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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS AND PROCEEDINGS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

MODERN TRENDS IN BUSINESS, HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

Editors Marius Dan GAVRILETEA
& Monica Maria COROȘ

Presa Universitară Clujeană



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Book of Abstracts and Proceedings of the International Conference

MODERN TRENDS IN BUSINESS, HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

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PRESA UNIVERSITARĂ CLUJEANĂ

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Table of Contents

SHORT PAPERS

Funda H. SEZGIN and Yilmaz BAYAR

*The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Stress
in the US Financial Markets.....* 11

Vlad-Alexandru BRANGA

*Building Effective Teams in Basketball versus Business
During the COVID-19 Pandemic* 21

Adina Letiția NEGRUȘA and Elisabeta BUTOI

*The Romanian Teleworkers in Search for Achieving
Sustainable Work.....* 33

Ali DALGIÇ, Alparslan GÜVENÇ and Mahmut DEMİR

*Preferences and Experiences of Bicycle Festival Participants:
A Study on Çanakkale Bicycle Festival (Turkey) Participants* 43

Shahrazad HADAD and Iulia ȚICĂU

Benefits Dependency Networks – a CRM approach 63

Yilmaz BAYAR and Funda H. SEZGIN

*The Interaction between Stock Market Returns
and Economic Growth: Evidence from BRICS Countries* 83

Nizamulmulk GUNES and Yilmaz BAYAR

*The Interaction between Financial Development
and Human Development in EU Transition Economies.....* 93

Ozan ATSIZ

*Overall Residents' Quality of Life, Community Attachment
and Support for Tourism in Rural Destinations
Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Preliminary Research.....* 101

Mahmut DEMIR, Ali DALGIÇ and Hazal Ezgi ÇELEBI

*The Impact of the Innovations on Human Resources
Planning in Hotels: The Mediating Role of COVID-19 Measures* 111

Daniela Andreea CARABA and Smaranda Adina COSMA

Current Spectator's Profile of the Stage Arts..... 133

Adeline Cristina COZMA and Monica Maria COROŞ

Logging or Lodging?..... 141

Şirvan Şen DEMIR, Mahmut DEMIR, and Onur AKTÜRK

*Comparison of the Effects of Different Teaching Techniques on
Learning in Tourism Distance Education during the COVID-19.....* 151

Cristina PRUND

*How to Survive through the Challenges of the Pandemic.
Research and Analysis Regarding the Impact of SARS-COV-2
on the Romanian Labour Market.....* 169

Lavinia LAMUREAN and Marius BOTA

*The Profile of the Event Consumer:
Case Study City of Cluj-Napoca.....* 187

Ştefan-Sebastian POPESCU and Aurelian SOFIĂ

Bullying in Romanian Organizations..... 201

Orsolya Iulia OLÁH and Oana Adriana GICĂ

*Some Considerations on Behavioral Changes
of Romanian Young Tourists Following the Pandemic.....* 211

Florina-Gabriela MITU and Marius BOTA

Using Eye Tracking to Explore the Universe of Art..... 225

Bianca Ana-Maria OPREA and Aurelian SOFIĆĂ
Solo Female Travellers. Behaviour, Attitudes, and Meanings 237

Denisa Natalia HAMPU and Monica Maria COROŞ
*Religious Tourism: Pilgrimages – A Business
of the Church’s Travel Agencies?* 253

ABSTRACTS

Irina BILAN and Constantin-Marius APOSTOAIIE
Unemployment Benefits and Entrepreneurial Initiative 269

Mihaela-Filofteia TUTUNEA
*Artificial Intelligence in Tourism&Hospitality – Tourists`
Perception by Generation*..... 272

Omer Faruk OZTURK
*The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Public
Finance in Turkey*..... 274

Carolina ŢĪMBALARI and Mihai Gabriel CRISTIAN
*Competitiveness in tourism industry. Scenario of Romania
under the shadow of COVID-19* 275

Marius Dan GAVRILETEA
COVID-19 Risks and Travel Health Insurances..... 276

**Valentin TOADER, Fernanda A. FERREIRA, Veronica RUS,
and Oana Ruxandra BODE**
The COVID-19 Impact ON Airbnb..... 277

**Monica Maria COROŞ, Nicoleta Dorina RACOLŢA-PAINA,
and Ana Monica POP**
The Business of Transylvanian Wineries 278

Mikaela Aishel J. FLORES, Fe Ann L. HONORIO, Nadine A. LACASANDILE, Trisha Mae A. NARNOLA, Kenneth A. TUCAY, and Hilmer M. FERNANDEZ	
<i>Commerce amidst Covid-19</i>	279
Iuliana LEVINSCHI and Marius Dan GAVRILETEA	
<i>The Impact of COVID-19 on the Aviation Industry</i>	281
Ionuț GAVRIȘ and Valentin TOADER	
<i>Empowering Our 2030 Vision</i>	282

SHORT PAPERS

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Stress in the US Financial Markets

Funda H. SEZGIN¹ and Yilmaz BAYAR²

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic was first detected in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and then spread rapidly to the rest of the world. The pandemic negatively affected all the economies in the world and great fluctuations were experienced in the global stock markets. This study investigated the impact of 2019 novel coronavirus on stress in the US financial markets during the period March 9, 2020-February 19, 2021 employing Bayer and Hanck (2013) cointegration analysis. The analyses revealed a negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the financial market stress in the US in the short and long run.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Financial Market Stress, Panel Cointegration Analysis.

JEL Classification: C22, G15, G18

Introduction and Review of Literature

The ongoing novel coronavirus COVID-19 has been the fifth pandemic as of the 1918 flu pandemic and was firstly detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, and then swiftly spread to the world. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. The countries have generally applied

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lockdowns, closed the borders, and international mobility has come to a halt. Therefore, economic and social life have also come to a standstill.

The measures against COVID-19 pandemic have led the countries to experience negative social and economic problems. In this study, we have focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the financial market stress in the US (United States). The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic led the considerable decreases in the financial assets and raised the volatility in the global markets. In this context, the scholars have generally focused on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the stock market indices, stock returns, and financial risk and uncertainty as seen in the literature review. Therefore, we explored the relationship between COVID-19 pandemic and financial stress index considering the related empirical literature and aimed to make a contribution to the related literature.

In this study, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on financial markets stress in the US was analyzed in the US for the period of March 9, 2020-February 19, 2021 with daily data through Bayer and Hanck (2013) cointegration analysis. In this context, the next section summarized the related literature and the data and method were described. Section 4 conducted the empirical analysis and the study is over with the Conclusion.

The large number of scholars have explored the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the stock market index, stock market returns and financial risk and uncertainty for different countries and periods and have generally revealed a negative influence of COVID-19 pandemic on the stock market index and returns and raised the financial market risk and uncertainty (e.g. see Bahrini and Filfilan, 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Ashraf, 2020).

Bahrini and Filfilan (2020) explored the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the stock market index in Gulf Cooperation Council economies for the period of April 1, 2020-June 26, 2020 through regression

analysis and revealed that new and total COVID-19 confirmed deaths negatively affected the stock market indices. On the other side, Al-Awadhi et al. (2020) researched the impact of growth in total confirmed cases and in total deaths on the Chinese stock market for the period of January 10- March 16 2020 through regression analysis and revealed a negative effect of both COVID-19 measurements on the stock returns.

Zhang et al. (2020) also researched the relationship between COVID-19 pandemic and stock market risks in top 10 infected countries and reached that the COVID-19 pandemic led to higher risk and uncertainty in the global financial markets. On the other side, Liu et al. (2020) explored the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the stock market index in 21 major affected countries for the period of February 21, 2019-March18, 2020 through event study analysis and revealed a negative impact of the COVID-19 on the stock market returns.

Ashraf (2020) explored the effect of COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths on the stock market returns in 64 countries for the period of January 22, 2020-April 17, 2020 and revealed a negative effect of confirmed cases on the stock market return. Singh et al. (2020) explored the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the stock markets in G-20 countries through event study and revealed a negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the stock markets. Anh and Gan (2020) explored the impact the COVID-19 daily confirmed cases on the stock returns in Vietnam for the period of January 30-May 30 2020 through regression analysis and discovered a negative effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the stock return.

Data and Method

In this study, we the impact of COVID-19 on the stress in the financial markets in the US for the period 3 March 2020-19 February 2021 was analyzed through Bayer and Hanck (2013) cointegration test.

The daily data of financial stress index (FSI) was provided from Office of Financial Research (2021a). The FSI is the weighted average of

credit, equity valuation, funding, safe assets and volatility variables and reflects the failures in the operation of financial markets. The zero value of the index suggests that FSI is at normal levels, positive FSI shows that the stress level is above average and the negative FSI indicates that stress levels in the financial markets are below average (Office of Financial Research, 2021b). On the other side, the COVID-19 is represented by the number of new COVID-19 cases and obtained from World Health Organization (2021). The variables in the econometric analysis and their symbols were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Data Description

FSI	Financial stress index
COVID	The number of new COVID-19 cases

The statistical programs of Eviews 10.0 and STATA 15.0 were used for the econometric analyses. The trend of the variables were displayed as following:

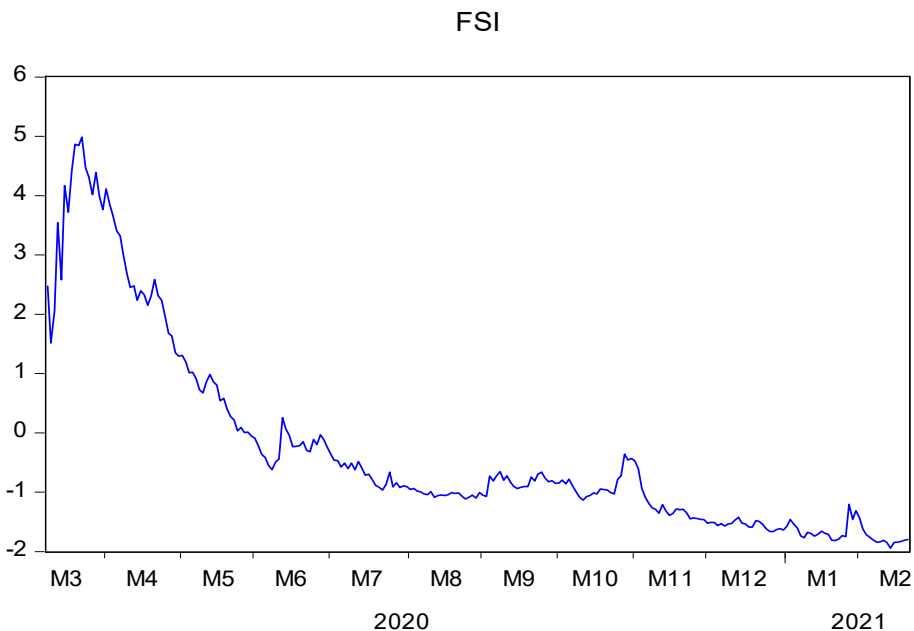
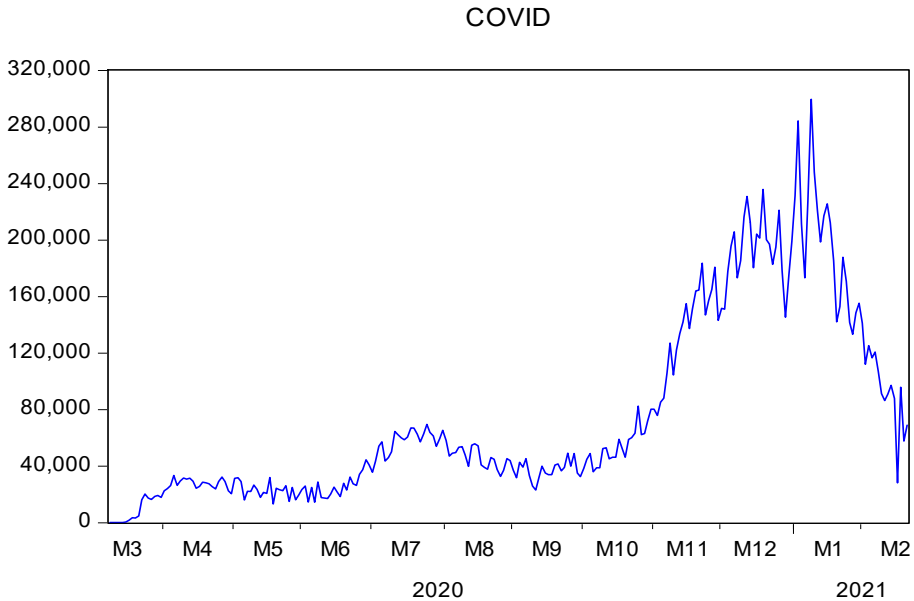


Chart 1: FSI Trend

**Chart 2:** COVID trend

The summary statistics of the dataset were presented in Table 2. The mean of financial stress index in the US was -0.28 during the study period, and the mean of new COVID-19 cases was 75733, but the standard deviation of COVID series was very high during the study period.

Table 2: Summary Statistics of Dataset

Statistics	FSI	COVID
Mean	-0.283152	75733.00
Median	-0.888000	46308.50
Maximum	4.988000	299562.0
Minimum	-1.941000	224.0000
Std. deviation	1.633968	66889.63

In the econometric analysis, the stationarity of the time series were analyzed through Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) (1981) and Phillips-Perron (PP) (1988) tests. On the other side, the long run relationship between two series was analyzed by Bayer and Hanck (2013)

cointegration test, and the short run relationship was analyzed by error correction model.

Empirical Analysis

The stationarity of the series were analyzed by tests of ADF and PP and displayed in Table 3. The variables were not stationary at the level, but became stationary after first-differencing.

Table 3: Unit Root Tests' Results

Variables	ADF		PP	
	Constant	Constant + Trend	Constant	Constant + Trend
FSI	-1.102(0.139)	-1.124(0.141)	-1.198(0.128)	-1.204(0.133)
COVID	-1.231(0.205)	-1.267(0.246)	-1.216(0.253)	-1.238(0.244)
Δ FSI	-7.453(0.000)*	-8.201(0.000)*	-8.234(0.001)*	-8.517(0.007)*
Δ COVID	-5.448(0.001)*	-6.998(0.002)*	-7.305(0.000)*	-7.984(0.000)*

*It is significant at 5% level

Note: The values in the parentheses showed the probability values and Δ indicated the first differences of the series.

The optimal lag length was specified as 8, because the five information criteria were found to be significant at 8 lag as seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Determination of Lag Length

Lag	LogL	LR	FPE	AIC	SC	HQ
0	-3431.018	NA	7.19e+09	28.37205	28.40089	28.38367
1	-2550.569	1739.069	5141819.	21.12867	21.21517	21.16352
2	-2548.974	3.123084	5245111.	21.14855	21.29272	21.20663
3	-2535.685	25.80975	4857608.	21.07178	21.27362	21.15309
4	-2510.414	48.66337	4074649.	20.89598	21.15549*	21.00052
5	-2506.659	7.168066	4083149.	20.89801	21.21518	21.02578
6	-2501.456	9.846035	4043103.	20.88807	21.26291	21.03907
7	-2482.403	35.74427	3570543.	20.76366	21.19618	20.93790
8	-2475.765	12.34431*	3494035.*	20.74186*	21.23204	20.93932*

The cointegration relationship among the series were analyzed by Bayer and Hanck (2013) cointegration test and the findings were presented in Table 5. The calculated two Fisher test statistics were found to be higher than the critical values and in turn the null hypothesis of significant cointegration relationship among the series was declined. Therefore, we revealed a significant cointegration relationship among financial stress index and the number of new COVID-19 cases.

Table 5: Bayer and Hanck (2013) Cointegration Test Results

Model	EG-JOH	EG-JOH-BO-BDM	Cointegration
Model: $FFSI=f(FCOVID)$	19.512*	25.873**	Significant
Significance level	Critical values	Critical values	
1%	15.385	32.572	
5%	12.939	23.591	
10%	9.974	16.543	

Note: * and ** indicated that it was significant at 1% and 5%

The cointegration coefficients were estimated by FMOLS method (Fully Modified Ordinary Least Square) and the result was displayed in Table 6. The coefficient show that the increases in the number of new COVID-19 cases decreased the financial stress index.

Table 6: FMOLS Estimation Results of Cointegration Coefficients

Model	COVID
Model: $FSI=f(COVID)$	-0.308*

* indicated that it was significant at 5%

Note: The problems of autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity were eliminated through Newey-West method.

The short term dynamics between the series was examined by Vector Error Correction Model (VECM) and the findings were displayed in Table 7. The test results revealed the significant negative impact of the COVID variable on the FSI variable and the short run impact of COVID

variable on FSI was found to be relatively lower than the long run impact. The error correction term was found to be negative and significant. In other words, the error correction mechanism works and the short term deviations between the series were eliminated by 43.7% and the series converged towards the long run equilibrium value.

Table 7: Results of Short-run Error Correction Model Estimation

Dependent variable: ΔFSI_t	Coefficient	Diagnostic tests
$\Delta COVID_t$	-0.297*	$R^2=0.568$, $Adj. R^2=0.562$, $F(p)=0.000^*$, <i>Breusch-Godfrey LM Test</i> (p)= 0.124*, <i>White Test</i> (p)=0.146*, <i>Ramsey</i> <i>RESET Test</i> (p)= 0.151* , <i>JB test</i> (p)=0.277
ECT_{t-1}	-0.437*	
Constant	0.982*	

* indicated that it was significant 5%

Note: JB showed the probability value of Jarque-Bera normality test and the problems of autocorrelation and heteroscedasticity were eliminated through Newey-West method.

Conclusion

In this study, we explored the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on financial market stress in the US for the period March 9, 2020-February 19, 2021 through Bayer and Hanck (2013) cointegration analysis. The vector error correction model and cointegration analysis revealed a negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the financial market stress in the US in the short and long run. Our finding was not consistent with the related empirical literature, because the related empirical literature has generally revealed a negative effect of COVID-19 pandemic on the financial markets. However, we revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic decreased the financial market stress and this can be resulted from that the positive news about COVID-19 vaccines and the efficiency of the vaccines decreased the financial markets stress.

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Building Effective Teams in Basketball versus Business During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Vlad-Alexandru BRANGA¹

Abstract: In today's economic environment, building effective teams has proven to be a major factor to ensure success in sports and in business. However, the sports and business industries have both been, and continue to be drastically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. People, Teams and Companies have been forced to adapt to new challenges and work ethics. That is why the goal of this paper is to point out how building effective teams in basketball and business has changed since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The results will provide us with an insight into how people, managers, coaches and especially the human resources departments must adapt in order to build effective teams in sports and in business.

Keywords: effective teams; team building; team performance; human capital.

JEL classification: M12, M19

Introduction and Review of Literature

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the word team as „a number of persons associated together in work or activity.”² However, such a simple definition is not sufficient in today's economic situation. More so, the term „team” comes rather from sports than from business. In sports, „each player in a team game has a position and a specific responsibility. The skills of the players are important but the strength of the team depends more

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² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/team;>

specifically, on how well the players combine." (Belbin, 2010). This statement underlines the importance of leadership on behalf of the basketball coach or a team leader / manager of a company. A better definition of the term „team" was given by Hensey, who wrote, „The word team may be defined as a group of people, each with different skills and often with different tasks, who work together toward a common project, service, or goal with a meshing of their functions and with mutual support." (Hensey, 2001) Having defined the term „team" a definition of the term „effective team" is also needed in order to fully grasp the concept. „An effective team is one in which development of a supportive social structure has occurred, with each individual adapting his behavior to optimize his personal contribution to the team." (Sheard and Kakabadse, 2002).

When starting to build a team there are a variety of factors that need to be taken into consideration, such as available recruitment budget, defined roles, team size, cultural aspects, leadership and many more. Furthermore, „Teambuilding takes work and an understanding of both group and individual dynamics." (Diamond, 2007). This aspect also underlines the fact that basketball coaches, team leaders and / or managers of different companies need to be in a continuous development process, meaning they should be appropriately skilled (Mickan and Rodger, 2000), in order to always be able to identify how the dynamics between individuals and between teams change. This way they will be able to build effective teams.

The question that arises now is why use teams especially when you have clearly defined roles for every individual. Robbins and Coulter gave an answer to this question: „Organizations are using team-based structures because they've found that teams are more flexible and responsive to changing events than traditional departments or other permanent work groups. Teams have the ability to quickly assemble, deploy, refocus, and disband." (Robbins and Coulter, 2016). Furthermore, an important aspect of a team is its essence as Belbin wrote: „The essence of a team is a set of players who have a reciprocal part to play, and who are dynamically engaged with one another." (Belbin, 2010). One might go

even further and say that a team is not just a set of players, but also a set of individuals that come together for a common goal. If we look at sports, we see teams everywhere, even at those so-called individual sports such as tennis for example. A tennis player might appear as a single individual playing one on one on the field but they would not be there without their „hidden“ team, which consists of coaches, kinetotherapist, training partners and so on.

More so, in order for a team to be effective it needs to fulfill certain characteristics. For example, Robbins and Coulter have concluded following necessary characteristics of effective teams:



Figure 1: Characteristics of Effective Teams

Source: Robbins and Coulter, 2016

As we can see in figure 1, some of these characteristic fall upon the team members themselves but some fall upon the leader (coach, team leader or manager).

Furthermore, one idea that has been pointed out by various authors is the fact that the number of members in a team has a direct impact on the team's effectiveness. For example, Katzenbach and Smith underlined the fact that „if there are more than ten to twelve people in your group, you may have too many people to apply the team discipline effectively. In our experience, the team discipline does not work with large numbers of people.” (Katzenbach and Smith, 2001). Other authors support this idea, for example, Dyer G., Dyer J., Dyer W. wrote: „A team that is too large may be unwieldy and cause team members to lose interest due to a lack of individual involvement. Having too few team members may place unnecessary burdens on individual team members, and the team may not have the resources needed to accomplish its goals.” (Dyer G., Dyer J., Dyer W., 2013). On the one hand, this idea is supported by the fact that a basketball team can have, on paper, a number of maximum 12 eligible players. However, the team is permitted to have more players on its roster and rotate between them according to its opponents. Furthermore, if we look at a company's organizational chart, we do not see just one big team but a number of teams each with its clearly defined role and objectives.

Some authors underline the idea that before becoming an effective team, individuals form groups. Robbins and Coulter al define a group „as two or more interacting and interdependent individuals who come together to achieve specific goals.” (Robbins P. Stephen and Coulter Mary, 2016). More so, groups, as teams, have four stages of development:

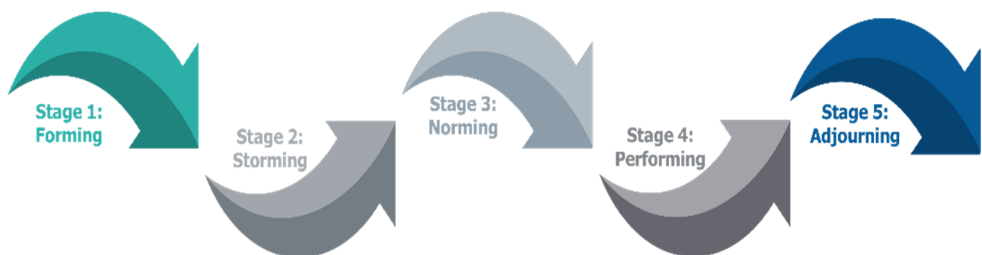


Figure 2: Stages of Group Development

Source: Robbins and Coulter, 2016

These stages of development are necessary not only for groups but for teams as well as they are the steps towards reaching effectiveness. „The forming stage“ is the first stage and is defined by individuals that join a group and after this, the group’s objective; organization or leadership situation is established. The second stage, the so-called „the storming stage“, can be defined by various conflicts (ex.: who will lead the group and what the group’s objectives should be) inside the group. The establishment of relationships between the group’s members defines the third stage, „the norming stage“. This is also the stage where cohesiveness appears for the first time in the development process. Lastly, a „fully functional group with a clear and accepted structure“ characterizes the fourth stage, „the performing stage“. (Robbins and Coulter, 2016).

Moving on, before the COVID-19 pandemic, building a team was on the one hand easier, in basketball and in business, as the labor market was more fluid and people were changing their jobs with more security and fewer risks. However, since the pandemic began, we can see a clear change in the labor market: people are not so willing to change their jobs in this period as they did before and companies have either stopped or decreased hiring or they focused on keeping their existing clients close and their costs at a low level. On the other hand, in basketball we could see a clear decrease in the budget of all the teams as they lost one sponsor after the other. This means that all the teams had for the 2020-2021 season lower recruiting budgets. If in the past players changed teams more easily than employees did, nowadays, they look especially for those teams that have a financial stability in order to be sure that they will receive their financial compensation on time. More so, players’ salaries have decreased in contrast with previous years, which means that some teams might get a very good player for the budget that they have available.

Building an effective team during a pandemic such as COVID-19 is not only challenging but also very hard to plan. Things change on a

daily basis; plans can no longer be fulfilled and need to continuously change. However, some aspects need to be taken into consideration when trying to build an effective team in basketball or in business in a pandemic or not. We cannot state that one method is the best in order to build an effective team. However, we can clearly state that every method needs to analyze a variety of factors. Furthermore, Taylor, Doherty, McGraw (2007) have pointed out an interesting aspect regarding sports team: „Increased globalization, commercialization, and accountability in the sports industry over the past few decades have led sport organizations to adopt more sophisticated management systems and become more ‘business’ oriented.” (Taylor, Doherty, McGraw, 2008) Therefore, not only business can learn from sports teams but also sport organizations can learn from businesses.

Material and Methods

For the purpose of this paper, I have conducted interviews with several basketball coaches that are active in the Romanian Basketball Federation and business managers from various industries in order to see how building an effective team has changed during the pandemic. More so, I wanted to see if they are aware of the characteristics of an effective team, as seen in Figure 1, or in which step of group development they first see their team as effective, as seen in Figure 2.

Moving on to the analysis of the group’s development stages, first, in order for a team to be effective, we must have „the right people on the bus” (Collins, 2001). Other authors such as Taylor, Doherty, and McGraw who wrote: „Getting the right people into the organization is a vital step in creating this competitive advantage. This means being able to identify the best mix of technical, team, and leadership skills and abilities required for the organization.” (Taylor, Doherty, McGraw, 2008) also support Jim

Collin's idea. This is what characterizes the first stage of a group development and is the stage that both basketball coaches and business managers considered of vital importance. The main argument was that if they have the right people in their teams, the learning process would occur more easily. An interesting aspect that resulted from the interviews is regarding the second stage, the storming stage. Because this stage is characterized by intragroup conflict, some basketball coaches and managers pointed out that they sometimes „push“ certain people or groups in order to see how they react in those types of situations. Although it is not an ethical thing to do, it showed them positive and negative characteristics of certain individuals and they know in which direction they should work closer together in order to reach effectiveness. However, I would like to point out, that in my opinion this is not something that I would recommend anyone to do as it can very easily backfire and create big problems.

Furthermore, I noticed that every person interviewed, mentioned the fact that after their team has been through some conflicts or difficult situations together, they have started to be more cohesive. This shows that their teams are actually on the third stage of group development and one-step closer to being effective. Mickan and Rodgers wrote an interesting idea that underlined the importance of working together as one: „when all team members are cohesive, make decisions jointly and manage conflict, the team is more effective.“ (Mickan and Rodger, 2000).

Moreover, all the people that I interviewed pointed out the fact, that if they managed to ensure as many characteristics of an effective team, as seen in Figure 1, their teams have become effective. That means that they reached the fourth stage, the performing stage. This is the stage, where a team is characterized as being effective. There was however, another interesting aspect that was pointed out during the interviews and that can be in a way associated with the fifth stage, the adjourning stage,

was that teams are in a continuous change as people come and go. From this, we can conclude the fact that the group development process is not only a linear one, but also a circular one. This affects the effectiveness of the team on short term until the team gets back on track towards reaching effectiveness. This means that team effectiveness is not something that once reached will always remain there but something for which teams need to work closely together in order to achieve.

Results and Discussions

The results of the interviews with basketball coaches and business managers have pointed out some differences between building a team during the COVID-19 pandemic and before the pandemic:

- ☛ One of the main differences that is between building a team in basketball versus building a team in a company is the fact that in basketball, players will be recruited „based on a range of physical (e.g., strength, speed, coordination) and psychological (e.g., resilience, personality, leadership) qualities.” (Beauchamp, McEwan and Waldhauser, 2017). In business, however, because jobs where candidates need to take a physical exam in order to be hired are scarce, candidates are selected mainly based on their psychological qualities and their financial demands. Furthermore, when selecting candidates for recruitment in business, one can use a variety of cognitive ability tests. These tests „differentiate individuals based on their mental rather than physical capacities.” (Noe et al, 2016). This however does not mean that recruiting in business is easier, it means that recruiting in basketball is also done by looking at various statistics (ex.: field goals, three point, rebound, assists percentages) that one player has achieved over the years. More so, basketball coaches with whom I have

discussed have underlined the fact that the hard skills of a player are always easier to be taught than soft skills;

- ☛ Another big difference between building a team before the pandemic and during one is regarding the organization of the recruitment interviews. Before the outbreak, basketball coaches on the one hand were doing telephone / video interviews in order to get to know their potential players as the players were mainly in other cities, countries or even continents. On the other hand, recruiters and team leaders / managers were doing the interviews face-to-face and online only in specific situations. Nowadays, with almost everyone working from home, the interviews are being held primarily online. This shift has affected the selection process and thus building an effective team as one cannot be sure to identify all the small details (ex.: body language) during a video conference. However, this way of conducting interviews can bring a lot of benefits for the recruiters in companies as they are not restricted by a specific area and are now able to reach candidates everywhere on the globe.

The discussion further is on how will basketball coaches / team leaders / managers build their teams after the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. One thing that might happen is that they will put an even greater focus on the psychological qualities of their potential players / candidates. As mentioned previously, hard skills have a unique characteristic, meaning that they can always be taught; soft skills however, are something that is not so easily taught. Another aspect that the COVID-19 pandemic brought in focus is the fact that basketball coaches and team leaders / managers need to pay a lot more attention on the internal and external environment of a team as leading virtual teams has come into play. This means, that their own leadership needs to be adaptable and in a continuous development process in order for them to

successfully lead the team towards achieving its objectives. Furthermore, because of this, the recruitment process will take longer in the future as basketball coaches and team leaders / managers will put more focus on this aspect in order to make sure that they have „the right people on the bus.“ (Collins, 2001). More so, it will be interesting to observe how the human capital selection process will change after the COVID-19 pandemic is over. Will it return to its former system of face-to-face interviews, will it remain only via online video platforms, or will it be a mix of those two? Finally yet importantly, the answer to the question „how long does it take for a team to become effective?“ could represent the topic for further research papers.

Conclusions

The COVID-19 breakout followed by its pandemic has changed many aspects of our lives. One of these aspects is that teams, in basketball or business, have been forced to rapidly adapt in order to survive. This means that the way teams, in basketball and in business, are built during this time has been also influenced. The human capital selection was already in a continuous process of changing, since some years now, but the pandemic made everything happen a lot faster and in different ways. We can also state that the pandemic has set changeability and adaptability as main characteristics for effective teams in this period. Furthermore, basketball coaches, team leaders / managers have found themselves needing to reevaluate all the activities of their teams, adapt to new recruitment budgets, cut costs or in some cases even fire employees. Lastly, one thing that we can clearly state is the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic's effects will affect teams for years to come and that its challenges will continue to teach us a lot about how we need to remain adaptable in order to achieve effectiveness.

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The Romanian Teleworkers in Search for Achieving Sustainable Work

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Abstract: In a time of imposed remote work, the Romanian teleworkers face several challenges. A previous period to COVID-19 pandemic with a known and accepted working environment suddenly just changed its pillars and variables. The escaping room of private life got invaded and occupied by working life. In this time of pandemic workers are learning to adapt to the new way of working from home and finding the work-life balance. While employers are searching for new and performing approach to accomplish their goals, employees are addressing new requirements; both sides carefully analyze the psychosocial risks at work, fragmentation of work and the merging of work and private life. The study presents and analyses official results of two surveys conducted by the “European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions”. The search for sustainable work requests improving working conditions and job quality, tackling emerging risks and involving all stakeholders in Romanian working environment.

Keywords: telework, work-life balance, flexible work, job satisfaction, right to disconnect, COVID-19.

JEL Classification: M100, M540, M150

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Introduction and Literature Review

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the unpredictably change of the working place from the office to home had a tremendous impact on employees. As in Romania the employees performing telework were around 10% in 2015 (Eurofound, 2021). This change affected and challenged more especially those never performing work from home. The new teleworkers had to adapt quickly to the situation, also the employers had to face the leading from distance approach. The link between employees and employers is maintained through the information and communications technologies (ICTs). This way of organizing work based on ICTs is called telework, remote work or commuting work. "Telework is work carried out by the use of computers and telecommunications, in order to overcome restraints in place or time of work" (European Commission, 1998, p. 3).

In Romania remote work is just in the first phase of development and it's results and influences are yet slightly researched. The law regarding the regulations of telework activity was issued just in April 2018, before that telework was considered a form of home work (Dima, et al., 2019). At global level, the commuting work was predicted in 1970 and became in time a type of location-independency work (Messenger & Gschwind, 2016).

A study done on telework effects on 1180 Romanian employees in 2019 identified that at individual level telework could improve work-life balance and develop new remote work specific skills. The work flexibility could be considered by employers a competitive advantage as this is a source of job satisfaction for employees. Autonomy has a positive influence on work-life balance and could rise workers' attachment to the company. The autonomy influences also positively teleworkers' openness to develop new necessary abilities for performing their work, while this is an intrinsic motivation for further self-development. Work flexibility and autonomy are important elements supporting sustainable human capital

management strategy. Telework has sustainable social implications too as it facilitates access to labor market of certain labor force categories like mothers of small children, people from rural areas (Dima, et al., 2019). Another Romanian study, analyzing pandemic effects, discloses the speeding up of technologization and digitalization in many industrial sectors, rapid changes in organizing methodology and quick adjustments in employees' behavior and expectations (Grigorescu & Mocanu, 2020).

The literature reveals several benefits and challenges of remote work as the ICTs made working place changeable, from office to clients' place, to a coffee shop, at home or while traveling (Wojcak, et al., 2016). Telework enables work flexibility, enhance work-life balance, increases job satisfaction, is an advantage for single parents and persons with special issues (Burrell, et al., 2014), improves personal development and reduces commuting time (Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012), while allowing workers to work from any place, permitting them to use the required technologies to fulfill their tasks (Belzunegui-Eraso & Erro-Garces, 2020). The time autonomy has a positive effect on employees' work-life balance and productivity (Sostero, et al., 2020). Although telework implies risks, like, blurring between work and personal life, work-family conflicts triggered by pressure between work and family roles (Stankevičiūtė & Savanevičienė, 2019). The social isolation, low trust, self-discipline, procrastination and technological skills of teleworkers could reduce the job performance (Antonacopoulou & Georgiadou, 2020; Contreras, et al., 2020; Waizenegger, et al., 2020; Wang, et al., 2021). All these led to a flexible work arrangement, developing employees' technical and communication skills and the need of adapted leadership (Wojcak, et al., 2016).

Latest, the academic literature highlights the importance of work-life balance and working time flexibility. Telework is analyzed from different points of view and there are pros and cons, however, these could benefit workers space and time management, and organizations' cutting costs. An organizational culture supporting work-life balance also

supports sustainable human development, furthermore reduces the work experience gap between men and women, inequities and discriminations (Galvez, et al., 2020).

The United Nations had issued the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* presenting the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets for implementation. The target addressing labor force requests for labor rights, safety and secured working environments for every worker (United Nations, 2015). The European Union (EU) had committed to this agenda and is focusing on smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Therefore, the *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions* (Eurofound) is monitoring the progress of the improvement of working conditions since 1991 implementing regular surveys at European level. Adding up the impacts of telework on social, environmental and economic levels is a necessity for up-to-date choices. The behavioural responses towards telework are very complex as changes are present everywhere (Moos, Andrey, & Johnson, 2006).

As the pandemic started, there were lunched several studies to analyze its impact on social and economic level. The studies identified specific elements, like the balance between work and family, health, well-being (Nangoy, et al., 2020), the possibility to work from home or loss of job, as the spread of pandemic increases labor market risks (Cetrulo, et al., 2020).

Research Methodology

The study presented in this article was carried out with mixed methods and comparative design. The research focuses on the attitudes and perceptions about working conditions, performance and job satisfaction of Romanian employees subsequently experiencing telework activities during the pandemic.

The data was gathered from Eurofound's investigations, since they are providing knowledge to assist in the development of better social, employment and work-related policies since 1975. They deliver reports and results of their conducted surveys at European level (Eurofound, 2021). The most recent data related to the pandemic is from the "Living, Working and COVID-19 E-survey" (LW-COVID-19). This survey had two rounds in April and July 2020. The data was collected online through snowballing and advertisements on social media. The two rounds of the survey were applied in almost all EU members and reached 87,477 respondents (Eurofound, 2020). The sample size of Romanian respondents was 5,021 in round one (out of 63,354 in total) and 1,318 in round two (out of 24,123 in total), the total panel for both rounds being 817 in Romania (out of 11,575 in total) (Sandor, et al., 2020). The second instrument used in this research is the "6th European Working Conditions Survey" (EWCS6) from 2015. In this survey participated 1,063 Romanian respondents out of 43.850 in total from 35 countries (EWCS6, 2015).

The framework for analysing working conditions and sustainable work is based on the seven dimensions of job quality: physical environment, social environment, work intensity, skills and discretion, working time quality, prospects and earnings (Eurofound, 2021). The focus of our research is to analyse the work time quality and work intensity dimensions at Romanian employees' level in comparison with the EU average results.

Results and Discussions

According to the LW-COVID-19 survey's results teleworking pattern in Romania was not a common practice before the outbreak. Thus, an important characteristic during the pandemic crisis is that teleworking became the regular mode of working for many Romanian employees

with no experience in this system. Based on the results of the survey applied in July 2020, the percentage of Romanian employees working only from home was around 30,8 and 52% in the hybrid type of system. The highest incidence of teleworking was registered in the service sectors: education, financial services and public administration; and lower level was characteristic for the frontline sectors such as health, transport and agriculture, as well as in sectors that were subject to specific lockdown restrictions, like commerce and hospitality.

Since the telework primarily allows both employees and employers to adapt work time and place to their needs, gathering productivity improvements, the first dimension analysed was the perception regarding change of working hours in the remote system. Based on responses to the question “*Last month, how many hours per week did you work on average?*” resulted an average of 50.9 hours/week for the Romanian employees, 20% more in comparison with the European average. The gap remains the same also in the case of female employees, even if the female average working hours are slightly lower in comparison with the male ones – 50 hours for Romanian men and 39.8 for EU men (Eurofound, 2020). In conclusion, a high amount of the working time used in the remote system has been growing in comparison with the average of 40.8 hours/week resulted before the outbreak, based on the EWCS6 survey from 2015 (EWCS6, 2015). However, it seems the Romanian employees did not perceive this growth. Figure no.1. displays these perceptions on a five levels scale. Starting from these data we applied a weighted score, using a rating system from -2 (decreased a lot) to 2 (increased a lot) to evaluate the overall perception. Resulted an overall index of (- 0.24) which corresponds to the perception that the working hours decreased in the remote context. So, even if the amount of working time increased, the general employees’ perception is contrary.

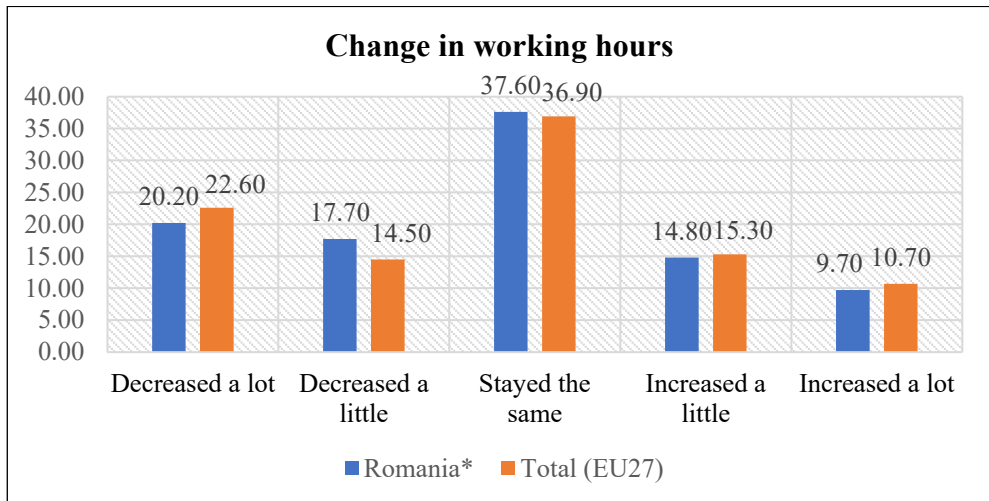


Figure 1: Perceptions about working hours in the remote system

Data sources: Eurofound (2020), Living, working and COVID-19 dataset, Dublin, <http://eurofound.link/covid19data>

Based on LW-COVID-19 results a percent of almost 30% of EU teleworkers are working in their free time daily or several times weekly, while the percent of office workers doing it is less than 5% (Eurofound, 2020). This reveals the need of teleworkers to disconnect from work as constant connectivity can lead to health disorders.

Even working time increased with the experience of remote work, the most Romanian employees (75%) expressed their wish to continue working from home at least occasionally after the pandemic (Eurofound, 2020). Consequently, work-life balance is currently a tough challenge for employees and employers because telework will continue to intensify after the pandemic.

Conclusions

The increase of working time in remote system issue requires for new approach of work and organization. It is very important that telework is design in a form of projects or assignments to facilitate effective results evaluation and a goal-oriented work achievement of

employees. A formal clear policy guidance provided to teleworkers is mandatory in preparation for accomplishing expectations (Burrell, et al., 2014). Furthermore, employers have the responsibility to facilitate a more sustainable working system offering adequate communication technology and tools with improving possibilities of digital skills and communication, establishing ways to connect and disconnect from work, also providing stress management and self-management trainings.

The matter of work-life balance in commuting system raised initially in the ICT sector some years ago. It was addressed by the European Commission requesting more adaptable working conditions with specific requests for parents and careers. In April 2019 was approved the rules of flexible working arrangements and EU countries have three years to comply with the new rules (European Parliament, 2018). Also, the problem of always-on status forced the policy makers to consider and approve the law allowing employees to disconnect from work. This law was adopted by European Commission in January 2021 (European Parliament, 2021) and the right to disconnect follows to be integrated and embraced by teleworkers and their employers.

