



The "New Normal" in Hotels: Study on Challenges and opportunities in post covid world

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Abstract

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<p>This research-based thesis aims at providing the information on the shortage of the staff in the hotels and considering the human factor. The study shows and provide the information on the areas of the customer service effected and the trend of the "new normal" to be followed. The research areas are indented to advance the knowledge base providing analysis based on qualitative approach on the hotels, post covid. The Suggested re- search Streams are expected to provide Insights and to help promote the development and Sustainability of the hotel sector while following the new normal. The theoretical framework is a reflection to work done. This research- based thesis provides information on the challenges and the opportunities in hotels, post covid like: People changing Indus- try, Staff shortages, Retain, regrowth and recruitment' Salaries Impacted due to the stimu- lating process. While the methodology provides with the solution to these challenges and are answered by collecting data applying the qualitative method, based on the theoretical framework and using the questionnaire prepared with some open- ended questions which seeks towards the grounded theory (which works with the empirical data) that describe, understand or interpret the problem in more depth. For example: people from different ho- tels have been given a theme-based questionnaire (specific topic-based questions) through email. Some hotels are also observed using non-participant observation method through news, blogs, articles or homepage. The collected information is structured or summarized using the content analysis. The people interviewed are treated as sources. The references from the interviews are included in the discussion section. The results from the research interviews are showed in the empirical part of the report. Conclusions and implications are suggested in the own learning process part, which describes and suggest some implications needed post covid.</p>
Key words New normal, Covid-19, Challenges, Oppurtunities

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1 Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic, first reported in 2020, necessitated the adoption of a new phenomenon known as the "new normal" worldwide. On December 8, 2019, the government of Wuhan, China, declared the discovery of many distinct instances of coronavirus, as confirmed by health authorities (Bakar & Rosbi, 2020). Subsequently, COVID-19, a novel variant of SARS known as SARS-CoV, has evolved into a global pandemic and has disseminated to other countries.

Over the last three decades, there has not been a viral epidemic of such magnitude that has significantly affected the global hotel business (Nkengasong, 2020). Despite advancements in the environmental domain, the hotel industry is now encountering substantial difficulties pertaining to the economy and society (United Nations, 2020). In March 2020, as public health worries escalated, several borders were closed, travel bans were implemented, and other local, regional, and worldwide restrictions were enforced. Consequently, hotels have incurred financial losses. In October 2020, the total number of nights spent by visitors in different accommodation establishments was 49 thousand, reflecting a significant decline of 82.8% compared to the previous period (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, 2020). Consequently, there was a rapid rise in the number of jobless individuals compared to the year 2019, according to the State Employment Agency Republic of Latvia (2020).

This thesis, based on research, seeks to assess the influence of Covid-19 on the hotel business via the use of qualitative analysis on the areas of customer service affected in hospitality sector and the human aspects. The research will delineate the specific domains of customer service that are impacted, as well as the observed trend of the "new normal". The objective of the study domains is to augment the existing information by providing a qualitative analysis of hotels post-COVID, so contributing to the expansion of knowledge in this field. The recommended research streams are expected to provide valuable insights and contribute to the development and long-term viability of the hotel business, while also taking into account the current circumstances.

The primary objective of the research is to investigate the paradigm shift in hotel operations after the COVID-19 pandemic, also referred to as the "new normal." The research are intended to advance the knowledge base providing analysis based on the qualitative approach on the hotels, post covid. This research streams are expected to provide insights and to help promote the development of the hotel sector while following the "New Normal".

The present research tries to include all participants from the hospitality sector and, within the same cohort of stakeholders in the hospitality business. However, it may lack consistency because to its specific emphasis on the impacts of Covid-19 on the hospitality sector. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on hospitality enterprises, affecting several areas like as their size, location, management, and governance systems. Similarly, the significantly distinct travel prerequisites for domestic tourists, independent travellers, and corporate and recreational visitors indicate that the diverse impacts of Covid-19 are expected and need discussion within certain market segments. Exploration into Covid-19 might uncover previously unidentified elements that contribute to the spread of pandemics. Furthermore, apart from these changes that are particular to the setting, they also possess very precise predictive capabilities to anticipate or validate significant guidance in recognizing any disparities and vulnerabilities that may arise among different hospitality stakeholder groups. The recent COVID-19 events and difficulties have significantly deteriorated the working and business conditions for individuals in the hotel industry. Conducting study on stakeholder behaviour and Covid-19 is crucial. Therefore, the researcher has chosen to do the research thesis on this specific issue and area.

2 “New Normal in Hospitality Sector

2.1 Introduction

The 2019 COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the normal operations of the hospitality sector and resulted in a decrease in hotel occupancy rates (Salem et al., 2021), causing staff members to experience job uncertainty, worry, and melancholy. This demonstrates a significant influence on socioeconomic conditions, the psychological welfare of employees, and the rate at which employees leave their positions (Salem et al., 2022). A recent study indicates that unemployment and uncertainty contribute to feelings of melancholy, anxiety, stress, work burnout, and a strong desire to leave one's current job (Teng et al., 2021).

2.2 Fear of Covid-19

The persistent fear of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the global social climate. A cognitive process called threat assessment, which evaluates one's perceived vulnerability and the seriousness of the risk, has been set off by this fear. Shehata and Selem (2021) report that hotel employees voice worries about how COVID-19 is affecting their behaviour, emotions, and thought processes. Many sectors and communities voice concerns, which leads people to evaluate the degree of loss by taking into account outputs, global commerce, and job prospects (Tan et al., 2021). According to Chi et al. (2021) the pandemic had a disruptive effect on a number of industries, including tourist, retail, wholesale trade, housing, and catering. As a result, employment and productivity suffered.

Majumdar's (2021) study indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic had the most negative effect on the travel and tourism sector. Feelings of vulnerability, powerlessness, lack of control, uncertainty, and potentially fatal situations have all been brought on by the pandemic (Hemington and Neill, 2022). Ahorsu et al. (2020) created the Fear of COVID-19 Scale (FCV-19S) in response to global concerns. The scale has strong psychometric features and may be used to improve treatment efforts that try to prevent and manage the virus.

Psychological Health

The term "psychological well-being" in the context of hotel workers pertains to their overall happiness with life and emotional state (Hills and Argyle, 2002). The study by Viseu et al. (2020) used hedonic and eudaemonia methodologies to gain insight into it. Psychological well-being may be defined as the active pursuit of rewards or pleasure in order to attain life satisfaction and prevent bad experiences. The eudemonic approach on psychological well-being involves the expression of one's authentic self and an assessment of the significance of life

(Ryff and Singer, 2008). The understanding of psychological well-being and its individual components remains ambiguous.

Turnover Intention

The intentional and planned resignation of employees can be utilised to predict their future voluntary departure tendencies (Wayne et al., 1997), which has financial and practical consequences for businesses. The study undertaken by Teng et al. (2021) reveals a robust correlation between turnover intention and behaviour by a thorough assessment of the costs and characteristics linked to turnover, encompassing principles, viewpoints, and personality factors. Employee behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic could lead to costs associated with turnover, which may be considered the second most substantial expense after the loss of human life. The COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in increased psychological distress, unhappiness with work, and a greater tendency among hotel employees to resign from their jobs.

Workplace Depression

The COVID-19 epidemic has caused workers, their families, and society as a whole to experience feelings of anxiety, sorrow, and despair (Zhang et al., 2020). The main trigger for worry, grief, and tension among hotel workers is the deep concern of COVID-19 (Aguiar-Quintana, 2021). Aguiar-Quintana et al. (2021) found that hotel workers experience negative effects on their alertness and adaptability due to factors such as changes in sleep patterns, social media usage, and additional stresses like quarantine and economic concern. Employees experience distress, including sorrow, unease, and insomnia, due to their attachment to their home nations and nearby surroundings (Kroenke et al., 2001; Su and Swanson, 2019). Aguiar-Quintana et al. (2021) found that hotel personnel were more prone to having feelings of concern and dissatisfaction.

2.3 Job insecurity and its impact on work intensification and working hours

Employed individuals who have successfully avoided layoffs and encountered increased working hours frequently encounter job insecurity and heightened work pressure. Downsizing frequently results in an augmented burden as a consequence of the diminished number of individuals involved in sharing it Richter et al. (2010) referenced Kets de Vries & Balazs (1997). Boyar et al. (2008) found that intensification leads to an increase in both the pressure from deadlines and the workload. Increased work demand might lead to a longer duration for completing organisational activities as a result of the competitive drive to produce more. Employees that feel job uncertainty may demonstrate increased performance levels as a way to showcase their commitment, loyalty, and value, in case they are kept on (Roberts, 2007). A

study done on employers and workers in the Indian business process outsourcing (BPO) industry found that job uncertainty resulted in a rise in both workload and working hours during the 2008 financial crisis (Taylor et al., 2014). According to AWALI research, work-life conflict was influenced by characteristics such as working hours, job pressure, and intensity. Yu (2014) conducted a study using a dataset of 4,000 Australian work surveys. The study found that job intensification is associated with longer working hours, and employment instability worsens the imbalance between work and personal life. According to the most recent McKinsey poll from 2020, 80% of workers said that the COVID-19 epidemic has increased their workload. Moms had higher levels of work-related stress during the COVID-19 pandemic than dads.

