of the visitor, and were mask all the time in public to reduce the spread of the virus.

It is very hard to predict the phase during the pandemic due to the fact that there are a lot of considerations to be taken, such as the country policies and the level of health care within the country. From another perspective, the outbreak that is happening now can be a huge opportunity for the countries to promote the tourism in the country where the tourism industry is very crucial for the country as a source of income. People have to adapt the NEW NORMAL way of living, new procedures during traveling and after traveling arriving.

Conclusion

There is a direct relationship between the level of applying communication skills strategies and gaining customer satisfaction. Both in the hotel industry in TRNC and everywhere else in the world. Better communication with hotel guests is achieved at different points of interaction. Whether it is a check-in at the front desk, or related to room service, or about food and beverage department's interactions, they all constitute an experience for the guest that does directly affect satisfaction. Regardless of whether HR recruits employees with better sociability or teaches the skills to each department separately, the sociability of employees is important in achieving hotel guest satisfaction. Quality standards are increasing every day and guests have higher expectations because of their previous experiences at other accommodation facilities. Therefore, the human factor, alongside cleanliness, safety, equipment, and variety of services, are reasons for the clients to enjoy their stay and to wish to come back.

It is clear that travelers are even more conscious about their surroundings and the service they get after COVID hit in 2019. Interactions at the front desk when they check-in, the equipment used to hinder the contagion, further interactions with room service as well as with the food and beverage department have changed. Guests are paying even more attention at how communication is being handled. A hotel might have all the equipment necessary to avoid the contagion, yet not communicating it properly does disappoint guests who are vigilant about these procedures. Judging the attitude and behavior of service providers is at its highest.

Another reason to pay attention to better communication is the shrinking of the tourism industry. If lower number of people are travelling for the purpose of leisure, it means the current capacity of service is higher than the demand for it. As a result, guests have more alternatives to choose from. Had losing a few customers because of bad communication possible in the past, it is unacceptable in the present. What hotels must consider is the highest quality of communication, in order to reduce stress and uncertainty of the guests. Whenever a guest arrives, they must be assured that cleanliness and personal

hygiene of the workers are top priorities for the hotel. It would be impossible, under current circumstances, to satisfy a guest without providing the means to avoid the contagion. Not surprisingly, even if those conditions are provided by the hotel, if not discussed, mentioned, or communicated, guests would think hotel employees are not paying enough attention to them.

After doing this research, it has become clear that communication skills of hotel employees have evolved to include COVID or pandemic-related information to customers of the services provided. Management of hotels in North Cyprus must pay more attention to cleanliness of their rooms, halls, toilets, etc. When hiring new workers, a higher emphasis must be put to choosing employees with good hygiene and attention to details (cleanliness and communication specifically). Furthermore, there must be training programs to convey information about COVID. Guests would more satisfied if employees have knowledge about the virus and how it might spread.

Theoretical Contribution

This study aims to shed a spot of light on the importance of human factor in the hotel sector in the TRNC before and during COVID-19 times. Thus, to be a start point of sharing awareness within the sector about the importance of human and the critical role of communication skills while providing the services to the customers. It aims to provide understanding about the role of accommodation establishment's management in keeping their employees satisfied which will result in generating customer satisfaction and increase the number of repetitive customers. This study aims to fill the gap in the literature regarding tourism in TRNC in general and the related literature that elaborates the relationship between strong communication skills and customer satisfaction in accommodation sector in the TRNC during COVID-19 times, with management involvement as a strengthening factor.

Practical Contribution

This study aims to help the accommodation management to understand the significant role of communication skills in the process of producing more profit to ensure the continuation of the organization. Moreover, to help the

management to recognize the importance of communication skills during COVID-19 times (the importance of training employees for better communication skills increasing during uncertain times). The implication of strategies and plans to reduce the turnover rate in the touristic establishments and help the employees to improve their skills and create a sense of ownership within the employees to encourage them to show their maximum abilities to achieve the organizational goals.

Since there is a contrast of the purpose of visit in the number of arrivals (e.g. Turkish citizens are coming to gamble, tourists from North Europe are coming for the warm climate of the island during the winter season, people from England are coming to visit relatives). This contrast will result in a different perception about the services provided in the hotel sector in the TRNC. Normal gambler will be more concerned about the location of the establishment; the closer to the casino areas is the favorable hotel. A family who are coming for relaxation will be concerned more with the distance to the beach, clear water, better service and better food. A businessperson who is coming in a business trip to the island will have different perception, again the location and security is important for such person, this is why determining the aspect of the purpose of visit is important to categorize the visitors in groups. Then the management will have a better plan to achieve customer satisfaction and produce a repetitive customer and increase the establishment's reputation and benefit from the free advertisement, which is the word of mouth.

Recommendations for Future Research

We can provide certain suggestions for future scholars that will help to expand the generalizability of our research study. First, our research used advanced employees' communication skills as an independent variable affecting guest satisfaction, therefore for the future research the author suggests to use other variables such as employees' personality characteristics or employees' satisfaction that can also have a direct impact on customers' satisfaction in the hotel. Second, future studies can focus on five-star hotels in TRNC, since the possibility of recruiting and training employees regarding the development of advanced communication skills is higher in this type of hotels. Third, due to the

fact that we did not divide our employees by certain departments, we suggest to conduct the future research with employees from front office department, since the interaction between employees and guests is the closest

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Ben aşağıda imza sahibi Günay Sadıkođlu olup, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakóltesi Öğretim Üyesi Mustafa Alian'nın (20184783) "**The Role of Communication Skills on Guest Satisfaction in the Hotel industry During the COVID-19 Pandemic**" isimli tezini yürütmekteyim. Söz konusu tez insan, hayvan, bitki ve/veya yerküreden birincil veri toplamayacağından dolayı etik kurulu tarafından değeriendirilmesine gerek yoktur.

Saygılarımla,

Yrd.Doç.Dr.Günay Sadıkođlu