This study highlights the main topics concerning Romanian teleworkers challenges, but not only, that could support organisations' approach in organising remote work and leading employees. The digital transformation of the economy comes with opportunities and challenges for employees, employers and policy makers, consequently requiring a sustainable approach of telework, as it is here to stay.

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Preferences and Experiences of Bicycle Festival Participants: A Study on Çanakkale Bicycle Festival (Turkey) Participants

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Abstract: In this study, it is aimed to reveal the preferences and experiences of the bicycle festival participants. Data were collected using purposeful sampling method, one of the non-probabilistic sampling methods, from the participants of the bicycle festival held in Çanakkale on 3-5 May 2019. The research data were obtained between February 01 – April 30, 2021 with the semi-structured interview form. The obtained data were analyzed with descriptive analysis method. According to the analysis, it is found that the participants of the bicycle festival camped and preferred daily rental houses. When the expenditures of the participants are evaluated, it is observed that the expenditures made for “food & beverage”, “accommodation” and “entertainment” come to the fore. It can be said that factors such as “like cycling”, “socializing” and “doing sport” are the factors for the participants to prefer the event. Participants evaluated factors such as “proper event planning”, “opportunity to participate in different activities”, “opportunity to see historical sites” and “proper tour route” as the most important factors affecting the success of the event. In addition, the participants stated situations such as “meeting new people”, “socializing” and “relaxation” as individual-based positive effects brought about by the event. Stating that the event was successfully

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realized, the participants also believe that the event made positive contributions to the destination and local people. In this context, the participants stated that the event contributed economically to the local people, provided cultural exchange, created awareness about cycling among the local people and contributed to the awareness and image of the destination. Finally, the participants of the event were asked what the bicycle meant to them and it was seen that the answers such as “freedom”, “sport” and “health” were given. When the findings are evaluated, it is revealed that the Çanakkale destination is suitable for the bicycle events.

Keywords: Bicycle Festival, Festival Experience, Participant Preferences, Bicycle Tourism, Çanakkale, Turkey.

JEL Classification: Z300; Z320

Introduction

The use of bicycles, which has increased significantly in recent years, appears in different areas. There are many definitions of bicycle tourism in the relevant literature. According to Faulks (2010); Bicycle tourism is all of the activities in touristic destinations that include vacation, sports, entertainment, event and recreation-style activities, with direct cycling participation or participation in the event as a spectator, with or without an accommodation. When its dynamics are evaluated, bicycle tourism is considered within the scope of sustainable tourism due to its positive effects, and it can be said that bicycle tourism has very important effects on economic, social and environment such as rural development, reducing carbon emissions, creating new business areas, providing touristic product variety, destination development, etc. (Goefit and Alder, 2001; Ritchie, Tkaczynski and Faulks, 2010; Picket, Eijelaar and Peeters, 2013; Duran, Sevinç and Harman, 2018; Bakogiannis, Vlastos, Athanasopoulos, Christodouloupoulou, Karolemeas, Kyriakidis, Noutsou, Papagerasimou-Klironomou, Siti, Stroumpou, Vassi, Tsigdinos and Tzika, 2020; Türkmen and Gökdemir, 2021). Turkey also has an unique potential for bicycle tourism, which is seen to be prominent in

countries such as some European countries (Netherlands, England, Finland, Sweden, etc.), America, Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan. It is thought that Turkey has an important advantage in this regard due to its geographical features, tourism infrastructure, natural and cultural wealth, etc.

In addition to bicycle tourism, bicycle-themed festivals also stand out as events that have increased their popularity in recent years. These kinds of events can also be specified as an important promotion and marketing element since they are an attraction element for the destination (Buhalis, 2000). Bicycle themed events can benefit attendees and also may have a positive impact on the local community and destination. In order for such activities, which have many effects in economic, commercial, physical, environmental, sociocultural, psychological, political, tourism, etc. fields (Fredline, Jago and Deery, 2003; Bowdin, Allen, O'toole, Harris and McDonnell, 2006), to have positive effects, some factors should be brought together before, during and after the event. The factors that should be included in the organization and execution of the events in order for the events to be successful and to provide unique experiences to the event participants can be stated as "key success factors". It is important to identify which factors are key success factors in bicycle themed festivals. In addition, demonstrating what kind of benefits individuals participating in such activities obtain will guide the practitioners in terms of increasing the benefits to be obtained. Moreover, it is important to reveal some words to be used in the promotion and marketing of bicycle-themed events and what should be shared on social media channels for the development of such events.

Determining the factors affecting the expenses of the individuals participating in bicycle festivals, accommodation preferences, the activities they participate in and their destination preferences are also important issues for event organizers. As a result of the information, the rescheduling of the festivals, adding different attractiveness to the

destination, increasing the activities during the festival process can have a positive effect in the context of key success factors such as including different inputs to the process. In this way, it will be possible for the festival participants to have unique cognitive and emotional experiences and acquire new knowledge. Considering the mentioned issues, this study was carried out to reveal the factors that motivate participation in the Çanakkale Bicycle Festival, the key success factors that play a role in the success of the festival, the individual positive effects of the festival and the positive effects of the festival on the local people and the destination. In the study, first, a “literature review” including some of the researches on bicycle tourism and bicycle-themed events will be given. Afterwards, information about the population, sample, scope, data collection method and data analysis methods of the research will be given in the “methodology” section. The analysis results of the obtained data and the opinions of the participants will be included under the “result” section. The research will be concluded with the “conclusion and discussion” section.

Literature Review

With each passing day, it can be said that the positive progress in bicycle tourism continues around the world. The effect of the Tour de France on tourism one of the most popular sports events in the world can be a good example of the reason for this trend. The Presidential Bicycle Tour, which is evaluated in the Pro Series class by the International Cycling Association (UCI), is one of the largest bicycle tourism organizations in Turkey. In addition to many events recognized by UCI, public bicycle festivals are also organized in Turkey. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that studies on bicycle tourism are handled in a versatile way. Recent studies in the academic field can be considered as an indicator of the increasing interest in the topic of bicycle

tourism and bicycle festivals. When the researches are examined, it can be stated that issues such as “motivation and behavior”, “strategy development”, “destination choice reasons” come to the fore. Ritchie, Tkaczynski, and Faulks (2010) analyzed 564 valid data they gathered from cycling group members in Australia in their study investigating the motivation and travel behavior of bicycle tourists and they found that the factors driving tourists to bicycle tourism are adventure experience, gaining competence, relaxation/escape, and socialization.

In the study conducted by Türkmen and Gökdemir (2021) to determine the travel motivation of bicycle tourists, they expressed the motivations of the participants for bicycle tourism with the data they obtained from the Turkish participants who attended the Çanakkale Bicycle Tour Festival held in 2018 from outside the city. These motivations are expressed under five dimensions: exploring nature and relaxation, competence-mastery, new experience and knowledge, gaining dignity and socialization. As a result of the second order confirmatory factor analysis, it is determined that the most effective dimensions are competence-mastery, new experience and socialization, the dimension with the highest participation is the dimension of discovering nature and relaxation, and the dimension with the lowest participation is gaining dignity. In another study conducted for similar purposes, Duran, Sevinç and Harman (2018) aimed to reveal the motivation of bicycle tourists, the importance given to bicycle tours by bicycle tourists and the level of interest they show. Interviews were conducted with the participants of different cycling groups in the study investigating how the level of interest in cycling could be an important tourist attraction for Çanakkale. As a result of the study, it has been revealed that cycling can be developed in the context of sustainability in Çanakkale. In a study conducted by Çelik Uğuz and Özbek (2018) on the participants of the Burhaniye Bicycle Festival, they examined the effects of the level of interest of the festival participants on satisfaction and the

effects of satisfaction on re-participation and loyalty to the festival. As a result of the research, it was found that interest can affect satisfaction and satisfaction can affect loyalty. Based on the findings of the study, strategic recommendations were made at the regional level.

When examined at the studies that can be evaluated in the context of tourist preferences, Meng and Han (2016) investigated the effect of environmental perceptions of cyclists on decision-making. They reached valid 394 data from cycling clubs of eight universities in China. As a result of the analysis of the data, it was determined that environmental connectedness has a significant and positive effect on environmental behaviors and environmental behaviors affect the desires of the participants in a significant and positive way. In addition, it was found that the variables of attitude, perceived behavior control and positively anticipated emotion had a significant and positive effect on participants' desires. Another finding is that the desires of the participants significantly and positively affect their behavioral intentions. Faulks, Ritchie and Dodds (2008) focused on the question of "can bicycle tourism offer opportunities for recreation and restoration" in their study on the participants of the Great Victoria Bike Tour. This research focused on the lack of research on the motivations of sports tourists in general, but more specifically on participants in non-competitive bicycle events. A questionnaire was applied to 749 participants in order to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The data obtained indicated that social interaction, personal difficulties and health / wellness are important motivations for recreation and restoration. It was found that there were differences in the motives with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, tour history, skill level and the possibility of recommending the tour to others. Buning and Gibson (2016) aimed to investigate the effect of travel conditions on preferred destination, event and travel characteristics in the context of event participant cyclists in their study. They collected data through a questionnaire from 1452

cyclists who traveled for the purpose of attending the event. Among some of the important findings obtained, it has been revealed that a proper event planning, security, the presence of historical sites in the destination, the necessity of different attractions and the presence of different activities in the destination are important.

The cycling contests or festivals not only provide economic contributions but also aim at popularizing bicycle riding as physical fitness, sports and recreational activity, and an alternative mode of travel (Lee and Huang, 2014; Lee, Chen and Huang, 2014) in the context of tourism. However, the environmental requirements for bicycle tourism are rather different from other events, sport, and nature-based forms of tourism (Yeh, Lin, Hsiao and Huang, 2019). As seen in Nilsson's (2019) study, bicycle tourism has also had a focus on the promotion of networks, and the development of bicycle trails in European countries such as the UK, Belgium, Austria, Germany. It has understood that the studies related to bicycle tourism including bicycling contests and festivals also tend to focus on physical and organizational infrastructure, development of tourism products, etc. as well as its experiential aspects of cycling.

Methodology

The population of the research is the participants of the "Çanakkale Bicycle Festival" held in 2019. The sample of the study was determined as those who actively participated in this festival organized in 2019 (those who actively experience the route by cycling). With the evaluations of the individuals who actively participate in the organized bicycle festival, the reasons for choosing the festival, the positive and negative aspects of Çanakkale for this festival, the positive contributions of this event to the cyclists, the local people and the destination, and the meaning of the bicycle are within the scope of the research. Purposeful sampling methods, one of the non-probabilistic sampling methods, were

used as the sampling method of the study. In qualitative research, the need to be evaluated within the depth and richness of the data and to examine the subject matter in depth are the reasons that make purposeful sampling methods quite suitable for qualitative research. Because purposeful sampling methods allow for in-depth study of situations that are thought to have rich information (Sandelowski, 1995; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011; Palinkas et al., 2015).

The data of the research were collected by interview technique. The interview form was created in a semi-structured manner. In this technique, the researcher prepares the interview questions in advance. However, it can rearrange and discuss the questions by providing partial flexibility to the person being researched during the interview (Ekiz, 2009). The questions in the interview form were prepared by evaluating the Lee (2014), Lee, Chen and Huang (2014), Çelik Uğuz and Özbek (2018), Xu, Yuan and Li (2018), and Türkmen and Gökdemir (2021) studies (see Table 1). Before the data of the study was collected, 18 people who intend to participate in the study remotely were found. The data of the research were collected between 1 February and 30 April, 2021. 3 of the 18 people who stated that they would participate in the study before did not participate in the study. Kelly (1963) stated that the data obtained from 15 people may be sufficient for qualitative research and create data saturation. The data were analyzed by descriptive analysis method. Descriptive analysis method that supports the presentation of the themes as a result of the detailed information obtained from the interviewees and the transfer of information to the readers with direct quotations (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011).

Table 1: Research questions in the semi-structured interview form

Questions
1. What were your most expenses during the event?
2. What were the factors that influenced your choice to participate in this event?
3. What were the negative factors you encountered in the bicycle festival? What were the factors that influenced the success of the bicycle festival?

Questions

4. What were the positive effects of the bicycle festival on an individual basis?
5. What were the effects of the bicycle festival event for the local people and the destination?
6. Have you shared the bicycle festival event from your social media accounts? What kind of responses did you get as a result of sharing? Can you state what the word "bicycle" means to you in three different words?
-

Results

Analysis of Categorical Variables

15 people, 1 female and 14 male, participated in the study. The majority of the participants in the study are single (13 people). More than half of the respondents are between the ages of 25 and under, and most of them are graduated from university. Findings about categorical variables are given in detail in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic and general information about the participants

Gender	Marital Status	Age (Year)	Education	Income (Monthly-Turkish Lira)	Accommodation
Male	Single	25 and below	Undergraduate	3001 – 4500	Camp
Male	Single	25 and below	Undergraduate	3000 and below	Camp
Male	Married	46 and above	Postgraduate	6000 and above	Camp
Male	Single	25 and below	Undergraduate	3000 and below	Camp
Male	Single	26-35 years	College	3000 and below	House
Male	Single	25 and below	Undergraduate	4501 – 6000	Camp
Male	Single	26-35	Postgraduate	3000 and below	House
Male	Single	26 – 35	Undergraduate	6000 and above	House
Male	Married	36-45	High school	3001 – 4500	House
Male	Single	25 and below	Undergraduate	3001 – 4500	House
Female	Single	26 – 35	Undergraduate	4501 – 6000	Camp
Male	Single	25 and below	High school	4501 – 6000	House
Male	Single	25 and below	Undergraduate	3000 and below	Camp
Male	Single	25 and below	Undergraduate	3000 and below	House
Male	Single	25 and below	Undergraduate	6000 and above	House

Spending of the participants

Festival participants were asked about their most frequent expenses during the festival. It was found that the participants spent the most on food & beverage (53.3%) and accommodation (26.7%). Information on expenditures is given in detail in Table 3.

Table 3: The expenditures made by the participants

Items	N	%
Food & Beverage	8	53,3
Accommodation	4	26,7
Entertainment	2	13,3
Entrance fee to the ruins	1	6,7
Total	15	100,0

Reasons to choose the event

It was found that the participants of the bicycle festival preferred this event due to the reasons that they like cycling (50.0%) and socializing (16.6%). Reasons for the festival participants to choose the event is given in detail in Table 4.

Table 4: Reasons for participants to choose the event

Items	N	%
Like cycling	9	50,0
Socializing	3	16,6
Doing Sport	2	11,1
Seeing historical sites	2	11,1
Being in nature	1	5,6
Desire to see the destination	1	5,6
Total	18	100,0

Some of the answers of the participants about the reasons for participating in the event are as follows;

...I love cycling. I think such events should be increased... (Male, Single, 26-35 years, Undergraduate).

...Socializing, my passion for travel and my interest in Çanakkale... (Male, Single, 25 years and below, Undergraduate).

Negative factors affecting the success of the bicycle festival

Participants were asked about the negative factors affecting the success of the event. Four of the participants stated that “wind” and 2 people stated that “overcrowded”. The negative factors affecting the success of the bicycle festival event are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Challenges affecting the success of the bicycle festival

Items	n	%
Wind	4	50,0
Overcrowded	2	25,0
Some places have extreme slopes	1	12,5
Camp areas are not sufficient	1	12,5
Total	8	100,0

Some of the opinions of the participants about the negative factors that affect the success of the event are as follows;

...The road to Dardanos campus was slope and dark. Çanakkale’s winds blowing from all sides may have been difficult for novice cyclists... (Male, Single, 25 years and below, Undergraduate).

...We had difficulties in some routes and camping areas due to the large number of participants... (Male, Single, 25 years and below, Undergraduate).

Factors that play a role in the success of the bicycle festival event

The bicycle festival participants were asked about the factors that played a role in the success of the event. The most emphasised issues of key success factors for the event that is “proper event planning”, “opportunity to participate in different activities”, “opportunity to see historical sites” and “proper tour route”, respectively. The factors that play a role in the success of the bicycle festival event are given in detail in Table 6.

Table 6: Factors that play a role in the success of the bicycle festival

Items	n	%
Proper event planning	4	26,7
Opportunity to participate in different activities	3	20,0
Opportunity to see historical sites	2	13,3
Proper tour route	2	13,3
Having food & beverage and equipment support	2	13,3
Adequate security precautions	1	6,7
Adequate health precautions	1	6,7
Total	15	100,0

Some of the answers given by the bicycle festival participants regarding the factors that play a role in the success of the event are as follows:

... The precautions taken within the framework of this event and the support of public institutions, especially the Governorship of Çanakkale, and the support of the sponsors were continued in a very positive way... (Male, Single, 26-35 years, College).

... Many activities such as competitions, excursions, concert events were held... (Male, Single, 25 years and below, Undergraduate).

... I think that the water, catering, equipment assistance and follow-up of ambulance are important factors for health along the way... (Male, Single, 26-35 years, Postgraduate).

Individual benefits of the bicycle festival event

Bicycle festival participants were asked about the individual benefits of the event. People who participated the study stated that “meeting new people”, “socializing”, “relaxation” and “getting new knowledge” to individual benefits from bicycle festival, respectively. Participants’ opinions about individual benefits of the bicycle festival is given in Table 7.

Table 7: Individual benefits of the bicycle festival

Items	n	%
Meeting new people	6	25,0
Socializing	5	20,8
Relaxation	4	16,7
Getting new knowledge	3	12,5
Being in nature	2	8,3
Getting to know different cultures	2	8,3
Seeing new places	1	4,2
Improving cycling skills	1	4,2
Total	24	100,0

Some of the answers of the participants about individual benefits of the bicycle festival event are as follows;

...We had the opportunity to meet many people interested in cycling. The foundations of lasting friendships were laid and we informed each other about many issues other than cycling... (Male, Single, 25 years and below, Undergraduate).

... It provided peace with spiritual and physical rest... (Male, Married, 46 years and above, Undergraduate).

... I obtained information about the history of the martyrdom which is not known much and will attract attention... (Male, Single, 25 years and below, Undergraduate).

The contribution of the bicycle festival event to the local people and the destination

The bicycle festival participants were asked what could be the contribution of the event in terms of local people and destination. The most mentioned issues that “economic impact”, “raising awareness of cycling among local people”, “interaction between cultures” and “increasing the awareness of the destination”, respectively. Information about the contribution of the bicycle festival event in terms of local people and destination is given in Table 8.

Table 8: The contribution of the bicycle festival to the local people and the destination

Items	n	%
Economic impact	6	30,0
Raising awareness of cycling among local people	5	25,0
Interaction between cultures	4	20,0
Increasing the awareness of the destination	3	15,0
Getting to know different cultures	2	10,0
Total	20	100,0

Some of the responses about the effect of the event on the local people and the destination are as follows;

...These kinds of events encourage and raise awareness about cycling to the public. In addition, every individual participating in the festival in terms of tourism provides a development in the economy... (Female, Single, 26-35 years, Undergraduate).

...It has a huge economic potential for the city. Those coming from out of the city make a serious economic contribution to the city for their accommodation, food & beverage and personal pleasure... (Male, Single, 25 years and below, Undergraduate).

8. Social media posts and the meaning of the word of “bicycle”

All of the individuals participating in the study shared information about the event through social media channels. It was

determined that the posts made during the event were effective in issues such as “wondering about the event”, “coming to the activity area to watch the event” and “willingness to participate in the next event”. Finally, the participants were asked to indicate in three different words what the word of “bicycle” meant to them. The most emphasised words are “Freedom”, “Sport” and “Health”, respectively. The meanings of the word of “bicycle” are given in detail in Table 9.

Table 9: Meanings of the word of “bicycle”

Items	n	%
Freedom	9	20,0
Sport	6	13,3
Health	5	11,1
Challenge	3	6,7
Entertainment	3	6,7
Passion	3	6,7
Nature	3	6,7
Escape	3	6,7
Social development	3	6,7
Excitement	3	6,7
Pleasure	2	4,3
Speed	1	2,2
Life style	1	2,2
Total	45	100,0

Discussion and Conclusions

This study was carried out to reveal the factors that motivate participation in Çanakkale Bicycle Festival, the key success factors that play a role in the success of the festival, the individual positive effects of the festival, and positive effects of the festival on the local people and the

destination. As a result of the evaluation of the findings, it is possible to say that there are similarities and differences with the results of this study in the relevant literature. As a result of this study, it has been determined that the motivations of those who participate in the Çanakkale Bicycle Festival are elements such as “like cycling”, “socializing”, “doing sport”, “seeing different places” and “being in nature”. It can be stated that the “socializing” factor overlaps with the studies’ results of Ritchie, Tkaczynski and Faulks (2010) and, Türkmen and Gökdemir (2021). In addition, it can be stated that the factors of “seeing different places” and “being in nature” are parallel to the study’s result of Türkmen and Gökdemir (2021). In this context, considering studies’ results conducted in similar fields in different cultures, it can be said that the “socializing” factor can be one of the main motivation factors. Ritchie, Tkaczynski, and Faulks (2010) stated that factors such as “adventure experience” and “gaining competence” could be one of the main sources of motivation. This situation is not similar to the results of this study. It can be stated that the main reason for this situation may be “cultural difference”.

It has been found that the key success factors of Çanakkale Bicycle Festival are issues such as “proper event planning”, “opportunity to participate in different activities”, “opportunity to see historical sites”, “proper tour route” and “adequate security & health precautions”. It can be said that the results are similar to the results of the study conducted by Buning and Gibson (2016). Buning and Gibson (2016) found that “proper event planning”, “security”, “historical attractions of the destination”, and “participate in different activities” are important in a bicycle-themed event. In this context, it can be stated that these issues should be considered in bicycle-themed events to be organized in different countries or destinations.

The participants stated the issues such as “meeting new people”, “socializing”, “relaxation” and “acquiring new knowledge” as individual positive results of this event. Among these findings, it can be stated that

“meeting new people” and “socializing” coincide with the results of the study conducted by Faulks, Ritchie, and Dodds (2008). In this case, it can be said that it would be correct for both theorists and practitioners to highlight the “socializing” factor in these events. On the other hand, it can be said that the factor of “acquiring new knowledge” is similar to the results of the study conducted by Meng and Han (2016). It can be stated that the events should be informative about different themes and topics as well as providing unique experiences.

As a result of this research, it has been found out that such events to be organized can bring economic contribution and raise awareness in the local community about cycling. It can be stated that these results are similar to the study’s results of Duran, Sevinç and Harman (2018). The element of “sustainability” stated by Duran, Sevinç and Harman (2018) should be established in economic, social and cultural dimensions. Thus, the positive effects of such events are more likely to be felt. Another point is that one of the best ways of promoting the event and destination is the sharing of the event participants on social media. It can be said that it has a significant effect on social media posts for participating in next events and encouraging the visit to the destination. On the other hand, bicycle festival participants stated that the word of “bicycle” is equivalent to words such as “freedom”, “sport” and “health”, and these words can be brought to the fore in the promotion of such events and the organization. It shows that the three main features that are sought in today’s living conditions can be in bicycle-themed events and that such events have the ability to attract both local people and tourists.

Theoretical Implications

It is thought that this study will provide important theoretical implications for the bicycle tourism literature. This is one of the rare studies in which related to the preferences and experiences of cyclists. Although previous studies have provided abundant sources on bicycle

tourism through bicycle contests and festivals (Ritchie, 1998; Lamont, 2009; Meng and Han, 2016; Han, Meng and Kim, 2017), a sufficient number of studies was not seen that conducted on the preferences and experiences of cyclists (Lee, 2014; Lin, Hsu, Ho and Lai, 2020). This research has also revealed some findings that bicycle tourism including bicycle contests and festivals provides vital opportunities for a destination as economic, social, and environmental. Like with any sports tourism or event tourism, bicycle tourism makes participants spend such as food & beverage, accommodation, entertainment, entrance fee to the ruins.

Managerial implications

Practically, the findings of this research provide significant implications for bicycle tourism with regards to bicycle contests and festivals and determine a need to further examine the preferences and experiences of the cyclist. The conditions should be improved for bicycle festivals as the elements most excited bicycle tourism's success and sustainability in the cycling world and provided practical and accessible opportunities by stakeholders. Hence, given that stakeholders are benefiting from bicycle tourism including contests, festivals and other events, the findings can be seen as important recommendations to organizers, tourism and sport policymakers, cyclist and bicycle-friendly people to guide for improving these events as a tourism product.

Limitations and future research directions

This research has a number of limitations. The first is related to the scope of the findings and results, which were obtained through interviews with Çanakkale Bicycle Festival participants in Turkey. As a sample of Çanakkale Bicycle Festival-specific research, the sport and festival-specific tourism attractions such as bicycle tourism, and bicycle festival identified in this research may be limited and are only applicable to Turkey. Second, the factors explaining the behaviors of participants who have been

attended bicycle festivals in this study are intended to reflect the preferences and experiences of the cyclists. Given Covid-19 pandemic constraints, all informants of this research were Turkish. The comprehensive and comparative research on bicycle tourism that focuses on bicycle contests and festivals may provide a more detailed examination of the factors affecting the preferences and experiences of the cyclists.

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Benefits Dependency Networks – a CRM approach

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Abstract: This paper aims to put together the information collected by means of literature review about the tools of Benefits Realization Management, and the presentation of the case study SC. Fermit. SA, in order to create a development plan for this organization. The objective is to provide solutions for problems encountered by the firm after the economic crisis from 2008, problems that are related to customer relationship management. Since the reduction of the company's financial resources caused the removal of the marketing department, the tasks of this department were shared between employees dealing with other fields of activity, and the communication with clients became weaker. Nevertheless, the loyal customers maintained an ongoing relationship with the organization during its recovery, after the crisis, which led to proving that it was worth investing in developing a long-term relationship with them. Another objective of this paper is to present a way in which a customer relationship management plan can be designed and presented in order to prove its benefits and to convince the management to approve it, and, most importantly of it all, to follow it.

Keywords: CRM, benefits realization management, loyal customers, crisis.

Introduction

Nowadays, organizations are more and more focused on developing long term relationships with their customers. In this context,

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more attention is placed on implementing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM refers to processes and strategies that allow an organization to interact with customers and to gather knowledge related to them by using information systems. CRM integrates different tools to build a long-term and valuable relationship with customers (Steel et al., 2012,)), which involves: customer retention, one-to-one dialogue, personalized marketing, customer orientation. This will translate into a better understanding of the customers and in a more efficient control of other organization's areas like production, marketing, HR, and sales.

CRM refers to building long-term relationships between companies and their customers, relationships that are beneficial for both of the parties. Only those customers that are valuable for an organization will be subject to the CRM efforts. Also, CRM is strongly linked with IT processes. Technology is used for enhancing a firm's competencies according to customers' needs, so that the organization is able to deliver customer value on a long-term basis.

The relationship between buyer and seller can be described as a learning relationship. The client willingly collaborates by giving feedback or through open means of communication, in such a way that it allows an organization to maximize the value of the information obtained. During this relationship, the client will become loyal. Meanwhile, the organization gains a competitive advantage.

CRM has two important determinants: trust and value (Simanjuntak et al., 2020). Trust relates to one's willingness to believe in an organization's ability in serving the clients' needs. Value relates to an organization's ability to satisfy customer needs at lower costs than competitors do. These costs can be perceived in terms of money, time and other types of needed resources. Other determinants can refer to: understanding the customer problems, meeting their expectations, supplying after-sale support, and proving long-term perspective when it comes to establishing a long-term relationship.

This paper aims to put together the information collected by means of literature review about the tools of Benefits Realization Management, and the presentation of the case study SC. Fermit. SA, in order to create a development plan for this organization.

SC. Fermit. SA is a small and medium enterprise in Romania. The organization is an important producer in the field of general mechanics, because this industry is not very developed in our country and there are few players on the market. It sells products that like dies, adjusters, gears, plates clutch, auxiliaries, and personalized products. It also ensures services of maintenance and repair. Its main clients are other businesses that produce motor vehicles, minibuses, trucks, trailers, buses, trolleys, subways and industrial installation.

The objective is to provide solutions for problems encountered by the firm after the economic crisis from 2008, problems that are related to customer relationship management. Since the reduction of the company's financial resources caused the removal of the marketing department, the tasks of this department were shared between employees dealing with other fields of activity, and the communication with clients became weaker. Nevertheless, the loyal customers maintained an ongoing relationship with the organization during its recovery, after crisis, thing that led to proving that it was worthy investing in developing a long-term relationship with them. Another objective of this paper is to present a way in which a customer relationship management plan can be designed and presented in order to prove its benefits and to convince the management to approve it, and, most importantly of it all, to follow it.

Another practical objective of this paper is to present a way in which a customer relationship management plan can be thought and presented in order to show its benefits and to convince the management to approve and follow it. The removal of marketing department was the first measure implemented in the context of the economic crisis, which proves that the trust in its importance is not very strong. This lack of confidence could be more accentuated in the case of a CRM plan,

especially if there is no financial data to show its benefits. For this reason, we chose the Benefits Realization Management tool to facilitate the understanding of the proposed CRM plan.

Literature Review

A Benefits Dependency Network (BDN) helps managers to make decisions about priorities and allocation of resources (Wilson et al., 2007). Usually, these decisions take the form of a plan, since this is the first step in becoming efficient. The desired outcomes of any plan are changes meant to bring benefits and further on, to support the objectives one proposes to accomplish (Jabbari et al., 2018). Also, these changes are determined by constraints, assumptions or opinions of stakeholders, things that must be clarified from an early stage in order to avoid later misunderstandings.

The elements of BDN are: drivers – a trigger that determines an organization to respond with a change; investment objectives like a statement showing what the project should achieve; benefits stated clearly and quantified; business changes – changes in the organization or in the way employees work, meant to achieve the benefits proposed; enabling changes which are required for the implementation of business changes like a new system or trainings for using it (Maritz et al., 2020).

When thinking about possible changes, management should consider them in a broad view because they want to determine if they are likely to happen and if benefits will be delivered. Thus, managers should take into account those that will be affected by these changes and the amount of effort needed to accomplish the changes. In order to implement changes in an organization, managers should participate to workshops, alongside with the rest of employees, because they are responsible for achieving them.

As it was specified in the description of Benefits Realization Management, it is very important to involve the stakeholders in the

planning process, for taking a decision that is beneficial for them too and for receiving their approval. Moreover, their commitment is required to implement successfully a project; otherwise some negative attitudes might occur and make the implementation difficult, like: lack of motivation, increased absenteeism, refusal to identify problems and find solutions or refusal to comply with the change agenda. It must be added that stakeholders can contribute with their experience and knowledge originating from a different view than that of management, and leading to new ideas that might help in implementing the project in a more efficient way. To sum up, this cooperation allows the prioritization of efforts, the avoidance of conflicts, and the formulation of an achievable plan.

A graphical representation of a Benefits Dependency Network can be seen in Figure 1.

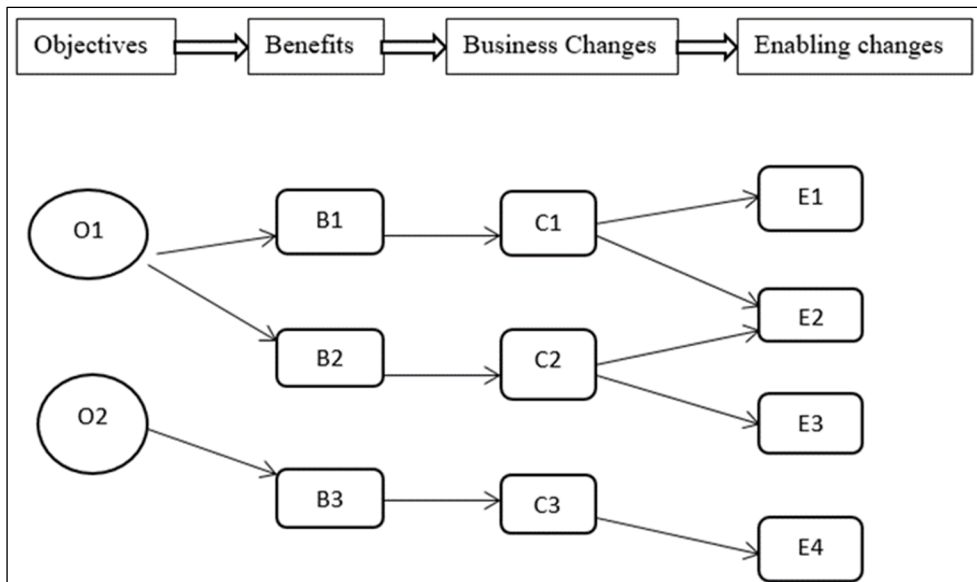


Figure 1: The Structure of a Benefits Dependency Network

Source: Adapted from Waller, 2010

According to this representation, a benefit is obtained only if the changes which are connected to it will be achieved. In this way, managers have the duty to perform a risk analysis, and afterwards to prioritize the

benefits and decide upon their fulfillment. The last step is to establish the change owners. Change owners are individuals responsible with implementing successfully the specific changes for the department they lead. They translate the changes into operational activities. Their commitment can be an issue for management, especially if the benefits do not concern them directly. For this reason they are considered in the stakeholder analysis. Also, they are provided with deadlines and reports regarding the appropriate use of available resources. It is important for the management to monitor continuously the progress by controlling both the benefits and the changes. These regular assessments will help them to amend the BDN and the template.

The graphical representation of BDN as it was previously shown was thought as an exercise of brainstorming, which contains core information and can be used especially for large projects that involve several departments or a great number of benefits. The following step is to organize the information obtained in templates or spreadsheets. These will help in analyzing easier the probability to achieve those benefits which were mentioned in BDN. The following representation is a model of change template that can be filled in after the BDN has been agreed upon.

Change Template					
Enabler	Enabler description	Prerequisite enablers	Dependent enablers	Dependent benefits	System
Enter ID number from BDN	Enter change name from BDN	Enter the ID and name of the enabling change required to effect the change	Enter the ID and the name of the business change enabled by the change	Enter name of the benefit this change enables	Enter the name of the system required to effect the change

Figure 2: Change Template for BDN

Source: Rogers et al., 2008

This table is structured as a database with the purpose to show the exact connections needed for achieving certain benefits. The table is completed by employees working in that particular department and they use ID numbers in order to reduce the searching time. The most important fields of the template are: preliminary actions required before the implementation of a change, necessary system capabilities and benefits that should be achieved. After this version is completed, one can add two more fields to this template, related to change owners and enablers. They should be established by the same employees. Finally, there will be provided information about the due date and required resources which should be reflected by the preliminary actions and change owners. After all data is gathered, participants have to discuss and give feedback so that the final decision is taken.

For a qualitative implementation of these decisions, managers should continuously monitor the changes and benefits; they should discuss with project managers about the progress made, delays or problems that must be taken into consideration and they should make changes in the BDN and in the template.

Nevertheless, Benefits Dependency Map is different from other. While in BDN and results chain, the chosen elements are objectives, benefits, business changes and enablers, BDM focuses on activities, outputs, short term and intermediate outcomes. On the other hand, all of them present a common characteristic: the graphical illustration should be simple and easy to understand and it should emphasize only the key elements so that people will not be confused by too many details. In any case, one can choose to use all the three tools for his/her project, to compare the results and to select the best option.

CRM projects and not only, can be very well represented with the help of these tools. The issue which was identified at the beginning of this chapter, related to the fact that several CRM objectives and implementation stages of a project cannot be measured exactly.

Moreover, some success factors were identified like economic, politic, change management and control issues, with the purpose to show the main conditions for approving a project. All of these factors needed some measurements in order to show the level of success or failure of a project. By using one of the previously presented tools above, for CRM, a project justification can become more accessible. After all, organizations should develop continuously their learning capability which is essential in bringing new ideas and creating solutions for increasing the organization's performance. In the same time, a successful CRM implementation is based on an adaptive organizational learning.

In conclusion, we can state, by using the formulation of Payne and Frow (2005, p.168) that CRM is

"[A] strategic approach concerned with creating improved shareholder value through the development of appropriate relationships with key customers and customers segments(...)CRM provides enhanced opportunities to use data and information to both understand customers and co-create value with them. This data-driven orientation requires a cross-functional integration of processes, people, operations and marketing capabilities that is enabled through information, technology and applications".

Methodology

Interview as a research method aims to collect relevant information by addressing direct questions. There are two categories of interviews: structured and semi-structure (Mitru et al., 2003). For the first one, the interviewer prepares the questions in advance and he or she controls the discussion without allowing the interviewee to deviate from the subject. For the semi-structured interview, the interviewer also prepares some questions in advance, but he or she may add some spontaneous questions to allow participants to freely express themselves and to obtain more qualitative data. Structured interviews refer to questionnaires or surveys and the result obtained is quantitative data,

which can be easily processed by the researcher. Semi-structured interviews provide both quantitative and qualitative data, which can be used for establishing the research information that can be obtained through other methods (Danik and Kowalik, 2013).

For our study we used a semi-structured interview, conducted face-to-face. The interviewee was a person working in the marketing department. The main points which were covered referred to: relationship with clients, methods used to reach to new customers and methods practiced to maintain the communication with them. Several probing questions were addressed in order to stress the problems related to the customer relationship management of the firm.

Building the Benefits Dependency Network

We aim to develop a solution for the firm SC. Fermit. SA regarding its customer relationship management, based on the information previously identified related to Benefits Dependency Network, since the aim of this study is to present the solution in a graphical illustration for a better understanding.

According to the previously conducted AHP analysis presented in Hadad and Ticaú (2021), we have obtained the following ranking of the criteria: trained personnel (0.487), direct contact (0.262), enough employees (0.132), updated databases (0.084) and updated website (0.035).

The degree of importance for the first criterion is well justified since it has an influence over the other criteria too. For instance, people working in marketing department and interacting with customers should be familiarized with the technical terms of the industry. In this way they will be able to present the products to customers, to answer the questions of clients and to find appropriate solutions for them. They need the

specialized language in drawing questionnaires for measuring clients' satisfaction, preparing the firm's website or designing special offers.

The training of personnel is not referring only to being familiarized with the specific features of products. The firm can train its employees to be customer oriented and to act nicely when having direct contact with clients or when promoting the firm's products during special events. Their negotiation skills can be improved, since, from the observations done in the department, they use this technique for loyal customers when taking orders, establishing discounts or recovering accounts receivable. Working in teams and communication skills can also be improved by training. It should not be overlooked the fact that, in order to become customer oriented, marketing personnel should communicate with all the other departments of the firm. In the same time, they should work in teams so that they could find new solutions for achieving customer satisfaction. Nevertheless, working in teams involves sharing common or very close offices, so that they are not physically separated. In the case of this firm, the marketing department is situated in a different building from the other decision-making departments. Maybe this could represent an obstacle for an efficient communication.

All these criteria in establishing the type of training needed for the marketing personnel can also be represented in a hierarchy, as it was done in Figure 4.

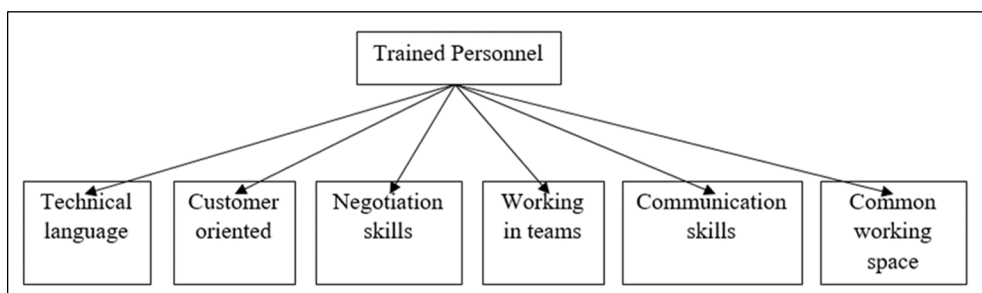


Figure 3: Hierarchy for criterion of trained personnel

Source: Authors' own contribution

Figure 3 shows at the top, the goal which is to train the personnel and at the second layer criteria in choosing the type, frequency or other factors when establishing the type of training that will be delivered to employees. The information contained in this figure will help in building the Benefits Dependency Network.

Regarding the “direct contact” criterion which came the second as importance in improving the CRM of the firm, some suggestions can be made here too. From the observations done in the firm, it was noticed that the organization lacks an office for receiving clients or taking orders. The clients that place orders directly to the firm are received by employees working in the production because of the fact that they have to establish the features of the product. Nevertheless, there is no official person to receive these clients, to direct them or to offer information for those that are not so familiar with the organization.

Another issue to be discussed here relates to the contact with those clients that use communication means for placing orders or for asking information. Usually, the organization has two such means available: phone and e-mail. For those clients that interact by phone, there is one person from marketing department which answers to calls and gives information, but this is not the main responsibility. When it comes to e-mails, the personnel are not able to respond to all of these, so clients rarely use this communication mean. The solution could be also to assign a person whose responsibility is to answer the calls of clients and dedicate time for informing customers or answering to complaints. Another responsibility should be to answer to e-mails received from potential clients that are interested in finding more information about the offers of the firm before taking a final decision. Sometimes, not receiving an answer to the e-mail can discourage these potential customers from trying more by phone or by going directly to the firm.

These ideas will be also summarized in a hierarchy for further use in developing the Benefits Dependency Network, as illustrated in the following figure.

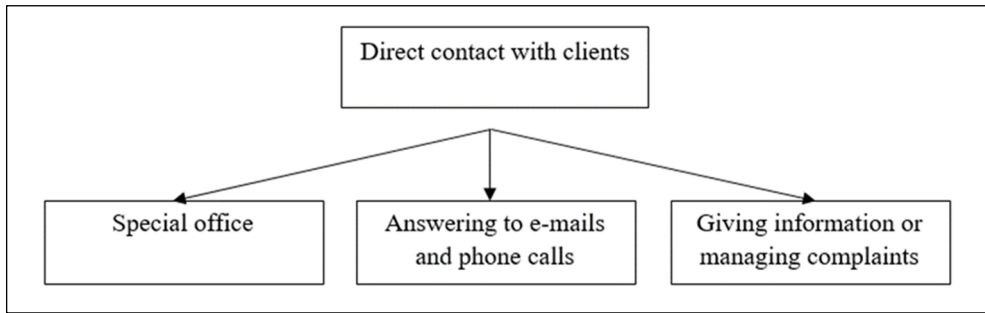


Figure 4: Hierarchy for “direct contact” criterion

Source: Authors’ own contribution

Regarding the criterion enough employees, there are no suggestions to be made.

The fourth criterion, updated database is very important in developing a long-term relationship with loyal clients. In order to gather information about existing clients, marketing personnel can develop a questionnaire for measuring the clients’ satisfaction. The questionnaire should address issues like: the way in which customers were served, quality of the products, demand for new products, forecasted orders from the firm, necessary improvements in the activity of the firm, and contact information. In this case, the purpose of this questionnaire is not necessarily to receive information about possible improvements to products, but to get contact information and suggestions regarding improvements in treating customers.