Job Insecurity and Its Impact on Family Demand and Family Time

The ambiguity around employment leads to an increased workload and longer working hours, resulting in a shift in time distribution and a reduction in quality family time. Aside from temporal disparity, apprehension over job loss and exhaustion resulting from extended work hours have a significant influence on family responsibilities and the amount of quality time shared, sometimes resulting in work-family discord. Long-term employment reduces family time, which increases the risk of work-family conflict (WFC) (Voydanoff, 2005). Research by Larson et al. (1994) and published in Chirumbolo & Areni (2010) shows that life satisfaction and family relationships are negatively impacted by work volatility. In a research published in 2019, Blom et al. examined a Dutch longitudinal panel dataset made up of 3,668 people and 11,536 observations. The results point to a negative link between relationship satisfaction and unstable employment. A comprehensive examination of 767 correlations from 171 unique research conducted between 1990 and 2016 revealed that employment instability has a detrimental impact on the enhancement of work-life balance (Lapierre et al., 2012). Parental stress encompasses the amalgamation of economic burden and the obligation to meet the responsibilities and obligations linked with pregnancy, child-rearing, and work-related stress.

The family's expectations include both caregiving and household chores. The source of family work conflict arises from the responsibilities of providing care for both elderly family members and children. Elder-care duties include providing both physical and psychological assistance to aging parents, resulting in a significant emotional burden. Childcare has a detrimental effect on both work-life balance and the experience of pleasure (Hochschild, 2008). The study conducted on the Swiss Household Panel (SHP) from 2000 to 2016, with a sample size of 7,167, found that job uncertainty and unemployment had an impact on childless individuals

who later became parents. Hence, the heightened need for household assistance in child-care, elderly care, and other responsibilities leads to elevated stress levels and an imbalance between work and personal life.

Working parents often experience increased conflict as a result of their responsibilities in caregiving and housekeeping (Boles et al., 2003). The findings revealed that women, individuals without children, and younger persons were more affected by negative work-family spillover. Working parents have challenges in allocating time for household chores. Several studies have shown that the use of cleaning services has been associated with a decrease in the amount of time families spend together (Cheung & Lui, 2017). There is a connection between having too many parental responsibilities and experiencing conflict between family and work, as well as the level of satisfaction one has in their professional life (Beckett & Howell, 2015). Providing care for both children and aging parents leads to family work problems. Hobfoll's conservation of resources (COR) model (1989, quoted in Karatepe, 2010) suggests that receiving help from one's family, whether via shared responsibilities or emotional assistance, might decrease work-family conflict (WFC). Role theory posits that a spouse or partner might mitigate work-related stress by jointly assuming the employee's domestic responsibilities, tending to childcare, and so on. Supportive familial connections tend to exhibit lower levels of demands and conflicts compared to those lacking support. Taking care of the kids and doing home duties are examples of family support. Without support, job duties and responsibilities might be disrupted by family.

The co-relation between Job Insecurity and Employee's Health Issues

Job insecurity not only hampers productivity but also has detrimental effects on workers' well-being. Job uncertainty causes significant strain on people, adversely affecting their physical and mental well-being. A comprehensive meta-analysis including 53,405 participants has shown a noteworthy association between mental health and perceived job instability. The study conducted by Llosa-Fernández et al. (2018) found a correlation between job uncertainty and feelings of melancholy, anxiety, and emotional fatigue. An additional study conducted by Chirumbolo and Areni (2010) with 287 employees discovered a negative correlation between job instability, performance, and mental well-being. An assemblage of 336 employees in the metalworking sector, situated in a facility in Belgium, revealed a connection between employment uncertainty and a deterioration in their general condition of welfare. Depressive episodes, thoughts of suicide, and decline in self-perceived health are also interconnected (Min-seok et al., 2017). Workers facing job uncertainty may resort to working longer hours to protect their employment or cope with heightened work expectations, thereby reducing the

time available for family commitments. Job uncertainty leads to anxiety over potential financial setbacks and obligations towards one's family, resulting in detrimental effects on employees' well-being (Minnotte & Yucel, 2018). According to Mckinsey's 2020 study on women in the workplace, both men and women encounter burnout and weariness. However, women in senior positions, particularly mothers, face a higher degree of burnout compared to males.

Job insecurity and excessive workload have detrimental effects on one's health. A study conducted by Giunchi et al. (2016) used a self-reported questionnaire to survey 474 Portuguese individuals. The findings indicated that whereas work uncertainty fully moderated job tiredness in women, it only somewhat moderated job fatigue in men. Similarly, 736 employees of Finland's health care districts reported feeling overworked as a result of job instability. People who are afraid of losing their jobs get stressed and put in longer hours at work, which leads to psychological suffering (Minnotte & Yucel, 2018).

The co-relation between Job Insecurity and Productivity

The apprehension of job loss has a significant impact on morale, motivation, and performance. A survey conducted on a sample of 13,683 American employees who managed to keep their jobs despite layoffs, outsourcing, and offshoring revealed that these survivors perceived a decline in the overall effectiveness of their firm (Maertz et al., 2010). According to Bohle et al. (2018), the performance of 400 retail workers at a reduced-size Chilean firm was significantly impacted by job insecurity. The investigations conducted by Hai-jiang et al. (2015) found a strong negative correlation between work insecurity and job performance. Study 1 included 140 Chinese employees, while study 2 included 125 Chinese employees. The correlation between work instability and performance was less pronounced in the study conducted by Sverke et al. (2002). The prospect of job insecurity serves as a driving force for workers, compelling them to exert more effort and achieve higher levels of performance in order to establish themselves as indispensable assets to the organization. The study conducted by Probst et al. (2007) found that job instability has a negative effect on the creativity and performance of workers. This conclusion was drawn from a lab experiment involving 104 students and a survey of 144 employees. An analysis of a diverse sample consisting of 150 professors and 11,500 married students, chosen to accurately represent various segments of the population, has demonstrated that experiencing uncertainty about one's profession has a notable detrimental effect on the dynamics of marriages and families for both husbands and wives. The study conducted by Larson et al. (1994) found that it had an impact on several aspects of marriage, including marital adjustment, family communication, problem-solving, role clarity, and emotional participation.

The GSS surveys conducted in 2002, 2006, 2010, and 2014 were used to examine work hours, scheduling, and job insecurity. The sample consists of 3,564 individuals who were employed and received a fixed pay or income throughout those years. A subsequent research including 525 participants demonstrated that job quality was diminished by employment insecurity and reduced working hours (Lambert et al., 2019). Job instability leads to elevated job stress, compromised physical well-being, and decreased efficiency.

The topic of concern is the issue of job insecurity and its impact on work-life conflict.

Job insecurity leads to an increase in working hours and a loss in family time, so impacting work-life balance. This situation causes concern among both working and jobless spouses and children, impacting their well-being and the amount of time they can spend together as a family. Work-life balance is negatively affected by job instability and intensity (Yu, 2014). Workplace demands, a loss of control over working hours, and a lack of work-life balance were identified by Dzurizah (2014) as the main causes of work-family conflict. One of the first signs of work-family conflict (WFC) is job pressure. In a longitudinal study of Swedish teachers, Richter et al. (2010) found that employment insecurity led to an escalation in work load and work-family conflict specifically for male individuals. In their study, Carr & Chung (2014) discovered that the perception of employment instability had a negative impact on life satisfaction across 22 countries, as shown by data from the 2010 European Social Survey.

2.4 Occupational Health and safety

It is of utmost importance for employees in Ontario to minimise occupational health risks. COVID-19, a contagious respiratory infection that has resulted in significant suffering, death, and prolonged sickness, presents a workplace risk that necessitates companies to implement appropriate measures and protections. (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2021)

The Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act delineates the entitlements and obligations of all parties in the workplace to ensure the protection of workers against health and safety issues. The source of this information is the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, in the year 2020. The legislation mandates adherence to stringent workplace internal responsibility systems [IRS] and enforcement, ensuring self-compliance. The IRS holds the belief that every individual contributes to the maintenance of workplace safety. Employers are required to establish a robust Internal Revenue Service (IRS) system, effectively communicate potential dangers to employees, and take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and well-being of workers. Employees are required to promptly notify any hazards,

actively engage in occupational health and safety initiatives, and consistently adhere to safe work practices. In most companies, a combined health and safety committee consisting of workers and management is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the internal responsibility system. The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) grants workers three fundamental rights, one of which is the authority to halt or decline hazardous labor without facing any negative consequences from their employers.

The Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the Employment Standards Act (ESA) provide employment rights to the majority of workers in Ontario. The topics covered include minimum salary, working hours, sick leave, absences, severance compensation, and termination or temporary layoffs. This temporary initiative requires businesses to provide a maximum of three days of paid sick leave for reasons linked to COVID-19, such as testing, waiting for test results, self-isolation, immunization, and taking care of family members.

The Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development conducts investigations into complaints related to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and the Employment Standards Act (ESA) and enforces adherence to the regulations.

2.5 Potential risk of Covid-19 on hotel workers

- Several domain experts have observed that hotel employees, particularly housekeepers responsible for cleaning guest rooms, are compelled to work and face the danger of occupational exposure to COVID-19 in the absence of adequate control measures.
- Hotel employees may have increased exposure to Covid-19 when commuting on lengthy public transportation routes to hotels in downtown Toronto. This heightened risk of transmission extends to their family and communities, particularly if they reside in apartment complexes or engage in intergenerational living arrangements.
- According to subject matter experts, workers are reluctant to jeopardize their employment yet feel compelled to do so due to financial need. Additionally, it was said that those who are not currently employed are apprehensive about coming back to work. This might potentially result in hotel staff quitting the business, hence creating difficulties in retaining and rehiring people.
- Inadequate measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace could have adverse consequences on the well-being of employees. Furthermore, it has been pointed out by an expert that workplace safety breaches may have an impact on mental well-being, in addition to the dangers of infection. A study conducted in Ontario suggests that workers who perceive a lack of attention to their COVID protection needs,

including infection control and personal protective equipment (PPE), are more susceptible to developing anxiety and depression.

- In addition to COVID-19 exposure: Health hazards faced by hotel housekeepers due to cleanliness and increased workload
- Furthermore, experts have noted that the ongoing pandemic could worsen the occurrence of accidents and illnesses among hotel housekeepers due to the physically demanding nature of their cleaning tasks and prolonged exposure to cleaning agents. Hotel cleaning requires significant physical exertion. Studies suggest that hotel housekeepers with increased workloads are more prone to experiencing musculoskeletal discomfort, including back and neck pain. The referenced source is Liladrie, 2010.
- The province and hotel sector promote the practice of regularly cleaning surfaces that are often handled and using specific cleaning solutions to fight the spread of COVID-19. The text is a citation from the Ontario Office of the Premier in the year 2020.
- The user's text is a bullet point. Experts expressed concerns about the potential for hotel housekeepers to have occupational injuries and strain if their workloads, namely their room quotas, were not decreased to enable them to effectively and safely fulfill extra cleaning responsibilities. Inadequate training and protection of staff may lead to an increased risk of skin reactions caused by very hazardous cleaning agents.

2.6 Effectiveness of workplace health and safety safeguards

According to experts, the variety of cultures and resources found in hotel workplaces significantly impact the importance given to occupational health and safety, as well as the distribution of time, effort, and financial resources dedicated to it. The identification and resolution of occupational health and safety (OHS) issues can take place when they are recognised and the internal accountability structure of the workplace functions efficiently. An Ontario study on occupational health and safety susceptibility reveals that when it is not given priority and the system fails (such as workplaces lacking sufficient OHS policies and procedures, workers being unaware of their rights, or workers feeling hesitant to report hazards to managers or cease unsafe work), employees face a higher risk of workplace injuries and illnesses. This information was supplied by the Institute for Work & Health in 2016. The concerns revolve around the well-being of employees in relation to COVID-19, disinfectants, and overwhelming workloads.

Precarious employment arrangements, such as temporary, contract, and part-time roles, diminish the efficacy of occupational health and safety (OHS) standards and the framework for

corporate responsibility. Issues regarding potential reductions in working hours or job security can diminish employees' willingness to voice workplace health and safety issues and assert their legal entitlements.

OHSA mandates that firms are not permitted to terminate employees who exercise their rights, although the Employment Standards Act gives them the authority to dismiss workers without providing a specific reason. Workers may not be effectively safeguarded by employment legislation. According to experts, if workers express concerns about the amount of cleaning work and the use of chemicals, they are more likely to be disregarded or not taken seriously. This might discourage them from bringing up future problems and result in unsolved threats to their occupational health and safety. The source cited is Liladrie (2010).

2.7 The impacts of covid-19 on job and financial stability of hotel workers

Significant employment reduction, financial instability, and ambiguous resumption of work

The epidemic has had a significant impact on hotel workers, with one of the most notable consequences being the sudden and widespread loss of employment. Experts indicate that hotels terminated employees during the spring of 2020 as a result of low occupancy rates and restricted operations caused by the epidemic. In 2020, the pandemic caused a significant decline in Toronto hotel occupancy rates, dropping from 75% in 2019 to a mere 28%.

According to experts, several hotels closed entirely, while others functioned with reduced operations and personnel. Housekeeping staff in many hotels are determined by occupancy rates and requirements for cleaning rooms. Hotels terminated the employment of housekeepers due to a decline in room occupancy. Termination of employment has resulted in financial instability and apprehension over essential expenditures. Job loss has resulted in significant psychological distress, mental health challenges, and the inability to meet essential necessities such as shelter, food, and medicine due to a decrease in income.

Difficulties faced by those who have been terminated from their employment when seeking new job opportunities.

Certain hotel employees who have been terminated are either undergoing retraining or actively seeking other employment opportunities, however a subset of them encounter unique

challenges. Experienced hotel housekeepers may lack expertise in hunting for jobs. Individuals with extensive professional expertise may have difficulty securing employment owing to the absence of a high school diploma or its equivalent. Several experts expressed concerns that terminated employees, especially those who are members of labor unions, would be compelled to transition into less secure and lower-wage professions. Experts in the field recommended taking into account the career paths of older hotel housekeepers who could have apprehension about resuming work due to health risks or who may struggle with the additional cleaning responsibilities brought about by the COVID-19 epidemic. If these workers are unable to resume their hotel cleaning responsibilities, they may be compelled to pursue less stable cleaning or caregiving positions as a result of their restricted private and state pension income. [Tranjan, 2019]

3 Status of hospitality sector in the post-COVID 19 scenario

The advent of the deadly COVID-19 illness has led to significant global health challenges and substantial financial losses (Anderson et al., 2020). The hotel business, a major contributor to the service sector, saw a large decline due to alarming reports of influenza outbreaks, viruses, epidemics, and catastrophes. (Abbas, 2021) Pandemics have had an adverse impact on the conduct and psychological well-being of travelers. Their scheduled visit was postponed due to concerns of contracting an illness, since it was difficult to prevent the spread of viruses during travel. Moreover, unvaccinated individuals who have traveled by air really pose a danger to other passengers in terms of acquiring an illness.

Travelers have significantly contributed to the spread of viruses, pandemics, outbreaks, and pandemics, impacting both destinations and the well-being of local people. The citation "Zhong et al., 2021" refers to a publication by Zhong and colleagues in the year 2021. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a global media crisis, which in turn aided in the spread of further viral diseases and had a disastrous impact on the hotel sector. Viral diseases exhibit fast transmission, possess a high degree of contagiousness, and may result in fatality. Consequently, the occurrence of outbreaks and the spread of new viruses are feasible (Maqsood et al., 2021). Transmissible illnesses, which detrimentally impact the quality of life of nurses in relation to their profession, often transmit from animals to people. Shuja et al. (2020) reported that the transmission of the SARS virus occurred from avian species to humans in 2002. The pandemic has had a severe impact on those with chronic conditions. The Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) virus, also known as the camel flu virus due to its transmission from camels to humans, was discovered in 2012. Infected people transmit the virus to surrounding persons by droplets, sneezing, and contaminated surfaces (MacIntyre, 2020). A previous research conducted by Kallbekken and Saelen in 2021 determined that implementing travel limits was the most beneficial and efficient method for managing the spread of infectious diseases inside communities, both in the early and late stages of the outbreak.

By March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) upgraded the classification of the COVID-19 outbreak from an international public health emergency to a worldwide pandemic, after first categorizing it as such at the beginning of 2020. As of March 2021, the pandemic has affected over 119 million humans, with a death toll of over 2.66 million from the contagious and lethal sickness (Lange, 2021). This rendered the lethal virus one of the most fatal pandemics in the annals of human history. The symptoms of a coronavirus infection varied from mild to severe and potentially fatal conditions. Proximity between individuals facilitated the predominant airborne transmission of the virus. The illness spreads when an infected person

transmits it by respiratory droplets expelled when speaking, sneezing, coughing, or breathing, which are then inhaled or enter another person's mouth, nose, or eyes. The virus may also be transmitted via contaminated surfaces. Additionally, individuals who are infected can disseminate the virus for up to two weeks, even if they are asymptomatic (Rather, 2021).

3.1 Contribution of hospitality industry towards the economy

COVID-19 emerged on a global scale at a period of significant growth in the hotel sector. The younger cohort had a tendency to allocate a greater amount of time and financial resources towards recreational pursuits as a means of alleviating stress. The hotel industry was a key undertaking in this context. The majority of countries implemented lockdown measures due to the virus's quick and pervasive spread, which had a profound impact on every aspect of the economy. This research deliberately focused on examining the alterations that the pandemic has induced in the hotel industry. McCabe and Qiao (2020) argue that the hotel industry and its associated activities play a crucial role in generating employment, driving economic growth, and fostering global cultural development. Hospitality and tourism play a crucial role in driving the economic growth of several towns, regions, and nations. The hotel business plays a crucial role in ensuring consumer satisfaction and driving economic growth. However, it has been shown as the most vulnerable sector of the economy. This business is routinely the most susceptible to numerous diseases, epidemics, seasonal flu, and worldwide pandemics. The hotel business is severely affected by major crisis events, known as "black swan" events, such as the worldwide financial crises of 1997 and 2008, the SARS outbreak of 2003, social unrest, and earthquakes (Lee and Chen, 2021). The advent of the most formidable viral illness has impacted all economic sectors and has notably diminished tourist and consumer satisfaction. Expert projections based on conventional technique are necessary for economic operations and company services.

The technique used to address substantial global problems may be antiquated and inefficacious. The effectiveness of forecasting techniques for educational institutions and corporate operations relies on the appropriate reaction to the implications of COVID-19. By the conclusion of 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic had profoundly affected the worldwide economy, precipitated substantial health concerns throughout the globe, and engendered notable social challenges. The current COVID-19 epidemic has given rise to global challenges including renewable energy, carbon emissions, financial instability, and healthcare concerns. Several multinational corporations, like those in the hotel industry, which play a substantial role in the worldwide economy, have also experienced negative effects.

The CEO has a crucial role in making creative choices to restore economic profitability, which has a significant impact on the long-term success of the company organization (Mubeen et al., 2020). Social media sites have alerted many entities of the COVID-19 epidemic. The impact of COVID-19 on tourism has been significantly harmful to the hotel sector. The global hotel sector saw the most significant effect, with almost 50% of revenues lost, resulting in a staggering decline and a loss of 2.86 trillion US dollars. (Wut et al., 2021)

3.2 Global hospitality sector

The European Union stands as the only institution that has made a substantial and noteworthy contribution to the worldwide hotel sector. Half of all holidays are spent in the EU, making it responsible for 50% of global travel. European nations contribute to more than 48% of the total worldwide outbound travel and hospitality endeavours. The provision of hospitality has a significant and beneficial influence on corporate operations, so contributing to the growth and stability of the global economy. The tourist and hospitality sectors have a significant influence on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the visiting nation for the DACH countries.

Figure 1

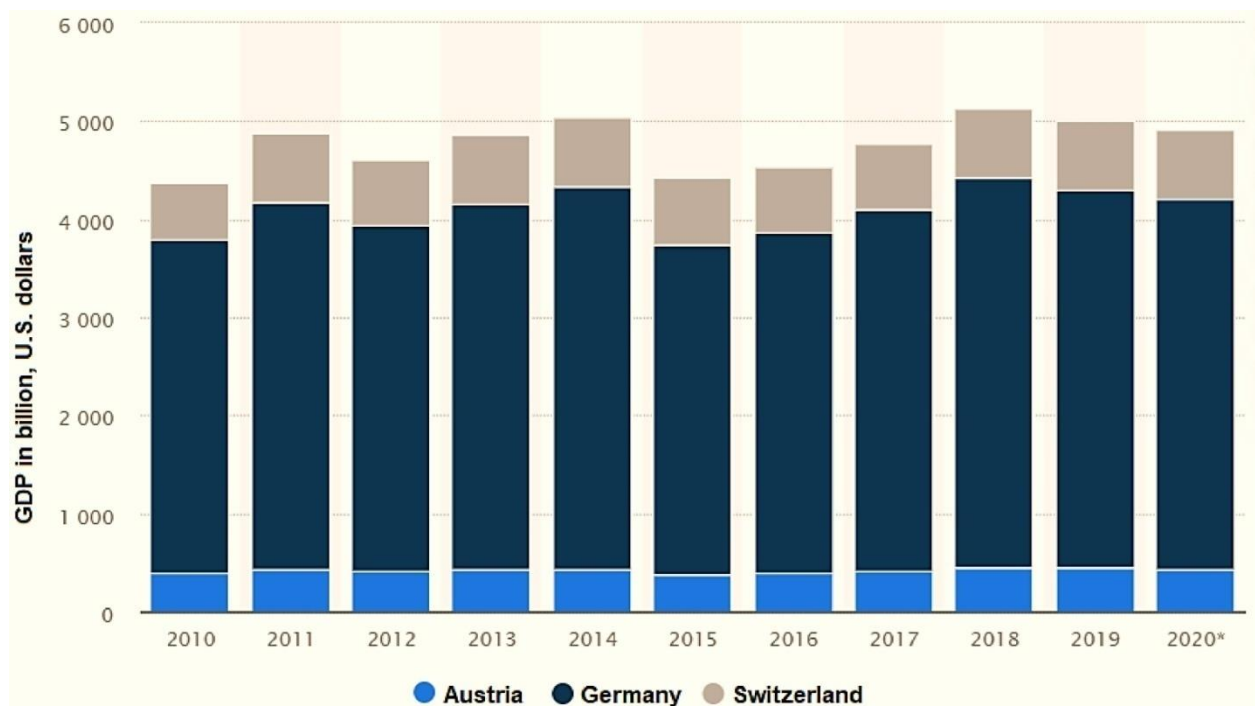


Figure 3.1: GDP of DACH countries: The (GDP) for the period spanning from 2010 to 2020.

Origin: (UNWTO).

According to industry data, the travel and tourism sector in the DACH states is projected to have made a contribution of 5.1 trillion dollars to their GDP from 2018 to 2020. In 2019, the tourist sector made a significant contribution of 446.31 billion dollars, 3780.55 billion dollars, and 704.83 billion dollars to the GDPs of Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, respectively. In 2000, the tourist sector made a significant contribution of \$707.87 billion to Switzerland's gross domestic product, \$378.55 billion to Germany's, and \$432.89 billion to Austria's. The DAH area in Europe comprises Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Figure 1 illustrates the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the DACH countries in the year 2019. The approximate value was \$3.86 trillion USD. Germany maintained its position as the leading contributor, making a significant and considerable contribution of over \$5.01 trillion USD. The acronym DACH represents the three adjacent nations of Germany (D), Austria (O), and Switzerland (CH).

The biggest community comprises these nationalities, with German being the official first language for the majority of people there. These three countries have the highest levels of human development when assessed based on social and economic factors. In Austria, the service sector accounted for 62.50 percent of the country's GDP, whereas in Germany, it made for 61.80 percent of the GDP. The service industry in Austria accounted for 71.4% of the country's GDP. In 2018, the DACH region had a total of 135 million visitors. Germany retained its position as the third-largest consumer, spending a total of 94 billion US dollars on tourism. The travel and tourism business in European countries is a worldwide one, with an annual influx of 600 million people (Neuberger and Egger, 2020). (Figure 2)

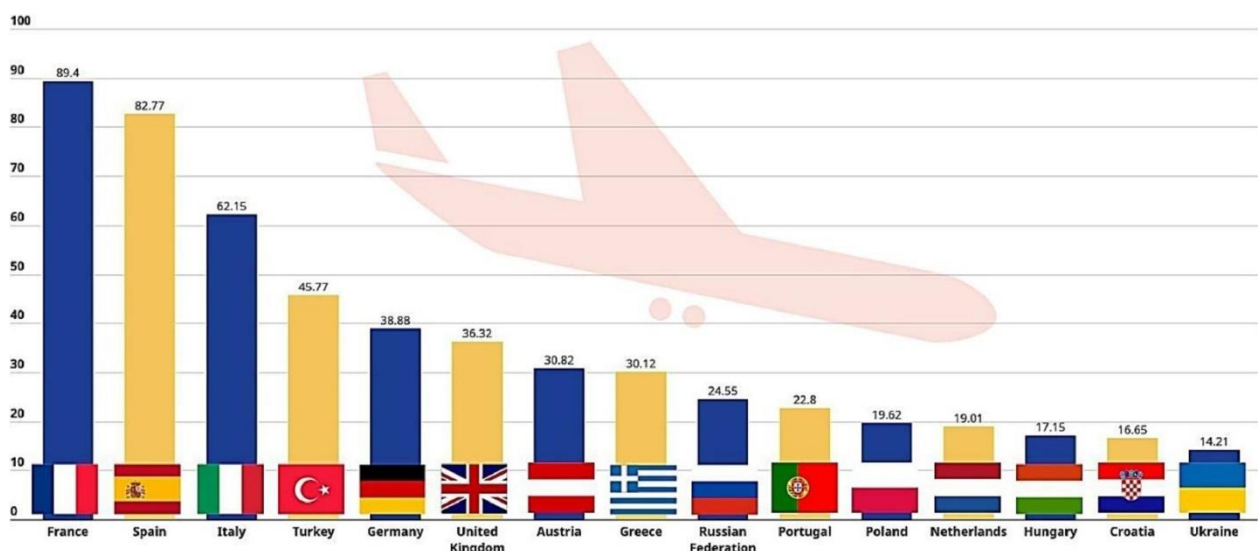


Figure 3.2: Europe attracted the highest number of international tourist

Origin:UNWTO

The hotel business experienced a significant increase in growth throughout the 2010s due to increased levels of active participation and mobility. Moreover, China and the USA are key market players who have made substantial contributions to the growing importance of travel and tourism outside intra-European travel. Several places have attempted to find environmentally friendly approaches to handle the increased flood of tourists caused by the spike in tourism. Nevertheless, the hotel industry has demonstrated its benefits and has strengthened the European economy. In 2018, it directly supported 14.4 jobs and made a contribution of 782 billion euros to the economy of the European Union. Based on the data, there was a worldwide increase in the number of international tourists visiting different countries between 2010 and 2019. In 2019, North America welcomed a total of 146.4 million international tourists, with 61.4 million of them coming from the Middle East. The yearly number of international visitors had a growth between 2010 and 2019. Europe was a popular tourism destination for people from many countries worldwide. According to UNWTO, the European area receives the highest number of foreign visitors globally, accounting for over 50% of all arrivals. Presently, the hotel industry plays a substantial role in promoting socio-economic and cultural progress while generating many employment opportunities.