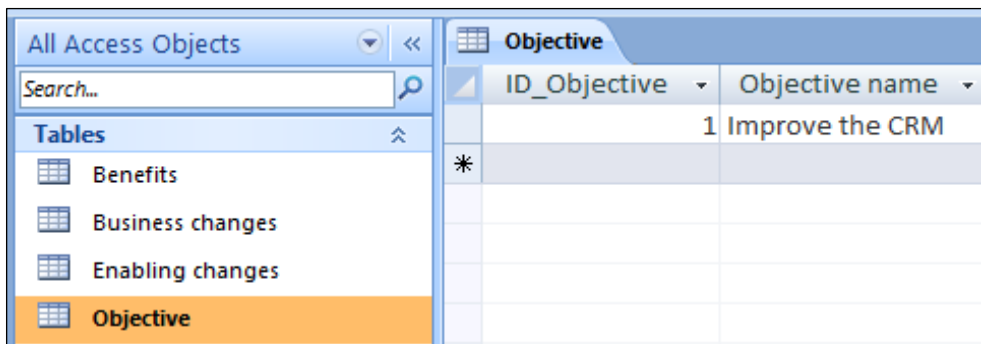
During the observations in the organization, marketing personnel complaint that there is not enough time to process the data obtained from the last questionnaire. In the case the firm would assign a person for direct contact with clients, this person could have also the responsibility to update the database with contact information. This information can be used for sending catalogues of products, asking for feedback, managing complaints, and so on. This person can also register the answers for the other issues addressed in the questionnaire in order to present them to the management of the firm.

The last criterion relates to the website of the company. The website is well developed, but they should only update some information regarding products and prices.

The Benefits Dependency Network

The purpose of this sub-chapter is to present the solution proposed by this study for the problems encountered by SC. Fermit. SA regarding the customer relationship management. The information obtained up to this moment will be used to build a Benefits Dependency Network, with the purpose to present the plan proposed by this study in a manner which is easy to understand and to be explained. In the same time, there will be showed screen captions from the database which was created with the aim to organize the information in a structured format.

The first step in building the BDN is to establish the objectives. The purpose of this study was to find ways to improve the CRM of the firm SC. Fermit. SA. In the database, there is written only one objective, which is of interest for this study, but the organization can add more objectives from other domains.



ID_Objective	Objective name
1	Improve the CRM
*	

Figure 5: Objective

Source: Authors' own contribution

The second step is to establish the benefits which the organization wants to achieve after improving the customer relationship management.

The screenshot shows a database management system interface. On the left, there is a navigation pane with 'All Tables' at the top, followed by 'Benefits' and 'Benefits : Table'. A 'Benefits' button is visible below the table name. On the right, the 'Benefits' table is displayed with two columns: 'ID_Benefit' and 'Benefit Name'. The table contains six rows of data:

ID_Benefit	Benefit Name
1	Attract more clients
2	Increase Awareness
3	Achieve clients' loyalty
4	Efficient feedback processing
5	Generate fast solutions
6	Reduce costs with promotion

Figure 6: Benefits

Source: Authors' own contribution

The organization wants to obtain the following benefits: to attract more clients and to increase awareness on the Romanian market, to achieve clients' loyalty and to develop long-term relationships with the existing ones, to have an efficient processing of the feedback, to encourage employees to participate in the decision-making and to generate fast solution, and to reduce the costs with promotion. Before the economic crisis, the firm managed to have a well-developed marketing policy and an appropriate marketing department that maintained the relationship with its clients, asked for their feedback through questionnaires, built a database with information about customers and maintained a website. After 2008 the management reduced the number of employees, including those in the marketing department and some of the responsibilities were transferred to less experienced persons from other departments. For this reason, some of the marketing activities were passed on the second placed, like: processing the data obtained from questionnaires, updating the information in the database, answering to e-mails from clients, and so on. In the recent years, the firm managed to recover after the crisis, and now it makes efforts to improve its relationship with clients.

Another step is to establish the business changes required in order to achieve the benefits established at the previous step. They can be checked in the following figure.

ID_BChange	Business change
41	Trained personnel
42	Direct contact
43	Enough employees
44	Updated database
45	Updated website
*	

Figure 7: Business Changes

Source: Authors' own contribution

As it can be seen in the figure, the business changes are: trained personnel, direct contact, enough employees, updated database and updated website. These changes are presented in the order of importance obtained by using the AHP decision making tool (Hadad and Ticau, 2021).

According to the BDN structure, the last step is to identify several enabling changes, which are the preliminary actions required before the implementation of a change. The enabling changes were identified at the beginning of this chapter. In the database, they were also correlated with the business changes, as it can be seen in the following figure.

ID	Enabling change	ID_BChange
51	Customer oriented	41
52	Negotiation skills	41
53	Work in teams	41
54	Communication skills	41
55	Questionnaire	42
56	Answer e-mails & phone-call:	42
57	Manage complaints	42
58	Updated contact information	44
59	One-to-one communication	44

Figure 8: Enabling Changes

Source: Authors' own contribution

As it can be seen, there were identified enabling changes for three business changes. The correlations obtained will be presented in the

following lines. For the employees it was noticed that they should be trained to improve their negotiation skills, to become more customer oriented, to be encouraged to work in teams and to improve their communication skills. In order to improve the direct contact with clients, the marketing personnel should address questionnaires to the clients, they should answer to e-mails and phone-calls and they should manage complaints. For an updated database, the marketing personnel should update the contact information and to encourage the one-to-one communication.

In the last figure, there were obtained the links between the elements identified up to this moment. Based on this database table the Benefits Dependency Network will be drawn.

ID_Benefit	Benefit name	ID_Objective	Business change	Enabling change 1	Enabling change 2	Enabling change 3
10	Attract more clients	1	42	56		
11	Attract more clients	1	45			
12	Increase awareness	1	45			
13	Achieve clients' loyalty	1	41	51	52	54
14	Achieve clients' loyalty	1	42	55	56	57
15	Achieve clients' loyalty	1	44	59		
16	Efficient feedback processing	1	41	51	53	
17	Efficient feedback processing	1	42	55	57	
18	Efficient feedback processing	1	43			
19	Generate fast solutions	1	41	51	53	54
20	Reduced costs with promotion	1	44	58	59	
21	Reduced costs with promotion	1	45			

Figure 9: Connection between elements of the BDN

Source: Authors' own contribution

On the second row of the table, there were registered the benefits that the organization wants to achieve. These are all correlated with the same objective, which is to improve the CRM. The third row presents the associated business changes and the next three rows indicate the necessary enabling changes. The reason why certain benefits repeat in the table is because they can be achieved through several business changes.

For the first benefit, attract more clients, it was thought that it can be achieved through two business changes: direct contact and updated website. Concerning the first business change, direct contact, and the most fitted enabling change was considered to be “answer to e-mails and phone-calls”. The next benefit specified in the table is to increase the awareness, which can be achieved through an updated website.

The clients' loyalty can be achieved through three business changes: trained personnel, direct contact and updated database. For the trained personnel, the enabling changes associated were: improved customer orientation, negotiation and communication skills through trainings. For the direct contact, the associated enabling changes are: address a questionnaire, answer emails and phone-calls and manage complaints. Regarding the updated database, the best way to achieve clients' loyalty is to practice one-to-one communication.

The next benefit, efficient feedback processing can be achieved through the following business changes: trained personnel, direct contact and enough employees. Regarding the criterion "trained personnel" the most fitted enabling changes when thinking about an efficient feedback processing are: improved customer orientation skills and work in teams. When it comes to direct contact, the necessary enabling changes are: questionnaire and manage complaints.

In order to encourage employees to generate fast solutions, it was considered that they should be trained regarding their customer orientation and communication skills and to work in teams.

For the last benefit, reduced costs with promotion can be achieved through updated database and website. Related to the updated database with the purpose to reduce promotion costs, the necessary enabling changes are: updated contact information and one-to-one communication.

All these data were introduced in a Benefits Dependency Network. In the final step of this research the database resulted was used in order to build a Benefit Dependency Network that allows a better understanding of the solution proposed.

Conclusion

As stressed throughout the paper, we reiterate that customer relationship practices are very helpful in boosting the sales of an organization. During the observations performed in the firm, and after discussing with the persons responsible for maintaining the relationship

with clients, we noticed that they complain about having a poor database or lacking the time to analyze the questionnaires' results. Also, we noticed that they do not have enough time to answer to e-mails, which might lead to the conclusion that they are not open to do business with new partners, and this represents a pitfall for the firm. We believe that, despite the costs involved with hiring more employees for a marketing department, the organization can take advantage of a better promotion and of attracting new clients in Romania. Thus, these costs should be perceived as an investment for the organization's well-being.

The contribution of the hereby paper consisted in finding a solution for an organization that can help it to improve its relationship with clients. After finding out the main issues regarding this subject, we compiled their prioritization, and based on this we followed the model of a Benefits Dependency Network to develop a solution. In the end, we created a database that could help the company to organize the proposed improvements, and which can be used for other types of objectives too.

Even though we advanced a complex solution for the improvement of customer relationship management, our recommendation would be to adopt step by step the proposed improvements. Anyway, as it was shown by the database, each change brings more than one benefit. Therefore, we strongly suggest the management to improve their relationship with the loyal customers, but also to be open for doing business with new customers too, especially in Romania, because they have potential, but they are not very well promoted. All in all, this paper is a proposal for the organization on adopting customer relationship practices.

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The Interaction between Stock Market Returns and Economic Growth: Evidence from BRICS Countries

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Abstract: Stock markets are accepted as a leading indicator of economic performance in the world. This study investigated the causality between stock market returns and economic growth in BRICS countries over the period of 1998-2017 through panel causality test and revealed a significant unilateral causality from stock market returns to the economic growth.

Keywords: Economic Growth, Stock Market Returns, Panel Causality Test.

JEL Classification: C32, G14, N24

Introduction and Review of Literature

The stock markets implement an important function in the financial system through mobilizing the savings and making a contribution to the capital formation and in turn foster the economic growth. Therefore, stock markets are accepted as one of the leading indicators of economic growth. In this context, increases in stock market returns can be a sign of good performance overall economy. However, stock market returns sometimes

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can be misleading about the performance of overall economy, because stock markets are sometimes driven by the expectations and deviated from the economic fundamentals.

In the related literature, the scholars have generally focused the impact of stock market development on the economic growth and the interaction between stock market performance and economic growth (e.g. see Ho and Odhiambo (2012), Marinkovic et al. (2013), Jiang (2019), Elhassan and Braima (2020)). In this study, we explored the causality between economic growth and stock market returns in sample of BRICS countries over the 1998-2017 period through Kónya (2006) bootstrap Granger causality test.

In the related literature, many scholars have explored the relationship between economic growth and stock market returns and reached mixed findings. In this context, some scholars have revealed a unidirectional causality from stock market returns to the economic growth (Athapathu and Jayasinghe, 2012; Senturk et al., 2014; Chien et al., 2014; Ajibola and Maxwell, 2016; Tekin and Yener, 2019). On the other side, some scholars have discovered a significant unidirectional causality from economic growth to stock market returns (see Elmas et al., 2011; Paramati and Gupta, 2011). However, relatively few scholars have discovered a bidirectional causality between stock market returns and economic growth (Pece, 2015).

In one of the empirical studies, Liu and Sinclair (2008) explored the causality between stock market prices and economic growth in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan revealed a unidirectional causality from stock prices to economic growth in short run and a unidirectional causality from economic growth to stock prices in the long run. On the other side, Athapathu and Jayasinghe (2012) examined the causality between stock market performance and economic growth in Sri Lanka for the period of 1997-2008 and reached a one-way causality from stock market performance to economic growth.

Senturk et al. (2014) analyzed the causality between economic growth and stock market returns in Turkey for the period of 1998Q2-2014Q2 through Toda-Yamamoto and frequency domain causality tests and revealed a significant causality from stock returns to economic growth in the short run and a significant causality from economic growth to the stock return in the medium run. On the other side, Silva et al. (2018) explored the relationship between stock market performance and economic growth in Sri Lanka through regression analysis and revealed a positive relationship between two series. Ajibola and Maxwell (2016) explored interaction among economic growth, stock market performance, and stock market volatility in Nigeria for the period of 1985-2013 and revealed a significant unilateral causality from stock market performance to the economic growth.

Tekin and Yener (2019) analyzed the causality between stock market index and economic growth in developing and developed economies for the period of 1998-2017 and revealed a unilateral causality from stock market index to the economic growth in the United States, BRICS countries and Turkey and a bilateral causality between two series for Germany. On the other side, Jiang (2019) analyzed the co-movement of economic growth and stock index return in China and the United States for the period of 1992Q1-2017Q4 and that revealed a relatively strong, but fluctuant co-movement in the U.S., and a relatively weak, but stable co-movement in China.

Elhassan and Braima (2020) analyzed the impact of stock market performance on the economic growth in Sudan for the period of 1995Q1-2018Q4 through ARDL approach and revealed a positive impact of stock market development on the economic growth. Lastly, Dabwor et al. (2020) researched the impact of stock market return on the economic growth in Nigeria for the period of 1981-2018 and reached an insignificant impact of stock market return on the economic growth.

Data and Method

In the study, economic growth was proxied by growth rate of real GDP per capita and stock market returns were represented by annual stock market returns. Both series were provided from World Bank database.

Table 1: Data Description

Variable	Variable definition	Data source
GRW	Real GDP per capita growth (annual %)	World Bank (2021a)
STOCK	Stock market return (% , year-on-year)	World Bank (2021b)

The study period was specified as 1998-2017 considering the data availability and the sample consisted of BRICS economies (Brazil, China, India, Russian Federation, and South Africa). The descriptive statistics of the dataset were presented in Table 2. In the sample, the average economic growth was 3.95 and the average stock return was 14.51, but both variables showed considerable variations among the countries. Furthermore, China experienced the largest economic growth with a mean of 8.5% during the study period and Russian Federation had the largest stock market return with a mean of 23.3% during the study period.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of BRICS countries

BRAZIL	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
GRW	-4.35	6.52	1.2016	1.36	2.83551
STOCK	-18.44	54.43	11.9020	5.65	22.28155
CHINA	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
GRW	6.27	13.64	8.5044	8.021	2.00058
STOCK	-28.46	159.99	10.4747	1.575	42.03974
INDIA	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
GRW	1.59	7.08	5.1693	6.07	1.80012
STOCK	-24.29	54.74	12.8630	11.48	20.76941

RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
GRW	-7.83	10.46	3.6108	4.81	4.83602
STOCK	-43.54	107.57	23.3327	16.38	41.28780
SOUTH AFRICA	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
GRW	-2.90	4.28	1.3009	1.44	1.87252
STOCK	-13.08	43.63	13.9903	13.80	14.20845
BRICS PANEL	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation
GRW	-7.83	13.64	3.9574	4.91	3.94360
STOCK	-43.54	159.99	14.5126	10.56	30.06915

The mutual interaction between stock market returns and economic growth was analyzed through Kónya (2006) bootstrap Granger causality test considering the cross-sectional dependency and heterogeneity.

Empirical Analysis

In the empirical analysis, the cross-sectional dependence was firstly checked through the Pesaran (2004) LM CD test, Pesaran et al. (2008) LM adj. test, and Breusch and Pagan (1980) LM test and the findings were shown in Table 3. The null hypothesis of cross-sectional independence was declined at 1% significance level and in turn the cross-sectional dependence among the series was revealed.

Table 3: Cross-sectional Dependence Tests' Results

Test	Test statistic	P value
LM	37.452	0.000
LM _{adj}	38.556	0.000
LM CD	36.241	0.000

At the second stage, the homogeneity was checked by adjusted delta tilde test of Pesaran and Yamagata (2008) and the findings were

shown in Table 4. The null hypothesis of homogeneity was declined at 1% significance level and in turn the cointegration coefficients were revealed to be heterogeneous.

Table 4: Homogeneity Tests' Results

Test	Test statistic	P value
Delta tilde	14.361	0.000
Adjusted delta tilde	17.846	0.000

The presence of cross-sectional dependency among the series led us to check the stationarity of the series by Pesaran (2007) CIPS unit root test and the findings were shown in Table 4. The series were found to be I(1).

Table 4: CIPS Unit Root Test Results

Variables	Level		First differences	
	Constant	Constant + Trend	Constant	Constant + Trend
GRW	-1.287	-1.304	-6.322*	-6.837*
STOCK	-1.108	-1.149	-5.908*	-6.113*

* indicates it is significant at 5% level

The reciprocal interaction between stock market returns and economic growth was analyzed by Kónya (2006) bootstrap Granger causality test regarding the presence of cross-sectional dependence and heterogeneity and the findings were shown in Table 5. The results revealed a significant causality from stock market return to the economic growth and the findings were found to be compatible with Athapathu and Jayasinghe (2012), Senturk et al. (2014), Chien et al. (2014), Ajibola and Maxwell (2016), Tekin and Yener (2019). In other words, stock market returns had a significant impact on the economic growth in sample of BRIC countries.

Table 5: Bootstrap Granger Causality Test Results

Countries	H ₀ : GRW is not cause of STOCK				H ₀ : STOCK is not cause of GRW			
	Wald stat.	Bootstrap Critical Values			Wald stat.	Bootstrap Critical Values		
		1%	5%	10%		1%	5%	10%
Brazil	7.643	40.98	22.56	17.24	49.45***	47.51	24.45	19.26
China	10.556	42.86	22.97	18.93	40.66**	45.16	32.51	18.56
India	12.452	43.37	22.31	17.74	42.14**	48.22	25.53	15.61
Russia	9.228	44.15	23.88	18.53	43.78***	42.64	28.89	17.03
South Africa	13.771	43.65	23.44	19.16	42.91**	46.35	24.28	17.34

***, **, * respectively indicates that it is significant at 1%, 5% and 10% significance levels. Note: Bootstrap critical values were generated from 10,000 simulation and optimal lag length was specifies considering Schwarz information criterion and maximum lag length was 2.

Conclusion

Stock markets and economic growth are closely interrelated and stock markets generally reflect the overall economy's performance. Therefore, stock market index can be accepted as an indicator of future economic growth. In this article, the causality between stock market returns and economic growth was analyzed in sample of BRICS countries for the period of 1998-2017 through panel causality test and a significant unilateral causality from stock market returns to the economic growth was found. In other words, stock market returns had a significant influence on the economic growth and can be seen as a leading indicator of economic performance.

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The Interaction between Financial Development and Human Development in EU Transition Economies

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Abstract: Financial sector development has been documented as a significant determinant of economic growth through diverse channels. This study investigated the causality between financial development and human development in EU transition economies for the period of 1992-2018 through causality test. The causality analysis revealed a unilateral causality from human development to financial sector development.

Keywords: Financial Development, Human Development, Panel Causality Test.

JEL Classifications: E44, G20, J24, O16

Introduction and Review of Literature

Human capital development and financial sector development have been suggested as the significant components of economic growth and verified by many scholars in the related literature (e.g. see Hassan et al., 2011; Hanushek; 2013; Stewart, et al., 2018; Yang, 2019). However, financial development and human development have potential to affect each other. In this context, a well-developed financial system can provide

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funds for investments in human capital and also make easier the access of the economic units to financial institutions to finance their activities which contribute to human development (Sehrawat and Giri, 2017). On the other side, the people with higher human capital benefit from financial services more and make better financial conscious decisions and in turn make a contribution to the development of financial sector (Kargbo et al., 2016). In this context, a mutual interaction between human development and financial sector development is expected at theoretical terms.

This study analyzed the mutual interaction between human development and financial development in sample of EU (European Union) transition economies taking notice of the extensive literature about finance-growth nexus and human development-growth nexus.

In the related empirical literature, most of the scholars such as Zaman et al. (2012), Akhmat et al. (2014), Kiliç and Özcan (2018), Arif and Khan (2019), and Tekin (2020) discovered a positive impact of financial sector development on human development.

Zaman et al. (2012) analyzed the effect of financial sector development on the human development in Pakistan over the 1975-2010 period through cointegration and causality analyses and found a unilateral causality from financial development to the human development and also financial development fostered the human development. On the other side, Akhmat et al. (2014) explored the relationship between financial development and human development in selected South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation economies over the 1988-2008 period and financial development positively affected the human development in both short and long run.

Ibe (2017) analyzed the influence of financial intermediation on human development in sub-Saharan African countries for the period of 1980-2012 through regression analysis and revealed an insignificant relationship between financial intermediation and human development. On the other side, Kiliç and Özcan (2018) explored the impact of financial sector development on human development in sample of 16 emerging

economies during the 1990-2015 period through causality and cointegration analyses and revealed that financial sector development had a positive effect on the human development in the long run and also discovered a bilateral causality between financial development and human development.

Arif and Khan (2019) explored the impact of financial development on the human development in Pakistan over the 1991-2016 through cointegration analysis and revealed that financial sector development had a positive impact on human development. Lastly, Tekin (2020) analyzed the impact of financial development on human development in 15 developing countries for the period of 1970-2016 through causality and cointegration analyses and revealed a bilateral causality between financial development and human development.

On the other side, some scholars have researched the impact of human development on financial development and reached a significant effect of human development on financial sector development. In this context, Filippidis and Katrakilidis (2015) analyzed the impact of institutions and human development on financial development in 52 developing countries over the 1985-2008 period and discovered that human development positively affected the financial development through dynamic regression. On the other side, Kuloğlu and Ecevit (2017) analyzed the relationship between health and financial development in ten high income countries for the 1991-2014 period through principal component analysis and causality analysis and reached a unilateral causality from health development to the financial development.

Data and Method

The paper analyzed the causality between human development and financial development in case of EU transition economies. In the paper, the financial sector development was proxied by financial development index of IMF (2021) which is calculated regarding the

access, depth, and efficiency of the financial sector. On the other side, human development was proxied by human development index which is the is the geometric mean of normalized life expectancy index, education index, and GNI (gross national income) by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) (2021). The study period was specified as 1992-2018 considering the banking sector data availability.

Table 1: Description of the variables

Variables	Description	Data source
FINDEV	Financial development index	IMF (2021)
HDI	Human development index	UNDP (2021)

The sample consisted of 11 EU transition economies of Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The EViews 10.0 and Stata 14.0 were employed for econometric analyses. The causality between human development and financial development was checked through Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality test.

Results and Discussions

In the empirical analysis, the cross-sectional dependence was questioned by adj. LM adj. test of Pesaran et al. (2008), Pesaran (2004) LM CD test, and Breusch and Pagan (1980) LM test, and the findings were displayed in Table 2. The findings indicated a significant cross-sectional dependency between two series.

Table 2: Cross-sectional dependence tests' results

Test	Test statistic	Prob.
LM	369.7	0.0000
LM adj*	85.44	0.0000
LM CD*	15.75	0.0000

*two-sided test

The homogeneity was checked through delta tilde tests of Pesaran and Yamagata (2008). The findings were displayed in Table 3. The null hypothesis of homogeneity was denied and, in turn the presence of heterogeneity was discovered.

Table 3: Homogeneity tests' results.

Test	Test statistic	Prob.
$\tilde{\Delta}$	11.307	0.000
$\tilde{\Delta}_{adj.}$	11.992	0.000

The stationarity of the series was checked through Pesaran (2007) CIPS unit root test taking notice of the existence of cross-sectional dependence and the findings were displayed in Table 4. The findings showed that both series were I(1).

Table 4: Unit root test's results

	Constant	Constant+Trend
Variables	Zt-bar	Zt-bar
HDI	-1.698	0.398
d(HDI)	-2.064**	0.063**
FINDEV	1.934	1.777
d(FINDEV)	-3.754***	-3.017***

*** and ** indicates that it is respectively significant at 1% and 5% level.

The causality between human development and financial development was analyzed through Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality test and the findings were displayed in Table 5. The findings revealed a unilateral causality from human development to financial sector development. So human capital development had a significant impact on the financial sector development in the short run. The findings of the study was found to be compatible with the findings of Kuloğlu and Ecevit (2017), but contradicted with the findings of the most scholars. We evaluate that this can be resulted from that EU transition economies already have a relatively higher human development in the world.

Table 5: Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality test

Null Hypothesis:	W-Stat.	Zbar-Stat.	Prob.
dHDI \rightarrow DFINDEV	2.69561	3.14951	0.0016
dFINDEV \rightarrow dHDI	1.73532	1.25403	0.2098

Conclusions

In this paper, the causality between financial sector development and human development was analyzed through Dumitrescu and Hurlin (2012) causality test in sample of EU transition economies given the importance of both human development and financial sector development. The causality analysis revealed a unilateral causality from human development to the financial sector development unlike the findings by most of the studies and may be probably resulted from relatively higher human development level of the countries in the sample. However, the findings of the paper revealed that human development can affect the economic growth through financial sector development.

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Overall Residents' Quality of Life, Community Attachment and Support for Tourism in Rural Destinations Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Preliminary Research

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Abstract: The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of residents' quality of life and community attachment on support for tourism development in the rural destination during the COVID-19 pandemic. This preliminary research adopted a quantitative research approach and used a questionnaire that was applied to residents who are in Yozgat (Turkey). A total of 250 usable questionnaires were included in the data analysis. As a result of the investigation, it was concluded that community attachment and residents' overall quality of life impact positively residents' support for tourism during the pandemic.

Keywords: Residents' quality of life, community attachment, support for tourism, the COVID-19, Yozgat (Turkey).

Introduction

The tourism destinations have been severely hit by a recent health crisis which is known as the COVID-19 pandemic (Wen et al., 2020). During this crisis, a wide range of measures such as closing the borders, lockdowns, and international travel restrictions have been taken by

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numerous governments to stop the spread of the pandemic (Atsız, 2021; Dedeoğlu & Boğan, 2021). Moreover, some strategies have been put forward by World Tourism Organization (World Tourism Organization, 2020) and various researchers (Assaf & Scuderi, 2020; Fotiadis et al., 2021) to recover the tourism industry in the destinations. It is expected that future travels will be carried out to rural areas where less human interaction is available (Visafirst, 2021). However, there is a question about whether residents' in the rural areas support tourism development in their destination. Although the current literature is mainly focused on examining the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry (Baum & Hai, 2020; Mason et al., 2020), this knowledge gap was neglected.

Recent research by (Koh, 2020) has emphasized the importance of residents' quality of life in tourism destinations. Moreover, it is highlighted that tourism demand will increase again post-COVID-19, and improving residents' perceived quality of life can be extremely helpful in terms of recovery strategies. (Nepal, 2020) also provided insightful information about travels after COVID-19 and stated that locals' quality of life in the tourism destinations are mainly dependent on tourism development. This was confirmed by previous research (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Eslami et al., 2019; Woo et al., 2015). Apart from this, (Nian et al., 2019) concluded in their study that community attachment had positive impacts on crisis responses and community participation. Despite the importance of both concepts, it is not well investigated in rural destinations amid the COVID-19 surge. In response to this gap, this research attempts to empirically examine the impact of residents' quality of life and community attachment on support for tourism development in the future, namely post-COVID-19. To attain our purpose, Yozgat (Turkey) was selected as a research area owing to its rural characteristics and it is known as one of the most important rural areas in Turkey. Moreover, considering that some improvements are available to develop the tourism industry, it is expected that future tourist

flows will be directed to this area. Therefore, it is important to ascertain residents' support from tourism development in such a circumstance.

Methodology

This research aims to examine the effects of residents' quality of life and community attachment on support for tourism development in rural destinations. To address this purpose, a quantitative research approach was adopted, and a questionnaire was used to gather the research data. The questionnaire consists of two main sections. First section deals with three measurement items of residents' quality of life (Eslami et al., 2019), five measurement items of community attachment (Choi & Murray, 2010), and five measurement items of residents' support for tourism development (Çelik & Rasoolimanesh, 2021). All items were measured with a 5-Point Likert Scale (1= Strongly disagree; 5= Strongly agree). The second section included demographic variables.

Considering the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the questionnaire was distributed to residents in Yozgat province online through snowballing and convenience sampling methods. A total of 250 usable questionnaires were gathered and included in the analysis. The collected data were analyzed with SPSS and SmartPLS software. Demographic information was illustrated by using SPSS while measurement and structural model were performed by utilizing SmartPLS software enable researchers to analyze the data with a small sample size and requiring non-normal distribution of the data based on partial least squares structural equation modeling (Chin, 2010; Matthews, 2017).

Findings

Demographic profiles of participants

As depicted in Table 1, the majority of participants (41.6%) were 36-55; the dominant gender as females (59.6%). Moreover, 59.2% of

participants were married and the education levels of participants were mainly with a pre-license or license graduation. Further, the most of participants' income (33.6%) was 4001-6000 Turkish Liras. In terms of length of residency, the most of them live in Yozgat between 11-15 years.

Table 1: Demographic profiles of participants

Variable	n	%	
Age	15-25	46	18.4
	26-35	92	36.8
	36-55	104	41.6
	56 and above	8	3.2
Gender	Female	149	59.6
	Male	101	40.4
Marital Status	Single	102	40.8
	Married	148	59.2
Education	Primary school or middle school	9	3.6
	High school	54	21.6
	Pre-license or license	137	54.8
	Postgraduate	50	20
Income	1000 Turkish Liras (TL) and below	25	10
	1001-2000 TL	8	3.2
	2001-4000 TL	55	22
	4001-6000 TL	84	33.6
Length of residency	6001 TL and above	78	31.2
	1-5 years	54	21.6
	6-10 years	31	12.4
	11-15 years	124	49.6
	16 years and above	41	16.4
Total	250	100	

Measurement Model

To ensure internal consistency, rho_A, CR, Cronbach's alpha, and AVE values are used. As illustrated in Table 2, all CR values are above 0.70 which was proposed by Chin (2010). Moreover, all rho_A values are above 0.70 except for the quality of life. However, it is a threshold level.

Therefore, it can be accepted for this model. Cronbach's alpha of all constructs is acceptable for this research. It can be concluded that internal consistency for this research is provided.

Table 2: Measurement Model

Constructs/Items	Loadings	rho_A	CR	AVE	α
Support for tourism		0.921	0.932	0.735	0.909
I strongly support tourism development in my province and district	0.869				
I make suggestions for tourism development in my province and district.	0.925				
I actively participate in tourism planning in my province and district	0.750				
I participate in the development of tourism projects in my province and district.	0.903				
I want to see many tourists in my province and district	0.827				
Community attachment		0.897	0.897	0.691	0.887
I am satisfied with living in Yozgat	0.883				
I feel at home in this community	0.864				
I know about what is going on in my community	0.815				
I would be sorry if I move away from Yozgat	0.864				
I feel safe here.	0.720				
Quality of Life		0.660	0.932	0.593	0.638
The conditions of my life are excellent so far	0.859				
I have gotten the important things I want in life	0.834				
I am satisfied with my life as a whole	0.590				
Remarks: CR (Composite Reliability); AVE (Average Variance Extracted); α (Cronbach's alpha)					

To establish convergent validity, AVE (Average Variance Extracted) has to be considered apart from CR values. Chin (2010)

recommended that AVE values should be above 0.50. According to our AVE values for each construct, it varies between 0.593-0.735. Discriminant validity was ensured through Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values as presented in Table 3. HTMT values are a new method that is used to examine discriminant validity in recent years (Henseler et al., 2014). These values are expected to be below 0.90. So, our values are below a threshold level. It can be concluded that the measurement model is established well for this research.

Table 3: HTMT Values

Constructs	1	2	3
Community attachment (1)			
Quality of Life (2)	0.677		
Support for tourism (3)	0.796	0.606	

Structural Model

Based on findings obtained from the analysis, the coefficient of determination (R^2) for support for tourism development construct is 0.541. This value is above 0.20 which was recommended by Hair et al. (2016). Bootstrapping was used to test the significance of community attachment and residents' overall quality of life on support for tourism. Structural results for this study were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Path Coefficients

Paths	β	SD	t-value	P
Community Attachment → Support for tourism	0.662	0.046	14.336	0,000
Residents' overall quality of life → Support for tourism	0.130	0.056	2.336	0,020

According to the structural model, it was demonstrated that the impact of community attachment ($\beta=0.662$, $t\text{-value}=14.336$) and residents'

overall quality of life ($\beta=0.130$, $t\text{-value}=2.336$) on support for tourism was significant.

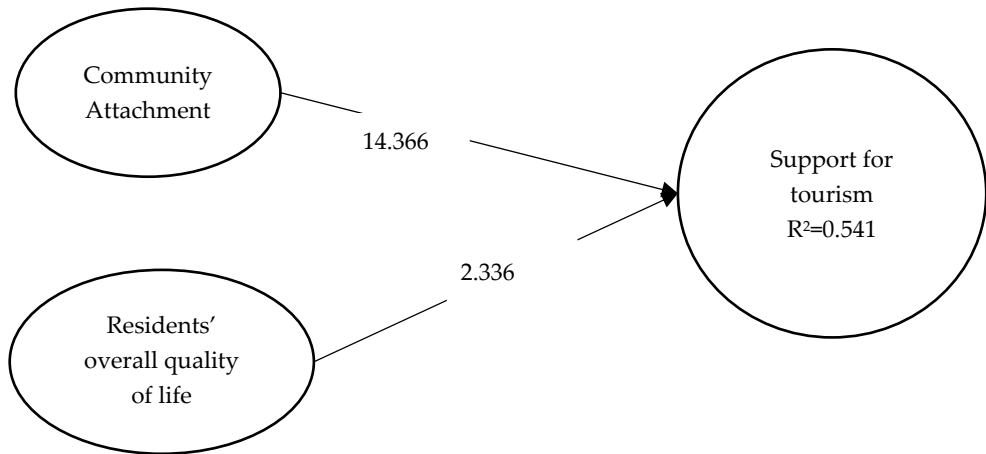


Figure 1: Structural model results

Conclusion

This research attempts to understand the impact of residents' quality of life and community attachment on support for tourism development during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the first study that examines these variables in such a health crisis. Therefore, it is believed that these results will be extremely for literature. Based on the research findings, it was concluded that community attachment and residents' overall quality of life have a determining role in support for tourism during the pandemic. Although the pandemic studies are reported that people will avoid coming together with people (Wen et al., 2020), this study has shown that people can desire tourists to visit their destinations if their quality of life and community attachment conditions are well. Future studies can investigate the impact of the COVID-19 on the residents' support for tourism development in rural destinations by adopting a qualitative research approach.

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The Impact of the Innovations on Human Resources Planning in Hotels: The Mediating Role of COVID-19 Measures

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Abstract: The covid-19 pandemic has been affecting the tourism industry globally since it first appeared. The economic and social effects caused by the pandemic have deeply shaken the employees as well as the hotels. During the Covid-19 pandemic, employees have experienced anxiety in terms of both health and job loss. The purpose of this research is to determine the impact of the technological and service innovations and Covid-19 measures on human resources planning in hotels. Taking the pandemic measures into account, the data were collected from 386 participants through face-to-face interviews at hotels and online forms via ICSEER platform from June 7, 2020 to March 16, 2021. The population of the research includes chefs of all departments in Hotels with Tourism Management Certificate in the İzmir, Antalya and Muğla provinces of Turkey. The data were analyzed with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using the LISREL program. It is found that the technological innovations, services innovations, and Covid-19 measures in hotels significantly have influenced human resources planning. As a result, nine of the ten hypotheses were accepted, but one was rejected.

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JEL classification: O15, J21, L83

Introduction

Undoubtedly, it is nothing more than a dream for the tourism industry to overcome the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic unscathed. Within the tourism industry, this pandemic has affected the hotels as well as all tourism value chains. The impact of canceled hotel reservations became immediately felt by customers, employees, and businesses that have direct or indirect relations with tourism. Lay-offs in hotels have been the most fear of employees after health concerns with the pandemic. Widespread shutdowns of hotels in order to control the Covid-19 pandemic have caused a lay-offs and these challenges affected not only employees but also their families.

Covid-19 has shown how fragile tourism industry beings are and how the hotels' operating and service can be changed during pandemic period that they cannot react. In the tourism where it seemed that the digitalization dominated everything in advance, hotels have shocked along by a great pandemic caused by Covid-19. It is understood that the Covid-19 pandemic will not only leave hotels struggling for survival but will also trigger many of them to find the radical changes. Although the challenges caused by pandemic, Covid-19 has forced the hotels to invest innovations with opportunities to identify new services concepts, and digitalization including technological innovations and automation.

Based on the Covid-19 pandemic, this study has three interrelated goals. First, to briefly review the previous studies related to the impact of the pandemic on hotels, in context of their human resources planning. Second, the study provides an examination of the direct effects of innovations with technological and service dimensions on the human resources planning in hotels. Recognizing that the impact to employment has still lasted, the final goal is to determine the mediating role of Covid-

19 measures in the effects of innovations on the human resources planning in hotels.

Literature

Human resources is a significant resource foundation for hotels, referring to customer values in the process of Covid-19, and make a difference perceived by employees' attitude and behaviors, skills and communication, service and relations (Demir et al., 2021a). Another resource that makes a difference in terms of production, management and marketing in hotels is investing in innovations (Demir and Demir 2015; Jiang and Wen, 2020) to gain competitive advantage (Sigala, 2012), increase employee productivity and work outputs (Gregurec, Tomičić Furjan and Tomičić-Pupek, 2021) as well as reduce the aggregate cost (Cha, 2020; Ivanov and Webster, 2018). However, also due to Covid-19, evidence indicates that innovations always cannot significantly influence human resources planning as in an expected way (Demir et al., 2020) such as increasing employment. During the unprecedented pandemic period, hotels needed to focus on empowering their employees' psychological health against Covid-19 (Yan Mao, Morrison and Andres Coca-Stefaniak, 2020).

Although many of studies have focused on the effects of innovations on marketing in the context of customer based (Ho et al., 2020; Sheresheva et al., 2021), the research that examined the relation between innovations and human resources planning (Cha, 2020; Ivanov, 2020) in tourism is limited. In addition, vast of these limited studies is also related to only technological innovations. However, there is a lack of in-depth investigation on how innovations effects human resources planning in overcoming negative impacts (Jung et al., 2021) such as lay-offs. Almost all of these studies were conducted to determine the positive antecedents and consequences of innovations in hotel industry, but its challenges on employment was ignored by most researchers. Whereas, as Faché (2000) stated the innovation is a more comprehensive change in the service design or concept than a mere adjustment.

The innovations, especially technological innovation, raises concerns of job losses for employees during Covid-19 due to the fact that it will be substituted of human staffs by robots, applications, automation systems, digital sensor technologies etc. (Dengler and Matthes 2018; Li, Bonn and Ye, 2019). Even, some authors see that the innovations have a secret power to lay-offs. (Ivanov, 2020; Jung et al., 2021). On the other hand, some researchers (Cha, 2020; Demir and Demir, 2015; Webster and Ivanov 2020) agree that innovation has power to change the nature of work and the qualifications and skill required by human employees. When comparing the impact of innovations in hotels, it is understood that technological innovations create more radical results than service innovations. In particular, technological innovations are seen as an element of labor cost reduction in the Covid-19 period (Cha, 2020; Demir et al., 2021a). The main reason for the fear of the employees is that they will lay-offs.

As known, service innovation is a key factor (Agarwal, Erramilli and Dev, 2003) that allows hotels to compose services, unique from others aiming to create value for customers (Tajeddini, Martin and Altinay, 2020), and it can be differentiated from other innovations due to the intangible features. In the process of Covid-19, service innovations in hotels not only alleviate the workload of employees, but also fulfill an important function in terms of protection from the pandemic. The more preventive the innovation with service concept perceived by employees, the more cautious they might be to overcome the pandemic challenges (Yan Mao et al., 2020). Service innovation positively influence human resources planning as requiring the high qualification (Demir and Demir, 2015). Similar to service innovation, technological innovation in hotels seeks to acquire and use information from customers, managers, employees, stakeholders to address and resolve the challenges with pandemic. However, it is really scary that hotels tend to use technological innovations including robot, automation, applications etc. instead of human staffs due to the decrease in sales and room occupancy rate during the Covid-19 process.

Covid-19 pandemic has posed challenges to hotels and their organizational structure with regard to human resources planning. Inevitably this pandemic has put hotels under test for its decision to employees' rights and work agreements. The Covid-19 pandemic has given opportunity and time to the hotels to reflect on the basic meaning of innovation and the impact and consequence of the innovation not just on their own business but on the employees and the customers. Because innovation is not getting rid of labor cost by laying-off employees. But, as Jos and Ooijens (2020) has stated that initial impacts were felt as companies reduce hours or lay off workers to cut costs during the Covid-19. Similarly, Smart, Ma, Qu and Ding (2021) has emphasized that the Covid-19 pandemic delivered blows to tourism industry, forcing the hotels to lay off or furlough staff, put a temporary hold on accommodation and service operations, or permanently close doors. From these statements, it is understood that the Covid-19 measures trigger layoffs in hotels on the pretext of innovation.

One of the most important challenges of human resources management is to reduce the workforce for various reasons while implementing innovations that will improve organizational performance and increase customer satisfaction. Studies have found that Covid-19 measures is a mediating predictor of the effects of innovations on human resources planning that include employment decisions, requirement of new qualifications, new job description (Hassan and Soliman, 2021; Wong, Kim, Kim and Han, 2021). In the literature on the hospitality industry, Ivanov's (2020) and Demir et al. (2020) studies indicated that innovations, including technological developments and automation, were negatively associated with the employment. In addition, Covid-19 measures cited as an innocent justification can destroy the hope and resilience of employees. Therefore, it is assumed that Covid-19 measures are used as a tool by hotels aiming to lay off or new requirements for hiring during the pandemic process. Based on all the literature above, the following hypotheses were proposed.

- Technological innovations negatively affect the quantitative of workforce (Hypothesis H1a), and positively affect the qualitative of workforce (Hypothesis H1b).
- Service innovations positively affect the quantitative of workforce (Hypothesis H2a), and the qualitative of workforce (Hypothesis H2b).
- Covid-19 measures negatively affect the quantitative of workforce (Hypothesis H3a), and positively affect the qualitative of workforce (Hypothesis H3b).
- Covid-19 measures has a mediation impact on the relationship between technological innovations and quantitative of workforce (Hypothesis H4a), and the qualitative of workforce (Hypothesis H4b).
- Covid-19 measures has a mediation impact on the relationship between service innovations and quantitative of workforce (Hypothesis H5a), and the qualitative of workforce (Hypothesis H5b).