Estimates indicate that the hotel industry maintains a significant influence on the global economy in 2019. It provided substantial contributions totaling 2.9 trillion US dollars, so contributing to the overall expansion of the world economy by 9.3 trillion US dollars. Conversely, this industry has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a drastic decline of 98 percent in May 2020. International travel restrictions and steps made to slow the virus's rapid spread may be to blame for this drop. Based on the statistics supplied by destinations, there was a significant 56 percent decline in foreign visitor arrivals during the first half of 2020 compared to the same time in 2019. Between January and May 2020, there has been a decrease of 300 million in the number of international tourists compared to the same period in 2019. Projected export profits indicate a significant loss of \$320 billion in international tourist income, which is more than three times lower than the effect of the financial crisis in 2009. The Asia and Pacific area had the first impact, with immigration declining significantly by 60% between January and May 2020. The present outbreak has triggered a worldwide health and economic catastrophe, causing unprecedented disruptions to the fundamental aspects of the global financial system, including the accommodation choices for international visitors.

Figure 3

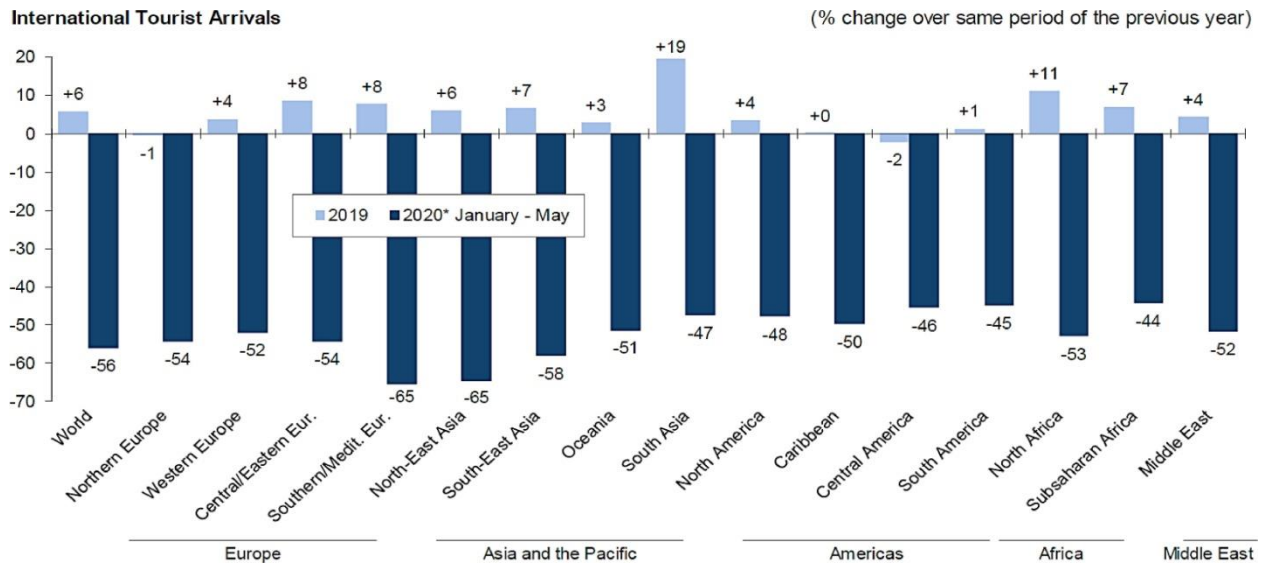


Figure 3.3: Global tourists' destinations by regions indicating international arrivals worldwide

Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The hotel industry, crucial for the socio-economic development of the area and the nation, relies significantly on energy consumption. In order to adapt to the impact of more visitors, a greater amount of energy and electricity is necessary. Furthermore, it has ramifications for the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, compounded by the rise in travel resulting from an influx of visitors (Usman et al., 2019). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, characterized by its global impact on economic activity, has severely hindered the growth of the hotel industry on a global scale as well as in specific sub-regions.

The relaxation of lockdown measures and the resumption of solely domestic air travel highlight the need for comprehensive strategies aimed at boosting tourist arrivals, promoting the use of sustainable energy sources, and securing an ecologically conscious future in the aftermath of the global economic rebound. The pandemic has modified the processes of globalization, hospitality, tourism, and energy consumption, prompting innovators to reassess their strategies for long-term recovery initiatives. The pandemic has influence on both inflation and stock markets (Goshit et al., 2020). The epidemic has also affected government funding allocated to assist efforts for families in the agriculture sector.

The European hotel business saw the second highest level of adverse effects, as there was a 51% decline in arrivals from Middle Eastern countries. In comparison, tourist numbers to both the Americas and Africa simultaneously decreased by 47%. Inbound tourism and travel activities have a significant influence on communities due to their interference with the social and economic well-being of the people (Joo et al., 2021). Researchers in the hospitality industry

often study the impact of certain socio-economic factors on the residents of tourist areas. Since mid-March 2020, the viral epidemic has had a significant influence on tourist activities, leading to a decrease in foreign travel. The number of international visitors arriving had a significant and rapid decline from January to May 2020, with a decrease of 56%. In April and May, the decline was much more severe, with decreases of 97% and 988% respectively. Figure 4

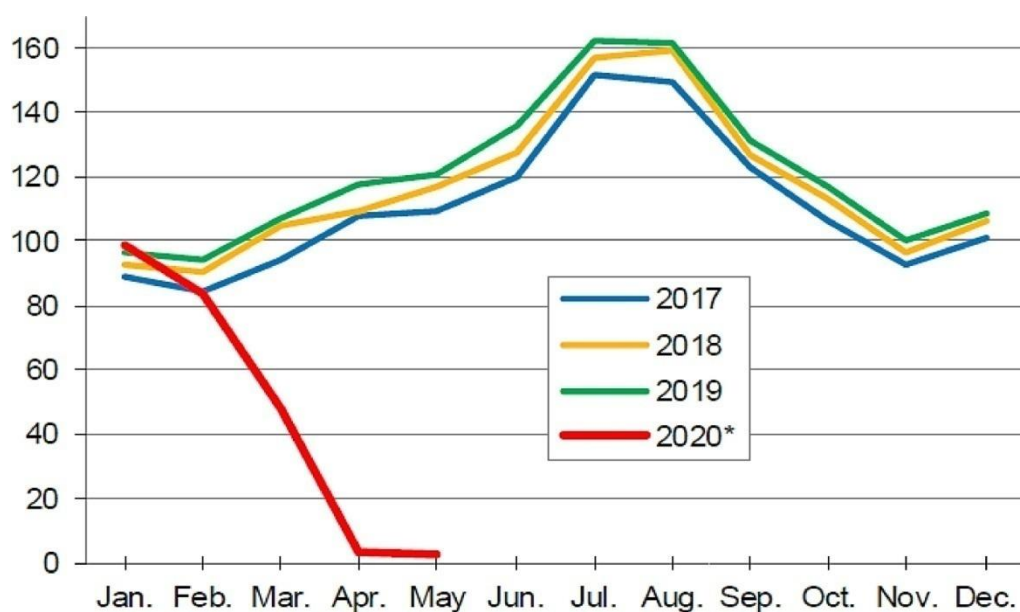


Figure 3.4: Arrival statistics of international tourists categorised by months from January to December spanning the years 2017 to 2020. Origin: UNWTO.

3.3 Social stain in the COVID-19 pandemic in hospitality sector

According to the World Health Organisation, societal stigma creates an association between certain diseases and persons or groups that possess specified characteristics (Kare et al., 2021). The study examines the stigmatization, unjust treatment, and preferential treatment of some groups based on the belief that they are responsible for spreading contagious illnesses and pandemics (Hao et al., 2020). D'Amico et al. (2020) assert that this conduct may impact certain individuals, such as close relatives, close friends, and the quality of medical treatment. Individuals who have infections and exhibit other characteristics may experience social stigma within their society. The COVID-19 epidemic has engendered societal stigma in several global populations. The rising prejudice faced by Chinese people is a consequence of the obstacles posed by individuals from various socio-economic origins, religious affiliations, and ethnic backgrounds (Adja et al., 2020). This mindset has also influenced the

perspectives of Chinese visitors. The pandemic has also had a detrimental impact on marital relationships, with many studies highlighting a pervasive problem of domestic violence. The level of religious devotion among individuals has contributed to the preservation of peaceful marriages. The Corona virus infection presents a significant risk to older individuals with diabetes (Moradi et al., 2020). Women suffering from mental problems experience significant psychological strain due to the emergence of the most lethal illness.

The global epidemic has resulted in many health complications, placing significant pressure on healthcare systems worldwide. The worldwide medical emergency had a detrimental effect on living circumstances, leading to the abandonment of renowned tourist spots. The virulent viral epidemic posed significant challenges for global cultures. Aliperti et al. (2019) found that researchers in the hotel sector have begun to reassess and reinterpret ways for resurrection in order to restore normal economic activity. This method aims to raise awareness and bring about change in order to revitalize the hotel industry and overcome the financial crisis caused by COVID-19. Conversely, the worldwide economy declined and the hotel sector incurred losses (Sigala, 2020). In order to address the growing academic interest in analyzing the impacts of COVID-19 on tourism, there was a need for creative research focused on e-tourism. E-tourism has the potential to revolutionize the hotel business via the provision of measurable and versatile benefits, organizational principles, theoretical trends, and practical and flexible technology ideas.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a harmful impact on several stakeholders in the hotel industry, affecting them on interpersonal, psychological, economic, and cultural levels. These negative impacts have persisted for an extended period of time. Due to the pandemic, researchers in the field of hospitality now have several new opportunities to perform studies using excellent research approaches. In conducting surveys on the impacts of COVID-19, it is essential to disregard or discard the previous approaches used in managing the hotel business. In order to thoroughly assess the impact of COVID-19 on various geographical entities and stakeholders, researchers must employ a combination of feasibility study, projections of tourist demand, and the simultaneous application of both active and best practises.

Small commercial hotels are at risk of losing their property assets because they are unable to earn enough money from lodging rates to cover their mortgage obligations. This is explained by the expectation that current models and beliefs about how COVID-19 would affect the hotel sector will continue and be reinforced. The root reasons of everything are the present economic slump and rising travel agency costs. The research on COVID-19 in the hotel industry requires a thorough examination of the cognitive, biological, and behavioral factors that affect

workers who have had COVID-19. This includes studying their well-being, level of engagement, online work environment, and other aspects of human resources. During the COVID-19 isolation era, traditional methods of managing, working, governing, and advancing in careers are no longer effective in inspiring, motivating, and retaining individuals whose values and perspectives have shifted.

The need for hospitality education has surged because to the employment repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic in the hotel industry. It has had a substantial impact on the capacity for global employment growth. Virtual learning and teaching have resulted in students facing disruptions in training, challenges in recruiting, and unpredictable employment prospects in the hospitality industry. The obstacles faced by hospitality programs, campaigns, and academic institutions include a decrease in enrollment fees, limited government marketing support, insufficient funding for research, and lack of government assistance. When evaluating organizational distance, researchers and academics in the hospitality industry should take into account the privacy and mental well-being concerns of the stakeholders affected by COVID-19. Additional pedagogical issues that must be taken into account include the cultivation of students' expertise and competencies that can be used in many business domains, along with the design and implementation of more enduring, adaptable, and versatile instructional approaches in the hospitality field.

3.4 Finland

Finland is located in the northeastern region of Europe. Important geographical elements that have a considerable impact on the analysis of the spatial aspects of pandemics are a relatively small population and a remote location. The region boasts an extensive coastline in the southern and western parts, which directly overlooks the Baltic Sea. Additionally, it shares a significant border with Russia to the east. These regions have been securely restricted since the onset of the COVID-19 epidemic. Finland, overall, had among of the most minimal rates of viral proliferation and dissemination throughout the first and subsequent stages of the pandemic (WHO 2020). Finland's advantageous position relative to other European countries may be attributed to its implementation of one of the most stringent travel regulations. Consequently, there has been a significant decline in overall tourism, and Finland's isolated geographical position has exacerbated the detrimental impact on the hospitality industry, surpassing that of other European countries and even the neighboring Nordic countries. The pandemic has not resulted in substantial discrepancies in internal limits across the regions, especially in those with little enforcement capability.

The national government of Finland has the authority to impose internal travel restrictions, with the first phase of this policy being applied in March 2020. Consequently, it was deemed acceptable to impose limitations on the freedom of movement for individuals inside the country and between different regions. This was justified by the fact that the laws and national security measures in place were equivalent to those implemented during times of war.

The impact of COVID-19 has shown regional disparities in Finland. The impact is especially apparent in countries with low population densities, such as Finland, where the average number of people per square kilometer is just 18.2. Considering the transmission mechanisms of COVID-19, popular tourist destinations tend to have low population densities in their central areas, such as in Lapland. These areas are where most tourists come and spend the night. The understanding of the tourist characteristics in sparsely inhabited areas, mostly comprising of natural and ecological attractions like the untamed landscapes of Lapland or holiday residences in Lakeland, is greatly influenced by this trend. Nevertheless, the sparsely populated regions pose difficulties for the public healthcare system when it comes to providing hospital treatment for visitors. The national risk assessment mechanisms have recognized and acknowledged this particular trend. Finland's stringent immigration regulations have necessitated a focused effort to educate international tourists and visitors about the burdens placed on the country's healthcare system.

Although there is a scarcity of empirical research investigating the effects of COVID-19 on the hotel business, specifically within individual countries, there have been published study findings available (Pappas 2021). Haaga Helia (2020) undertook a comprehensive survey as part of a global research effort to collect the viewpoints of Finnish individuals on the hospitality industry during the epidemic. The poll presents a comprehensive analysis of both the geographical regions and the respondents' viewpoints on tourism and hospitality. Approximately 55% of the Finnish population has formulated trip or holiday arrangements for the 2020s, as reported. The empirical data also demonstrate the existing demand capacity. During the collection of survey data, around 75% of those who were contemplating such trips had not yet made a decision on their destination. This result reflects the presence of uncertainty and the natural hesitation that existed at that time as a result of the changing travel conditions and constraints. According to the original survey, domestic travel was the preferred option among respondents. The majority of respondents (52%) said that they only intended to take domestic trips. Nearly equal portions of the remaining half went to the previously popular travel locations, such as Sweden, Estonia, Spain, and Greece.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that domestic tourism was completely neglected in terms of promotion during the winter season. The Finnish tourist sector followed the national government's explicit instructions, as stated by the Prime Minister during a televised address, that the COVID-19 period should not be used for travel. While these ideas carried significant weight, those seeking to limit domestic travel were not legally bound or constrained in any way. Therefore, if an individual chooses to travel, there are no obligatory regulations or corresponding consequences, such as monetary sanctions. Notwithstanding the recommendation to remain at one's residence, domestic tourism exhibited good performance, as shown by the following statistics. Despite the absence of specific advertising initiatives, Finns did engage in travel. The findings also indicate that, overall, Finns possess a comprehensive understanding of the primary tourist and vacation spots inside the country.

4 Research Method

The author has provided a comprehensive analysis of the research methodology and procedures employed in the current study. This encompasses an examination of the reasoning behind selecting the qualitative research approach for this study, employing semi-structured interviews as a research instrument.

4.1 The objective and research questions

The primary aim of the study is to examine the "new normal" in hotels following the COVID-19 pandemic and assess the effects of COVID-19 on the hotel business through qualitative analysis.

4.2 Planning the research

Two primary research methods commonly employed for data collection in research are qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Qualitative research is typically employed when the sample size is small, when observing an event or behaviour, during focus group talks, or in ethnographic studies. The quantitative research approach is employed when numerical data is utilized, employing statistical methods and procedures. The data is then visually represented through pie charts, graphs, and other means, and a substantial number of respondents are involved. In case of quantitative research, the purpose is to answer the queries of "wh" terms like why, what, who etc. utilizing statistical approaches. (Kothari, 2022)

The current study utilized the qualitative research methodology using the semi-structured way to interview the respondents, which is particularly advantageous for investigating a research topic that has received less attention. This approach offers the researcher significant flexibility to investigate questions in depth with the participants. (Qu & Dumay, 2011) The qualitative research approach is particularly suitable when the researcher seeks to understand the respondents' genuine perspectives in relation to the researcher's inquiries. (Phoenix et al., 2010) Qualitative research also allows the researcher to explore and collect granular data about the respondents' opinions in reference to the study subject, it is more so in case the researcher is dealing with a small sample size. (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015) In this study, the researcher sought to examine the changes in hotels following the COVID-19 pandemic, commonly referred to as the "new normal." The researcher chose to use a qualitative research approach due to the small sample size of 6 respondents, which made it more suitable for the study. The chosen research method also supported the subject of the thesis since the

objective was to study the “new normal” in the hotel business in the post Covid situation consequently the research becomes more reliable.