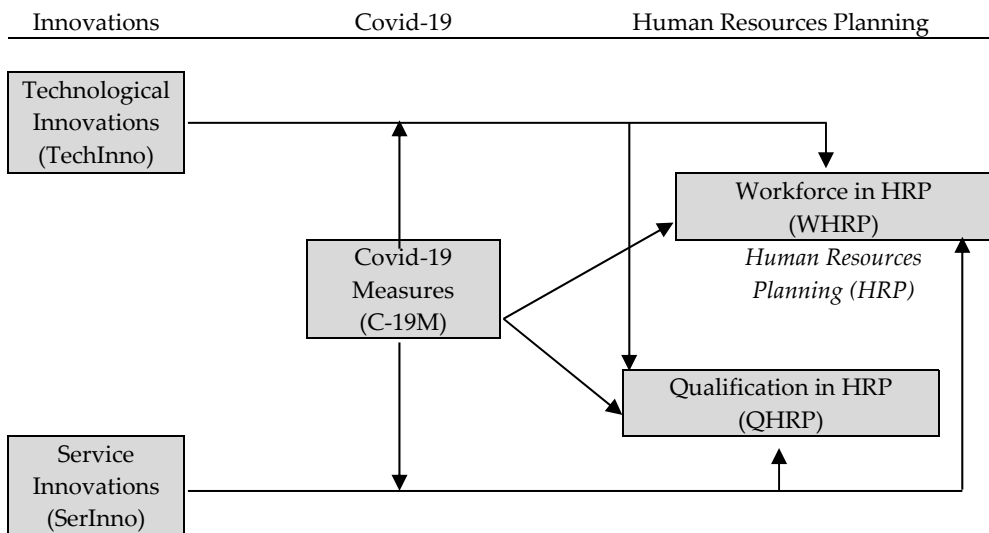


Figure 1: Research model

Methods

Sample and data collection

A hybrid survey including a face-to-face interview at hotels and an online form via ICSEER platform was conducted to obtain data from June 7, 2020 to March 16, 2021. The population of the research includes chefs of all departments at Hotels with Tourism Management Certificate in the İzmir, Antalya and Muğla provinces of Turkey. According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2020 data (KTB, 2020), there are 1441 hotels with Tourism Operations Certificate in these regions of Turkey. The questionnaire link was sent to 493 hotels via email and the hotel management was asked to share it with all department chiefs. A total of 407 questionnaires were gathered from 69 hotels. After filtering invalid responses, a total of 386 responses were used, but 21 responses were excluded from the analysis due to the lack of questions fully filled and respondents are no chefs.

Measurement development

The survey conducted three parts that include the questions of (1) technological innovations, (2) service innovations (3) Covid-19 measures in hotels, and (4) human resources planning with the items were measured with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 for “strongly disagree” to 5 for “strongly agree”. The technological innovations scale was developed with five items (Demir and Demir, 2003; 2015; Solnet, Baum, Robinson, and Lockstone-Binney, 2016), service innovations scale with five items (Bauer and Borodako 2019; Faché, 2000; Sigala, 2012), Covid-19 measures in hotels scale with five items (Demir, 2020; Demir, Günaydın and Demir, 2020; Demir, Demir, Dalgıç and Ergen, 2021) and human resources planning scale with six items (Hwang and Kogan, 2003; Khatri, 2000; Yasar and Demir, 2019), using the conceptual definitions, methods and secondary data in the literature. Before analyzing data, first,

a pretest was conducted to assess the content validity in the scale development process. A pilot test with 19 graduate students, who had worked in hotels, was conducted to test the preliminary version of the full scale and then interviewed with a focus group of 5 academics to verify item statements. Finally, a minor change to two items and removal of 2 items of the questionnaire was made.

Measuring instruments

The Technological Innovations scale (TechInno) is a five-item scale that measures technological tools and automation systems, using a 5-item Likert scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The scale, as seen in Table 1, includes the items with the relation between technology use and work, and its internal consistency was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$).

The Services Innovations scale (SerInno) is a five-item scale that related to the changes and behavioral innovations in the content, methods and tools of hotel services. The internal consistency for the existing sample was 0.77 for the pilot study and 0.91 for the SerInno.

Covid-19 Measures (in Hotels) scale (C-19M) is a five-item scale that used as a measure of overall measures taken by the Government in the tourism and hospitality industry. The C-19M has an excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's α) of 0.90 for the current study, while had an average 0.74 for the pilot study.

Human Resources Planning scale (HRP) is a six-item scale that measures the changes in employment with quantitative and qualitative dimensions in hotels based on independent factors. The scale has two subdimensions as Workforce in HRP (WHRP) and Qualification in HRP (QHRP). The internal consistency of this scale was excellent (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.91$ for WHRP and 0.88 for QHRP) as well as the pilot study. The CFA revealed results were in acceptable range that the goodness-of-fit-indices of the HRP.

Results

Measurement model

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypothesized model of this research. The measurement model-fit indices and factor analysis were implemented accordingly. Four items in the scale of this research that were non-significant to the construct were excluded from the measurement model. Scale items, five were for technological innovations, five were for service innovations, five were for Covid-19 measures in hotels, and six were for human resources planning. Both Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha were used for the constructs' reliability, and constructs' validity was assessed via factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The CR and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients met 0.7 for good measures' reliability (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Mackenzie, Podsakoff and Podsakoff, 2011) as well as all AVEs exceeded the 0.5 thresholds (Hair et al., 2017). The t values for the coefficients also ranged from 5.317 to 13.742, indicating the measurement model had an acceptable fit to the data. Factor groups had significant at ($p < 0.01$), CR of the constructs was 0.819-0.902, and AVEs was 0.651-0.733. Table 1 indicates the statistical results of constructs including Cronbach's Alfa, CR, AVE, factor loading and variances of items, and standard deviations. To examine construct fit of the measurement model, the fit indices were applied. The fit indices indicated that the measurement model fitted the construct as follows: $\chi^2 = 362.009$, $df = 189$, $\chi^2/df = 1.915$, $p < 0.01$, GFI = .913, AGFI = 0.901, CFI = 0.954, TLI = 0.922, NFI = 0.926, RMSEA = 0.048 and SRMR = 0.041.

Table 1: Convergent validity measures

	Factor Loading	Variance	St. Error	Cronbach's Alfa	AVE	CR
<i>The Technological Innovations</i>				0.934	0.717	0.902
... have become part of the job	0.902	0.721	0.224			
... make the job easier	0.877	0.714	0.238			
... contribute to getting the job done quickly	0.811	0.701	0.265			
... make business more standardized	0.800	0.684	0.291			
... increase the work efficiency	0.755	0.645	0.302			

	Factor Loading	Variance	St. Error	Cronbach's Alfa	AVE	CR
<i>The Services Innovations</i>				0.918	0.672	0.886
... changes and updates the job description	0.886	0.704	0.243			
... changes business requirements	0.864	0.699	0.257			
... creates new knowledge	0.851	0.678	0.269			
... requires a reorganization of the work schedule	0.822	0.636	0.283			
... creates an opportunity for new teams to be formed	0.793	0.619	0.304			
<i>Covid-19 Measures in hotels</i>				0.901	0.651	0.823
... complicate working conditions (R)	0.944	0.742	0.201			
... constantly update the work program	0.849	0.721	0.227			
... create a stressful environment (R)	0.812	0.699	0.254			
... cause anxiety and anxiety (R)	0.793	0.669	0.272			
... impede personal development (R)	0.761	0.655	0.294			
<i>Workforce in HRP (WHRP)</i>				0.909	0.733	0.841
Technological innovations and automation decrease workforce	0.912	0.754	0.221			
Services innovations create new workforce	0.877	0.723	0.244			
Covid-19 measures in hotels causes to decrease workforce	0.833	0.701	0.279			
<i>Qualification in HRP (QHRP)</i>				0.888	0.709	0.819
Technological innovations and automation cause to improve the qualifications of human resources	0.869	0.722	0.236			
Services innovations cause to improve the qualifications of human resources	0.827	0.707	0.251			
Covid-19 measures in hotels cause to improve the qualifications of human resources	0.784	0.682	0.288			

CR: Composite Reliability AVE: Average Variance Extracted

Structural modeling

SEM was conducted through LISREL to test the hypothesized model. According to conceptual model in Figure 1, hypotheses were tested and the results were as follows; Table 3 illustrates that H1a [TechInno→WHRP ($\beta=-0.692$; $t=-8.988$; $p<0.01$)]; H1b [TechInno→QHRP ($\beta=0.663$; $t=7.404$; $p<0.01$)]; H2a [SerInno→WHRP ($\beta=0.704$; $t=10.917$; $p<0.01$)]; H2b [SerInno→QHRP ($\beta=0.729$; $t=13.742$; $p<0.01$)]; H3a [C-19M→WHRP ($\beta=0.661$; $t=-7.026$; $p<0.01$)] and H3b [C-19M→QHRP ($\beta=0.599$; $t=5.317$; $p < 0.01$)] are supported respectively. Therefore, results

reveal that “the technological innovations” and “the services innovations” positively and significantly influences the human resources planning, namely influences the quantitative and changes of HRP. Moreover, SEM was also used to determine the mediation role of “Covid-19 measures in hotels “on the relation between “the technological innovations” and “the human resources planning” as well as “the services innovations” and “human resources planning”. The findings have indicated that H4a [TechInno→C-19M→WHRP ($\beta=-0.421$; $p<0.01$)]; H5a [SerInno→C-19M→WHRP ($\beta=0.328$; $p<0.01$)]; H5b [SerInno→C-19M→QHRP ($\beta =0.212$; $p< 0.01$)] are supported respectively, while H4b [TechInno→C-19M→QHRP ($\beta =0.037$; $p>0.05$)] is not supported. The results also revealed that three of the mediation-related hypotheses including H4a, H5a and H5b, are accepted.

Table 2: Discriminant validity

	Mean	Std. Dev.	TechInno	SerInno	C-19M	WHRP	QHRP
TechInno	3.98	0.714	<i>0.846</i>				
SerInno	3.87	0.705	0.771**	<i>0.819</i>			
C-19M	3.71	0.701	0.524**	0.606**	<i>0.806</i>		
WHRP	4.01	0.722	-0.692**	0.704**	-0.661**	<i>0.856</i>	
QHRP	3.93	0.709	0.663**	0.729**	0.599**	0.406*	<i>0.842</i>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

#1 Diagonal value (italic) are the square roots of AVE.

#2 TechInno:Technological Innovations, SerInno:Services Innovations, C-19M:Covid-19 Measures in hotels, WHRP:Workforce in HRP, QHRP:Qualification in HRP

Table 3: The structural parameter estimates

Hypothesized path	Standardized direct effect	Standard error	t value	Sig. level	Hypothesis
H1a:TechInno→WHRP	-0.692	0.025	-8.988	0.001	Supported
H1b:TechInno→QHRP	0.663	0.032	7.404	0.001	Supported
H2a:SerInno→WHRP	0.704	0.021	10.917	0.001	Supported
H2b:SerInno →QHRP	0.729	0.017	13.742	0.001	Supported
H3a:C-19M→WHRP	-0.661	0.035	-7.026	0.002	Supported
H3b:C-19M→QHRP	0.599	0.041	5.317	0.003	Supported

Notes: Model fit: $\chi^2 = 362.009$, $df = 189$, $\chi^2/df = 1.915$, $p < 0.01$, $GFI = 0.913$, $AGFI = 0.901$, $CFI = 0.954$, $TLI = 0.922$, $NFI = 0.926$, $RMSEA = 0.048$ and $SRMR = 0.041$.

Table 4: The mediation path parameter estimates

Mediation path	Standardized indirect effect	Standard error	t value	Sig. level	Hypothesis
H4a:TechInno→C-19M→WHRP	-0.421	0.017	-6.743	0.001	Supported
H4b:TechInno→C-19M→QHRP	0.037	0.224	0.884	0.674	Not supported
H5a:SerInno→C-19M→WHRP	0.328	0.036	5.771	0.001	Supported
H5b:SerInno→C-19M→QHRP	0.212	0.039	3.995	0.001	Supported

Notes: Model fit: $\chi^2 = 222.944$, $df = 139$, $\chi^2/df = 1.603$, $p < 0.01$, $GFI = 0.924$, $AGFI = 0.904$, $CFI = 0.929$, $TLI = 0.917$, $NFI = 0.933$, $RMSEA = 0.032$ and $SRMR = 0.023$.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, the effects of technological innovations and automation and new service implementations in hotels on human resources planning under the unexpected threats mediated by Covid-19 were examined. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented challenge (Shin and Kang, 2020) to people's health and a radical change of behaviors in their social and work life. In fact, the Covid-19 has made it necessary to redesign the business model and redefine the qualifications (Jung, Jung and Yoon, 2021) and job descriptions (Nhamo, Dube and Chikodzi, 2020) of human resources in hotels. The changes caused by Covid-19 have represented a new approach in hotel management that put jointly the customer and human resources in the focus. Essentially, it is important to recognize that the mandatory changes are late.

Despite the known impact of technological innovations and automation on employees' job performance and work output in the hotel industry (Demir and Demir, 2015), it is unknown why most of her research focuses on subjects other than human resources. Of course, the use of technology in the hotel industry is also important for investment, accounting, marketing, environment, etc., but its impact on human resources management and employees cannot be ignored. Whereas with the widespread of Covid-19, recent discussions about how technological

innovations and automation will replace employees and labor are omnipresent (Kim et al., 2021) and increasing more and more. Despite this, some studies (BBC, 2020; Belias, 2020; Ho, Tojib and Tsarenko, 2020; Ivanov, 2020) have revealed that the technological innovations and automation will be used extensively, contrary to Chan and Tung (2019), who stated that the customers prefer hotels that offer human staff services instead of robot staff in providing them with an emotionally and enriching experience.

The variety form of technological innovations and automation in the hotel industry that are used for the production and delivery of goods and services instead of human staff (Ivanov, 2020), despite all their positive aspects, poses a crucial threat to the future of human resources in terms of employment. Similarly, some researches have also supported the findings of this study. As stated by Ivanov and Webster (2019) and Pencarelli (2019), the developments and implementations in technological innovations would force hotels to adopt automation as a pathway of productivity and work output. Moreover, Zeng, Chen and Lew (2020) has revealed how the use of robots in hotels is triggered by Covid-19. Undoubtedly, these results always bring to mind the question of "Will robot staff replace human staff in the future?".

Thousands of hotel businesses face an existential threat (Demir et al., 2021a). Despairingly, due to the continuous changes in consumer desire and expectations (Chiang, Chen and Hsu, 2019), hotel management has also tended to the new business models including service innovations. The challenge is not only to service for customers purchasing holidays in this new business model but also to retain human resources. However, as Lau (2020) stated, only the fittest hotels would survive by embracing a variety of new business models that can enhance provide guests with a convenient and personalized experience. It is a must for hotels to compose a new service implementation and ensure that personalized services are available in all guest rooms, rather than just the hotel common service areas. This finding of this study was consistent

with that of some previous researches (Akpan, Udoh and Adebisi, 2020; Jiang and Wen, 2020; Lau, 2020; Yasar and Demir, 2019) that pointed out that new service implementation was important to minimize the negative impact of Covid-19.

Hotels have implemented new service types as well as measures such as temperature check, mask, and physical distance to protect the health of both guests and employees. New service implementations with new challenges (Loi, Lei and Lourenço, 2021) have been seen as a remedy for the hotels during Covid-19. As hotels themselves are aware that their guests expect new service concepts and implementations (Breier et al., 2021), attempt to continuously innovate in their forms of goods and services (Demir and Demir, 2015) to be able to keep up in the tourism market. Any new implementations to be made in services also affect human resources. Similarly, the results of this study revealed that new service implementations in hotels affect human resources. In fact, the effects of both technological innovations and automation and new service implementations on human resources have been more radical due to Covid-19.

Covid-19 measures with new challenges, such as service employee mandatory wearing face masks, hygiene standard (Loi, Lei and Lourenço, 2021) time schedule, technology predisposition, constant change of work teams, providing personal services, changes in services (Demir et al., 2021b), etc. will likely affect services and ultimately the entire human resources planning in the hotel industry. These results show that there will be significant changes in human resources planning in hotels with the effect of Covid-19, and these changes will occur both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the existing discourse on human resources planning in the hotels, which has so far been basically addressed for not only the Covid-19 measures but also for technological

innovations and automation and new service implementations (Demir and Demir, 2105; Ho, Tojib and Tsarenko, 2020). The literature of this study states that the technological innovations and automation and new service implementations of hotels help to overcome a Covid-19 pandemic (Akpan, Udoh and Adebisi, 2020; Demir, Günaydın and Demir, 2020; Jiang and Wen, 2020). On the other hand, the findings of this study also have indicated Covid-19 measures force hotels to adopt technology and innovation in service. The results of the study improve existing literature by using technological innovations and automation and new service implementations that can be the important trigger to overcome a Covid-19 pandemic in the hospitality industry. However, the drawback of these developments is that they involve reducing the employment rate in hotels.

The findings of this research are similar with some results in literature provided by Ivanov (2020) and Lau (2020) in relation between technological innovations and human staff. It is seen that service automation and robot staff will take more roles (Kuo, Chen and Tseng, 2017) day by day in some job positions in hotels. Moreover, the results have supported that the importance of technological innovations and automation but also indicate that the new service implementations of hotels might be even more strategically relevant with human resources planning in a Covid-19 context. In this context, technological innovations and automation has been determined as one of the antecedents and consequence of human resources planning during the Covid-19 pandemic. Because while hotels invest in technology and automation in order to reduce their costs as well as increase their profitability, they have turned towards saving in the number of labor force. With the Covid-19 pandemic, it has become more prominent that technological innovations and automation have an important effect on human resources planning, especially in the reduction of employment.

In this research, hotels were also found to adopt an innovative approach to new service implementations for protecting human resources' health as well as guest during Covid-19. These results revealed the effect of a quantitative and qualitative change in the human resources of innovative services. The analyses revealed that new service implementations significantly affect human resources planning, supporting previous researches (Breier et al., 2021; Jung et al., 2021; Yaşar and Demir, 2019). This is also an important contribution to the literature. The regarding the effect of new service implementations on human resources planning, the analysis on the mediating effects of Covid-19 measures indicated that the quantitative change was more affected by new service implementations than the qualitative change. In general, quantitative change may have more technology-oriented and qualitative change more both technology and new service-oriented innovations; however, the results of the research counter this assumption.

Practical implications

Recently, hotel managers have been suffering from lower qualification of employees, in contrary to higher labor costs because of the wage hike in tourism industry. A basic reason for the closure of hotels in Turkey is the decreasing occupancy rate and revenue, rising labor cost during the Covid-19 (Demir at al., 2020). It seems, the most significant benefit of investing technological innovation and automation is not only protecting guests and employees' health, but also reduced labor costs and achieving financial goals. Technological innovation and automation-oriented works can continue 24x7, and unlike human staffs, employers can manage their working programs (Cha, 2020). Thus, this could become more attractive and preferred actor (Kuo et al., 2017) for the hotel industry in the future.

Hotels have focused on the customer-oriented goals of technological innovations and automation as well as new services implementations as

Covid-19 measures during pandemic. This study shows that the technological innovations and automation as well as new services implementations in the hotels, even after Covid-19 pandemic, replacing employees that depends on whether managers consider these changes as necessary. However, the need of this change is not only related to technological functions but in hotel managers should consider service standards, timing, hygiene and sanitation etc. aspects along with economical and financial motivation aspects. Because these will provide hotels with a different perspective on human resource planning with the effect of technological and service innovations. Previous researches have shown that economic, environmental and competition impact (Chan and Tung, 2019; Demir et al., 2021a) is important in the adoption of a technological innovations and new service implementations that predicted the human resources planning (Cha, 2020; Demir et al., 2021b). In the same way, Covid-19 measures also influences the human resources planning as a mediation factor.

The insights of hotels with technological innovations and automation and new services implementations can be completely different from those that operates with limited budget, less labor, medium or small size etc. As shown in this study, although the technological innovations and automation and new services implementations have advantages, a major disadvantage is that some employees lose their jobs. Therefore, hotels that have considered Covid-19 measures should not ignore the vital role human resources and make efforts to maximize the positive impact of technological innovations and automation as well as new services implementations. Lastly, it is thought that this study will provide significant strategic direction and broadens the horizon of researchers, managers and tourism professionals.

Limitations and future research

This study has some limitations due to Covid-19 pandemic in Turkey as all over the world. Although it is one of the rare investigations on the relationship technological innovations and automation, new services implementations and human resources planning during Covid-19, sample size may be low. However, the unique setting of the Covid-19 pandemic and the difficulty of collecting data in this period should not be ignored. As human resources planning is a less studied research field in hotel industry should further be investigated. This research results can be guide for further research.

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Current Spectator's Profile of the Stage Arts

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Abstract: All forms of artistic products in the performing arts respond to a wide range of the audience needs. Some of the spectators make the decision to participate being interested in the program, while others can be attracted by interpretive qualities or by famous artists. The decision regarding the actual product to be delivered to the public involves solving a dilemma between the artistic and commercial dimension of the product, between available resources and budget and the aspirations of the ideal artistic product. The line between entertainment and art is not always very rigid. There is often a preconception that an art show could be boring and inaccessible to the uncultivated public. The main goal of the research is to identify the profile of the spectators on the artistic product in stage arts. A descriptive research was conducted, by the interview method based on the questionnaire. Often the demand for performing arts products tends to be limited to a common reference point and recognizable features largely focused on entertainment or familiar landmarks. In conclusion, the marketing of an artistic product involves a constant search for the equilibrium point based on inevitable compromises to have an optimal recipe more creative than the artistic product.

Keywords: spectators' profile, audience demographic characteristics, performance customers, artistic marketing.

JEL classification: M31, L89.

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Introduction and brief review of literature

The field of marketing ensures the success and intelligent allocation of the organization's resources in accordance with the market trend on which it operates (Baker, 2014; Kotler, 1990; Cosma and Bota, 2004). But how vast is the applicability of this approach? Is it suitable for any type of organization or product? In the artistic field, what does it mean to satisfy the consumer's needs and to what extent can it be applied in order not to alter the artistic freedom? "If artists always responded to the wishes of the marketplace, there would never be any meaningful progression of artistic thinking, new schools of thought, movements and development of theory" (Kerrigan and Ozbilgin, 2004).

If marketing is all about meeting the needs of the consumer, more precisely, what kind of needs does the consumer of artistic products have and how conflicting are they with the artistic essence of the artistic product?

There are several forms of artistic products in the performing arts, and all respond to a wide range of the audience needs. Some of the spectators make the decision to participate being interested in the program, others can be attracted by interpretive qualities or by famous artists and perhaps there are other type of reasons determining attendance (Artaud, 1997; Ginot and Michel, 2011; Iyengar, 2010; Stanislavski, 2008; Toffler, 1973).

Solving the apparent complex dilemma between the artistic and commercial dimension of the product, choosing between available resources and budget and the aspirations of the ideal artistic product as well as the responsibility for the harmonious communication and fusion between artists and the public is the responsibility of the director (Bernstein, 2014; Kerrigan and Ozbilgin, 2004, Koller and Zalman, 1980; O'Reilly and Kerrigan, 2010; Leko Šimić et al., 2018).

However, the line between entertainment and art is, perhaps, not as rigid as the common myth sustaining that the use of any commercial

principle interferes with the artistic freedom. There is often a preconception that a pure artistic production is by default boring and inaccessible to the uncultivated public (Vorzsak et al., 2006). The optimal receipt to solve the dilemma appears sometimes to be more diverse and flexible than the artistic product since the marketing of an artistic product involves a constant search for equilibrium, vision while becoming, perhaps, an art form in itself.

The principal goal of the present research is to identify the main characteristics and demographic profile of the consumers of stage arts artistic products.

A longitudinal descriptive research was conducted, by the interview method based on the questionnaire (Cosma, 2008). Only a part of the marketing research was used for the present study.

Methodology

For the research it was first collected data through an offline questionnaire administered at the performances of the artistic institution from Cluj-Napoca and later using an online platform with the title Lyric Opera Research Cluj RO and the acronym LyRO on the social media networks. The LyRO platform aims to centralize people interested and eager to participate in the study as well as strengthen the relationship with them and to keep their attention awake. It currently reached a total of 521 fans and is still active. We opted to add, along with the questionnaires, various information of interest that offers fans added value and supports the study. Thus, completing the questionnaires in an open and motivating way becomes a frequent activity for LYRO fans and encourages them to interact. During the shaping of the results and the extension of the sample, we made available to the participants graphs and results to involve them even more during the study.

The process of data collection was not very easy. In order to obtain the most sincere, complete and direct answers, we specified in the questionnaires that the real name of the respondent is not mandatory, however, an imaginary virtual identity that is constant throughout the study should be used. Some of the respondents voluntarily decided to provide a contact e-mail address in order to get more involved and to be up to date with the evolution of the study, a contact base of about 70 respondents. For them, we introduced an e-mail marketing campaign through the Lyrocluj@gmail.com account of Mailchimp and, weekly, they received more detailed information about the results of the study as well as the invitation to complete and distribute the questionnaire. We gathered data organized into 5 sections. Sections 1 – 4 analyzes the variables of the marketing mix and section 5 collects demographic data of the participants.

At the level of social media strategy, we opted for a permanent campaign to promote the page on the target audience together with a permanent campaign to promote the final questionnaire on a budget of maximum 2-4 lei/ day with pay per click. At the same time, we introduced campaigns on location during the performances of the profile institutions visible to all those in the building. The new strategy has proven effective. In just 3 days we obtained 50 answers from better targeted respondents who contributed clear and better substantiated answers.

Although the impact was positive, a substantial part of the target audience limited themselves to appreciating the advertisement (like) and providing feedback appreciating the research initiative but did not complete the questionnaire. In this case, we personally sent them the request to contribute concretely to the study by completing the final questionnaire. Until June 23, 2019, we accumulated a total of 367 respondents for the consumer profile that were retain for the present study.

Results and discussions

The construction of a consumer profile considered the following model:

1. Collection of general demographic information related to age, gender, income level, domicile (in order to measure the distance between domicile and the place of the show), ethnicity etc.;

2. Information related to the level of knowledge and education in relation to: preferred types of shows, information methods used, frequency of participation, the price the consumer is willing to pay, types of needs and expectations etc.;

3. Information related to consumer behavior to observe the frequency of participation in shows, motivations and arguments in the purchasing decision, factors that strengthen the buying behavior, barriers in the participation decision etc.

Based on the last questionnaire section that collected data about the sample profile and characteristics, the following results were obtained:

Category	Items	Frequency	%
Age	Children <16	3	0.83
	Teenagers 16-23	64	17.72
	Young 23-35	67	18.55
	Adults 35-45	55	15.23
	Adults 45-55	69	19.11
	Adults 55-65	79	21.88
	Mature 65 – 75	24	6.64
	Seniors >75	0	0
Sex	Male	89	24
	Female	278	76
	No response	0	0
Studies	Secondary school	7	2
	High school	73	20
	Post-high school	11	3
	University	136	37
	Master	106	29
	PhD	26	7
	Post-university	7	2

Category	Items	Frequency	%
Nationality	Romanian	306	83.37
	Hungarian	48	13
	German	4	1.1
	Jew	3	0.9
	Multi-ethnicity	3	0.8
	Other	3	0.83
Work Field	Work in education	37	9.97
	Medical	34	9.4
	Economic	30	8.26
	Technical	26	7.12
	IT	15	4
	Communication	7	2
	Leadership	26	7
	Services	18	5
	Unemployed & Maternity	11	3
	Law	4	1
	Artistic	11	3
	Administration	18	5
	Still studying	71	19.37
	Retired	54	14.81
Artistic Studies – Activity	Artistic studies – No activity	59	16
	Artistic studies – Artistic activity	37	10
	No studies – Artistic activity	11	3
	No studies – No Artistic activity	261	71
Monthly income (in LEI)	0-1400	81	22
	1400-2000	48	13
	2000-2500	48	13
	2500-3000	33	9
	3000-3500	33	9
	3500-4000	33	9
	4000-4500	33	9
	>5000	59	16
Attending frequency	Weekly	26	7
	2 – 3 times a week	62	17
	Monthly	81	22
	Once in few months	103	28
	A few times a year	62	17
	Every few years	29	8
	Never	4	1

Another important aspect was an evaluation of the product categories in the field by gender.

Gender	Mean	Frequency
<i>Opera seria, grand opera</i>	1,42	284
Opera buffa	1,67	335
Operetta	1,96	392
Classical ballet	1,90	381
<i>Contemporary ballet</i>	2,13	402
Concerts, symphonies, orchestral moments	2,02	404

The feedback related to the favorite genres was obtained by cumulating the number of points awarded by the public, 1 for the most favorite and 6 for the least favorite.

It follows that the most appreciated genre is *opera seria* with a score of 284 points and an average of 1.42. The least preferred genre was considered contemporary ballet with 402 points and an average of 2.13. The highest potential is generated by theater performances and alternative classical music concerts.

Light music concerts, electronic music and modern and contemporary dance performances are also worth considering. Among the suggestions with a higher share among respondents are jazz, rock and folklore concerts.

Conclusions

The Cluj consumer prefers large-scale operas in classical directing in the category of grand opera, opera series and is most disinterested in contemporary ballet performances. A typical Cluj-Napoca opera consumer can often be seen attending theater performances, concerts and sometimes at folk or electronic music performances.

Main characteristics of musical stage arts consumer segment in Cluj-Napoca are the following:

- aged 55-65 or 45-65
- female
- high-income
- college graduate
- works in educational, medicine or is retired
- no qualification as artist and no practice in the artistic field

The results open a whole range of directions to better harmonize the commercial and artistic perspectives by zooming into the marketing mix variables.

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Logging or Lodging?

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Abstract: Forests occupy roughly around 30% of the land on Earth. But 10.000 years ago, forestland was twice as big. The reason for this continuous and exponential shrinking is, obviously, human development, with all its implications: more humans, longer lives, the need for more crops, grazing, buildings, etc. But it is not sustainable at all: half of this forest loss occurred by 1900, as the other half occurred in the last century. This is not only exponential, but dangerous, too. This study aims to study tourism as a durable alternative to exploiting forests, as cutting them down bring enormous negative effects, from corruption to climate change. A comparative analysis between 10 countries, with different cultures, histories, backgrounds, demographic, economic and social characteristics, is made in order to analyze their way of exploiting forests. Indicators like EPI (Environmental Protection Index), Q (question) 111 from World Value Survey, CPI (Corruption Perception Index), TTCI (Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index) show that the respect for nature translates in exploiting the forests in a sustainable way. The fact that tourism is more developed is no surprise, as it represents a more durable way to monetize the forestland. This research can help decision makers to adopt more eco-friendly development strategies at the macro and regional levels.

Keywords: forests, corruption, tourism, sustainability, nature, comparison, lodging, logging.

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Introduction

In 2021, forests occupy roughly around 30% of the land on Earth. But 10.000 years ago, forestland was twice as big. Half of this forest loss occurred by 1900, as the other half occurred in the last century. The reason for this continuous, exponential and dangerous shrinking is, obviously, human development, with all its implications. In 1800, there were around 1 billion people on Earth. In 1900 this number doubled. Now, we are almost 8 billion people living on this planet. Not only the number of people grew exponentially, but our life expectancy too. If in the eighteenth century, people could hope to live only 30 years, in 2021 our life expectancy has reached almost 80 years. In terms of land use, these facts translate in more agricultural land, grazing, cities, villages, industrial areas etc. The lack of sustainability is easy to spot, but not as easy to stop.

Authoritarian regimes, cultural values, historic backgrounds, demographic and economic situations, and many other factors can influence the level of corruption (Achim & Borlea, 2020). This is another important factor that contributes to the unsustainability occurred in the last centuries. We perceive corruption as a white-collar crime, which it is, in most cases. But when it comes to illegal deforestations, from threats to violent murders, corruption takes different shades of bloody red. In countries like Indonesia, Ghana, Brazil, Tanzania, and Romania also, where forests are rich and old, but with low and middle levels of development, corruption is still high and illegal deforestations represent a prosper business. But forestland can be exploited in another way, more sustainable and more ethical: tourism. Beautiful landscapes, hackings, mountain-biking, mushroom hunting, canyoning, rock climbing, horse trekking are just a few examples of durable activities that imply not only the existence of trees, but also economic development through these activities that exploit forests in a sustainable way. Therefore, lodging is a viable alternative to logging.

Literature Review

Databases such as ACM Digital Library, Emerald Full Text, Science Direct, IEEE Transactions, Springer-Link Journals and Web of Science reveals the lack of academic research on the topic of link between illegal deforestation and corruption. By searching for journal articles, case studies, book chapters etc. on this subject, from 1950 to 2021, using the keywords “deforestation and corruption”, and also „deforestation and shadow economy”. ACM Digital Library shows that 157 research papers have studied the relationship between deforestation and economic and financial crimes, Science Direct data base contains only 23 works on this subject, Emerald Insight only 1, IEEE Transactions 0, Springer-Link Journals 0, and Web of Science database 146.

The specialized academic literature is poor in analyzing the relationship between economic and financial crime and deforestation. Most research is descriptive, analyzing from a theoretical point of view the phenomenon of illegal deforestation and corruption, proposing countermeasures, mostly coercive ones, but without finding alternative solutions. By selecting the most important ones in terms of number of citations and journal quality, it can be observed that these studies not only use qualitative, descriptive approaches, but also deliver a qualitative, descriptive outcome: not only the connection between corruption and illegal deforestation is revealed, but also the mechanisms that allow it to happen. For instance, Harwell (2009) states that there are various and varied forms of illegal logging in Indonesia, which he discovered through interviews with state officials, journalists, and activists. Milledge, Gelvas, and Ahrends (2007) conducted a study in southern Tanzania, concluding that the phenomenon of corruption facilitates illicit timber exports. According to Pellegrini (2011), Pakistani forest officials allow illegal logging in order to extract more timber than the legal limit. A “wood

mafia" has infiltrated in politics and functions on bribes to allow timber trafficking to continue. Teye (2013) conducts a thorough investigation based on interviews with 102 employees of Ghana's Forest Service Division, 24 companies involved in illegal deforestation, and 105 residents of Amutu and Bami. According to the results of this report, corruption is partly to blame for Ghana's high rate of illicit exploitation. He comes to the conclusion that the common good is compromised in favor of state officials' and private timber firms' interests. Based to previous study, Maina (2018) affirms that corruption has the potential to decimate a country's forest, and studies to provide additional explanations on the degree to which corruption contributes to the continuous decline of forested area in the context of multiple reforms to improve the forestry sector's performance are urgently needed.

Specialized literature tries to explain the phenomenon and identifies some of the causes, proposes several countermeasures, but do not offer any viable and durable alternative in the long-term. Tourism can minimize the negative impact of deforestation and maximize the economic potential of forests and keeping them alive at the same time. Worldwide, many destinations have proven to have had the capacity to develop in a sustainable way by capitalizing on the exploitation of their forestland in tourism activities. At European level, states such as Austria, Switzerland or Germany have grown into highly successful sustainable tourism destinations, having adopted very strict environmental policies (Coroş, 2018, pp. 11-45; pp. 208-248).

Methodology

This study aims to study tourism as a durable alternative to exploiting forests, as cutting them down bring enormous negative effects, from corruption to climate change. This research is based on secondary data, as a comparative analysis on how different countries mix logging

with lodging is made. Six indicators (Total Forestland, Net Forest Change Rate, Corruption Perception Index, Environmental Protection Index, Question 111 – World Value Survey, and Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index) and ten different European countries (Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Romania, and Spain) known for their forests and/or touristic attractions were chosen for this comparison.

In order to have relevant results, the research is based on the most recent data – the values for year 2020 (except for Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index, which only published the report for 2019). The first indicator used is the Total Forestland in a country, measured by Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), selected to offer the dimension of this natural resource in a specific country. The Net Forest Conversion Rate is the percentage of forestland added or subtracted in a year, in a country, obtained from own processing by applying the formula: $\text{Net Forest conversion} / \text{Forest land (\%)}$. The Net Forest conversion is determined by the difference in the total forestland in the previous year to the current year. Corruption Perception Index is measured by Transparency International, and it shows the level of perceived corruption in a country, on a scale from 0 to 100 (where a 0 equals the highest level of perceived corruption and 100 equals the lowest level of perceived corruption). Environmental Protection Index was developed by Yale University to measure the environmental sustainability and ecosystem vitality. It uses 32 performance indicators across 11 issue categories. Moving from 0 to 100 on the score scale, the sustainability level increases. Question 111 from World Value Survey, a questionnaire with 290 questions aimed to measure cultural values, attitudes and beliefs, sounds like this: “Here are two statements people sometimes make when discussing the environment and economic growth. Which of them comes closer to your own point of view? A. Protecting the

environment should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs B. Economic growth and creating jobs should be the top priority, even if the environment suffers to some extent". The respondent can choose one of the given answers, as the percentage of people that chose an answer over the other is determined. As for Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, product of World Economic Forum, it includes 140 economies and contains four subindexes, 14 pillars and 90 individual indicators, resulting in a score which takes values from 1 (being the lowest) to 7 (the highest).

Results and Discussions

Comparative analyses are efficient methods to examine, compare and contrast subjects. The present study examines 10 European countries known for their lodging and/or logging activities. Its findings are valuable resources in the decision-making process of stakeholders involved in forest management at any level or entity. As described before, the most recent data for all 6 indicators and for all 10 European countries is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparative analysis on logging and lodging for 10 different European countries

Year	Nr. Cr.	Area	Forest land (1000 ha)	Net Forest Change Rate (% of total forest land)	CPI	Environmental Protection Index	Question 111 - World Value Survey			Travel and Tourism Competitiveness	
							Protecting the environment	Economy growth and creating jobs	Score	Rank (from 1 to 140)	
2020	1	Austria	3899,15	0,09212264	76	79,6	59.6%	30.6%	5,0	11	
2020	2	Croatia	1939,11	0,17647271	47	63,1	57.0%	40.4%	4,5	27	
2020	3	Finland	22409	0,00000000	85	78,9	65.2%	25.0%	4,5	28	
2020	4	France	17253	0,48339419	69	80	55.5%	36.4%	5,4	2	
2020	5	Germany	11419	0,00000000	80	77,2	66.5%	28.7%	5,4	3	
2020	6	Greece	3901,8	-0,00001538	50	69,1	56.4%	39.3%	4,5	25	
2020	7	Italy	9566,13	0,56250542	53	71	65.2%	32.6%	5,1	8	
2020	8	Norway	12180	0,06403941	84	77,7	68.4%	30.4%	4,6	20	
2020	9	Romania	6929,05	0,08107894	44	64,7	48.7%	49.7%	4,0	56	
2020	10	Spain	18572,17	0,02260371	62	74,3	63.4%	33.7%	5,4	1	

Source: own processing

In terms of forestland, Finland is the richest, having 22.409.000 ha of forest, followed by Spain, with 18.572.170 ha, France, with 17.253.000 ha, and Norway with 12.180.000 ha. At the bottom of the list is Romania, with 6.929.050 ha of forest, Greece, with 3.901.000 ha, 3.899.150 ha, and Croatia, with 1.939.110 ha. However, Romania and Austria are known for the quality of their forests, and big volumes of wood are exported from Romania to Austria, where it is processed and final products are resulted. Of course, the added value comes from processing, not from lodging, therefore Austria makes a great amount of money from the wood exported from Romania, where the legislation permits unsustainable exploitation and it is not strong enough to prevent illegal deforestation. But for this, the following indicator must be studied.

The net forest change rate measures the difference in the total forestland from one year to another. Its values are positive when the forestland is bigger than the previous year, and negative when its smaller. A positive value does not mean (illegal) deforestation does not exist, but that tree planting has exceeded, at least writable, the tree cutting. Greece is the only country where the forestland officially shrinker from 2019 to 2020. The countries with the biggest growth in terms of forestland are Italy, France, Croatia and Austria, followed by Romania, Norway, and Spain, while Finland and Germany did not suffer any change in the total forestland. It can be observed that France is not only rich in forestland, but also takes care of it. However, what prevents other countries to do the same? Logging is a very attractive industry for economic and financial crimes.

Great amounts of money come from illegal deforestation, as corrupt officers, politicians, and businessmen operate in order to create a favorable environment for unsustainable deforestation. Even if planting trees exceed cutting them, until they rich maturity, decades must pass. Therefore, the level of corruption plays a huge role in exploiting the

forests. The most corrupt countries are Romania, Croatia, Greece, Italy, and Spain. Countries with low levels of corruption are France, Austria, Germany, Norway, and Finland. This confirms the affirmation stated before about the route of the wood from Romania to Austria. But corruption in the deforestation industry is determined by the legislative, economic, and social environment.

Environmental Protection Index places France on top of the most sustainable countries, followed by Austria, Finland, and Norway. At the bottom of the ranking is Italy, Greece, Romania, and Croatia. These findings match the previous ones, as the countries that cut less trees, that are less corrupt, are the ones that are more eco-friendly. However, the level of sustainability ultimately comes from education, culture, and values.

Question 111 from World Values Survey measures these values by comparing the preferences of citizens between protecting the environment and economic growth, as they are mostly heterogeneous. Only Romania opts for economic growth in the detriment of protecting the environment. On the other side, Finland, Italy, Germany and Norway citizens think protecting the environment is more important in the long-run, with more than 65% of the responses pro-nature. If the logging industry opposes the environmental protection, tourism can be a viable alternative for growing both the economy and the trees. But how competitive are these countries in terms of tourism?

TTCI places Spain on the first place from 140 economies studies, followed by France and Germany. Romania is the last from these 10 countries in terms of tourism competitiveness, and on the 56th place in the research done by World Economic Forum. Greece and Croatia are also at the bottom of this ranking, but place 25th and 27th out of 140 economies. This correlates with all the other results: countries that are protective with nature invest in tourism, as the others do not.

Comparative analysis allows us to treat each subject differently, taking into consideration its specificities, and also identify their similarities. The most important finding is that countries with considerable forestland, but also with sustainable practices, norms, and measures, with respect and care for nature have in common three important things: low corruption levels, considerable positive change in the total forestland, and a competitive tourism industry.

Conclusions

People's beliefs determine the way they act in every aspect of their life. A corrupt country is also a country that does not respect nature, and also one that does not invest in alternative ways for "exploiting" the forests. In almost every aspect analyzed, France is the leading model of good practices. With a big amount of forest which grew from 2019 to 2020, with a low level of corruption, with a very high score for the Environmental Protection Index (which measures the level of sustainability of a country), with more than half of the citizens opting for protecting the environment in the detriment of economic growth, it occupies the second place out of 140 in the top of the most competitive countries in terms of travel and tourism, but the last places in term of corrupt countries. Other good examples are the Nordic countries.

The value of the results is given by identifying the models that must be followed by decision-makers in their planning of forest management, as well as considering tourism as a viable alternative, and focusing on fighting corruption by politicians, investors, and any other stakeholders. These findings can be a start point in analyzing if these trends apply at the international level. Further research may focus on the quantitative demonstration of these links.

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Comparison of the Effects of Different Teaching Techniques on Learning in Tourism Distance Education during the COVID-19

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to analyze the relation among “Synchronous and Asynchronous methods of distance education”, “students’ self-learning capability”, “teaching competencies of lecturers” and “students’ learning performances”. The population of this study was tourism undergraduate students. A total of 386 tourism undergraduates who enrolled in semester-length hotel management and travel management courses at a university in Turkey were recruited for this research. An online survey was conducted to gather data in April, 2021. Two different measurement tools were used to determine the learning efficiency of each step. First, a quiz was held at the end of each course and the scores of the students in each step were compared to understand the difference of the synchronous (interactive) and asynchronous (non-interactive) form of distance education methods. Second, a questionnaire consisting of 5-Likert type questions was applied to the students at the end of the courses in each step. Students were asked to evaluate the courses through the questionnaire and the data of the 4 steps were compared. Statistical analysis programs were used in analyzing the data. Factor analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were applied to the data. As a result, all factors, except asynchronous distance education, were found to affect students' learning outcomes positively and significantly.

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Keywords: Synchronous method, Asynchronous method, Distance education, Students' self-learning capability, Teaching competencies, Learning performances.

JEL Classification: I23, L83

Introduction

COVID-19, which spread from China to the whole world in December 2019, started to be effective in Turkey as of March 2020 and was declared as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Ghebreyesus, 2020; Cucinotta and Vanelli 2020). In this process, face-to-face education was suspended in tourism higher education institutions in Turkey, as in many countries of the world, and started distance education within 1 week (Demir, Demir, Dalgıç and Ergen, 2021). In the past, education was suspended in times of crisis such as war, terrorism, and natural disasters, but never felt a global impact. This experience has undoubtedly brought up new solution proposals for the continuation of education. Distance education methods, which were partially implemented before the pandemic, have gained a new dimension with digitalization. During the Covi19 process, many countries continued their educational activities online by further developing their previous technological education infrastructures. Countries that do not have a distance education infrastructure have started feverish work for this. In the globalizing world, it has been understood that education can not only be carried out in an institutional building but can also be carried out by distance education.

Many researchers (Annaraud and Singh, 2017; Brown, Mao and Chesser, 2013; Kim and Jeong, 2018; Sigala, 2012; Zapata-Cuervo et al., 2021) have discussed how to conduct distance education in tourism, how to perform professional practices, and the rationale, scope and consequences of this. Rightly, discussions about how to achieve learning outcomes in tourism education, which requires an applied content and

method, have not yet found a satisfactory answer. Although a technology-supported education model has been developed, the lack of practical courses can affect the lecturers' teaching motivation and students' learning effectiveness (Demir and Demir 2015). For this reason, some tourism higher education institutions have taken the necessary precautions during the pandemic period and tried to implement the course practices face to face.

Literature

In the Covid-19 period, distance education was a really important step in terms of not interrupting education (Demir, 2020). Despite its long history, this training method, which has not been paid much attention, has become more popular nowadays (Haynes and Dillon, 1992; Marzano, Pickering and Pollock, 2001). Numerous countries are exploring and experimenting with ways to increase student and lecturer interaction in distance education. Countries such as Turkey, Japan, South Korea and China have been more successful in distance education than others (Byun and Slavin, 2020; Demir et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2020; Viktoria and Aida, 2020). While many countries, especially these, have benefited from the opportunities provided by distance education, countries with poor educational opportunities and technological infrastructure have faced many difficulties in their educational activities. Distance education facilitated the access of students from different settlements to the same educational content and enabled the student to continue their education during the pandemic period. While distance education is standardized in some countries, it has been left to the preference of higher education institutions in some countries and lecturers have been provided with education using different tools (Byun and Slavin, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Viktoria and Aida, 2020). In this way, instructors have the freedom to find the most suitable teaching method for them.

Distance education has a wide range of content. Even just an audio or video can be called a method of pursuing distance education. At this point, tourism higher education institutions should decide on the desired distance education method realized education. Distance education can be synchronous (live), asynchronous (recording), or mixed, in other words, it can be carried out in both synchronous and asynchronous methods (Offir, Lev and Bezalel, 2008; Watts,2016). Synchronous education methods are one of the common education methods used in distance education (Asherian, 2007; Demir and Demir, 2015, Mabrito, 2006). In virtual classrooms, courses can be taught to many students at the same time by sharing only the audio or video and audio using the camera or microphone over the previously prepared educational materials, videos, and screen shares. In asynchronous educations, training materials such as e-courses, videos, visuals, documents, assignments, surveys, e-exams, forums, etc., can be used. It is possible to use a single material as well as use all materials at different times of the course. In the mixed method, it is possible to use both methods together and at the same time.

Generally, students feel very well when they achieve difficulty, and those who feel successful and are willing to learn becomes motivated towards the course. Forcing students to learn contributes to their development and awareness. Students who know their learning capacity can have confidence in themselves, believe in their own competence and have high academic and career expectations, which can also affect learning outcomes (Desplaces, Blair and Salvaggio, 2015; Haynes and Dillon, 1992). Another factor that should be considered while preparing the educational content is the universal elements. The student who receives the planned education should not conflict with the tourism industry for his career due to inadequate education.

It is known that different teaching methods such as lecture, discussion, case study, problem-solving, project-based learning, individual study and collaborative learning are used in distance education

(Allen et al., 2002; Clark, 1993). With the effect of the teaching competence of the lecturer, it is aimed to give the student knowledge of the cognitive field, perception and reaction of the affective field (Restauri, 2004; Threlkeld and Brzoska, 1994). The aim of distance education courses is to explain regular content with audio and visual symbol systems. However, the effective realization of this is related to the lecturer's ability to teach. The lecturer can increase the effectiveness of distance education with various skills such as text, slide, audio and video demonstrations, and video conferencing. This situation may affect both the student's own learning capacity and learning outcomes.

Ultimately, like all education methods, distance learning methods also aim to facilitate activities in the process of students' learning and teaching by lecturers. Of course, the benefits of distance education methods, which also have disadvantages, are much more than their handicaps. As a matter of fact, the aim of distance learning methods is not to terminate formal education, but to increase learning outcomes by increasing efficiency and to alleviate its burden. Distance learning enables education to be more accessible in the digital field. According to some research (Holmberg, 1995; 2005; Ponzurick, France and Logar, 2000), it has been observed that the performance of the students in distance education is higher than the performance in face-to-face education. However, there are not enough studies on the effect of distance education on tourism higher education yet.

As can be understood from the conceptual model, the hypotheses created in the study in the light of the previous literature are expressed as follows.

H1: Synchronous methods of distance education positively affect the students' self-learning capability.

H2: Synchronous methods of distance education positively affect the teaching competencies of lecturers.

- H3: Asynchronous methods of distance education positively affect the students' self-learning capability.
- H4: Asynchronous methods of distance education positively affect the teaching competencies of lecturers.
- H5: Synchronous methods of distance education positively affect the students' learning performances.
- H6: Asynchronous methods of distance education positively affect the students' learning performances.
- H7: Students' self-learning capability positively affect the students' learning performances.
- H8: Teaching competencies of lecturers positively affect the students' learning performances.

Method

Sample and data collection

The population of this study was tourism undergraduate students. A total of 386 tourism undergraduates who enrolled in semester-length hotel management and travel management courses at a university in Turkey were recruited for this research. An online survey was conducted to gather data in April, 2021. The questionnaires were gathered from students of Tourism Management and Tourism Guidance Departments. After filtering invalid responses, a total of 386 responses were used. The students were asked to answer questions about synchronous (interactive) and asynchronous (non-interactive) form of distance education methods as well as their learning capability and teaching competencies of lecturers.

Two different measurement tools were used to determine the learning efficiency of each step. First, a quiz was held at the end of each course and the scores of the students in each step were compared to understand the difference of the synchronous (interactive) and

asynchronous (non-interactive) form of distance education methods. Second, a questionnaire consisting of 5-Likert type questions was applied to the students at the end of the courses in each step. Students were asked to evaluate the courses through the questionnaire and the data of the 4 steps were compared. Statistical analysis programs were used in analyzing the data. Factor analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis were applied to the data.

Measurement development and instruments

The scales of this research were developed from prior literature with 21 items (Alea et al., 2020; Bolliger and Halupa, 2018; Chen, Dobinson and Kent, 2020; Demir and Demir, 2015; Santally et al., 2020; Zhai et al., 2017). The scales, using a 5-item Likert scale from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree, 1) self-learning capability scale (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.94$), 2) teaching competencies scale (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.92$), 3) synchronous form of distance education methods (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.91$), 4) asynchronous form of distance education methods (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.90$), 4) student's learning outcomes scale (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.90$) have a quite high internal consistency.

Results

Demographics features of participants

Research participants were composed of 47% female students and 53% male students. All of the participants were aged between 18 to 24 years old. Students as participants were distributed from the first semester to the eighth semester in their undergraduate program: 20% were seniors, 22% were juniors, 27% were sophomores, and 31% were freshmen. According to the distribution of the tools used by students to attend classes in the distance education method; 58% were computers, 29% were tablets and 13% were mobile phones.

Measurement model

The reliability and validity were examined to further analysis such as correlation and regression analyses. The reliability of the scale was examined through Cronbach’s Alpha (Hair et al., 2006). The result of Cronbach’s Alpha was ranged from 0.90 to 0.94, eigenvalue was ranged from 5.231 to 9.423, the explained variance rate (%) was ranged from 9.061 to 21.611, standard deviation was ranged from=3.84 to 4.32, and mean was ranged from 3.27 to 4.22. As seen in Table 1, in general, General $\alpha=0.92$; KMO Measure=0.914; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity=28467,036; $p<0.001$; Explained Variance Ratio (EVR)=72.29; Standard Deviation=17.24; Mean=3.96

Table 1: Factor analysis measures

	Factor Loading	Measurement
<i>The synchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (SDLM)</i>		
The synchronous form of distance learning method contributes to listening the course	0.826	Eigenvalue = 6.423 EVR (%) = 12.347
The synchronous form of distance learning method contributes to seeing the course	0.802	Standard Dev. = 4.25 Mean = 4.22
The synchronous form of distance learning method contributes to the interaction in the course	0.772	$\alpha = 0.91$ $p = 0.001$
<i>The asynchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (ADLM)</i>		
The asynchronous form of distance learning method contributes to listening the course	0.805	Eigenvalue = 6.004 EVR (%) = 10.011
The asynchronous form of distance learning method contributes to seeing the course	0.798	Standard Dev. = 4.19 Mean = 3.27
The asynchronous form of distance learning method contributes to the interaction in the course	0.742	$\alpha = 0.90$ $p = 0.001$
<i>Self-learning capabilities (SLC)</i>		
I ask the specific topic	0.943	Eigenvalue = 9.423
I ask the subject to be told again	0.901	EVR (%) = 21.611
I listen to the subject again from the recording	0.887	Standard Dev. = 3.84
I note the topics again	0.832	Mean = 4.14
I compare the subject lectured	0.779	$\alpha = 0.94$
I confirm that I understand	0.753	$p = 0.001$

	Factor Loading	Measurement
<i>Teaching competencies (TC)</i>		
The teacher tells the subject according to the curriculum	0.841	Eigenvalue = 8.042
The teacher tells the subject with great enthusiasm	0.822	EVR (%) = 19.262
The teacher explains the subject with current contents	0.804	Standard Dev. = 3.97
The teacher explains the subject with examples	0.796	Mean = 4.05
The teacher explains the subject in visuals	0.735	$\alpha = 0.92$ $p = 0.001$
<i>Students' learning performances (SLP)</i>		
I succeed the exams	0.884	Eigenvalue = 5.231
I commented on topics	0.863	EVR (%) = 9.061
		Standard Dev. = 4.32
I practiced what I have learned	0.839	Mean = 4.12
		$\alpha = 0.90$ $p = 0.001$
General $\alpha=0.92$; KMO Measure=0.914; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity=28467,036; $p<0.001$; Explained Variance Ratio (EVR)=72.29; Standard Deviation=17.24; Mean=3.96		

Hypotheses testing

The hypotheses of the research were tested using correlation and regression analyses via SPSS. The conceptual model in Figure 1 has been followed to analyze the relationship between independent factors and students' learning performance. Although the results have indicated that the factors are correlated with each other, H1 [SDLM→SLC ($r=0.81$; $\beta=0.184$; $t=5.775$; $p<0.01$)]; H2 [SDLM→TC ($r=0.72$; $\beta=0.173$; $t=4.114$; $p<0.01$)]; H5 [SDLM→SLP ($r=0.84$; $\beta=0.179$; $t=5.862$; $p<0.01$)]; H7 [SLC→SLP ($r=0.78$; $\beta=0.166$; $t=4.043$; $p<0.01$)] and H8 [TC→SLP ($r=0.71$; $\beta=0.157$; $t=3.964$; $p<0.01$)] are supported respectively, but H3 [ADLM→SLC ($r=0.39$; $\beta=0.073$; $t=1.007$; $p>0.05$)]; H4 [ADLM→TC ($r=0.47$; $\beta=0.101$; $t=1.317$; $p>0.05$)] and H6 [ADLM→SLP ($r=0.51$; $\beta=0.068$; $t=1.075$; $p>0.05$)] are not supported.

Table 2: Correlation analysis

	Mean	Std. Dev.	SDLM	ADLM	SLC	TC	SLP
The synchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (SDLM)	4.22	4.25	1				
The asynchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (ADLM)	3.27	4.19	0.27	1			
Self-learning capability (SLC)	4.14	3.84	0.81**	0.39*	1		
Teaching competencies (TC)	4.05	3.97	0.72**	0.47**	0.74**	1	
Students' learning performances (SLP)	4.12	4.32	0.84**	0.41*	0.78**	0.71**	1

* Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 3: Regression analysis

Model 1: Constructs	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t value	Sig. level
	B	Standard error	β		
Constant	2.432	0.179		14.994	0.001
The synchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (SDLM)	0.174	0.029	0.179	5.862	0.004
The asynchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (ADLM)	0.071	0.044	0.068	1.075	0.112
Self-learning capability (SLC)	0.159	0.031	0.166	4.043	0.001
Teaching competencies (TC)	0.148	0.035	0.157	3.964	0.001

Dependent: Students' learning performances (SLP), R= 0.521; R²= 0.445; Adjusted R²=0.439; F= 42,13; p<0.01

Model 2: Constructs	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t value	Sig. level
	B	Standard error	β		
Constant	2.049	0.181		6.224	0.001
The synchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (SDLM)	0.207	0.034	0.184	5.775	0.001
The asynchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (ADLM)	0.067	0.056	0.073	1.007	0.128

Dependent: Self-learning capability (SLC), R= 0.604; R²= 0.462; Adjusted R²=0.444; F= 27,53; p<0.01

Model 3: Constructs	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t value	Sig. level
	B	Standard error	β		
Constant	1.987	0.189		5.008	0.001
The synchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (SDLM)	0.192	0.036	0.173	4.114	0.003
The asynchronous (interactive) form of distance learning methods (ADLM)	0.094	0.051	0.101	1.317	0.109

Dependent: Teaching competencies (TC), R= 0.544; R²= 0.408; Adjusted R²=0.389; F= 17,93; p<0.01

Discussion and conclusions

Research findings revealed how distance education methods affect students' learning outcomes in higher education institutions providing tourism education. Although the results show similar results with some studies in the literature, they show that there are different findings in contrast to some studies (Desplaces, Blair and Salvaggio, 2015; Haynes and Dillon, 1992; Restauri, 2004; Threlkeld and Brzoska, 1994). According to the analysis results, five of the hypotheses were accepted, while three were not. A clear evaluation could not be made as to whether these results are dependent on Covid-19 conditions, and no conclusion on this has been found in the literature.

With the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the governments of many countries have decided to suspend face-to-face training of educational institutions and turn to online or virtual education overnight (Daniel, 2020). This meant that educational institutions started digital or distance education within a few days, which they planned to move step by step over months or years. Since educational institutions did not expect such a rapid transition to distance education, sub-technical and educational structures were not sufficient (Scull, Phillips, Sharma, and Garnier, 2020). Universities that do not have distance education technical infrastructure and programs have had a lot of difficulties and have found the solution by using digital platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Discord, etc. (Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison, 2020). In other words, universities have had to improvise quick solutions in non-ideal conditions. However, no matter how rational the solutions are, the transition to the distance education model has stressed many students and lecturers (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust and Bond, 2020).

New digital technologies used in distance education trigger the need to seek new teaching strategies and approaches in response to

changes in student learning performance (Lim and Morris, 2009; Offir, Barth, Lev and Shteinbok, 2003). The justification for this is Paulus et al. (2010) showed that lecturers are concerned about the extent to which students acquire the necessary skills in online learning. Distance education revolves around a student-centered system with a teaching activity that focuses on facilitating learning. The lecturer enriches the prepared study materials by providing explanations, references and reinforcements for the student. Independent study emphasizes learning rather than teaching, and is based on the principle that the key to learning is what students do, not what lecturers do (Haynes and Dillon, 1992). However, Garrison (2009) claims that rapid technological development has brought beneficial changes in distance education design and implementation.

In some studies (Allen et al., 2002; Demir and Demir, 2015; Threlkeld and Brzoska, 1994), it has been found that distance education methods are effective in students' learning performance and synchronous or asynchronous instruction affects learning differently. According to Sherry (1996), students' preference for a certain learning style is an important variable in their learning effectiveness. On the other hand, as stated by Canfield (1992), teaching style is the mobile component of the educational experience that motivates students to perform well. Acknowledging the existence of alternative teaching styles also provides opportunities for the lecturer. Therefore, it is important to conduct research so that lecturers understand and recognize the importance of their teaching styles to help determine students' learning capacities. In fact, different applications are required to see the results of synchronous or asynchronous distance education methods. In this regard, Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) propose multiple teaching methodologies in the classroom to reveal students' learning capacities.

It is similar to some studies in the literature that students' learning capacity has an effect on their learning outcomes Allen et al., 2002; Lim and Morris, 2009; Threlkeld and Brzoska, 1994). The effectiveness of

learning depends only on the formation of the student's desire to learn, the attractiveness of the course and the push factors for distance education (Demir and Demir, 2015). Despite some of the negativities that distance education creates on the student, it is important to create motivations for learning. In particular, the synchronous conduct of distance education will both attract the attention of the student to the course and provide interaction with the lecturers and classmates. This situation may trigger the student's participation in the course as an important motivation tool through the opportunity to socialize.

It is similar to some studies in the literature that the teaching competencies of lecturers also have an effect on the learning outcomes of students. There are many studies that show that synchronous methods including teaching and learning-based approaches that support the design of teaching materials and students' interaction are more effective (Demir and Demir, 2015; Dymont and Downing, 2018; Robinson and Rusznyak, 2020; Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison, 2020). In these studies, it is recommended that lecturers interact with students via synchronous methods in order to improve their learning capacity. The main conclusion is that the most effective way for students to have sufficient knowledge and competencies in distance education will increase their learning performance by interacting with the instructors. In this way, attracting students' attention to the course will reflect positively on their learning capacity and thus on their learning performance. When this is approached from a different perspective (Sepulveda-Escobar and Morrison, 2020), it shows that the lack of direct interaction of lecturers with students and sudden changes in the environment are among the factors that most strongly affect the learning process in distance education.

As a result, the synchronous conduct of courses in distance education, the learning capacities of the students and the teaching competencies of the lecturers significantly affect the learning outcomes of the students. The fact that these results are supported by other similar

studies in the literature shows that the model created was constructed correctly. However, the findings of the study show that the courses given synchronously in distance education are more interesting than asynchronous courses and they enable students to learn and teach lecturers. In addition, all factors, except asynchronous distance education, were found to affect students' learning outcomes positively and significantly.

Limitations and future research

The study has some limitations. First, these study data were collected in only one university due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, it would not be appropriated to generalize the results to all universities. Second, an evaluation was made using synchronous and asynchronous methods in distance education. In future studies, by including different distance education methods, studies can be done and even the results can be compared. Third, the data collected during the Covid-19 period may reflect different attitudes and behaviors due to the psychological and sociological pressures experienced by students. For this reason, the effectiveness of distance education after the pandemic, including these methods, should be measured with different studies. Despite all the limitations, it is thought that the results of this study will make significant contributions to the literature and educational practices.

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How to Survive through the Challenges of the Pandemic. Research and Analysis Regarding the Impact of SARS-COV-2 on the Romanian Labour Market

Cristina PRUND¹

Abstract: The present article will bring to light a topical challenge which has affected companies and employees from all over the world. A huge number of countries are affected by COVID-19 from a lot of perspectives: economy, politics, health. One of the most affected sectors is considered to be the labour market because several companies were forced to suspend or to stop their activity, causing job losses.

In particular, the paper is trying to present the impact that SARS-COV-2 had and will have on the Romanian labour market. The article is taking into consideration two important perspectives: the perspective of the employer and the perspective of the employee. The studies in this field are minimal and that is the reason why an analysis about the changes that have occurred in the Romanian labour market from the moment the pandemic appeared until today will be done in this article.

In this paper I will analyze secondary data from some of the most important sources as follows: official reports from the World Health Organization, the National Institute of Statistics, the Ministry of Public Finance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. The paper is taking into consideration the impact of SARS-COV-2 on the 4 macroregions of Romania and also on the most important industries that are found on the Romanian labour market. Two

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important indicators which will be discussed in the paper are: the evolution of the unemployment rate and the situation of suspended contracts. On this subject, I will analyze the situation of the suspended employment contracts in different industries such as hotels and restaurants, health, cultural activities, manufacturing, etc. An analysis about the way in which the unemployment rate has evolved in Romania will also be done.

We have to learn from this difficult situation an important lesson: It is impossible to be 100% prepared for this kind of situations and that is why we must focus on our ability to adapt quickly to any new challenge. The purpose of my study is to analyze the huge impact SARS-COV-2 had on the Romanian labour market and in this regard the results will present several directions which might be useful for employers and employees.

Keywords: Challenge, labour market, Romania, SARS-COV-2.

JEL code: I15, M21, M54, O15

Introduction and Review of Literature

We Live In The Middle Of A Global Multiple Crisis, Health Crisis, Economic crisis and climatic crisis – unfortunately a perfect bad timing.

A series of news and studies have shown that there were a lot of sectors affected by Covid-19 and the labour market is not making any exception. The biggest problem at the moment is that the pandemic situation will not only affect the labour market at this time, it will also have negative effects in the future.

With a serious health threat, the future seems to be cloudy for a huge number of persons who are afraid about their economic and financial security.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020), which estimated the number of people at high risk of dismissal or reduction of salaries at 1.25 billion, the global labour market is facing the most difficult crisis since the second War World.

The Romanian Ministry of Health and Social Protection announced in March 2020 that around 500.000 employment contracts will be suspended until the end of March.

According (del Rio-Chanona, Mealy, Pichler, Lafond, & Farmer, 2020) while demand for specific sectors such as grocery stores increased in the early weeks of the pandemic, other sectors such as air transportation and tourism have seen demand for their services evaporate. In the given situation, a lot of companies have been forced to reduce or to suspend their activity and that is the reason why a lot of employees from Romania have lost their jobs. However, there are industries like Retail and FMCG (Fast Mover Consumer Goods) which need additional employees to be able to face the large number of orders and the new consumer behavior which appeared in time of crisis.

The CEO of the eJobs platform (the largest online recruitment portal in Romania), Bogdan Badea, said in an interview with RFI Romania (the largest subsidiary of the French public broadcaster Radio France International) that in 2019 there were more jobs than people, now there are over 400,000 Romanians left without a job, to which are added those who have returned from abroad and those who want to change their job. He also said that in 2020 in April there were on the eJobs platform about a million job applications, almost double compared to the same period last year. It seems that those who are looking for a new job are searching companies whose activity takes place in industries, like retail, which were able to better face the current challenge.

It is impossible to predict what is going to happen in the near future, when the whole situation will be under control, but it is extremely unlikely that things will return to the way they were before.

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), first identified in the Chinese municipality of Wuhan in late December 2019. The virus quickly spread to other regions of China and the world (Gronkiewicz et al., 2020).

SARS-CoV-2 was reported to have been introduced into Europe by a person from France who had traveled to Wuhan, China, for work, became ill on January 16 2020, and returned ill to France on January 22(Olsen et al., 2020).

Romania, like all other European countries, was unable to escape COVID-19. The first case was reported on 26 February 2020 in a 25-year-old man who had been in contact with an Italian visitor on a hunting trip.

McKinsey & Company (the trusted advisor and counselor to many of the world's most influential businesses and institutions) conducted a survey in June 2020, in Romania, called Financial Pulse Survey in which they included more than 500 respondents aged between 18-80 years old. The results have shown that 30 % of the respondents consider that the present crisis will last in Romania for 1-2 years, while 19% are expecting it to last for up to 3 years. In an attempt to cut operation costs, (Kim & Kang, 2020) have shown that firms around the world have forced workers into furlough and layoffs; these actions have increased job insecurity, which has turned into growing anxiety and psychological stress.

Since the first confirmed case of coronavirus in Romania until now, the local labour market went from one extreme to another.

The Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Violeta Alexandru, estimated in April 2020, that on February 29 there were 5,62 million active employees and, by the end of March 2020, over 500.000 employment contracts have been suspended and she also estimated that by mid-April the number will rise to over one million.

The Balkan Insight (a website of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN), which focuses on news, analysis, commentary and investigative reporting from southeast Europe) based on the Labour Ministry data have shown that in Romania, more than a million jobs were either terminated or temporarily closed between 16 March 2020 and 30 April 2020. More than 725,000 of these people saw their contracts suspended, however, being hopeful that that their jobs will

come back once the crisis is over. The other 276,000 joined the ranks of the long-term unemployed.

Owing to the pandemic, most people are experiencing different work schedules and routines compared to their pre-COVID-19 work chores, and this adaptation has brought about changes in various occupations, as well as new ones.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to anticipate the solutions for the problems presented above because of the unpredictable climate that leads to unexpected revenue declines in a very short term. Even if the government already took some important decisions, it must continue to monitor the issues very carefully in order to react in time with other support measures and thus save as many companies and their employees as possible.

Material and Methods

In this paper I will analyze secondary data from some of the most important sources as follows: official reports from the World Health Organization, the National Institute of Statistics, the Ministry of Public Finance, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

The paper is taking into consideration the impact of SARS-COV-2 on the 4 macroregions of Romania and also on the most important industries that are found on the Romanian labour market.

Two important indicators which will be discussed in the paper are: the evolution of the unemployment rate and the situation of suspended contracts. On this subject, I will analyze the situation of the suspended employment contracts in different industries such as hotels and restaurants, health, cultural activities, manufacturing, etc. An analysis about the way in which the unemployment rate has evolved in Romania will also be done.

Results and Discussions

Fighting COVID-19: Evolution and Analysis of Essential Variables

March 11, 2020 was the date when the World Health Organization declared a coronavirus pandemic. At that time there were over 120,000 people infected globally and in Romania we were already counting the first cases since the end of February. This would be the first signal to the business community that quick steps are needed to secure their businesses.

The data analysis will be based on June and July figures of the National Institute of Statistics or Ministry of Labour.

Correlation between the number of cases and the number of unemployed in relation to the Romanian macro regions

We are going to examine the relationship between two relevant variables: the number of confirmed cases and the number of unemployed, related to the macro regions from Romania. The country is divided into 4 macro regions as presented in Figure 3 and explained in more detail in Table 1.

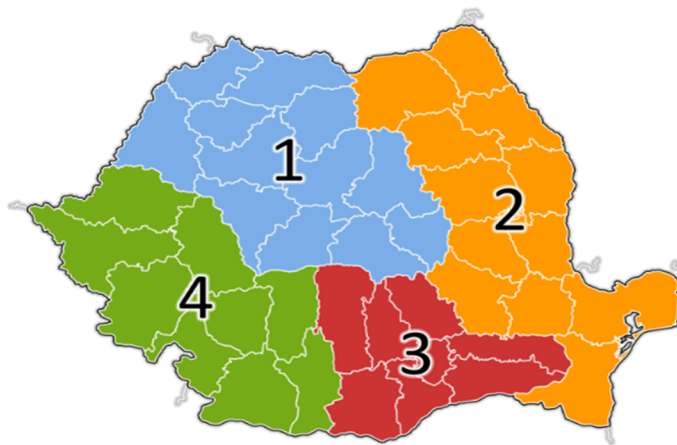


Figure 3: Territorial statistics: Map of the 4 Romanian macro regions

Source: <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/> (Accessed in 26.09.2020)

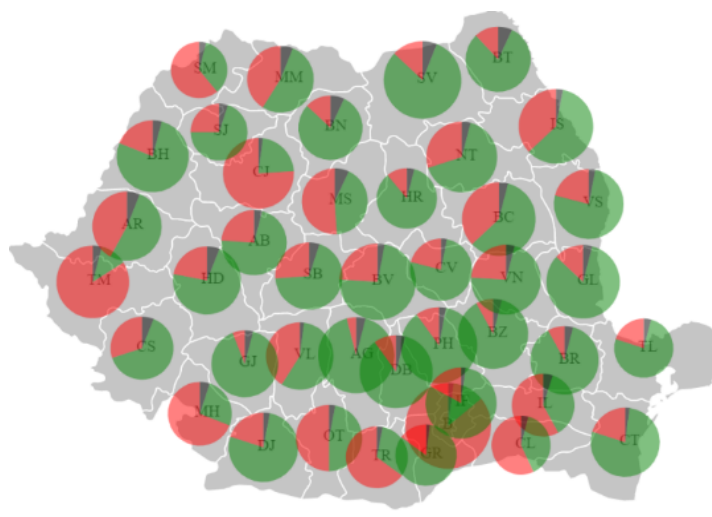


Figure 4: Map presenting the proportion of active cases, cure and deaths in Romania because of COVID-19 (June 2020)

Source: <https://covid19ro.org/> (Accessed in 26.09.2020)

The findings in Table 1 describe the component cities that form the 4 macro regions. It is essential to define the component parts of each macro region in order to have a clearer overview regarding the impact generated by COVID-19 on the labour market.

Table 1: Legend of macro-regions

Macroregion 1		Macroregion 2		Macroregion 3	Macroregion 4	
(N-V)	(Centre)	(N-E)	(S-E)	(S) + Bucharest	(S-V)	(V)
Bihor	Alba	Bacău	Brăila	Argeş	Dolj	Arad
Bistriţa-Năsăud	Braşov	Botoşani	Buzău	Călăraşi	Gorj	Caraş-Severin
Cluj	Covasna	Iaşi	Constanţa	Dâmboviţa	Mehedinţi	Hunedoara
Maramureş	Harghita	Neamţ	Galaţi	Giurgiu	Olt	Timiș
Satu Mare	Mureş	Suceava	Tulcea	Ialomiţa	Vâlcea	
Sălaj	Sibiu	Vaslui	Vrancea	Prahova		
				Teleorman		
				Ilfov + The city of Bucharest		

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The National Institute of Statistics.

The results in Table 2 show the correlation between the number of confirmed cases and the number of unemployed. As we can notice, the most affected macro region is the second one with a number of 9933 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in June and a decrease with 3807 in the number of unemployed in 2020 compared to 2019. We can highlight an important fact: If the number of cases is growing, there will be significant variations in the number of unemployed. We can suppose this situation is due to the effects generated by Covid-19 on the labour market: As the number of cases increases in a certain city, more companies are forced to end their activity and to suspend more contracts in order to avoid the spread of the virus and also to protect the company's activity and their employees.

Table 2: Analysis of the correlation between the number of confirmed cases and the number of unemployed

Macroregion	Number of confirmed cases(june2020)	Number of unemployment		Variations
		June 2019	June 2020	
Macroregion 1	5.406	52.302	56.391	4.089
Macroregion 2	9933	91.120	87.313	- 3.807
Macroregion 3	1993	56.102	57.149	1.047
Macroregion 4	6034	58.059	59.814	1.755

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Romania (Strategic Communication Group and Ministry of Labour)

Another important fact is that macro region 2 is the only one where the cases of COVID-19 increased and the number of unemployed decreases. We consider this could be possible because there are some cities, like Constanța, which is based on a huge impact of seasonality and it is difficult to estimate how the situation of the unemployment will evolve because jobs in this place can be done only in a certain period of the year. In the following part we are going to present 4 figures which will show the evolution from January 2019 to June 2020 in the number of unemployed in each of the macro regions described earlier.

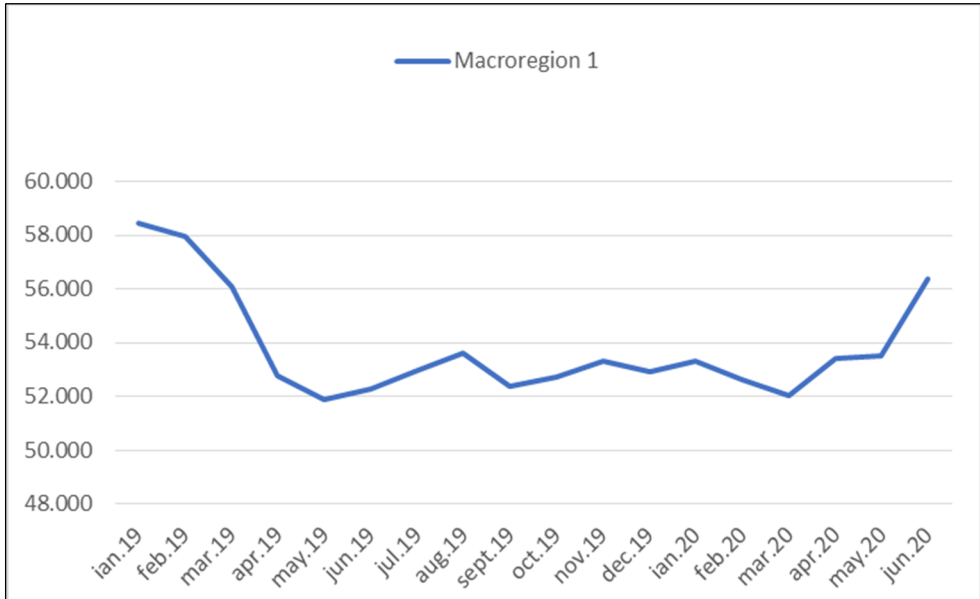


Figure 5: Evolution in the number of unemployed in Macro region 1

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The National Institute of Statistics and The Ministry of Labour

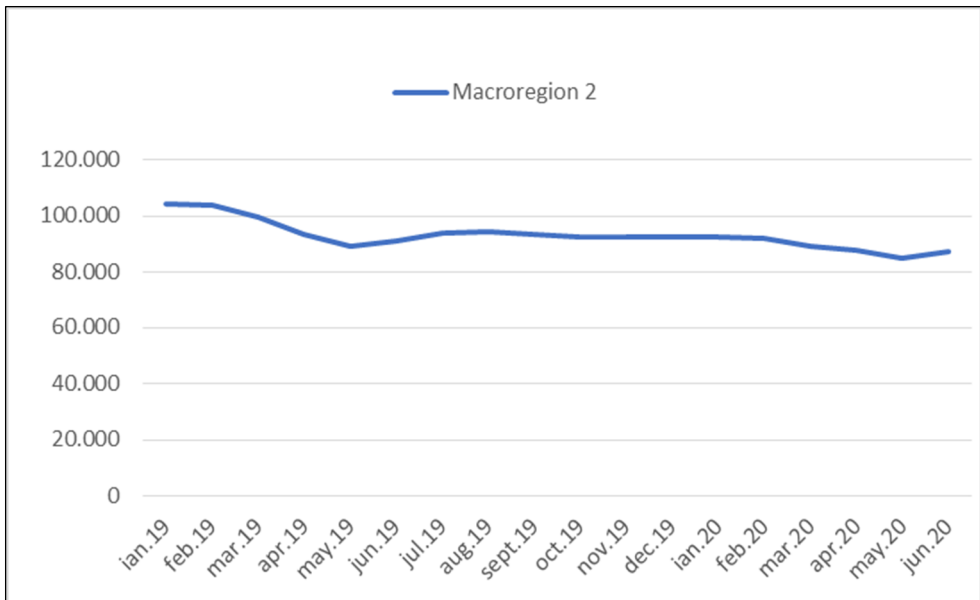


Figure 6: Evolution in the number of unemployed in Macro region 2

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The National Institute of Statistics and The Ministry of Labour

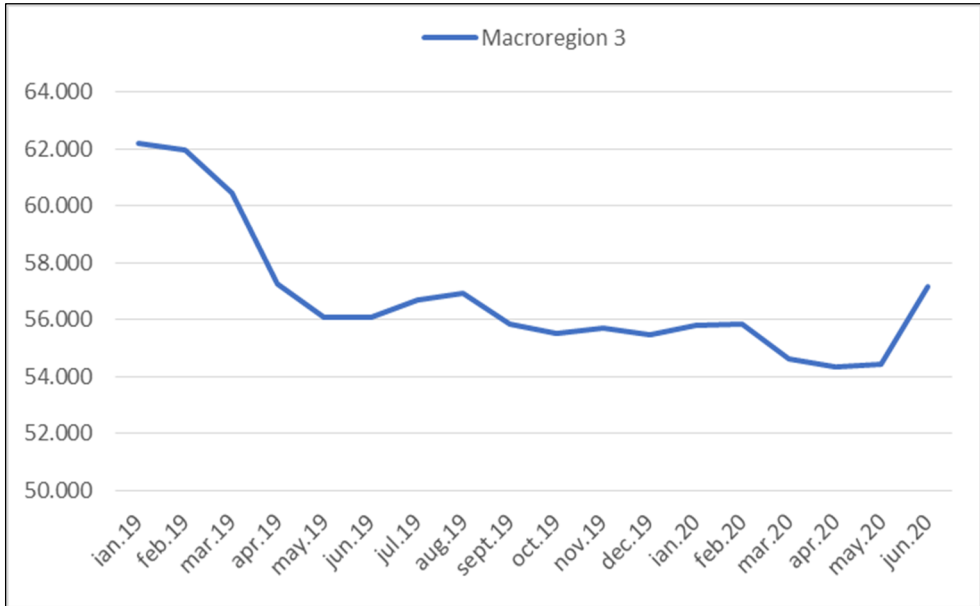


Figure 7: Evolution in the number of unemployed in Macro region 3

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The National Institute of Statistics and The Ministry of Labour

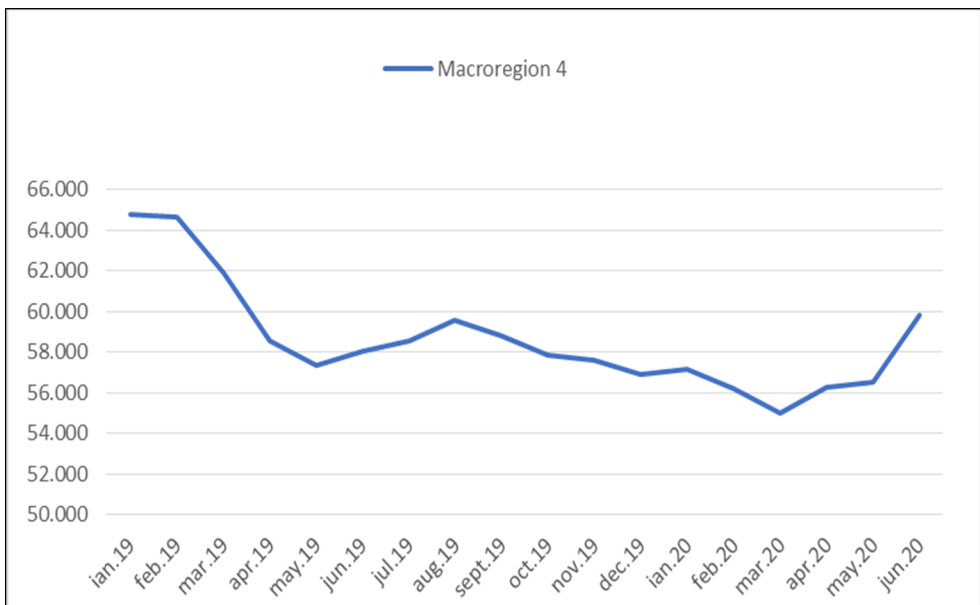


Figure 8: Evolution in the number of unemployed in Macro region 4

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The National Institute of Statistics and The Ministry of Labour

Evolution in the number of vacancies

In this study we are going to analyze the differences between 2019 and 2020 regarding the number of vacancies. The paper is going to take into consideration important sectors as follows: Manufacturing, Retail and repair of vehicles and motorcycles, Hotels and restaurants, Transport and storage, Cultural activities, Health, Construction.

According to the findings in Table 4, the most affected sector is the manufacturing industry: with a decrease of vacancies of 8,109, representing 38% of the total analyzed. The most affected region is macro-region 3 (by 34% fewer vacancies in June 2020 compared to June 2019, representing a number of 7,023 places out of the total number of vacancies).

Table 4: Analysis of number of vacancies related to important sectors and macro regions from Romania

Sector	Macroregion 1		Variations	Macroregion 2		Variations	Macroregion 3		Variations	Variations (%)	Macroregion 4		Variations	TOTAL		Variations
	2019	2020		2019	2020		2019	2020			2019	2020		2019	2020	
Manufacturing	5.326	2.210	-3.116	2.094	1.116	-978	2.683	1.065	-1.618	-60%	3.192	795	-2.397	13.295	5.186	-8.109
Retail repair of vehicles and motorcycles	1.334	897	-437	1.168	472	-696	3.150	2.341	-809	-26%	672	419	-253	6.324	4.129	-2.195
Hotels and restaurants	279	23	-256	915	29	-886	593	25	-568	-96%	136	0	-136	1.923	77	-1.846
Transport and storage	693	516	-177	491	226	-265	1.945	1.634	-311	-16%	736	407	-329	3.865	2.783	-1.082
Cultural activities	168	78	-90	195	172	-23	752	466	-286	-38%	155	124	-31	1.270	840	-430
Health	1.153	1.111	-42	1.773	1.365	-408	2.663	2.030	-633	-24%	877	659	-218	6.466	5.165	-1.301
Construction	457	743	286	1.109	674	-435	952	236	-716	-75%	122	124	2	2.640	1.777	-863
Others	4.363	3.004	-1.359	2.874	2.066	-808	9.551	7.469	-2.082	-22%	2.412	1.668	-744	19.200	14.207	-4.993
TOTAL	13.773	8.582	-5.191	10.619	6.120	-4.499	22.289	15.266	-7.023	-32%	8.302	4.196	-4.106	54.983	34.164	-20.819
Variations(%) /total macroregion	25%			22%			34%				20%					

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The National Institute of Statistics

A strong impact was felt in most of the activities, mainly in tourism (with a 96% decrease in vacancies, from 593 places in June 2019 to 25 vacancies in June 2020), constructions (with a 75% decrease in vacancies, from 952 vacancies in June 2019 to 236 vacancies in June 2020), the manufacturing industry (with a 60% decrease in vacancies, from 2683 vacancies in June 2019 to 1065 vacancies in June 2020), and activities of shows, cultural and recreational with a decrease of 38% of vacancies (from 752 places in June 2019 to 466 vacancies in June 2020).