An exhaustive evaluation of literature relating to this study was undertaken by the author to acquire a clear grasp of the research subject. Once the conceptual framework was formed the author started developing a questionnaire, since the author was carrying out qualitative research therefore accordingly an open-ended questionnaire was drafted so that it is easy and flexible for the respondents to answer the questions. The author tried to keep the language of the questionnaire to stay as simple and to the point as feasible. Initially it was intended to produce roughly 25 questions, but in finality 32 questions were established to cover all the areas of the study. The author herself tried to read out the questions to know how much time and effort it will take to conduct an interview with the response, she recognized it was easy to complete and did not demand much time and effort.

4.3 The Interviews

The open-ended questionnaire was divided into 9 sections which was interviewed in a semi-structure way. All the nine sections had sub-sections which contained relevant questions to the topic, which seeks towards the grounded theory and works with the empirical data that describes, understands or interpret the problem in more depth.

In the first section, “Fear of COVID-19” the author intended to know how Covid-19 influenced the professional life of the respondents, did it made their life more helpless and uncertain professionally. In the second portion, questions were asked relating to the “Psychological Health”, the author asked the respondents about their emotions and happiness elements, their sense of accomplishment, the purpose was to know about the psychological well-being of the respondents in the post covid situation.

In the third section, “Turnover intention”, the author aimed to know the tension and concern amongst the respondents towards losing their work in the post covid scenario. This assisted the author to know the respondents’ condition of worry and tension in regard to their employment. In the fourth section, “Employee depression” the author intended to know about the respondents’ anxiety and depression level due to the extremely tough employment scenarios in the post covid scenario, another important factor analysed here was the financial pressure which the hotel employees are facing in the post covid scenario.

In the fifth section, “Impact of Job Insecurity” the author aimed to know what are employment factors which led to increase in the job insecurity amongst the hotel employees in the post covid scenario, was it the extended working hours, increased workload, greater fear of job loss

or work–life conflict amongst the employees. All these criteria were necessary to appraise and grasp the “new normal” scenario amongst the hotel personnel. In the sixth section “Employee’s Health Issues”, the authors purpose was to examine the influence employees' physical and mental health in the post covid situation. In the seventh section, “Productivity”, the writers objective was to analyse how the employee productivity has been hardly in terms of their morale and motivation, and their general performance in the “new normal” environment. In the eighth section “Occupational health and safety” the authors attention was on o examine the workplace health threats and hazards in the hotels and the precautions that have been put in place by the hotel authorities to reduce them. In the ninth part here the authors purpose was to examine the influence of Covid-19 on the employees’ employment status in terms of far of job loss, income insecurity, ambiguity regarding present work, and financial instability.

4.4 Data Collecting

The open-ended questionnaire was issued between the 6 staff of hotel Holiday Inn, Helsinki City Centre Elielinaukio (Finland). Since the researcher herself is working in this hotel hence it was easier for her to request her colleges to supply the required information/views on the research subject through the interview session with the researcher. The researcher verbally questioned all the six respondents based on the questions drafted in the open-ended questionnaire.

The researcher was able to find 2 respondents each from the front office department, food and drinks department and house-keeping departments of hotel Holiday Inn, Helsinki City Centre. The interview was done on the bases of semi-structure type and notes were taken by the researcher herself. It was a good two-way communication and the respondents were quiet descriptive. Selection of respondents from the three key departments of the hotel would assist the researcher to acquire the overall response of the personnel in the hotel.

All the six respondents were coded according to their departments they belonged to in the following manner. This was done to preserve the privacy and individual details of the respondents, thus meeting research ethical norms as put out by university.

Department	Respondent No.	Code
Front office	1	FO1
	2	FO2
Food & Beverages	1	FB1
	2	FB2
House keeping	1	HK1
	2	HK2

5 Results

5.1 Background information

The next section contains the general background information about the responders.

Gender: Out of 6 respondents, 3 were male and 3 were female, thus assured good gender divide between the respondents.

Age: As regards the age-divide amongst the respondents, 2 respondents belonged to 21-30 years age group, while 4 respondents belonged to 31-40 years age group.

Department: 2 respondents each from the Front office, Food & Beverages and House-keeping departments were willing and accessible to supply the relevant data/information in respect to this research.

5.2 The “New Normal”

The research reviewed earlier has shown how the COVID-19 epidemic has drastically changed the nature of work globally, especially in the hotel sector. This sector has experienced numerous modifications and adjustments in the workplace, leading to the establishment of a "new normal" within the industry. The subsequent sections expound upon the various elements and variables that have contributed to the emergence of this "new normal" in the hotel business, based on the replies obtained from the chosen participants.

COVID-19 Phobia: This part aimed to evaluate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on personnel within the hotel business, specifically focusing on the fear experienced by these individuals.

All six respondents unanimously agreed that Covid-19 has significantly jeopardized their professional lives, as stated in the initial statement "Covid-19 made your professional life vulnerable."

The second argument asserted that Covid-19 has rendered individuals more impotent and ineffectual in their professional capacities. All six respondents unanimously expressed that Covid-19 has rendered them completely devoid of authority and assistance in various aspects. FO1, FB2, and HK1 disclosed that they were really terminated from their employment as a direct consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, although FO2, FB1, and HK2 reported experiencing substantial reductions in their salaries owing to Covid-19.

All six respondents answered the third item, which stated that Covid-19 has increased professional uncertainty in their lives. They all agreed that in the post-Covid-19 work landscape, there is always ambiguity regarding their career. HK1 and HK2 stated that they experienced dual instances of job loss since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Psychological Health: The objective was to evaluate the psychological well-being of personnel in the hotel business within the "new normal" situation.

The initial statement, "You feel you experience positive emotions and happiness," was unanimously contradicted by all six responders, who stated that their emotions and happiness have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. FO1 and FO2 disclosed that they had significant despair and emotional distress during their recovery from the global pandemic. HK1 and FB2 resorted to medication in order to enhance their psychological well-being during this series of occurrences.

All six respondents agreed with the statement "You have positive relationships with people you care for." Four out of the six respondents acknowledged that they made significant efforts to maintain positive relationships with their loved ones, despite the challenges they encountered during the pandemic.

All responders unanimously affirmed the third item, "You have a sense of accomplishment," and acknowledged that they had to exert significant effort to overcome the circumstance and persevere. They realised how hard it would be for them to overcome the obstacles caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it was a noteworthy accomplishment for everyone of the responders that they were able to persevere through this circumstance and keep their jobs. The respondents reported that plenty of their colleagues fell victim to this fatal circumstance, resulting in job loss and, tragically, even loss of life due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All six respondents acknowledged experiencing emotional distress during this "new normal" in response to the fourth statement, "You feel emotionally stable." FO1, FB1, and HK1 reached a consensus that this emotional harm affected them both in their work and personal lives. They experienced the loss of their beloved family members, and also endured prolonged work-related crises. The participants expressed that in this "new normal" situation, numerous obstacles have emerged that were absent in the pre-COVID era.

Turnover intention: The objective was to comprehend and assess the employees' disposition towards their jobs in the context of the "new normal" situation.

All six respondents unanimously confirmed experiencing significant anxiety in their job under the current employment landscape referred to as the "new normal." HK1 and HK2 expressed that they had to persevere in fulfilling their responsibilities in order to provide for their families during challenging times. All participants reported that salary reductions and increased workloads contributed to their stress in the current situation.

All six respondents responded to the second statement, "You are not content with your job." FB1 and FB2 stated that they find it challenging to switch jobs currently because they are uncertain about receiving the same level of salary. Therefore, they are choosing to stay in their current job despite having a heavier workload and lower salary than before. Every participant concurred that the current employment landscape is exceedingly arduous and demanding, yet they find themselves with limited options at the moment.

Employee depression: This section focuses on examining the extent to which employees in the hotel business are experiencing mental depression in the current "new normal" situation.

All six respondents unanimously agreed that they have been living in fear and stress since the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. They stated that their lives have become miserable and extremely challenging as a result, and they have been unable to overcome these feelings.

All six respondents unanimously agree that they have experienced feelings of worry and depression in recent times, within the context of the current "new normal" situation. According to the responders from the front office and housekeeping, there is an increased level of responsibility and pressure in the current situation compared to before.

All six answers unanimously confirmed that they had been experiencing financial problems for over three years in this industry, in response to the third statement "You frequently face financial pressure". All respondents reported that they had to get supplementary loans or seek personal assistance in order to sustain themselves throughout the "new normal" period.

The author's objective in this part was to identify the factors that contribute to employment insecurity during the "new normal" phase.

All six respondents unanimously confirmed that they are experiencing increased working hours due to less staff and new duties assigned by the management. HK1 HK2, FB1 AND FB2 stated that they were the most adversely impacted due to the increased working hours in the current job situation.

All six respondents confirmed their fear of job loss in response to the second statement. They expressed that they consistently experience this fear and shared instances where their colleagues were terminated due to their inability to handle additional responsibilities.

All six respondents reported experiencing work-life conflict due to increased working hours, which often leads to disturbances and conflicts with their spouses or other family members. The respondents also mentioned that they arrive home late and are unable to spend time with their children for extended periods, exemplifying the work-life conflict experienced by hotel employees in the current work environment.

Health concerns of employees: This section aims to evaluate the influence of the "new normal" situation on the general health condition of hotel personnel.

All six respondents acknowledged the first statement, "Harms employees' physical health," and unanimously agreed that the increased working hours and more tasks are significantly impacting their physical well-being. However, they expressed limited alternatives to avoid this situation at present. FO1 and FO2 expressed that they attempted to transition to different positions, but encountered a disparity in wage offers from other organizations, therefore compelling them to remain in their current roles.

All six respondents unanimously agreed that the second statement, "Harms employees' emotional health," is directly linked to their physical well-being. They believe that if a person is physically unwell, there is a high likelihood that their emotional health would also be affected. Both factors are intricately interconnected.

Productivity: The author aims to investigate the influence of the "new normal" situation on the overall efficiency of hotel staff.

All six respondents confirmed that the threat of job loss significantly affects their morale, motivation, and productivity. The responders are aware that failure to meet expectations may result in termination, therefore creating a persistent pressure to perform well and maintain their employment.

All six respondents acknowledged the statement "Fear of losing their job affects overall performance." They expressed the belief that they are aware of the consequences of underperforming, which is the risk of being terminated. Consequently, they experience constant pressure to enhance their overall performance.

5.2.1 Occupational health and safety

The initial statement emphasizes the imperative of reducing workplace health hazards for employees. All six respondents unanimously stated that the hotel sector is highly complex due to its extensive range of services and operational operations, as well as the engagement of individuals from diverse backgrounds. Consequently, there is a heightened risk of occupational hazards. The respondents concurred that hotel operators must prioritize the mitigation of workplace health concerns, particularly in the current post-COVID context.

All six respondents agreed and acknowledged the second statement, which emphasizes the need of hotels implementing appropriate safeguards and controls for workplace health.

5.3 Effect of Pandemic

All six respondents unanimously confirmed that the Covid-19 pandemic has indeed caused a significant number of job losses. They observed this trend within their own organizations and industries. Therefore, it can be concluded that Covid-19 has left a considerable number of individuals unemployed during these challenging times, commonly referred to as the "new normal" phase.

All six respondents answered the second statement, which states that Covid-19 has caused income insecurity. This question follows the previous one about job loss, and the respondents agreed that income insecurity is a natural consequence of losing a job. They also mentioned that the constant fear of job loss contributes to income insecurity, as well as feelings of anxiety and depression. The respondents experience income uncertainty as a result of the eventual loss of their jobs.

All six respondents addressed the third point, which states that Covid-19 has caused an uncertain return to work. They expressed that job loss, income instability, and concern about job prospects are interconnected, and the occurrence of one event may result in the other two. Hence, they expressed that in such conditions, they experience a sense of ambiguity regarding their employment.

6 Discussions

The final part of this study report shows the discoveries made, as well as the author's own growth and knowledge gained during the thesis. During the course of this thesis, the author's objective was to examine the concept of the "new normal" in the hotel industry following the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the author's objective was to assess the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on the hotel business in this study.

6.1 Main Findings

The findings indicate that Covid-19 has had a significantly adverse effect on employees' lives, rendering them devoid of power and assistance in several aspects. The employees experienced significant reductions in their salaries over the past two years or thereabouts. The employees in the post-Covid-19 employment landscape experienced job loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Regarding the psychological well-being of the employees, it has been observed that the current work situation, known as the "new normal," has had a detrimental effect on their emotions and overall happiness. Many employees have experienced significant depression and emotional distress as a result. Nevertheless, they have made considerable efforts to maintain positive relationships with their loved ones. The employees displayed resilience in enduring the challenging circumstances and maintaining their employment. Additionally, they experienced personal loss and confronted prolonged workplace crises. The participants in this "new normal" situation encountered numerous obstacles that were absent in the pre-COVID scenario.

Regarding the Turnover intention, it was observed that the employees persevered in their responsibilities throughout challenging times and endured compensation reductions in the new work environment. Thus, it can be contended that in such a situation, employee attrition may rise if they are presented with a more favourable job opportunity.

The reasons contributing to job insecurity among hotel employees include increased working hours, reduced staffing, added responsibility, fear of job loss, and work-life conflict. One could contend that given the current state of low impact from Covid-19 and the return of markets to normalcy, it is imperative for management to take action in order to mitigate job insecurity among hotel employees at this time.

Regarding employees' health concerns, it has been observed that increased working hours and additional responsibilities are significantly impacting their physical well-being. Furthermore, it is evident that emotional health is closely linked to physical well-being. Thus, if an

individual is physically unhealthy, there is a high likelihood of them experiencing emotional unhealthiest as well. It might be contended that the hotel management should intervene to enhance the general well-being of its staff, hence boosting their productivity. Another ambiguous aspect is to the likelihood of occupational hazards. It might be contended that hotel operators should prioritize the mitigation of occupational health concerns. In summary, the Covid-19 pandemic has led to significant unemployment, financial instability, and mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

6.2 Own Learning Process

Conclusion and implications

- ▶ Covid-19 has very negatively impacted employees' lives, and has actually left them powerless and helpless in many ways.
- ▶ The "new normal" work scenario has negatively impacted the employees' emotions and happiness and employees had to undergo huge depression and emotional health damages.
- ▶ The employees had to continue their duties in the toughest times and face salary cuts in the new work scenario. Therefore, the employee turnover may increase if they get a better employment option before them.
- ▶ Additional working hour, reduction of manpower, additional responsibilities, fear of job loss and work-life conflict are all the factors which lead to job insecurity amongst the hotel employees.
- ▶ Additional working hours and added responsibilities are taking a heavy toll on their physical health and the emotional health. The management of hotel must intervene to improve the overall health of its employees which will further improve employees' productivity.

In addressing these challenges, it is important for the businesses in the hospitality to prioritize the well-being of their employees. This emphasizes on providing the support systems, mental health resources and clear communications on the job security. Finally, as the hospitality industry navigates through the complexities of the challenges post covid and the in the new era of "new normal", finding a balance between operational efficiency and employee well-being is important for long term sustainability and success.

In conclusion, the hospitality industry has faced many challenges, before and after the pandemic. Although the initial impact was devastating but moving forward with resilience, adaptation and innovation has been a complete road towards the recovery.

Although the Hospitality industry has gone far with significant transformations in the wake of covid -19 pandemic, leading to “new normal” that has brought both challenges and opportunities. The industry is still evolving with people remaining flexible and proactive in response to ongoing changes.

7 References

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8 Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire

General Questions

1. Gender

- Male
- Female
- Others

2. Age

- < 21 years
- 21 to < 30 years
- 30 to < 40 years
- ≥ 40 years

3. Department

- Food and beverages
- Front office
- Housekeeping

Please share your views in regard to the following questions

1 Fear of COVID-19

1.1 Covid-19 made your professional life vulnerable

.....
.....

1.2 Covid-19 made you more powerless and helpless professionally

.....
.....

1.3 Covid-19 made your life more uncertain professionally

.....
.....

2 Psychological Health

(In the 'New Normal' work environment)

2.1 You feel you experience positive emotions and happiness

.....
.....

2.2 You have positive relationships with people you care for

.....
.....

2.3 You have a sense of accomplishment

.....
.....

2.4 You feel emotionally stable

.....
.....

3 Turnover intention

(In the 'New Normal' work environment)

3.1 You stay distressed towards your job

.....
.....

3.2 You are not content with your job

.....
.....

3.3 You have consistent fear of losing your job

4 Employee depression

(In the 'New Normal' work environment)

4.1 You stay in fear and stress mostly

.....
.....

4.2 There is always a feeling of anxiety and depression within you

.....
.....

4.3 You frequently face financial pressure

.....
.....

5 Impact of Job Insecurity

5.1 Working Hours

.....
.....

5.2 You face increased working hours and work intensification

.....
.....

5.3 You face increased workload

.....
.....

5.4 You fear job loss

.....
.....

5.5 You face Work–life conflict

6 Impact on Family Demand and Family Time

6.1 Decrease in family time

.....
.....

6.2 Leads to life dissatisfaction

.....
.....

6.3 Leads to more spousal fights

.....
.....

7 Employee’s Health Issues

7.1 Harms employees' physical health

.....
.....

7.2 Harms employees' emotional health

8 Productivity

8.1 Fear of losing their job affects morale and motivation

.....
.....

8.2 Fear of losing their job affects overall performance

.....
.....

9 Occupational health and safety

9.1 Workplace health dangers must be minimized for workers

.....
.....

9.2 Hotels need to adopt proper precautions and controls towards Workplace health

.....
.....

9.3 Employers must inform workers of hazards and safeguard them

.....
.....

10 Impacts of covid-19 on job and income security

10.1 Covid-19 has led to massive job loss

.....
.....

10.2 Covid-19 has led to income insecurity

.....
.....

10.3 Covid-19 has led to uncertain return to work

.....
.....

10.4 Covid-19 has led to financial insecurity

.....
.....