Taking into account the 4 macro-regions and the industries that are found on the Romanian labour market, I have found a decrease of 38% of vacancies, respectively by 20,819 (from 54,983 to 34,164). I consider that the decrease in the number of vacancies is due to the challenge that companies are facing today because they were forced to end their activity or to suspend it. In this situation, companies tried as much as they could to protect their employees in different ways: technical unemployment, unpaid leave, reduction of work schedule giving them the impossibility to look for other candidates who could fill in the vacancies. At the moment, the main concern of companies is to maintain their own employees and not to create other vacancies for new candidates.

Unemployment Rate

In this situation the labour market is difficult to measure, but indicators such as the unemployment rate can give companies an idea of its condition and evolution. Thus, in periods of strong economic growth the unemployment rate is usually on a downward trend due to increasing demand from employers while when the economy decreases unemployment increases.

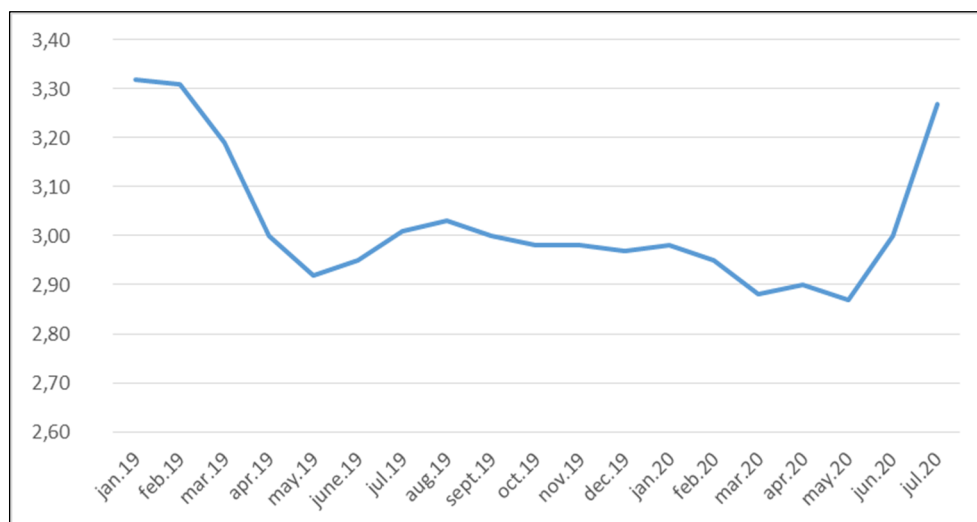


Figure 9: Evolution of the unemployment rate in January 2019-September 2020 interval of time at national level

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The National Institute of Statistics

The unemployment rate presented in Figure 9, registered at national level, in July 2020, stood at 3.27%, with 0.26 percentage points above the value recorded in the same month of 2019, according to the data of the National Agency for Employment (ANOFM). According to ANOFM most unemployed people were between 40 and 49 years old followed by those in the age group 50-55 years old, at the opposite pole being people between 25 and 29 years old. The provisions of the military ordinances on stopping the spread of the new coronavirus have led many companies to partially or completely cease their activities, which has led to the highest unemployment rate in the last two years. The suspended contracts can be taken into account in INS statistics only if those employees who have been dismissed meet the necessary conditions to receive unemployment benefits and are in the records of the National Agency for Employment (ANOFM) (Ramona Cornea, 2020). If the employee is fired, he or she can receive unemployment benefits from the state, but if the contract is concluded with the agreement of the parties, he cannot apply for unemployment. Moreover, the employee cannot

apply for unemployment benefits if he has been employed for less than 1 year.

Thus, some people who lost their jobs in March 2020 may not be among the unemployed registered in the statistics. The unemployment rate in March 2020 is still low due to the fact that in March the effects of the pandemic were not felt, companies waited until the last moment to see what measures the state takes to support technical unemployment.

The first measures taken by the companies were resorting to rest leave and granting other types of leave to employees.

The Number of Suspended Contracts

If we look at the situation by areas of activity, the most affected companies are those in the tourism industry, automotive construction, transport and production companies that no longer receive the raw material from the countries severely affected by COVID-19 (Alina Dragomir, 2020).

In Figure 10 we can see that the most affected sector is tourism, with a number of 24.464 employment postponed contracts, followed by manufacturing and retail.

According to Adriana Pălășan, the Vice-president of ARILOG (The Romanian Logistics Association) those companies and employees which only focused on one direction had to lose in this kind of situation.

Tourism, transport and hospitality and restaurants are just the first sectors hit hard by the crisis caused by the new coronavirus. The closure of borders and travel restrictions to European countries have reduced the mobility of people, by all means – by air, land or rail – and therefore the negative effects for these areas were immediately felt. The tourism industry is in a difficult situation and needs a way out of the crisis and recovery.

George Bădescu, Executive Director of the Association of Large Romanian Commercial Networks (AMRCR), says that analyzing the March 2020 figures, it is obvious that the retail sector, especially the food

sector, was tested because both managerial and logistical capacities were tried out. He also said that there were some difficult moments during March based on emotional reactions but also due to the fact that no one was completely prepared for this kind of situation. The situation became more stable in April 2020, but for the large commercial networks another challenge remained active: understanding the new behavior of employees and consumers. The director of AMRCR says that only on this basis can the business model be modified, investments be redirected and new management plans be made. On the other hand, production companies do not feel better either, especially those in the automotive industry.

Those companies will end up in a vicious circle: on the one hand, they will try to limit the spread of coronavirus among employees; on the other hand, they may have problems on the part of purchasing car components, and finally, in the context that, with the population staying indoors, they will not easily find a market for their products. The negative effects will be gradually transmitted to other fields of activity because all industries are interconnected.

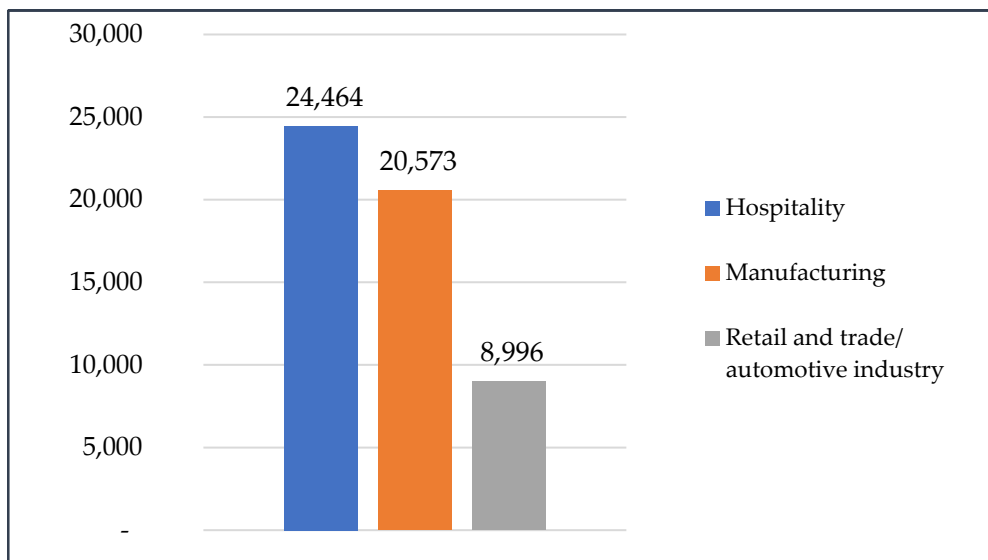


Figure 10: Number of employment contracts postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic in Romania (July, 2020, by industry)

Source: Composed by the author on the basis of the information from The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection

Conclusion

The biggest problem of this crisis is that it is not just an economic crisis, it is an economic crisis as a result of a health crisis. There will be some industries whose recovery will not take place earlier than three or four years from now.

An important aspect is represented by the concept of remote work. Now, employers have become much more flexible from this point of view and we think that from now on more companies will implement this concept.

The share of jobs that could be performed at home is an important contribution to predicting the performance of the economy in this period or in subsequent periods of social distancing (Dingel & Neiman, 2020).

So far, staff reductions have been made mainly by small companies, which felt the pressure of money more acutely and were able to make faster decisions than larger companies. Large companies have tried to keep their employees, resorting to the reserve or state aid, but it is becoming increasingly clear that we are not talking about a V-shaped economic crisis, with a rapid recovery, but rather a recession with more peaks and returns.

In the future the fight for employment will be tougher and will especially go to areas that have proven resilience to the coronavirus pandemic. The fight for employment will be tougher than before, because the range of available candidates has widened, and companies are looking for people who are starting to be productive as soon as possible and in any condition. Salary is still an important factor, but it has come to be dethroned by stability. Romanians are looking to work in industries that have shown, during this period, that they are solid, and in those companies that have managed to stay afloat and minimize as much as

possible a negative impact on employees. This was a crucial moment in which the companies either consolidated or collapsed.

It is the time when every leader needs to know what each employee is going through. And they do not have to promise them that everything will be over soon. It is important to be with them for as long as necessary and, in case restructuring is needed, fairness and transparency should prevail.

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The Profile of the Event Consumer: Case Study City of Cluj-Napoca

Lavinia LAMUREAN¹ and Marius BOTA²

Abstract: As a destination, Cluj-Napoca, is a city of ever going flexibility and innovativeness in many industries and fields, gaining an important status worldwide. Amongst its most favorable changes, Cluj-Napoca has managed to host, throughout the years, numerous sources, and types of entertainment, with events as a primary choice for its residents.

The purpose of our study was to identify the profile of the event consumer from Cluj-Napoca as a destination. An exploratory and descriptive research was conducted. For data collection a short questionnaire was implemented during 23.03.2020-13.04.2020 through a correspondence interview to a sample of 258 residents.

A profile of the event consumer was developed. This incorporates a predominantly feminine figure, of mostly young adults, ageing from 21 to 30 years old (74,4%). On an educational level, the respondents' most recent certification is either a high school degree (41%), an undergraduate bachelor's degree (40%) or a postgraduate acknowledgement (14%). Amongst the many choices on the market, artistic and entertaining events (80,2%) cultural manifestations (70,9%) and events that are organized for educational purposes (37,2%), represent a path of enrichment and self-development for the participating pupils. When choosing to participate or not to an event in Cluj-Napoca, browsing the social media platforms (91,5%) will allow the respondents to make an easy choice. Their choice of action is also guided by being provided feedback, through word-of-

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mouth (72,5%) as well as through getting the latest buzz from the online press (57%).

Keywords: events, destination, events industry, attendance, profile of the event consumer.

JEL classification: L83, M31

Introduction and Review of Literature

Events are well-known as an ageless concept, as being a part and of high importance in our footprint as humans. Getz (2011) is the author placing events under the symbolism of time, naming them temporary manifestations regarding their place and duration (Getz, 2011, mentioned in Cerutti and Piva, 2015). Bladen et al. (2012) in their book, *Events Management*, are the ones taking into consideration the human factor of these short-term gatherings, describing them as groups of premeditated participants (Bladen et al., 2012). Moreover, other authors have provided an extended close-up to this motivation, with humans seen as central to the life of events, describing them as an all-nature reunion having as a sole purpose a special feature (Carter, 2007, mentioned in Cerutti and Piva, 2015).

As opposed to those mentioned earlier in the article, other authors, have had been defining events after their way of happening as an entertaining phenomenon and through their authentic traits and foundation; by bringing together the target group and by spreading a universal message "events are central to our core as human beings" (Bowdin et al., 2012). Once again, Getz (2005) has provided a good explanation towards this human-events bond and has considered the authenticity as a provider for different combinations and elements in-between events "every event has its uniqueness, either coming from its management, schedule, space of happening and through what represents the human factor" (Getz, 2005, as mentioned in Bowdin et al., 2012).

Cluj-Napoca is amongst the best rated Transylvanian cities, due to its geographical establishment and due to its status as a genuine cultural

core of all times. At a national level, Cluj-Napoca has managed to occupy a first-class distinction following the dynamics of its cultural branch (Voicu and Dragomir, 2017, mentioned in Zbranca, 2017). Its adequacy to the events industry, as a destination, is high and has been demonstrated, primarily, through the living proof of its architectural buildings, present today, on the route of its most appreciated touristic spots.

The events market of Cluj-Napoca is in a rhythmic growth, being a host to multiple national and international level events, divided by their size and dimension and by their content. Thus, the destination has managed to keep its folkloric side, with the help of local events, these representing a chance of going back to its native roots through every local individual. In this regard, some authors have been perceiving events as an added value to its current patrimonial vestige. According to Niță (2018) the events of Cluj-Napoca are the ones bringing in the added value, as the local market has already “harvested its tourism potential” supported by archaeological reminiscences and artifacts (Niță, 2018).

The profile of the event consumer in the perspective of industry specialists might come from different studies, but they all have been providing important pieces of information in building the demographic pattern of this segment. Foremost, when creating an identity in this field of action, the individual, as seen by events experts, becomes a part of a predominantly uniform group of individuals. As an external image of great importance for a profile, authors Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele are the ones placing an emphasis on what an individual’s socio-demographic construction is constituted of and where they are currently living (Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele, 2011, mentioned in Lee and Kyle, 2014). However, as provided in the focus of this study, the targeted audience, that of residents of Cluj-Napoca participating in events makes it necessary to offer a further, in-depth description of the young energy predominating the profile; the energy of the participants is the nucleus of every event as a quintessential element for their existence (Getz, 2007, in

Mackeller, 2017). Therefore, expanding the focus by placing an important emphasis on variables determining not only what's objective in the investigated image, from the collected data, on the residence and socio-demographic attributes (Dolničar, 2004; Moscardo, Philip and Morrison, 2001 in Lee in Kyle, 2014), but on the psychology of their choice of action (Tkaczynski and Rundle-Tiele, 2011, in Lee and Kyle, 2014) as they are complementary to each other in order to understand the force driving the profile of the consumer (Mackeller, 2017).

A profile can be identified by other means, by the content, respectively the musical genres available at an event, as North and Hargreaves (1999) demonstrate; the profiling of the attendee is possible by the way of interaction with musical preferences, with the taste itself becoming the distinction between personas (North and Hargreaves, 1999, in Oakes, 2010). Oakes (2003a) provides an in-depth description of how a profile can be contoured by simply looking at an individual's musical taste; personas with an interest in present-day bands have a strong bond with the act of freedom of expression, being described as "liberal" in their choice of fashion and in that of communication, while from an opposite point of view, others will identify themselves as old-school, opting for traditional channels for the latest news and will even consider having their choice of music on CDs (Oakes, 2003a, as seen in Oakes, 2010).

Material and Method

The purpose of this study is to describe the image, precisely the profile of the events consumer of Cluj-Napoca, through individual characteristics demonstrating the avatar of this segment analyzed in this research paper, as well as through common traits, analogy and differences amongst the targeted group, that of attendees at the events of Cluj-Napoca.

An exploratory and descriptive research has been conducted. From a quantitative point of view and at a descriptive level, the study has been furthermore investigated, as well as interpreted by using a correspondence technique interview; choices made in accordance with the purpose of the study, to highlight and contrast the general profile of an event attendee in Cluj-Napoca. Therefore, in this manner, a questionnaire has been developed and implemented amongst the participating residents of Cluj-Napoca, in events. Data collection period was March to April 2020, with a total of 258 respondents. The analysis method and calculation tool for the subject research is the Excel software. The current study is only using a part of the collected data.

Results and Discussions

The present study reveals that most of the respondents are participating in events. The question serves as an introduction in contouring the profile of the event consumer of Cluj-Napoca focusing on an important aspect, that of active engagement.

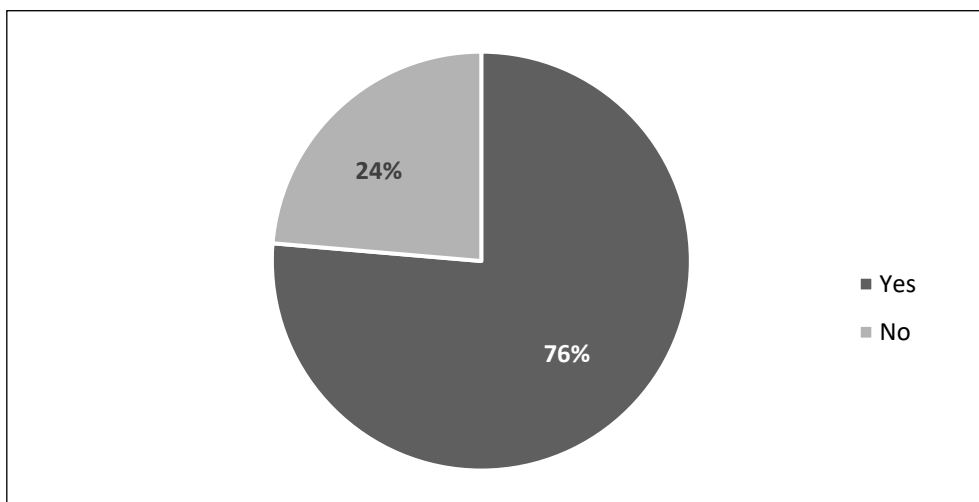


Figure 1: The percentage of active participation in the events of Cluj-Napoca

Source: Author's calculations

From a total of 258 respondents, as represented in Figure 1, the vast majority (76%) as 196 citizens in the city of Cluj-Napoca, are actively participating in the events taking place. Conversely, 61 residents (24%) consider themselves as passive attendees in the events, opting for a more exclusive participation than the rest.

The main focus when asking the residents about past experiences is to establish an important behavioral feature, the status and more precisely how long have they been participating in the events taking place in Cluj-Napoca.

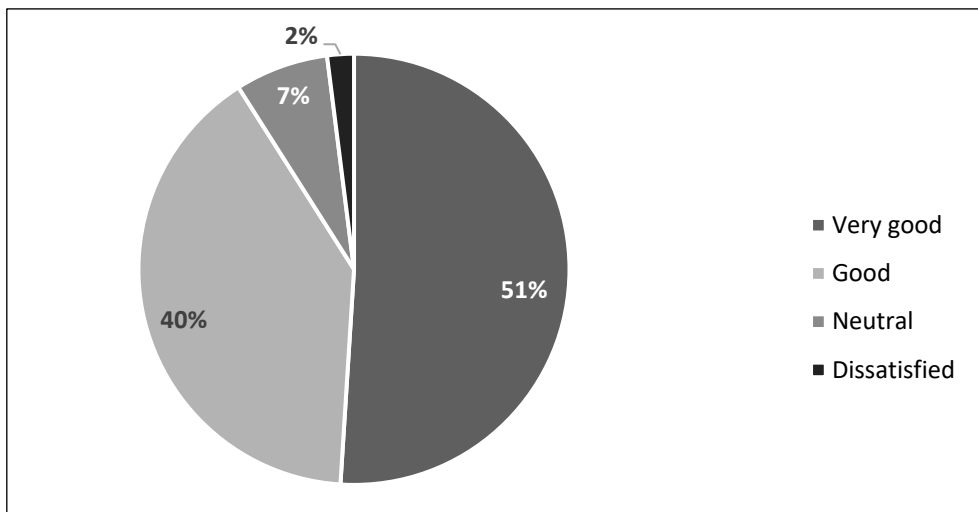


Figure 2: The weight in percentage regarding satisfaction of past events in the city of Cluj-Napoca

Source: Author's calculations

As seen in Figure 2, the biggest share in the chart (51%) represents a favorable outcome of 132 residents having a positive outcome towards past entertaining manifestations, as well as a satisfactory statement for 104 of the residents (40%).

As a biased point of view only 18 residents (7%) have a neutral perspective towards past participations; this situation is most likely to change, either positively or negatively in the foreseeable future, as the event portfolio of Cluj-Napoca has been rapidly expanding. A small

percentage of them (2%) have declared a dissatisfied experience towards past events, representing 4 participants out of 258 present in this study. No participant in the study had a very dissatisfied opinion, therefore the selection is null.

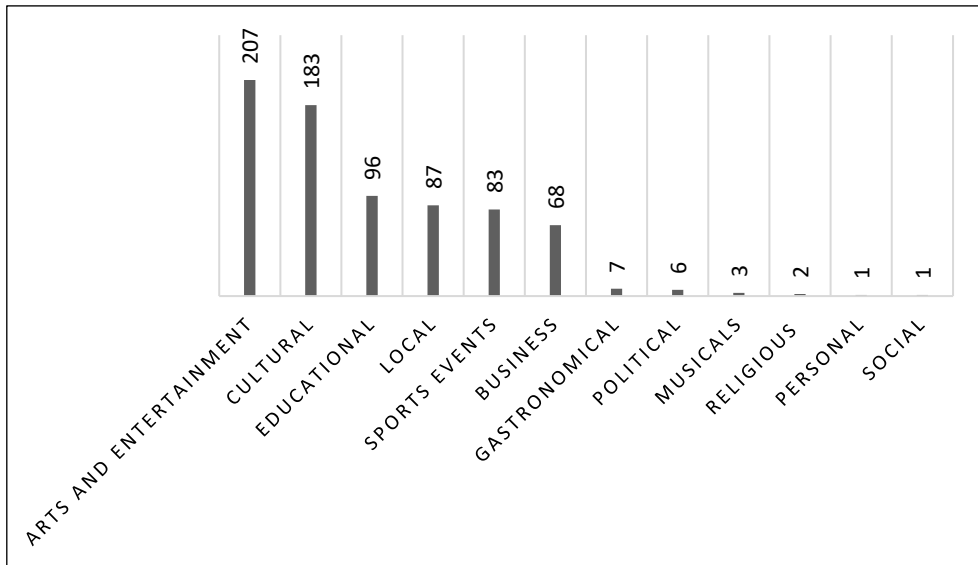


Figure 3: The choice regarding the events typology in the city of Cluj-Napoca

Source: Author's calculations

Figure 3 constitutes the choice of action towards the most familiar typologies of events for the residents of Cluj-Napoca. The information is essential and focuses on demonstrating the preferences of the participating residents in terms of events and the most frequented typologies available on the market of the destination. By having the possibility to opt for multiple answers, each resident has managed to create his or her own portfolio of preferred events in Cluj-Napoca.

Out of 258 residents, the wide majority of 80,2% (207 responses) see art and entertaining events as the peak in the market of Cluj-Napoca, while the cultural sector follows secondly, with a total of 183 responses (70,9%). As the third choice of preferred events, the residents with 96 responses (37,2%), have shown interest in educational events as a profitable source of action for their careers and self-improvement.

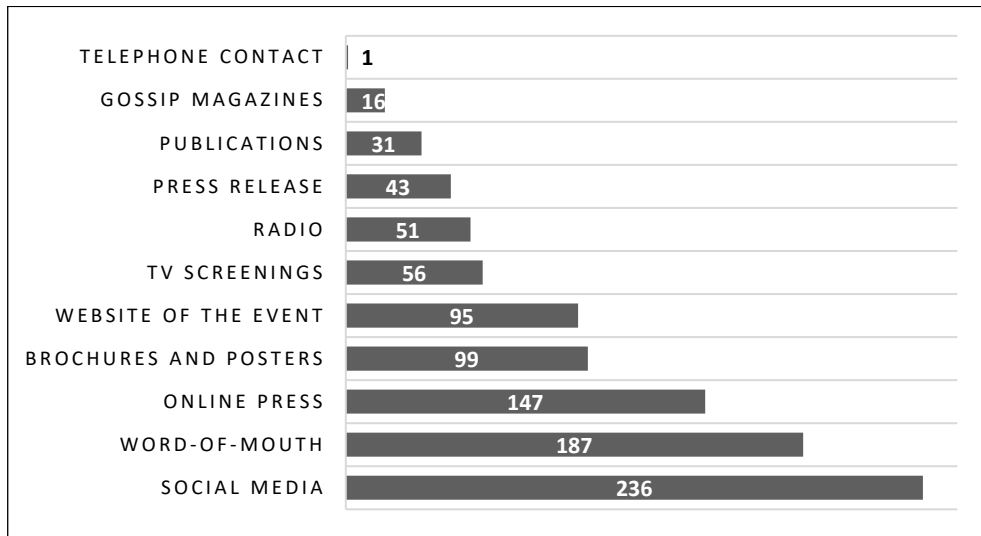


Figure 4: The sources of information most likely to be used for events taking place in the city of Cluj-Napoca

Source: Author's calculations

By considering the sources of information the study places an emphasis in finding out where the search for the latest news of events take place, respectively the most suitable channels of promotion in accordance with the given characteristics. The transcendence to the online environment is obvious and not only that is growing with each passing day, but is also stated in our research, the online promotion tools becoming the most frequented. As seen in figure 4, most of the responses (91,5%) show a search for data of events on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, and Instagram. On a second-choice basis, word-of-mouth is considered to have a success rate of 72,5% for 187 participants in the study, as a recommending tool between groups of friends and family. Also, being present in the online press does not go unnoticed by the residents (57%), as using such a tool will result in a larger coverage of the event. The share of posters and brochures on the street is a visible way of promoting events, by 99 of the residents (38,4%). Moreover, the simple click on the website of the event will result in an interaction towards the two parts, as noted by 95 (36,8%) attendees in the study.

However, a classical way of promoting an event is taken into consideration but does not have the same success rate as tools available online. In figure 4 it is captured the decay of the classic tools, in contrast to the top choices, where 56 residents (21,7%) pay attention to promotion on TV, a slightly less percentage (19,8%) listen to the radio and no more than 43 (16,7%) read the ads in the newspaper. Only 31 respondents (12%) react to publications for information about events and solely 16 participants (6,2%) rely on gossip magazines.

Therefore, the results serve as a confirmation of the young profile of the consumer, following the latest trends online for a catch up in events of Cluj-Napoca; it is being shown the same energy given by the age and the preferential choices. Hence, it becomes a win-win situation as the events industry is actively pursuing the online environment, while the consumers interact as intensely as possible with what constitutes an event. Lastly, the word-of-mouth promotion made towards the event consumer is highly appreciated, and due to its recommendation rate, the consumer uses the same tool for the events of Cluj-Napoca.

Table 1: Periodicity of an active attendee in the events taking place in Cluj-Napoca

Participation rate	Frequency of participation
More than 5 events	89
3-5 events	80
1-3 events	71
One event	18
Total	258

Source: Author's calculations

A strong correlation to the percentage of active participation, as a starting point in the research, and the favorable outcome in the responses, made it necessary to see the number of visits made by the residents to be considered active on the market of events. Therefore, by analyzing the given data in Table 1, the youth element of the profile is highly visible, through energetic and repetitive visits in the events of Cluj-Napoca, as well as the active participation, started on different frequencies of

participation. The highest peak of all, demonstrating the energy of the profile is seen in participating in over five events in one year, for 89 of the respondents (34%). Followed closely by an engagement in 3 to 5 events in a single year, by 80 citizens of Cluj-Napoca (31%).

However, a nearby position is the third choice of neutral engagement, to a few, 1 to 3 events per year, considered by 71 persons (28%). The least frequented choice of answer demonstrates a passive participant, as seen in the introduction, where a small percentage (7%) of 18 residents only joined a single event in one year.

According to the preferred choices of our consumer and in relation to the participating event, the research made it compulsory to find out the level of expenditure for a single sit, to take part in the events of Cluj-Napoca. Despite the presence of entry-free events, the consumer has the tendency to spend more cash inside the site, on goods and services requiring a fee, all contributing to the overall experience of the event.

The majority is represented by 80 respondents (31%), as seen in Figure 5, having an available budget of 250-500 RON. On an average spend of 100-250 RON, are situated 65 residents of Cluj-Napoca (25%). Investing a small amount for an event, under 100 RON, is a choice made by 20% of the respondents.

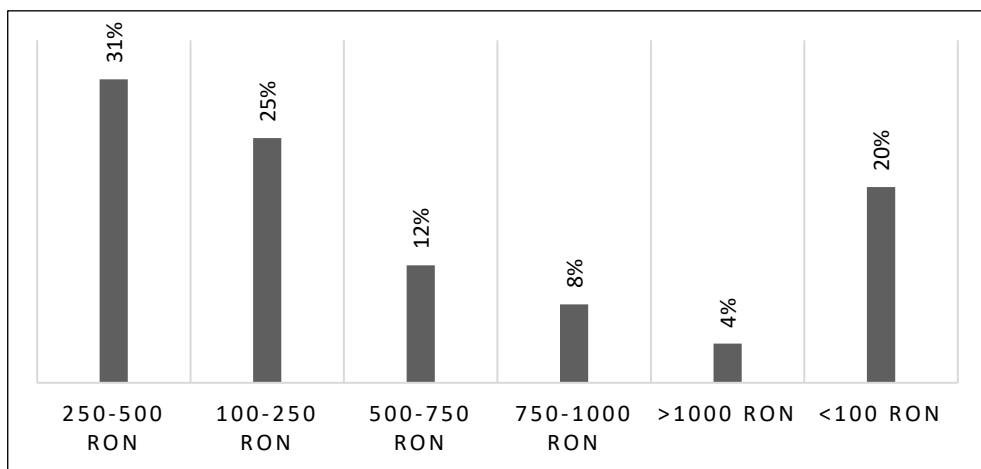


Figure 5: The budget allocated to participate in the event taking place in Cluj-Napoca

Source: Author's calculations

While on an opposing note, some participants believe that a good experience is followed by a proper investment; 30 persons (12%) have a budget of 500-750 RON, and a moderate percentage (8%) opts for an expenditure of 750-1000 RON. Ultimately, only 4% of the interviewed respondents display a budget over 1000 RON for a single event.

Therefore, in accordance with Table 2 our profile is composed of a majority of 70% females and 30% males. The young energy of the image is recognized through the following demographics. By the age gap, where most of the respondents are young persons between 21 to 30 years old (74,4%). High school students and university undergraduates under 20 years of age represent 10,1% from the overall results. Adults take up a segment of 9,7% as 31-40 years old, while an insignificant number of 10 participants (3,9%) have reached the age of 41-50 years old. Seniors are a small percentage in the overall participants, by providing an attendance of 1,6% for a 51–65-year gap and 0,4% for individuals exceeding the age of 65. On an educational level, the highest peak in studies demonstrates the young adult as dominating in the profile, having finished either high school studies (41%) as current undergraduates and students or by having a bachelor's degree (40%) and are in current employment or entrepreneurship. Moreover, 37 of the respondents provide a further education by doing postgraduate studies (14%). The lowest level is reached by individuals having basic studies (3%) or a post-secondary education (2%).

Table 2: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	181	70%
Male	77	30%
Age		
< 20	26	10,1%
21 – 30	192	74,4%
31 – 40	25	9,7%
41 – 50	10	3,9%
51 – 65	4	1,6%
>65	1	0,4%

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Income		
<1250 Lei	79	31%
1251 – 1800	38	15%
1801 – 2500	30	12%
2501 – 3000	36	14%
3001 – 4000	40	15%
> 4000	35	13%
Education		
Basic studies	7	3%
High school	107	41%
Post-secondary	4	2%
University studies	103	40%
Postuniversity studies	37	14%
Marital status		
Single	123	48%
In a relationship	104	40%
In a relationship/married without children	19	7%
In a relationship/ married having children	12	5%

Source: Author's calculations.

By looking at their marital status, the consumer is based on mostly singles as provided by 123 results (48%) or is currently in a relationship (40%). Married individuals without having children have provided a presence of 7%, while those participating with their kids represent a low percentage (5%). Ultimately, the most frequented income levels match the other demographics: students have an income of under 1250 RON (31%) if their single focus is on their further education. However, they can also represent students in current employment with a budget of 1251-1800 RON (15%) or are undergraduates taking a step ahead in their career, providing an income of 1801-2500 RON (12%) to that of 2501-3000 RON (14%). The highest levels of income might demonstrate an entrepreneurship initiative, of individuals participating in the events with an income of 3001-4000 RON (15%) or over 4000 RON (13%).

Conclusions

To sum up the prominent characteristics in the current study, based on an applied research instrument and on analyzed data, the

profile of the event consumer of Cluj-Napoca has been defined. Therefore, for our given data, the consumer of events in the city of Cluj-Napoca has the following description is primarily a figure of feminine gender, of young persons aged between 21 to 30 years old; the youth element in the data has given us an insight towards other demographics, such as occupation and level of education. Hence, the targeted group based on their age, is either a student, in current employment or makes a living as an entrepreneur. Furthermore, given their occupation status, the group targeted in the profile of the study has managed to reach the following educational level: high-school studies, for current students, undergraduate and postgraduate accomplishments for workforce individuals and entrepreneurs. Moreover, taking into consideration the given traits, of their career status and degree of education, the group has an average income of under 1250 RON, as students; 3001-4000 RON and 1251-1800 as employees and entrepreneurs.

Regarding their marital status, most of them are singles and unmarried; a category where the students can fit since their level of education and career status are in current development. In opposition to a single status, the study has managed to reach out to unmarried individuals having a current relationship.

As participants, the studied consumer is active in its status participating to more than 5 events in a single year.

Last but not least, their preferred content in events comes from artsy and entertaining manifestations, cultural festivals, educational and local fairs, as they can find in Cluj-Napoca's most iconic events. As for being informed towards the novelty of the industry, modern sources, such as social media, word-of-mouth suggestions and a click on the online press, are keeping the consumer up to-date in terms of events in Cluj-Napoca.

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Bullying in Romanian Organizations

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Abstract: Bullying, although it is regulated by Romanian law, is a phenomenon far from being properly addressed in the organizational environment. It is a topic difficult to absorb at the cultural level and its impact on mental wellbeing and productivity is worth studying. Our main objectives are mapping the problem and the social actors involved, identify the level of awareness, and identify the causes and effect, and collect examples of good practices/not so good practices.

Introduction

The study is conducted in Romania, especially in corporate organizations and focuses on data and subjects from the last twenty years to identify potential milestones and fluctuation. We were also interested to see if there is an incremental awareness and practices associated with bullying. Actors of interest involved in this phenomenon are witnesses (they observed a relevant case as bystanders), mediators (managers trying to solve the conflict to help the organization) and main parties (the victim and the perpetrator).

The law regarding bullying is quite new (Law 167 from 7/08/2020) and it comes as a greater effort to adjust the Romanian legislation to the

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European directives. The challenges of implementing the law, building awareness, developing specific practices and reinforcing it is something to be analysed in a future paper.

According to "Bullying in the workplace" (Dickson, D., 2005: 1159-1161), tackling the bullying situations requires interventions not only at individual level but at team and organizational culture level. This approach will help the victims to overcome anxiety and have the courage to deal with the situation. Building an environment of transparency and trust make employees to feel safe in discussing about their problems.

Theoretical background

An operation definition of workplace bullying used for this paper sees bullying as „a personalized, often sustained attack on one colleague by another colleague using behaviours which are emotionally and psychologically punishing.“ (Oade, 2009, 2).

Our focus is on corporate environment, because bullying experiences may evolve into pressure and harassment, with a clear-defined motive that can only be achieved by altering the interpersonal dynamics in the workplace (Duffy, Sperry, 2014, 19).

Bullying is a systematic process, repetitive, gradually increasing stress and decreasing productivity and it leads to long time failure of the victim. There is always a relation of inferiority with the perpetrator. Bullying and harassing are two sides of the same coin and are part of the psycho-social risks at work (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, Cooper 2011) especially because the phenomenon is difficult to observe and is difficult to discuss. It is also a phenomenon that is increasing in frequency or at least its perception is increasing (Dean, Shepard, 2017, 22) and quite often there is collateral damage since victimized employees are projecting their frustrations on the company's customers. (Dean, Shepard, 2017, 8-25). Bullying is a mechanism for self-defence because perpetrator validates

his/hers position and gives a sense of superiority. Lack of social skills create pressure for those in the position of power and as a result they project their aggressive attitude on to subordinates (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, Cooper 2011, 180-185). It looks like a cycle of weaknesses.

The level of integration in a group is a good indicator for bullying, as a single individual that does not resonate with the team is more vulnerable. Tolerance for mistakes is lower for a person who is not well integrated. Conflict management skills and strategies are also something to be considered in a group, since the lack of confidence and reaction leads gradually to victimization. Paradoxically, successful employees who are not integrated can be another factor that facilitates bullying (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, Cooper, 2003, 186-192). In the same line of argumentation, sometimes we have an escalating situation (action-reaction) because of mirroring arrogant attitude between two parties, and the perpetrator just reacts to a perceived unjust attitude (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, Cooper, 2003, 192-210). One key learning point is to identify the thin red line between aggressor and the victim and the challenging situation when the roles are intertwined or overlapping.

The most common tactics are verbal bullying, non-verbal bullying, direct bullying, and performance bullying. Verbal bullying illustrates involves offensive nicknames for the victim, abusive comments and/or negative remarks, verbal aggression as vocabulary or tone, scapegoating, insulting, coercion or affecting the private or public image. Non-verbal bullying is more subtle and involves rolling eyes, continuous amusement at the target person and the use of non-verbal aggression such as frowning, etc.). The next level is direct bullying and includes using or destroying personal belongings, humiliating the victim in front of teammates, and sending demeaning messages through any method of communication. Performance bullying means “continuous unwarranted criticism of the target person's performance, assigning an unrealistic amount of work to a colleague in order to generate a failure, intentionally

hiding information necessary to meet a requirement , the unjustified suggestion of the idea that the targeted person does not give the right performance at work and that he will be punished, the selective assignment of harsher rules to a single colleague or the persistent ignoring of the victim when he has the role of interlocutor in question "(Oade , 2009, 28-29). (Oade, 2009, 27-29) Considering the level of conflict involved, several categories of bullying are identified by Jenkins (2013): latent conflict that escalates; bullying as predatory behaviour; and bullying as group phenomenon (mobbing).

To understand the phenomenon, constant measure of the phenomenon is needed (Galanaki, Papalexandris, 2013), and furthermore to find concrete evidence is needed to be identified. For this purpose two methods were identified. The first method is a self-assessment method (employees are asked to self-assess their own experiences and indicate if they have had such experiences in the company and if they identify themselves as victims of bullying). The second method focuses on compiling a list of incidents (employees are asked to identify themselves with one of the cases). (Leymann, 1990)

Regarding the perpetrators, they are predominantly males, supervisors, lacks emotional intelligence, tend to be more authoritarian (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Rayner, 1997). The victims gender depends on the circumstances and nature of bullying, they usually represent a minority (race, social level, sexual orientation, different level of education). You might expect that the victims lack self-confidence, but it seems like people who are overly confident are often identified among the targets. One potential reason might be that the perpetrator fears of having its performance at work negatively compared with that of the target. (Oade, 2009)

Common psychological consequences on the victims are anxiety, self-isolation and alienation, loss of self-confidence, fear, sudden changes in mood, lack of energy or motivation, mood swings, depression, or panic

attacks. These psychological consequences can lead to somatization: migraines, palpitations, skin problems due to high stress, trembling or loss of appetite (Oade, 2009, 149-156).

Like with any unwanted organizational phenomenon, proactive prevention is better than reactive behavior. Prevention can be divided into a) eliminating this phenomenon before it might arise (to integrate into the organizational culture different tactics to discourage harassment practices); b) early-stage intervention, involving conflict management skills; c) tertiary prevention focuses on the sustainability of the measures prepared in the first and second phases. Lack of intervention usually degenerates into full blown bullying situation. (Glasl, 1994; Fisher and Keashly, 1990).

Policies in a company are clear statements with a low degree of interpretability about the ideas and values that the entity supports, usually outlined around the various issues that the organization often faces (Baron & Kreps, 1999). Many organizations do not frontally address prevention and usually mask the phenomenon under various unclear concepts (Cowan, 2011). Zero tolerance on such situations, transparency on the consequences that the perpetrator will suffer (e.g., job loss, change to a lower position, denunciation), clear procedures, details about monitoring and auditing, taking responsibility for resolving situations are a must (Rayner, Hoel, Cooper, 2002, 164-184).

Methodology

To explore this topic, we used a mixed research strategy combining questionnaire (with a focus on demographics of the phenomenon), and in-depth interviews for the respondents willing to dive deeper into their experience (with focus on the micro dynamic of bullying from the victim and the bystander perspectives).

The core research question was: “What are the factors that perpetuate Bullying in Romania, despite the fact that the phenomenon is regulated by law?”. The objective of the research is to identify the mechanisms behind bullying and to reflect on good and bad practices at the organizational level.

Key dimensions we covered are awareness of the phenomenon, causes and effects; direct experience; indirect experience; social actors involved; power and dominance; conflict management and strategies; outcomes; and gender and bullying.

The sample of respondents consists of 45 respondents from Romania and Republic of Moldova, with various ages (below 25:9; between 25 and 30:16; between 30 and 40:12; between 40 and 50: 6 and above 50:2. Most of the respondents were from București: 19; Cluj-Napoca:13 and Timisoara: 5. 3 of the questionnaire respondents agreed to attend an in-depth interview to explore their perceptions on the matter.

Analysis and interpretations

The phenomenon widely is recognized among Romanian employees. Half of the respondents say that there are anti-bullying policies in companies, while a quarter say that they do not exist, and another quarter say that they do not know the possibility of such policies. Given the high percentage of ignorance of organizational culture policies, we can see that a considerable part of companies does not focus on the code of conduct and workplace values. Regarding the frequency of this phenomenon, only half of the sample had no experience with bullying at work, whether in the position of witness or target individual. Half of the sample responses indicate the presence of such a conflict, which is a worrying situation.

It is observed that in large companies this phenomenon is much more common. More than half of the respondents who encountered

bullying situations at work, met in the context of a company that has more than 250 employees. Regarding the field of activity, the situation is extremely diverse, meeting in many fields. It is observed that most conflicts have a long duration and that, once the length of the conflict increases, the rate of resignation from work increases alarmingly.

The most common methods of bullying found in the answers are unjustified criticism, aggressive tone, humiliating nicknames, alienation and social exclusion, public shaming, and verbal aggression. There are also cases in which the target individual receives either extremely superficial tasks offensively or extremely difficult tasks, which do not correspond to the position held. Physical aggression is less common.

In two-thirds of cases, the supervisor was the perpetrator. Only two thirds of the cases were resolved either by the action of those responsible for resolving the conflicts, or by the resignation of a protagonist of the conflict. The most common causes underlying conflicts are preconceptions, personal frustrations of the perpetrator, poorly developed emotional intelligence of the protagonists, difference in values, etc. 80% of conflicts have never reached the attention of supervisors, which is extremely worrying.

Half of the conflicts were also based on discriminatory factors such as age, gender, ideology, social background, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or regional area of origin. Not many effects of the conflict on the perpetrator were observed, except higher self-esteem, irritation, low patience, and tendencies of gaslighting.

Both in the case of the target individual and in the case of the team, the impact of such a conflict is high in terms of productivity. Out of 15 solved cases, 13 ended in a resignation. Following case studies, we have identified that often the perpetrator's supervisors are aware of bullying, but for various reasons they will not address it. In some cases, the perpetrator feels threatened at work because he identifies a person on the team who provides impressive work output. In other cases, from the

perfectionism of the team leader and the desire to increase the output of work in an unrealistic way, a situation of bullying arises against employees who fail to perform work above standards.

The case studies and the analysed sample prove to us that bullying situations at work can occur regardless of the company's features, regardless of the sector of activity, regardless of size, regardless of city, regardless of seniority in the company. Sometimes the conflict can go unnoticed by the protagonists, sometimes it is known by all teammates. We notice that the impact of such an unresolved conflict in a timely manner is devastating, both to the target individual through the traumas that will remain and to the team by decreasing productivity. The company also suffers, because it must recruit new employees on the positions released because of the conflict. Furthermore, productivity is directly proportional to the quality of services and the profit received.

Following the interaction with the subjects from the case studies, we identified the fact that the presence of a psychologist in the organization would be beneficial in reducing the traumas of this phenomenon and on addressing such conflict in a healthy manner.

Conclusions

Bullying in organizations starts to be a topic of interest, starts to go beyond a formal/legal requirement and to be the focus of internal practices that helps to overcome this unwanted phenomenon.

Few questions remain to be answered. How can we reduce the impact of the phenomenon? What are the best solution and prevention tactics? Research shows that the method of leadership and organizational culture that encourages a healthy work environment would be key. A person within the organization with the responsibilities of organizational psychologist would also be very helpful for the target individual to minimize the impact of trauma. In addition, to properly map the

phenomenon and generate pragmatic methods of approach, it is essential to analyse the perspective of the perpetrator.

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Some Considerations on Behavioral Changes of Romanian Young Tourists Following the Pandemic

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Abstract: Young tourists are a viable segment for the tourism and leisure sector (representing more than 23% of international tourism), but the emergence of the global pandemic has largely changed everyone's view on travel. Globally, the tourism sector will no longer be the same, but it can continue according to the new rules and restrictions.

The primary purpose of this paper is to provide an analysis of the effect that COVID-19 has on travel activity preferences, subdividing the young tourists, and most important, how their travel behaviors changed following the pandemic. We have conducted a questionnaire-based survey on consumers of tourist services aged 18-28 years. The key topics investigated were related to the changes of their travel behavior due to the sanitary crises (type of destination they chose, the frequency of travel, type of tourist package, duration of stay or factors that would encourage them to travel more during this period).

While the entire travel industry has been hard-hit by COVID-19, some sectors have felt more impact than others and this crisis is leading to a strong uncertainty about the future of the hospitality industry and is important for the managers to know how consumers behaviors and preferences changed, so they can adapt to them and reopen the businesses in almost normal terms.

Keywords: travel, youth, COVID-19.

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Introduction

The world is facing an unpredictable, unique situation, and the spread of the virus affects to a very large measure the global economy, the well-being of people, practically everyone's life has changed radically. This virus is spreading globally, regardless of geographical coverage, and governments have implemented measures to stop its spread. These measures are: mobility and travel restrictions, blocking, closing shops, cinemas, hotels, restaurants etc.

According to WTTC (2020), the pandemic had a global economic impact, almost 143 million jobs were lost in travel & tourism sector, also this sector's GDP decreased by 43%, what means over 3,815 billion USD. The global arrivals decreased by 65% and the domestic ones by 33%. The GDP of travel and tourism sector decreased in a very big proportion, in 2019 was 10,4 % and in 2020 5,5%, almost 50% (WTTC, 2020).

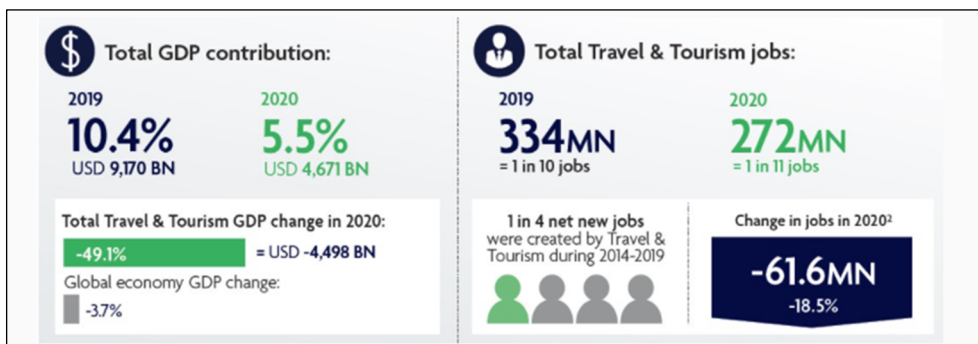


Figure 1: Evolution of the economic impact of Travel and Tourism

Source: <https://wttc.org/Research/Economic-Impact>

We consider this issue very important, because the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative impact on tourism. Customs restrictions, the closure of accommodation and food units have led to a collapse, from which the tourism sector will recover very hard. Today, tourists perceive travel in a different way than they did it in 2019, and their new behaviors depend on many factors. The aim of this paper is to

identify these factors and to make a comparison between the behaviors of young tourists before and following the pandemic. It is important to analyze because the tourism industry must be rethought, reviewed very well by specialists and new methods must be found to adapt to the conditions of the new virus. These adaptations cannot be made in the business of the tourism industry, only if the new behaviors of tourists and their desires towards the new way of practicing travel are known.

One of the most important factors determining the success or failure of a tourist destination is based on the protected and safe environment that it provides for both tourists and the host population. The perception of personal and physical safety influences the choice of a tourist destination, tourists will visit destinations where the risk to safety is perceived as minimal (Fowler et al., 2012, Novelli et al., 2018). When potential tourists perceived a destination as unsafe, they may adjust their intentions to visit that destination (Yusoff, Wee, Shamsol, 2017). Karl (2016, in Yusoff, Wee, Shamsol, 2017) shows that 54% of young tourists will choose a destination if it is safe, but after the virus appears, tourists do not perceive any destination as safe.

Undoubtedly, youth travel plays an important segment in the field of hospitality. Youth tourism is recognized among key stakeholders due to its positive social and economic impact (UNWTO, 2016). The tourism industry has begun to pay more attention to the preferences of young tourists and is increasingly looking to serve them on the basis of studies on the needs of a young person (Dionysopoulou and Mylonakis, 2013). The 'youth travel' product is very complex, the primary features are wide accessibility, the safety and the security of transport and tourism facilities, flexibility, and a high quality of service (Tavares, Sawant and Ban, 2018).

What we bring new in this paper is that we analyze certain factors that changed radically with the appearance of the pandemic, but especially we study the behavior of young tourists, which are their main motivations for practicing (or not) traveling during the pandemic. We are interested in how the pandemic and restrictions affected their desire to

travel, their motivations, their behavior. Studies show that the perception of consumers of tourist services is not and will not be the same as before, but we want to find out the opinions of a single target segment, young consumers. Understanding the travel behavior of young people is important for marketers. Data on the travel behavior of the young population can provide such information and increase hospitality businesses.

Research Methodology

To identify the young tourists' preferences and most important, their behavioral changes caused by the pandemic, we have conducted a questionnaire-based survey. The factors that we analyzed using the questionnaire were the travel frequencies, the destination type tourist choose, the type of travel package, the duration of travel, the safety feeling. Also, we have identified some factors that cause tourists to travel more often during the pandemic. For data analysis we have employed SPSS software.

The questionnaire was completed by 108 respondents. The average age of the respondents were 22,46 years, because we focused only on youth, 22,2% of the respondents were 22 years old, 16,7% 21 years old, 11,1% 23 years old, 10,2% 20 years old. The lowest percentage (4,6%), were 19, respectively 28 years old. The majority, 76,9 %, of the respondents were female, and 23,1% male. In terms of marital status, 48,1% of the respondents were unmarried, while 41,7% declared they were in a relationship, 8,3% are married and the lowest percentage (1,3%) were divorced.

The most common occupational status was student (52,8%), followed by employees in execution function 23,1% and those having a liberal profession (9%). The sample also included a percentage of 5,6 % of high school students and one of 4,6% of entrepreneurs and only 1,9% of unemployed individuals.

Table 1: The structure of the sample by occupational status

OCCUPATION	PERCENT
HIGHSCHOOL STUDENT	5.6
STUDENT	52.8
EMPLOYEE WITH MANAGING POSITION	8.3
EMPLOYEE WITH EXECUTION FUNCTION	23.1
UNEMPLOYED	1.9
ENTREPRENEUR	4.6
LIBERAL PROFESSION	.9
AT HOME	2.8
TOTAL	100.0

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Research Results

In order to identify the changes of young tourists' behavior we have asked for their preferences before and during the pandemic. The first aspect that we have investigated referred to the destination type they usually chose. The preferred destination before the pandemic were the cities (78,7%) followed by the seaside resorts (64,8%). The mountain resorts were chosen by 54,6% of the respondents and the cultural destinations by 30%. In proportions between 22 and 28% the young tourists have chosen Spas or outstanding and exotic destinations.

During the pandemic tourists preferred in a bigger proportion city breaks (54,6%) and mountain resorts (42,6%). We find interesting the fact that the seaside destinations decreased with almost 30% after the pandemic in the preferences of the tourists. The rural and natural reservations/parks recorded the same level in tourists' preferences before and during the pandemic, with shares between 22 and 26%. The visitors' preferences for Spas decreased, the reason it's absolutely the indoor based activity of a Spa and the fact that due to the pandemic this type o activities were suspended. The less visited destinations during

the pandemic are the theme parks (6,5%) and de gastronomic destinations (5,6%)

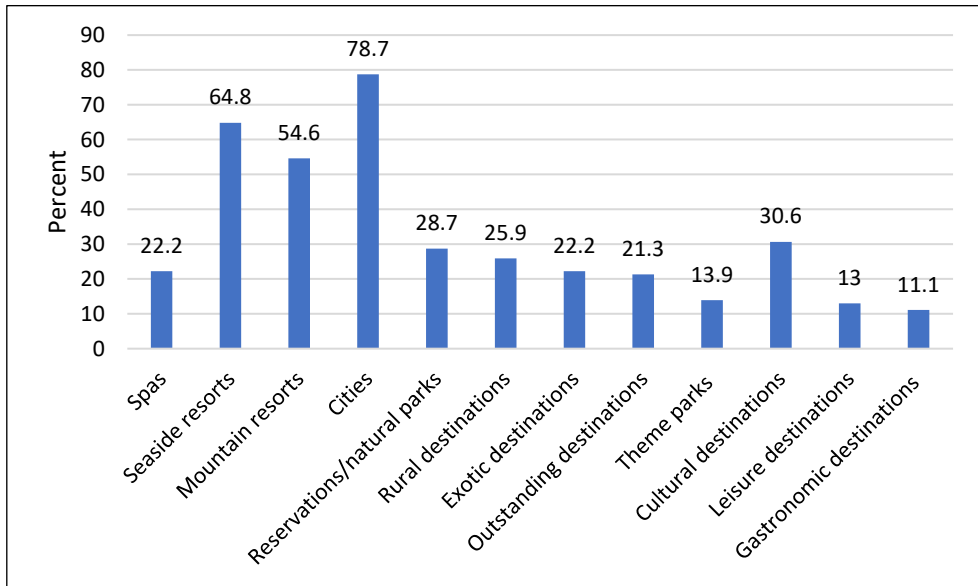


Figure 2: Preferred destination before the pandemic

Source: Authors' own elaboration

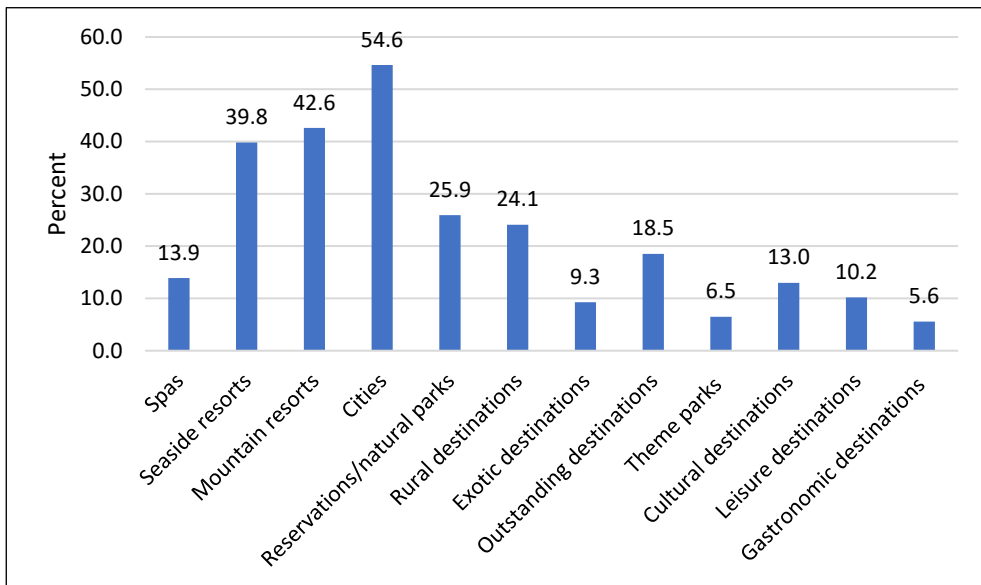


Figure 3: Preferred destination during the pandemic

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Another variable of tourist behavior that we have analyzed was travel frequency. Before the pandemic most of the young tourists (28,7%) travelled once at 4-5 months, while 26,9% have traveled twice a year and 18,5% once at every 2-3 months. Weekly and monthly traveled only 3,7% and respectively, 8,3% of the respondents, but there are also some tourists (13,9%) who traveled less often, only once a year.

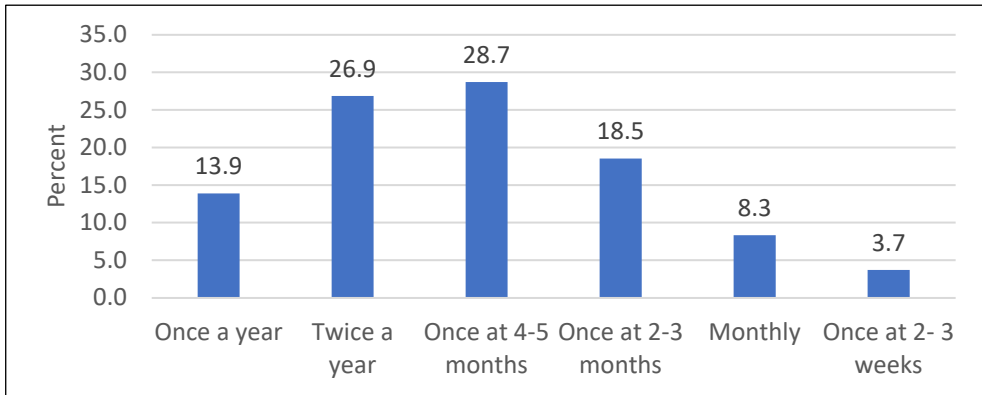


Figure 4: Travel frequency before the pandemic

Source: Authors' own elaboration

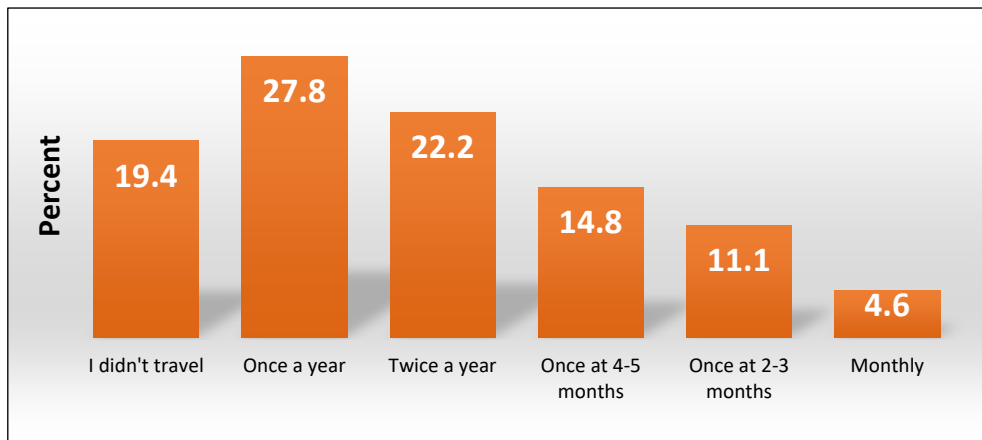


Figure 5: Travel frequency during the pandemic

Source: Authors' own elaboration

During the pandemic we can clearly see the difference, 19,4% of the respondents didn't travelled, while the most of them (27,8%) travelled

just once a year. The frequency of travel decreased during the pandemic, 22,2% of the young tourist declared that they have travelled twice a year, 14,8% once at 4-5 months, and the lowest percentage of respondents traveled monthly (4,6%).

In terms of type of travel package, most tourists chose room only accommodation both before (46%) and after (41%) the pandemic. The accommodation and breakfast type decreased by 8% during the pandemic in the preferences of young tourists and the full board option with 4%. Half board and all-inclusive types of packages recorded an increase in preferences during the pandemic, probably due to the very low rates charged by the accommodation units, because they try to survive on the market, and due to the fact that tourists trust in the safety measures this type of establishments took.

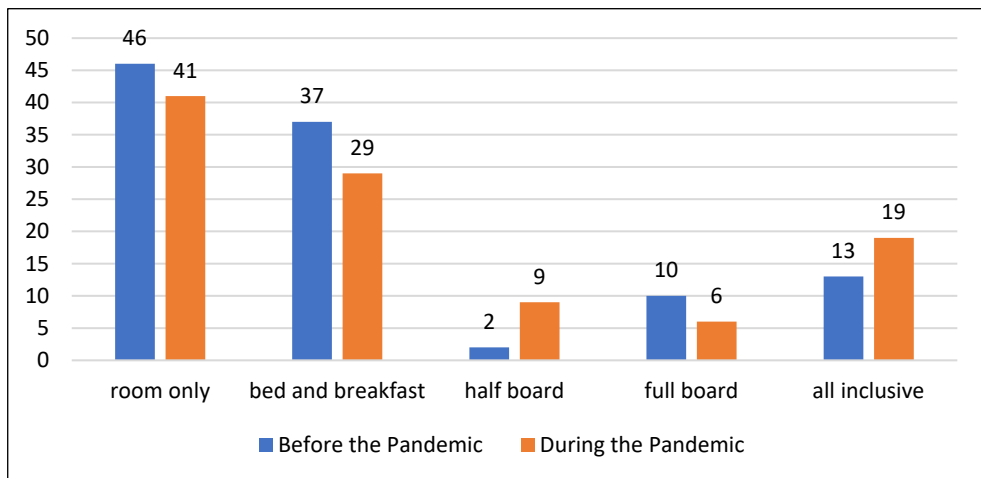


Figure 6: Preferred type of travel package

Source: Authors' own elaboration

The duration of travel before the pandemic was mostly 3-5 days (40,7%), and 6-7 days (30,6%). Just 8% of the respondents chose to travel between 8-10 days. A share of 9,3% of young tourists chose short trips (1-2 days), such as a city breaks or could be family visits. Only a very small percentage of tourists (2,8%) had a travel duration of more than 14 days.

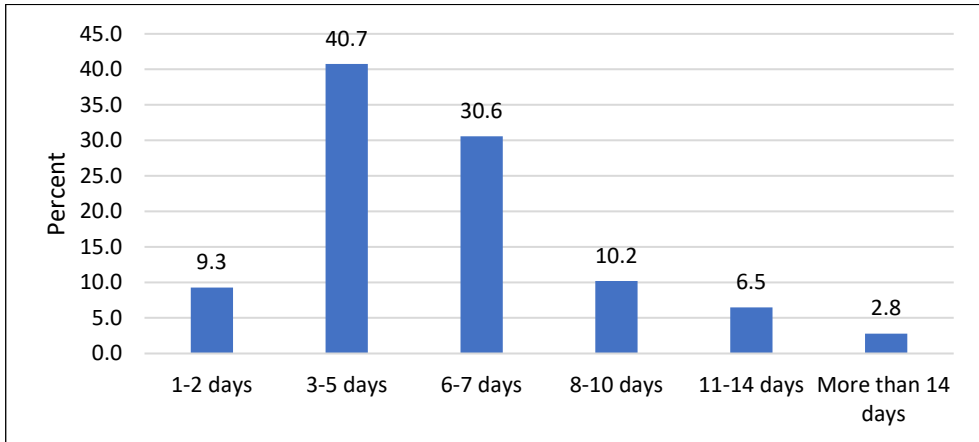


Figure 7: Duration of travel before the pandemic

Source: Authors' own elaboration

During the pandemic the preference for shorts trips increased, tourists now choose short trips instead of long vacations. The short trips (1-2 days) increased with 18,5% compared to the period before the pandemic. The longer trips (8-10 days) decreased by 7,4% but the very long trips, of more than 14 days, increased by 1,8% and this phenomenon is due to the great desire of tourists to travel more, to return to normal travel behavior and during the pandemic many restrictions were enforced especially for international travel so instead of travelling for shorter periods to more destinations, some individuals travel to one destination were they stayed longer.

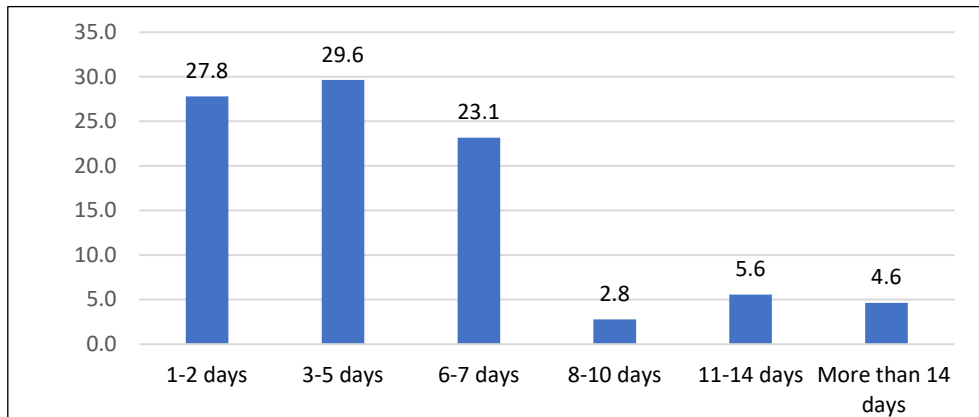


Figure 8: Duration of travel during the pandemic

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Safety is the most important factor in this analysis. Tourists choose a destination especially during the pandemic based on the feeling of security. The differences can be observed, before the pandemic the tourists felt safe in the destination to a large (48%), and respectively, to a very large extent (46%). With the break-out of the pandemic this percentages decreased. Now only 21% feel safe to very large extent and only 36% to a large extent.

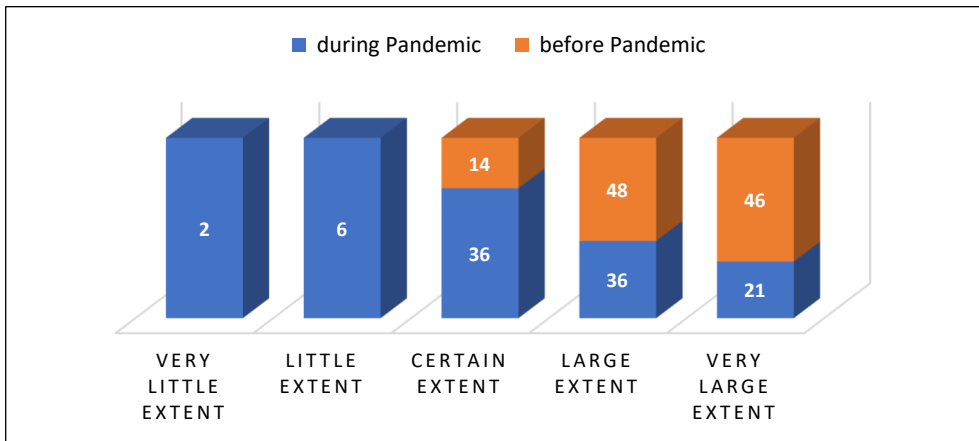


Figure 9: Sentiment of safety during traveling

Source: Authors' own elaboration

We also identified some important factors that influence the behavior of tourists to travel more during the pandemic. The most common factor is the reduction of the spread of the new virus to the chosen destination (69%) The next important factor is the implementation of sanitation and cleaning norms of all surfaces in the accommodation units (61%). Quarantine conditions are also a very common aspect, tourists would travel more if it would not be quarantined when they would return home (64%). In proportion of 55% the customs restrictions influence the travel behavior of tourists. The crowding of hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions is another determining factor. In the end, the rate for accommodation and services must be lower, given the

financial problems caused by the virus (41%) and last but not least the vaccination of the population (38%).

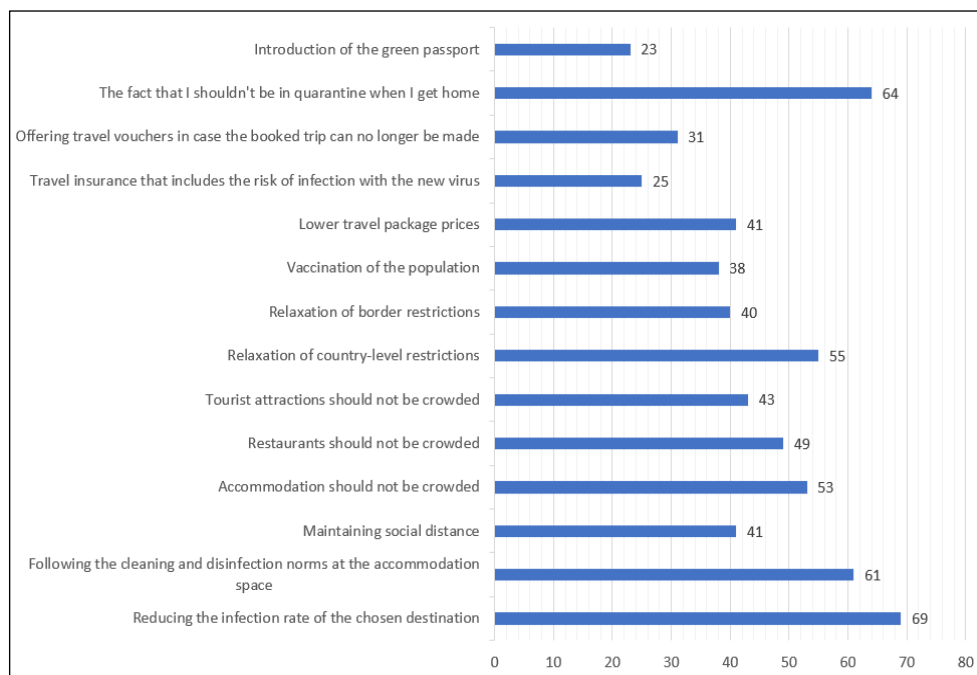


Figure 10: Factors enhancing the traveling

Source: Authors' own elaboration

Conclusions

The main purpose of our study was to investigate the change in travel behavior of young tourists as before the pandemic the youth represented an important segment of tourists and also the young people have been less impacted by this crisis compared to mature travelers and retirees (UNWTO, 2021). The travel and tourism organizations have been severely impacted by the pandemic so it is very important for them to know, understand and consider the preferences of the tourist segment that seems to be very keen to resume traveling.

Our findings show that young tourists prefer as destinations cities, mountain and seaside resorts, the difference brought by the pandemic is

that during this period more tourists preferred mountain resorts to seaside resorts, in order to avoid the crowded destinations. The mountains are perceived as safer probably due to the open environment, the natural distancing offered by the orographic conformation, the clean and fresh air (Osti and Nava, 2020). It was not a surprise to find that the travel frequency decreased to one or two trips per year given all the restrictions and the fact that, as our results show, the sentiment of safety while travelling decreased. In terms of tourist package the young people didn't change their preferences due to COVID-19, their options being mostly room only and bed and breakfast. Another aspect that seems to not suffer significant changes in this period, was the length of stay, most of the tourist declaring that they traveled for 3-5 days or for 6-7 days. Regarding this aspect, the most significant change was that before the pandemic the short trips (1-2 days) were preferred only by 9.3% of the participants and during the pandemic 27.8% of them stated they travelled mostly for 1-2 days.

Given what the participants declared would be the factors that would determine them to travel more, the accommodation units and the restaurants should implement health and safety protocols to address travelers' preferences and also the legal requirements, should have protocols in place to avoid the crowding of their facilities and to ensure that social distancing is maintained. Also, given that this pandemic negatively affected the financial resources of many individuals, the travel and tourism operators should adapt their offers to attract young tourists.

We consider the main limitation of our research to be the fact that it was conducted only in Romania and for a small sample size. Since the COVID-19 impacted mostly the international travel, future research should include young tourists from different countries, so that the findings would be more representative.

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Using Eye Tracking to Explore the Universe of Art

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Abstract: Eye-tracking is considered today as a so-called tool of the modern researcher. This research tool manages to identify certain parameters such as: the place where a person looks, his gaze or fixation point, the movement of the eyes in relation to the head and at the same time, measures the time in which the person looked at that point and the volume of fixation. By applying eye-tracking as a consumer study technique, the observable behavior of the investigated subject can be directly measured, thus eliminating subjectivity and ambiguity. The technique appeals both to the consumer's visual perception and to its emotions related to its own experience.

The purpose of our study was to explore the possibilities of using eye tracking to collect consumers' reactions to art. Starting from consumers' reactions, the art development and selling process can be improved. For data collection, exploratory research was conducted. A literature review was done to identify and analyze papers on topics to better understand this technique. In the last decade researchers have used Eye Tracking Devices, such as glasses. Nowadays, it can be noticed a kind of transition to online, using screen-based eye tracker.

Are consumers all the same? What type of observer is more interesting to watch a visual reference, the typical one or the one that is looking outside the battlefield? Based on these questions, most arts studies have shown that by using eye-tracking technology to study the eye movement of art lovers while viewing paintings

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displayed on a computer screen in the laboratory, the subjects of the experiment have a completely distinct experience in terms of visualizing art and compared to the physical experience in an art museum.

Keywords: eye tracking, observation, art, artwork analysis, paintings.

JEL classification: L31, C91

Introduction and Review of Literature

Art by its simple existence was able to bring to the surface the most hidden and deepest emotions of a person, either by his admiration or simply by starting his process of creation. For this reason, it is also to be appreciated how a simple work of art, without using verbal words or coded language in a certain way, can create such a strong connection between two different individuals.

In its unique sense of the word, according to the explanation given by the historians, “art’ it comes from the Latin word ‘ars’ which means simply put art, skill, or craft”, and as found by great historians, this word has been used first in the 13th century. (Marder, 2020) Countless definitions and interpretations of this word have been uttered and written since the earliest times of humankind and until now, making it so that today, we cannot attribute to this word a concrete and exact definition because this word was not designed for describe something ordinary or flat. As is consider by the one of the greatest artist and writer from Nigeria “art is man's constant effort to create for himself a different order of reality from which is given to him.”(Achebe, 1990)

As a final product, the result of this entire process of creating art, and perhaps one of the most famous and widespread products in the world is represented by the painting.

Considering the opinions of some well-known writers, the main essence of the paintings, in general, consists in their two-dimensional shape, which, moreover, represents nothing more than an image captured from the environment and then painted on that flat surface of a

canvas. Following the same ideas, this flat surface is the most common feature of a painting and together with its shape highlighted by its right angles manages to create the standard and emblematic condition for this product over time and also become very representative of the fine arts. (Taft Jr and Mayer, 2000)

It is very fascinating and impressive how all these feelings and emotional experiences, which underlie the human being, such as joy, sadness, frustration, or fear, are imprinted and captured in nature staged by a simple painting. These cryogenic traces, evoked by painting, are in themselves the results of the artist's cognitive and analytical thinking during the process of creating his work of art. Together with these ideas from the daily life of the artist and together with the imagination and techniques and methods that the artist uses in his creative process, make the attraction and interest in the final product reach the pinnacle of desired success. (Taft Jr and Mayer, 2000)

The paint and its texture have a particularly significant role in the composition of the paintings and on the basis of which they end up being classified, capitalized, and criticized. At the same time, these areas of paint in a painting overlap in a certain way and consistency. "They can be thicker or thinner, smoother or very textured and are those that capture light and manage to reflect it to a certain extent or are simply matte areas of paint on the canvas". (Taft Jr and Mayer, 2000). In other words, this synchronous dance made out of conjuncture and formed by light and layers of paint is an especially crucial element that underlies our perception of the painting.

Therefore, what we actually see when we look at a painting is the fact that it is dictated indirectly by the environment in which the artist is during the process of making the work of art.

On the other hand, considering the context created between the artist and the viewer, we concluded that the human eye and gaze is the common and connecting element of this relationship. As the artist identifies the color he wants to use depending on the response of his

formed eye, and the viewer when studying for the first time the work relates to what he sees with the naked eye for the first time.

The eyes have perhaps the greatest significance and use to create value for these works of art and the artists who created them. That is why in all this equation, eye-tracking, as a method of scientific research, also plays a very important role, especially if we refer to the way of analysis, exhibition, and sale of these works to their collectors and buyers.

Thus, after long research over time, it has been shown that eye movements and their control are related to a person's own will. Due to the advancement of technology and human interest in computer technology more precisely, these eye movements to a certain point they represent a quality and very accurate input generating tool for almost any research in the field of marketing, advertising and not only, given the advanced interactions of the business world and the field of psychology and implicitly of neuroscience, which together try to decipher increasingly the most unique needs of the people. (Richardson & Spivey, 2008)

Compared to the evolution and digitalization of today's world, in the past, one of the greatest achievements in the field of neuromarketing and implicitly of eye-tracking was the invention of devices that measure and study eye movements. Recordings that were intended to be purely objective, and capable of being permanently stored electronically. In this context, it's been discovered that the first data and conclusions regarding the discoveries and experiments that consider the analysis of eye movement are composed in advance of the observations made by the researcher, observations that could easily be, at that time, omitted or concealed by the observer of the experiment, either involuntarily or voluntarily by him, when the experiments are performing. It is known that in the past, during the time when the experiment was held, the behavior of the subject's eyes in relation to the experiment was monitored by using observation tools such as mirrors or telescopes. (Richardson & Spivey, 2008)

Considering the competition that exists today in the global art market, it is closely set in motion by its interaction with some of the most

important industries that underlie the existence of the economic field in the last decade. Therefore, according to an analysis made in these industries, real estate, finance, and banking or retail trade represent only an exceedingly small percentage of the industries that include the largest collectors worldwide. Industries that are still present today and that have come to lead the market and shake the water from time to time among its players. (Sussman, 2017)

On the other hand, if we consider the fierce players in the art market, it can be easily stated that they have become strongly influenced by the internet and these advances of the digital and information age. Just the simple fact that they have directed almost all their activities regarding the purchase and sale of art in the online environment, denotes how the preferences and the way these collectors perceive and see art have evolved and changed a lot comparatively with the past. Not only the artist himself comes to matter to them but also the interest that other collectors have towards the same artist ends up weighing these preferences and opinions regarding the trading of works of art. In other words, these collectors make their own rules regarding the purchase of art. They no longer rely only on the information provided from a sole source but search each source until they get the best image of the artist and his popularity. Also, there are new entrants that enter the market as collectors and try to minimize their risk by following other works of the targeted artists and the value at which they were sold, when and by whom.

In other words, in addition to the safety that a collector is looking for in an artist, he also looks at the value for money and time. They also want the accessibility to be unique and the price to be compatible with their pre-established budget, all of which are done around the professionalism usually present in a successful business. (Artsy, 2019)

The saddest thing that is prominent in the art market even today is the fact that too many art galleries and art auctions have focused their exclusive interest on contemporary art, trying to satisfy the tastes of these recently wealthy collectors who do not have enough knowledge. extended. of art and its history and that due to their financial contribution to

museums through donations made by them end up having a fairly controlled influence on the preferred trend of art and the characteristics it must meet in order to be sold significantly on the market. (Sussman, 2017)

Material and method

The main aim of this study was to explore eye-tracking, as a research technique to collect information from consumers and the possibilities of using it to record consumers' reactions to art. An exploratory research has been conducted. To better understand this research technique, a literature review was done to identify and analyze papers on topic. A comparative analysis of the papers was done to be able to draw relevant conclusions on the research subject from different perspectives. Looking at the fusion created between the field of art and neuromarketing, more precisely research using eye-tracking technology and through the study of this interaction, very widespread and dormant, in fact in recent years, we tried to sketch a map which should include the steps and hypotheses as well as the results discovered by the other researchers analyzed to carry out this work.

Results and Discussions

The present study reveals that the similarities found among the 11 papers studied all follow approximately the same structure in terms of methods used, from participants and materials to the discussion based on the results obtained.

On the other hand, in terms of inspiration and documentation made on the findings of eye-tracking research, eye movement on art, and stimuli that are derived from these results already analyzed by researchers in past decades, these studies have as historical landmarks about the same examples.

Thus, the studies from which most of the research carried out in the past decade, are influenced by the hypotheses and discoveries made by Buswell (1935) and Yarbus (1967), two great writers and researchers who focused on the influence of art on the viewer them and especially on the connection it has on the movement of the eyes. As for Buswell, he used art photography in his studio to start his experiment. Following this experiment, he claims that the results obtained by him show that in terms of painting, the eye does not tend to follow a so-called smooth trajectory. As is the case of the rapid passage of the eye through a text, it shows the same behavior in the case of the studied painting. The eye casts its gaze from place to place depending on the area where the points of interest of the painting are. In addition to these eye behaviors, he found that participants had in common a certain specific attraction to the same areas of the study studied, and this was observed due to a large number of cumulative fixations from all test participants.

It is also known that in that year, namely 1935, Thomas Buswell published his first book which aims to follow the eyes of a person using images to study these movements and directions of the eye. From these discoveries, Bruswel stated that, although the participants do not follow the same direction and route while looking at a painting or image, they still orient themselves after some horizontal and vertical imaginary lines that cross the flat surface of the image. Of course, due to the lack of equipment and technological endowments specific to that time, today these discoveries lead to so many doubts and speculations that end up laying the foundations of the newest and most innovative research hypotheses on this subject of studying eye movement in art.

Also, in the same discoveries made by Buswell, Yarbus, carries forward the hypothesis regarding the strongest areas of interest in a painting and states that these fixations of the eyes are found mostly in the center of the image. He is the first to suggest that the strongest interests in a work of art are an important link when trying to make a certain model that considers the movements of the eye. He also says that the eye

movements rotate beforehand, during the time provided for the analysis of the image, between the most significant points found in the paper by each participant and that they usually stick to these points of interest found for the first time when I look at the work (Sancarlo, R., Dare, Z., Arato, J. & Rosenberg, R. 2020).

Over time, these models made to be able to explore the paintings more easily in terms of visualization and analysis have undergone new additions and changes in this regard. New researchers have come up with their discoveries, such as Locher 1996, another pioneer who lays the groundwork for inspiration for countless researchers in this merged field.

It discusses the importance of pictorial balance, a balance that is described by the stages that underlie the visualization of work, and how the pre-stage of the actual visualization of the work, when subjects are asked to perform and follow certain tasks, to look at the symmetry and balance of the global structure of the content of the respective work.

This is also the one that describes the existence of quite prominent boundaries in terms of the process of analyzing the work of art from experts and non-art experts. It seems that experts are much more intrigued and receptive when it comes to original work in exchange for a replica or a lesser-known work, and they are also the ones who pay special attention to the composition of that work. Also, the experts present some longer and much fewer fixations when they see the respective work for the first time (Kapoula, Yang, Vernet and Bucci, 2008).

Therefore, in addition to the main vertical and horizontal lines in a paper and the return on points of interest discovered by each participant, the composition of a paper weighs as much in importance and influence on eye movement as other discoveries have. That is why the recently appeared model turns its attention to following the repeated jerks between the main elements of a painting instead of studying the eye fixations (Sancarlo, R., Dare, Z., Arato, J. & Rosenberg, R. 2020).

The main characteristics of eye tracking in paintings found in the research papers analysed are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The main characteristics of eye-tracking in paintings

Characteristics	Eye-tracking in paintings
The place of the studies carried out in the papers.	The representative countries for each of the studies analyzed were mainly Italy, Finland, Hungary, and other European countries, but also countries such as the USA and China. For the most part, the experiments were held either in laboratories specially designed for this type of experiment or in museums and art galleries.
Number of participants	The number of participants in art studies is between 20 and 150 people. This group of people usually consists of both experts and non-experts and follows a comparison of how they look at and analyze art paintings.
Type of participants	Most of the time, if a large number of subjects is used in eye-tracking studies, the number of experts is less than the number of non-art experts. Those participants were usually represented by students from different universities or laboratory collaborators, and if we are talking about the participant with some kind of art training, they are represented by painters, collectors, curators, and professors in art. Also, the number of women was way higher than that of men.
Experts vs non-experts	<p>In terms of how an art expert and a person who doesn't have that much knowledge visualize that art, it starts with the areas of the painting that these types of people look at. In the case of an expert, he analyzes approximately the entire surface of the painting and shows fixations on several extended parts of the painting, while novice people look at the most representative elements of the work and which attract their most attention or make them return on those points of interest. Also, in the same order of ideas, how these experts look at the whole surface of the respective work of art, shows how important the composition of that work is.</p> <p>Through this way of comparing those who know art and those without, it was wanted to know if the presence of a certain education in art has any increased result on the way of analysis and view of works of art by a person. Thus, it was discovered that those who have some knowledge in the field managed, among the different images of the same work that was modified in photoshop, to show that they have some correct ideas about what the composition of a painting means, and that this composition has a certain degree of harmony.</p>
Distance from the analyzed art subject	Regarding the distance at which a person must be when work is to be viewed, if it is the case of a museum then the distance is at least 1 meter, and if it is the state in front of a screen then the optimal distance is 60-70 cm.
Average time required to observe the paintings.	In terms of the time it takes for a person to look at a work of art, it is on average as shown by studies already done in about 20 seconds in a museum, but which still show some differences from a person. the high. if it is necessary to present several images of a painting that has been modified in different styles and edited to be able to observe which are exactly those stimuli that capture the most effective attention of the subjects, such as several 200 images this process takes about half an hour per experiment.

Characteristics	Eye-tracking in paintings
Equipment	<p>The equipment usually consists of either tracker that is based on the already built-in camera and that is strictly intended for sale and use identified at home or are headphones and glasses that are put on the head and have cameras that see what the subject is looking at and in his eyes. At the same time, this equipment for monitoring and analyzing a person's vision is then connected to a screen via a Wi-Fi signal or direct connection. It is also about certain online platforms that use certain software that is intended for the analysis of eye movement. The most commercial used eye-tracker is Tobii Eye-Tracker X120.</p>
General discoveries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓It has been found that in an art or gallery use, the fact that there are a certain number of exhibits and the fact that they are exhibited according to a certain theme makes the viewing time of certain works to be affected by these things and that it gradually decreases in while time in the museum increases more. This leads to a certain fatigue, especially if the museum is quite large and makes the average time at the exhibit noticeably short. ✓It has also been shown that arts education is necessary to obtain an efficient and correct analysis when it comes to the viewers of a work of art or even a painting in general. Because, if the residence time and the average fixation time have a shorter time, and the smaller the number of fixations, the more concrete and correct an analysis can be made if it is the case of identifying an original compared to the corresponding fake or modified work. the original. And that means the person is an expert in the art. Moreover, it has been shown that certain aesthetic features or symbols such as elements representative of human nature such as a person's face or body can positively affect a person's physiognomy, and if certain famous works are viewed, familiarity plays a particularly key role in regarding the fixations resulting from the subjects and the ratio of the values concerning the composition of the work of art. ✓It was also discovered the aesthetic differences that are present in the art styles used in the process of making the paintings are due to the differences in the visualization of a person's gaze in terms of the relationship and the impression left on the observer by the combination of colors, light and compositional harmonic behavior that are analyzed together by subjects.

Source: authors findings

Conclusions

To sum up, in the model we proposed, based on the results found in studies already published by other researchers on works of art, we found that they focus mostly on gaze recording. In general, such a test can have several stages and can take place both in a laboratory and

outside it. As in the case of portable glasses with built-in cameras to measure and record the direction of the participants' eyes, they can also be worn in the case of a museum. This is also scientifically proven in several studies that have shown how important the room in which the study of the gaze of a work of art takes place and how the room of a museum or gallery influences the way a person looks at a painting and how they interpret that work.

As we observed in the analyzed studies, in a gaze tracking experiment, certain limitations involve the light source, the correct position of the subjects opposite this camera and the light source as well as the subject's vision, how good it is. Therefore, from a technical point of view, it is desired that the start of the experiment take place in a well-equipped laboratory.

In this regard, if we consider a typical eye gaze recorder online program this is usually the easiest tool that you can get access to when you want to do eye-tracking research to find where a person is locking in details and numbers of data.

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Solo Female Travellers. Behaviour, Attitudes, and Meanings

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Abstract: The paper aims to explore the behaviours, attitudes and meanings associated with solo female travellers in the context of the shift from home-centred activities towards fully-fledged decision-makers in society. The focus is on the contrasting European Countries and Muslim countries, and through literature review and a series of interviews we are looking to make an initial assessment of the sociological and business impact this form of tourism generates.

Introduction

The paper analyses the *behaviour, attitudes and meanings associated with solo female travellers*. For contrast purposes the focus will be on differences between Europeans and Muslim countries. The analysis will develop on the touristic behaviours and motivations for pursuing such a journey, more specifically the driving forces behind the trip; meanings that they have for such a trip or build during their “developmental journey”; how they manage to plan it, from the financial, logistical (safety, itineraries, destinations) and the outcomes. Also, it would be important to address various social aspects like the dynamics of solo

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travel, or how the relationship host-guest develops between the social parties involved.

The reasons we should care about this topic, to name only a few, are the number of solo female travellers is increasing; the condition of the woman around the globe is changing gradually, allowing them to be independent travellers; the social media is a channel encouraging this behaviour and the tourism industry is only beginning to deal with this new opportunity.

Literature Review

From a historical perspective the evolution of solo women travellers, as the access to such experiences, was gradually accessible due to the change of women's position in society, starting with the industrial revolution, resulting in feminist movements (Clark, 1919), and the emancipation movement debated by the communist ideology (Marx & Engels, 1848). Also, the increase in demand for independent and solo types of travel is reflective of a wider, global phenomenon referred to as 'new tourism' and the increasing importance of women generated a new subcategory in the industry "solo female travellers". (Wilson & Harris, 2006). According to the theory of the Pillars of support (Popovic, Milivojevic, & Djinovic, 2007), there were identified four main categories supporting the problem: a) Individual & society – social structures; b) Motivations for pursuing a solo trip, or the driving forces behind the trip; c) Global economies and dynamics of solo travelling, and d) Technology, social media, and safety measures.

Individual & society – social structures

Solo travel represents a disconnection from the society and culture we are embedded in, and solo traveling allows those over a certain age (usually 18 years old) to escape their ethnocentric view. Thus, we can

think of this phenomenon as being related with the artifacts, exposed values, and deep assumptions of the culture of origin. A national culture may encourage a certain touristic behaviour, while another may even forbid tourism at any costs, some governments can give incentives to the industry, while others will not invest in it. Age is one key aspect to be noticed here. According to a study of Princeton University, "58% of millennials worldwide are willing to travel alone, compared to 47% of older generations." (McNutt, 2017). Generational differences, regardless of gender, can also have a strong effect on the motivation for travelling: "Millennials are especially likely to want to disconnect (36%) while Gen Zers are more likely to be motivated by self-discovery (34%) and meeting new people (32%)." (Expedia, 2019). Cultural background is the second reference point. There is not such a thing as a "global profile" for the solo female traveller, but more of a cultural mosaic that is to be explored. It looks like the bulk of solo female travellers comes from anglosphere, followed by the Asian (preponderantly Chinese women, with an increase of 11% of outbound travels at national level, out of which 50% were global destinations). (Sorrells, M., 2019)

Motivations for pursuing a solo trip, or the driving forces behind the trip

There are two main categories of solo travellers: solo female travellers by choice and solo female travellers determined by constraints. (Mehmetoglu, Dann, & Larsen, 2001) The first category (solo female traveller by choice) is represented by women that are traveling by default, with an internal driving force, defined by the power of choosing, the lack of constraint that they perceive, or, by any case, they surpass. For them, the main motivators seem to revolve around leisure, independence, and social interaction with a different culture. Leisure or recreation. In the first case, we can affirm that "Solo travellers are frequent travellers. 46% of respondents travel three or more times per year." (Solo Traveler, 2020), and in their case, literature review found a strong connection between the

idea of tourism and leisure, "... as both travellers and leisure seekers are generally, in search of experiences that provide escape, freedom, and pleasure". "...the number one motivator for solo leisure travels globally (61%), which compares to 48% when traveling with friends" (Agoda, 2018) becomes a recreational activity in most of the cases, allowing them to dissociate better from the centre, so an opportunity to not be missed just for the inconvenience of not having a partner to share the experience. The second category (solo female traveller determined by constraints) is represented by women forced by certain circumstances to do so, such as the absence of a partner for the trip. They react to the system, and what it is a motivation for the ones that choose to travel alone, like the desire to get out of the comfort zone, becomes for them an effect, as they are placed in this situation. A list of constraints of solo women travellers was conducted (Wilson & Little, 2005) and organised in four groups, depending on the typology: socio-cultural constraints; constraints at a personal level; practical concerns and spatial concerns. Socio-cultural constraints. Here, the expected gender roles and lifestyles (Bente & Birgit, 2014) would constrain women to respect duties, such as motherhood, but in a world where the civil status of single persons is highly increasing at a global level (DePaulo, 2019) this creates a gap in the social duties and the family becomes less important than personal enrichment, which in this case might be a trip.

Global economies and dynamics of solo travelling

With a global growth in the tourist demand of about 1.5 billion people in 2019, especially from China (Sorrells, 2019), the "mass-tourism" as "Contemporary (...) tourism phenomenon" (Vainikka, 2015), is placed in a shadow by the "solo tourism" at a global level, on the ground of many ethical problems, such as sustainability issues, pollution, overcrowding, scaling and emerging tourism economies creating "pilgrimage places" or the endangered loss of authenticity (Cohen, 1984). "60% of travellers plan

to take a solo trip in the next year, proving travellers want more flexibility, convenience, and autonomy from their vacations” (Expedia, 2019). This means they can integrate differently in the community, communicate with the residents, and have different activities, which can develop those differently at personal level. Neither the idea of “Tourism as commercialized hospitality” is not far from being appreciated, as single travellers interact more with the host countries. The more “explorer” a person is, the higher the relationship host-culture would be perceived (Smith, 1977). Nevertheless, women are perceived differently in this equation, and the problem of gender can be interpreted in different ways, regarding the country visited.

Technology with special respect to social media and safety measures

“Unsurprisingly, solo leisure travellers spend more time in front of their laptops and phones than any other traveller type – two hours a day (119 minutes) (...) 15% more time than when travellers are with friends”(Agoda 2019). One reason for this behaviour would be the access to touristic products through technology, especially due to sharing economies, connecting local companies/service providers with the potential guest at small costs, based on fees or commissions, without the normal limitations of planning, safety and labour laws, strict regimes. Among the tech-driven companies we can talk about Skyscanner, Expedia, Booking.com and Airbnb, with "Airbnb surpassed 800,000 listings and hosted more than 10 million people in 2014" (OECD, 2020). Not only that the internet and social media can provide the traveller with a pre-travel experience, but it can connect them with people at the destination, first of all with guided services: “The popularity of guided tours among solo travellers grew from 21% to 46% between 2013 and 2015” (Solo Travel, 2020). Secondly, there are multiple platforms, such as Couchsurfing, that help them to meet hosts willing to show them around, and the relationships are built usually before the trip. At a psychological

level, the idea of knowing someone at the destination can be a comforting motivator for most of the women travellers and can determine them to choose even more “exotic” places.

Lastly, but maybe the more important would be to mention the existence of social media communities and forums, created exactly for the purpose of empowering women all around the globe to travel. There are multiple ones on Facebook, out of which we can mention “Girls Love Travel®”, “a global community of over 1 million active and aspiring women travellers providing resources and empowerment to one another to explore the world fearlessly through safety, socializing and support”, rising popularity worldwide, especially raising awareness about the possibility of pursuing a solo trip. Also, in Europe, the idea of solo travelling is encouraged even by the EU Parliament, once created the “DiscoverEu” program, which would give free passes for train trips to 18-year-old teenagers. In the end, social media became a synergy between these human factors and many other more, all within the use of such a device, the smartphone.

Methodology

Harris (2006) argued that “independent travel is a meaningful part of people’s lives and that women through these experiences, reconsider their perspectives on life and community, and reassess their interpersonal relationships”[24] This quote was a starting point of the paper suggesting the importance of collective qualitative, immersive information about the phenomenon.

The method of choice was structured interview. To understand the phenomenon of interest, a series of interviews were conducted with solo traveling women from European countries (2 from Greece, 1 from Republic of Moldova, 1 from Romania, 2 from Germany, 2 from Estonia, 1 from Czech Republic), from Muslim countries (1 from Tunisia, 1 from Egypt and

1 from Turkey), and in-between these countries (an Algerian born and raised in UK). As a result of this exploratory approach many layers of the solo female traveling were identified, most of them connected with the theoretical background presented at the beginning of the project.

Document analysis was the second method of choice, aiming at collecting information from blogs and social media. Additionally, has analysed the online environment of solo woman travelling, including statistics, keyword ranking, trends, and lastly, confirming it by other research in the tourism domain, resulting in confirming some of the suppositions of the literature review, but also raising other topics and even contradicting some points.

Another method used (by one of the authors) as a complementary method to the interviews, was participatory observation. Personal, immersive experience as solo female travel gives a genuine insight into the topic, generates genuine interest, and narrows the distance between researcher and the research context.

Findings

Individual and society, social structures

It has been observed by the interviews how some cultures, with great respect to the Europeans, have promoted and actively developed this phenomenon of “solo traveling”, trough that benefited thousands of people [34], while others are more reluctant to this trend. There is a discrepancy between the Westerners and the Muslims countries perceptions of the phenomenon.

In Muslim countries there is a reluctance for solo female to visit Westerner countries due to racism “(...) racism may tie my hands and feet. I do not want to be in a place where nobody wants me in even if that place is the best” [MG, Turkey]. On the other side, the main concern when it

comes to female solo travellers is safety [CA, Greece]. On the other side it seems that even inside the similar cultural regions there are differences as KB [Tunisia] declared: "The only time I felt integrated was with the Tunisian people, not even any other Arabic nationalities, because Tunisia and Lebanon have this bad reputation in Muslim world for giving equal rights between women and men, overall being very Europeanised."

In individualistic cultures the fact that women travel alone is seen as an ordinary aspect – "Actually, I think that nobody has ever talked about it with nobody... People are used with me travelling, so they don't necessarily see a difference between being alone or with someone." (HS, Estonia). In the collectivistic cultures the social pressure is so strong that it can stop them from travelling – "Money and marriage are the only things that can stop me from traveling alone" (SN, Egypt). Another example is the case of an Algerian female living in UK with a unique perspective on things – "You will definitely be perceived as a modern woman if you travel alone in Algeria. In Algeria, people might also feel sympathy for you and assume that you are alone because you do not have a family. In European countries, however, I think to see a woman travelling alone is normal." (LC, UK)

Younger individuals seem to be more enthusiastic and willing to discover the world. In this regards age looks like good indicator for this phenomenon since the majority of interviewed female solo travellers considered it as "good experience before planning your life." (EP, Greece), as a preparation for adulthood (HG (Germany)), or as a good way to discover the world.

Motivations & driving forces

Out of the 12 people interviewed, only 1/12 was a solo traveller by default, 4/12 were travelling for the leisure purpose, and the rest, 7/12 invoked the constrains factor. Based on their answers, there were

revealed some categories of women's motivations for pursuing a solo arise.

Financial reasons, since some of the interviewees were looking for paid internship – “financial part can motivate me (for a summer job)” (CA, Greece); or study mobilities and international projects – “Things like study opportunities, interesting projects would push me to travel alone, I don't even care if someone joins or not.” (HS, Estonia).

Leisure, a pleasant way of spending time in a relaxing manner, without any special meaning attached – “Traveling alone makes me feel alive, more than any other activity, and I can say that it is an extraordinary feeling that I want to live in the future” (DV, Romania). Sometimes certain events that fall under the same category are the main drive “I can be pushed by certain event or concerts” (CV, Estonia).

Self-discovery and learning are present in other cases. “I can be pushed by knowing people in a certain place, so I travel just to visit them or knowing the place very well and re-visiting it.” (CA, Greece), “The desire to see a new place or to experience a new feeling would definitely push me to travel, just to break the routine.” (DV, Romania).

Independence & freedom gradually discovered through solo traveling experience and by stepping outside the comfort zone is another deeper motivator. “The first time I was very scared, so definitely I would have preferred to be with someone, because I wasn't ready to be alone... The other experiences I enjoyed being alone, especially because it felt freer.” (CA, Greece). “Coming from Qatar, a very conservative country, even for Tunisians, had an impact over me once arrived. I enjoyed not being known by anyone, doing what I wanted without fearing what people would think.” (KB, Tunisia)

On the restraining part or demotivators, safety seems to be a big concern. Fear of harassment, followed by the thieves and getting lost. Since women are so exposed to dangers, compared to men, this has strong effects on how they behave at the destination and can result in giving up

on some plans. "And when is dark, you can't go alone, you enjoy the destination just during the day." (CA, Greece). "In Poland, my friends advised me to dress less provocative, for safety reason" (EP, Greece). "(Women) are so easy targets, they can be robbed, attacked or forced easier than others, but the main issue would be sexual harassment." (SN, Egypt)

Dynamics of solo travel

Language barriers still have a big influence on the dynamics of solo traveling although English, the international travelling language helps in some cases. "No day passed without just being made fun of the fact that I don't speak good Romanian, and I was soooo frustrated about this because I was fluent in Arabic, English, French and Spanish, Romanian was my 5th one, while they were speaking ONLY Romanian." (KB, Tunisia). "It was like another world to me because not many people in Poznan could speak English." (MG, Turkey). ". I feel more comfortable in the countries where I can speak the language, such as English and Italian, because I am safer" (CA, Greece).

The more explorer a person is, the higher the relationship with host-culture would be [41]. Interviews revealed that many of the girls were associating the process of exploration during solo trip with a more authentic tourism experience, opposing to the classical mass-tourism, where the hospitality is sold only for commercial purposes. "When I arrive in a new city, I immediately set out in a whirlwind of discovery and try to visit at least a few places, but I explore rather than run a marathon from monument to monument" (VW, Cz. Rep). You do not let yourself conducted by the touristic actors, but mainly you chose how the experience would be delivered to you., and this gives you more satisfaction (LW, Germany)

Solo travellers are also prone to look for those like them and were happy to find co-nationals in a destination, or even elements of their

culture, generating feelings of belongingness, safety, and acceptance. MG from Turkey told how she needed to abandon her hostel room because there were men dormitories and she felt more protected when she was in the mosque “I found Moroccan mosque. There was another Turkish at the door. (...) He wanted to introduce me to his wife. (...) We went to his house. (...) I spent a night there, but it felt like we knew each other for long years, and I was a part of their family.” EZ from Moldova, counted on the support of the Romanians, Moldavians or Russians in Coruna to find more about the administrative problems, or to keep herself connected with home “I joined a lot of groups with Romanian, Moldavian and Russian diaspora in Spain, mostly to be information.

Technology

Google trends statistics [43] shows the importance of Internet in nowadays solo travelling tourism and the evolution of the phenomena “an indicator of a shift in the travel industry” [42] The popularity has increased over the past five years, peaking in 2019, followed by a decrease in 2020, due to the Co-vid 19 pandemic, which was explained in a survey on the Facebook community “Solo Female Travellers (first fb group for women who travel solo)”, where 39% of respondents invoked the pandemic as the main reason to cancel a solo trip, followed by loneliness feeling and fears. Based on key-entries Google Trends also displays the top 5 countries, where the phenomenon is popular: Singapore, Indonesia, Ireland, Philippine and United Kingdom.

Using tools of SEO optimization [44], the website www.solotravelerworld.com was analysed, the first online community of this sense, and the most popular articles were on “solo woman traveling” and “backpacking”, meaning that there is a higher interest for these two categories [1]. According to the “Easy to Rank Keywords” solo travelling seems to be a good attraction for people interested in visiting Africa and The Extreme Orient, but there is a multitude of person that didn’t decide

over one specific destination, and we can observe their interest in section “Buyer’s keywords”, that they make their choice of destination based on suggestions, either from other travellers or from quotes “Pinterest has also reported a 350% increase in women pinning articles in ‘solo female travel’ [45].

Social media has a strong influence on the female solo travelling. The influence comes from inner social circle – “I guess I have few friends that post this type of content and it is enough for me, so I don’t need to follow influencers and co.” (CV, Estonia); or from bloggers/influencers/content creators – “...many of the people that I follow on social media, mostly Instagram, are travel pages that display photography of different parts of the world and share people’s travel experiences. I use this as inspiration and ideas for my future travels.” (HG, Germany).

In terms of communication and social interaction during travel, 8 of the subjects were part of online communities or the apps for travellers for informational and inspirational purposes, but just a few are open to use them for getting in touch with other travellers. Real life interaction prevails the apps – “You can just take your time to meet people in real life. It is better to meet people in the traditional way, it is more challenging an interesting” (EP, Greece). There is also a risk associated with this online apps since there is always a possibility of being “scammed”, interviewees even naming scenarios like kidnapping or harassment.

Conclusions

In a world where women position is currently transcending, there is no doubt that we have a shift in their tourist motivations and behaviours, one of them being the phenomenon of solo women tourism. The research reveals how there is an increasing demand for such experiences, and especially in the case of the Muslim countries

considering the custom and traditions, whereas in Europe, solo female traveling it becomes a part of everyone's life.

Motivations are diverse and strongly related to the background of each traveller, both the culture and subculture they belong. Leisure was the first motivation because travelling alone and can easier transport you into another reality, as an escape, either as an enriching experience, or as a mean to recharge batteries. Our analysis also revealed an important sense of independence and freedom, embedded into their behaviour. However, there are constrains that motivate the women to choose the trip solo, but these start way earlier, before trip. In this sense they have of practical concerns, where the most relevant were safety and budgeting. This experience, of solo travelling, matures the person and overall enriches them with life skills, that can be used back home, in the new reality that they want to embrace, because being a "drifter" may also mean being adrift from the certain cultural models. We can talk about both language barrier, but also mentality set by religious principles, aspects that interfere with the "touristic message" and puts the label of "foreigner". In this sense, awareness is very important to be promoted on both sides, as through its people can easier accept each other, and solo travel manages to raise to a different level. Those that chose to pursue the trip, even facing these barriers have reported how their life perspectives actively changed through a more open-minded vision.

The presence of technology in the tourism world might be the biggest advantage or these travellers, as sharing economies deliver integrated solutions, and women make extensively use of it, especially in pre-travel part. It has been reported how the Internet can promote stereotypes or can mislead the context of one destination, which can stop some women to visit a place, and here we can talk about the power of feedback that they have on social media, since the majority relies on it, especially on the close circle of friends, followed by content creators or

speciality pages in tourism. However, real life communication is still preferred, and on-line environment connects people based on sharing information necessary for decision making and logistics, etc. but not to schedule meetings or to create meaning. Since the independence is they key of the experience, the women detach from usual guides or channels and chose to explore all by themselves, especially with the help of apps like Google Maps, TripAdvisor and they usually get familiar with the city before the trip.

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Religious Tourism: Pilgrimages – A Business of the Church's Travel Agencies?

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Abstract: One of the oldest forms of tourism, dating back from the 3rd and 4th Century, religious tourism can be classified in four types: pilgrimages, strictly religious tourism, travelling exclusively for a religious event, and church-tourism. These examples are included in the practice of organizing, promoting, and selling touristic packages by travel agencies. In this context, the present paper aims to analyze from sources of primary and secondary data, the online presence, the quality of the touristic products and the economic performances of travel agencies, coordinated by the Romanian Orthodox Church. The conclusion which can be drawn, besides the fact that the activity is attractive for tourists, it is also extremely profitable.

Keywords: religious tourism, pilgrimage, tourism agencies, economic performance, Romanian Orthodox Church, online presence.

Introduction and Theoretical Background

Religious tourism is the oldest known form of tourism, dating from the 3rd and 4th centuries, when religion was one of the most important purposes of travel. Making abstraction of the fact that these trips were associated with Christianity, Islam, Hinduism or any other religion, people used to travel to another regions or cities, thus

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maintaining their strong belief in something of a higher nature (Kim, Kim, & King, 2019; Rejman et al., 2016). Considering the periods from their beginnings, the pilgrimages lasted weeks or even years, due to the lack of infrastructure and transport facilities, but in the meantime, they have become more and more sought after through these developments, thus becoming much more accessible to tourists from other areas and countries. This context opens new tourist horizons for travel enthusiasts, transforming religious tourism into something more complex than it was originally: a contact with the faith (Balomenou, Poulaki, and Dimitrios, 2015: 4).

According to Rinschede (1992), religious tourism can be divided into four main types: pilgrimages (e.g. Medjugorje, Lourdes, Mecca, etc.), strictly religious tourism (for example, Visiting the Holy Land), traveling exclusively for a religious event (as in the case of the Catholic world Journée World of Jeunesse) and tourism of churches, monasteries and other religious buildings (such as visiting fortified churches in Transylvania, wooden churches in Maramures (European Commission, 2020), Catholic churches and cathedrals in France or Italy, the current Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, Mont Saint Michel, Taj Mahal etc.) (Vorzsák and Guț, 2009).

Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to conduct an investigation regarding the economic performance of religious tourism, which the Romanian Orthodox Church manages almost exclusively on the Romanian market. In this sense, a set of travel agencies dedicated to religious tourism were identified, selected and analyzed. These agencies that are for the most part subordinated to the Orthodox parishes in Romania. Researching the problem raised above, the main objective is to understand how holy places can be exploited and turned into a business concept, with

developed tourism products, with appropriate marketing efforts, generating significant, if not huge, turnover for the Church.

From a methodological point of view, the paper falls into the category of case studies based on the analysis of primary and secondary data, respectively with the use of induction and deduction. The research methodology involved the identification of market players whose activity falls into the category of religious tourism. Thus, following the processing of information from the database containing the list of travel agencies licensed in 2020 (National Authority for Tourism, under the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Entrepreneurship, 2020) was selected a total of 20 agencies, which focus on religious tourism, organizing pilgrimages to the Holy Land or circuit pilgrimages to churches around Romania. These travel agencies were strictly selected based on the names of travel agencies, using their websites as auxiliary tools. Studying, in fact, the total population, it can be considered that the number of 20 travel agencies (some with offices in many counties of the country) is a representative sample for such agencies. Once the travel agencies were selected, the research continued with gathering information from two major sources. The primary data source is the internet pages and/or Facebook pages of the identified agencies. Information was collected from these two sources on the following aspects:

- number of working points (License), respectively branches if applicable (Annex),
- year of establishment,
- the quality of their online presence,
- the communication strategies they adopt,
- the target audience (by identifying the foreign languages in which they communicate, being able to distinguish the target international markets concerned, outside Romania),
- the quality and diversity of the programs offered,
- services provided,

- internal / external destinations for which it offers tourist packages,
- and, last but not least, the policies adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second source of data, namely secondary data, aimed at collecting information on the activity and economic performance of the economic operators behind the selected travel agencies. The following categories of information were extracted from public financial data:

- changes in the number of employees,
- turnover,
- the evolution of the recorded profit / loss, and
- main field of activity, according to the NACE code.

Results and Discussions

Thus, a first finding indicates that none of the agencies is independent (nor unique), while all have one or more subsidiaries (Table 1). Basilica Travel is the only agency that has 11 other subsidiaries in the country, in addition to the headquarters. In terms of geographical dispersion, the selected agencies are present in all geographical regions of the country. Although the insurance is a mandatory legal document for travel agencies, two of them, namely the Sfantulita Pilgrimage Center and HolyLand, have a missing insurance.

Table 1: Selected Travel Agencies

No.	Agency	Economic operator	No. of subsidiaries	No. of counties	Missing insurance
1.	Agentia De Pelerinaje Sfantul Mina-Iasi	Pelerinaje Pentru Toti – Iasi SRL	0	1	No
2.	Avraam Travel	Avraam Travel SRL	0	1	No
3.	Axis Mundi	Axis Mundi Grp SRL	0	1	No
4.	Basilica Travel	Basilica Travel SRL	11	9	No
5.	Buna Vestire	Axion Est SRL	0	1	No
6.	Centrul de Pelerinaj Sf. Nicodim	Arhiepiscopia Craiovei – Activități Economice	0	1	No

No.	Agency	Economic operator	No. of subsidiaries	No. of counties	Missing insurance
7.	Centrul de Pelerinaj Sf. Nicolae	Fundația Alături de Tine	0	1	No
8.	Centrul de Pelerinaj Sf. Parascheva	Mitropolia Moldovei și Bucovinei – Activitate Economică	0	1	No
9.	Centrul de Pelerinaj Sfantulita	Centrul de Pelerinaj Sfantulita SRL	0	1	Yes
10.	Centrul de Pelerinaje Partoș	Arhiepiscopia Timișoarei	0	1	No
11.	Holy Travel	Holy Travel SRL	0	1	No
12.	Holyland	Holyland Tour SRL	0	1	Yes
13.	Nazareth Internațional	Nazareth International SRL	0	1	No
14.	Pelerinaje Gabriela	Pelerinaje Gabriela SRL	0	1	No
15.	Pelerinul Creștin	Asociația Pelerin In Maramures	0	1	No
16.	Reintregirea	Reintregirea SRL	0	1	No
17.	Renasterea Centrul de Pelerinaje	Renasterea Centrul de Pelerinaje SRL	0	1	No
18.	Sf. Travel	Sf Travel SRL	0	1	No
19.	Sfântul Nicolae	Agenția de Turism Sfântul Nicolae	0	1	No
20.	Sfintii Imparati Buzau	Agenția de Turism Sfinții Împărați Buzău SRL	0	1	No

Source: Own processing based on data provided by the National Authority for Tourism, subordinated to the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment, 2020

Thus, some of the findings indicate that 3 of the 20 agencies do not organize pilgrimages in Romania, relying exclusively on foreign tourism. At the same time, 3 other agencies do not organize pilgrimages abroad, but only domestic trips to national religious sites. The vast majority of agencies, more precisely, a number of 14 agencies deal with both domestic and international tourism.

Unfortunately, surprising for the 21st century and more than bizarre in the context of the pandemic, 50% of the selected agencies do not have a functional website or do not have a website of any kind, and those who have a presence on the web pages, offers information only in

Romanian, not having the option to translate the content. Considering the design and appearance of the sites, only one website looked slightly outdated, but the rest were well-organized, user friendly, and easy to navigate. Only 10% of them offered the option of “shopping cart” for the trips offered and their payment to be made online, and the rest offered the option to call the agency's headquarters or by filling out an online form.

A percentage of 20% of the 20 travel agencies were established in 2019, while another 20% of them were set up before 2000, and the remaining 60% between 2000 and 2018. travel agency was disbanded in 2020.

A representative factor for travel agencies are the employees and their number. The analysis begins with 2015 continuing until 2019 and a steady increase in the number of employees in this type of agencies can be noticed (Figure 1). According to the data, in 2015 approximately 182 people worked in this niche of travel agencies. The increase was marked by 9 new employees in 2016, stagnating between 2016 and 2017, with approximately the same number of employees. The years 2018 and 2019 registered constant increases with approximately 10 new employees every year. It is important to mention the fact that about half of this number, in some cases even more, is represented by the travel agency Partos Pilgrimage Center, owned by the Archdiocese of Timisoara. Within this agency, a large number of members in the Parish of Timisoara are also listed as employees in the company. Starting from 99 employees in 2015, this number reached its maximum in 2017 when 123 people were listed as employees. On the second place in the top of the number of employees is Basilica Travel SRL, an agency subordinated to the Romanian Patriarchate, with a number ranging between 41 and 61 employees.

Analyzing the above, it can be stated that a percentage of over 60% of employees of these types of agencies are people who are, in fact, part of the staff of the Romanian Orthodox Church, appearing as employees in these companies. The rest of the travel agencies have from 1 employee to a maximum of 9. There are some cases in which there are no registered

employees, but the company generates profits of up to 77,000 lei, as is the case of Axion Est. (Figure 1)

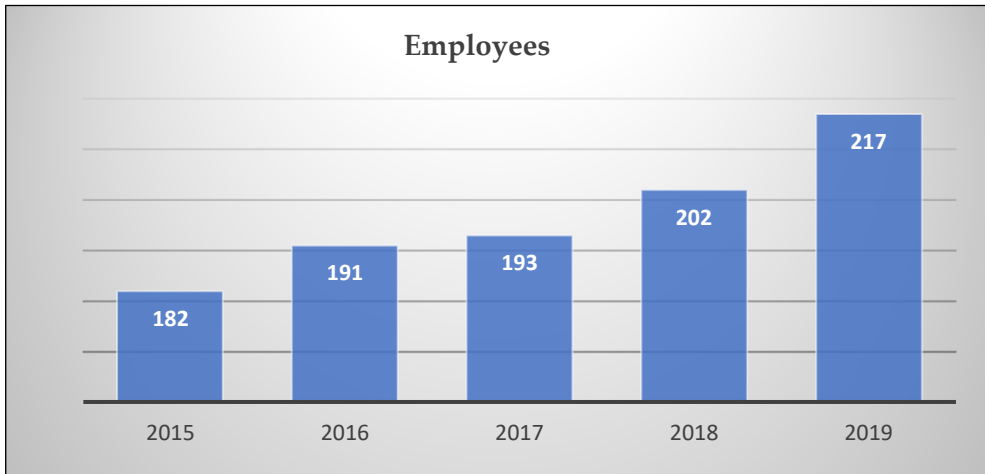


Figure 1: The number of employees in the selected travel agencies

Source: Own processing based on the Ministry of Finance, according to data collected by ListăFirme.ro

Considering the profitability of companies, it is very relative, not being constant in all cases. Some agencies are consistent when it comes to revenue, while others have losses in one year and impressive gains the following year. Unfortunately, for 2 of the chosen agencies no financial data was found, neither on the Ministry of Public Finance or on other websites that could provide such information.

The main field of activity differs from agency to agency. The areas of activity encountered were activities of tour operators, activities of the travel agency, activities of religious organizations, other travel booking and assistance services, activities of advertising agencies and operating activities. A pattern or a correlation could not be identified between the different fields of activity and the profitability of these companies. One thing that stood out as being special is that the only agency with the field of activity of “activities of religious organizations” has the highest profit of all agencies on the list. The profit of this company varies between one million and 3 million lei annually. This agency is called the Partos Pilgrimage Center, its owner being the Archdiocese of Timisoara.

Another huge profit worth mentioning is that of Basilica Travel, which is the travel agency of the Romanian Patriarchate, but the field of activity is “activities of travel agencies”. In contrast, there are certain companies with the same field of activity, but without a trace of profit.

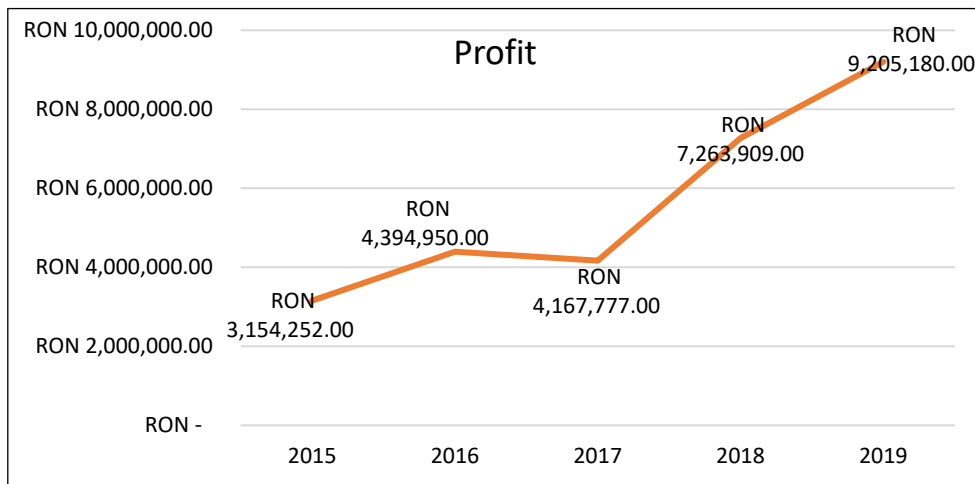


Figure 2: The evolution of profits and losses over the years in the selected agencies

Source: Own processing based on the Ministry of Finance, according to data collected by ListăFirme.ro

In order to obtain an image regarding the size of the business in the sphere of religious tourism, all the profits and losses from each year were cumulated and the results from Figure no. 2. It is important to note that this data is for 18 of the 20 selected agencies, as 2 agencies do not provide financial information.

The year 2015 marks the beginning of the huge revenues within the agencies that focus on national and international religious tourism. With profits of over 3 million lei, this is the lowest value in the last 5 years. In 2016, it increased by over 1 million lei, approximately 30% of the value of profits in the previous year. A slight decrease can be observed between 2016 and 2017, explaining the reason why the number of employees did not increase during this period. After this decrease, profit rose sharply to over 7 million lei in 2018, by 3 million lei, as the value of profit for 2015. And in 2019, this number increased again to over 9 million lei, an increase of 2 million lei in a year cannot go unnoticed.

The agencies that stand out again are Basilica Travel SRL and the Partos Pilgrimage Center. Closely matched by the number of employees, these two agencies undoubtedly have the highest profits in the chosen category. Making a comparison between the two, we can see how in 2015 both agencies had approximately the same starting point, talking about profits of over 1 million lei each. While Basilica Travel remained steady in number, even falling considerably in 2017, to a third of its value in 2015, the Partos Pilgrimage Center continued to accelerate until 2017. The year 2017 was a turning point. for both companies, because Basilica Travel has started to generate a growing profit, even continuing on an upward trend until 2019, and the Pilgrimage Center has decreased slightly.

Taking 2018 as an example, the total profit of the agencies was slightly over 7 million lei. Of these 7 million lei, 2.4 million belonged to the Travel Basilica (Figure no. 3a), and 2.3 million lei to the Pilgrimage Center (Figure no. 3b). In total, the two agencies covered 4.7 million lei, out of a total of 7, meaning a percentage of 67%. Thus, 67% of the profits generated belonged to travel agencies managed by the Archdiocese of Timisoara and the Romanian Patriarchate.

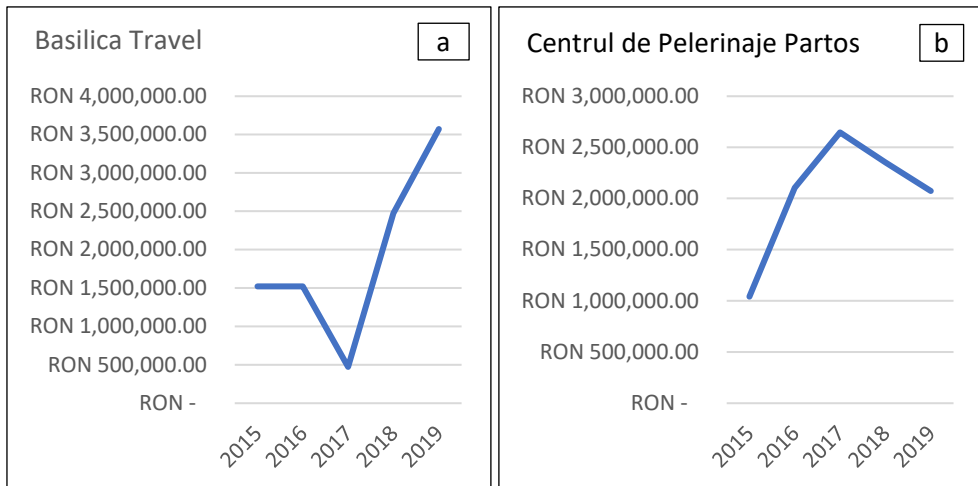


Figure 3: Profits and losses evolution, cumulated from all the selected tourism agencies: a Basilica Travel, b Centrul de Pelerinaje Partos

Source: Own processing based on the Ministry of Finance, according to data collected by ListăFirme.ro

Surprising the other side of the economic situation, these agencies also suffer significant losses. It can be seen that in 2015, there were no losses at all, and the following year to drop sharply to 0 losses reported by religious travel agencies. Considering the profit registered in 2016, it was a productive one from both points of view, the profit increasing, and the losses were 0. The following year the smallest losses from the 5 analyzed years were reported, almost 25,000 lei, 4 times less than two years ago. Parallel to the general profit of that year, it decreased slightly in 2017. The same upward trend in the case of profits, which began in 2017, one can notice a similar trend in the case of losses. 2018 was the year with losses of almost 150,000 lei, but the highest value of losses is noted in 2019, when it reached 235,000 lei.

One thing that stands out is that in 2015, no losses were registered, but in the following year they were worth almost 25,000 lei. Even though the profit was higher in 2016, apparently the losses recorded did not influence the final result. 2017 is the year with significant losses and the year in which the only decrease in overall profit was recorded. The losses influenced the profit a little noticeably, but they have a value of 139,000 lei, being generated by a single travel agency, which also had financial losses the previous year.

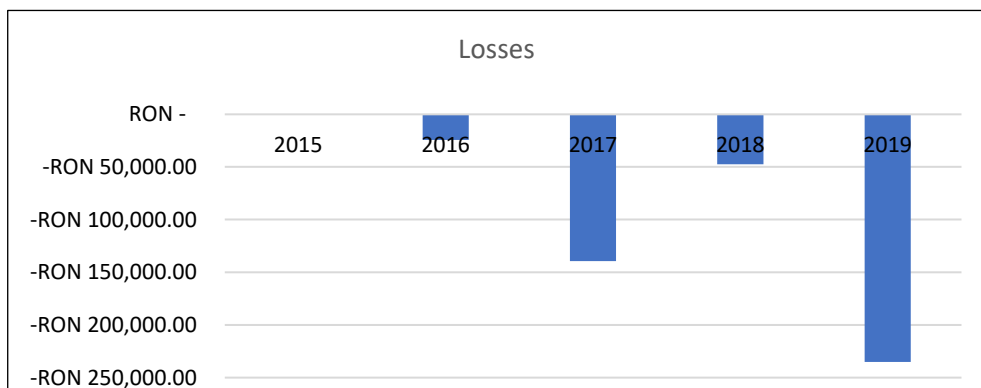


Figure 4: The evolution of cumulated losses of the selected travel agencies

Source: Own processing based on the Ministry of Finance, according to data collected by ListăFirme.ro

In 2018, there was a drastic decrease in losses in general, but it was offset by their increase in 2019 when they reached a value of almost 250,000 lei, when 38.8% of agencies lost.

An investigation was carried out into these agencies, and some unusual things were discovered. While some agencies have a modest number of employees and a decent profit, there were a few agencies that presented interesting data. For example, the Axis Mundi agency has been operating for 2 years and has suffered considerable financial losses every year. The reunification of SRL had the biggest loss from the list of agencies, in 2016 it lost almost 10,000 lei, and the following year it had losses of 139,000 lei. In 2018 it really had a profit, but the following year they returned to the incredible losses, this time registering a minus of 40,000 lei. Another aspect worth mentioning is that the field of activity of this travel agency is “activities of advertising agencies”.

Another agency that has raised some questions and brought up unusual information is Nectaria Tour. When the company was founded, the registered field of activity was “selling vegetables and fruits in specialized stores”. In 2014, it did not provide any information regarding their financial activity, and in 2015 it returned, registered with the same field of activity for the sale of vegetables and fruits. He ended 2015 with a net profit of 25 lei. A two-year break was taken, and in 2018 they returned as a travel agency, registering debts of approximately 1,514 lei from the start. They deducted these debts from the company's capital, more precisely, a capital of -1,514 lei was mentioned. Nectaria Tour ended 2018 with neither profit nor loss. The following year it registered losses amounting to 6,800 lei.

Conclusions and Recommendations

All agencies can be considered niche-oriented, focusing on religious or spiritual tourism. In addition to their services, some agencies mentioned the organization of trips with local schools, as well as within

the School Otherwise program. Only one agency offers insurance brokerage services, but this is an exception.

No information about the coronavirus pandemic was posted on the agencies' websites. No information is provided on hygiene and safety measures for participants in future excursions, and more information on organized group travel is likely to be expected.

In order to conclude based on the analysis, it can be said that the presence of religious travel agencies is observed and known by the population, but the financial data of these companies and the degree of involvement of the Orthodox Church are not known. A question must be asked: Why does the activity of some agencies that record huge losses continue for 3 years in a row? Another remark is that many agencies offer the price of these trips in euros, without offering an exchange rate at which they are calculated, for the transparency of transactions.

No offers were found, there are no promotions or discounts on travel prices, nor any methods of promoting the agencies. The alleged marketing strategy is to spread the word to participants in religious services, based on the fact that these people are interested in such services.

Speaking of the vast variants of excursions, travel prices in Romania are affordable and decent for a larger selection of believers. A trip lasting 2-3 days costs approximately between 350 and 500 lei. When referring to foreign tourism, prices are slightly higher, being obviously influenced by the final destination. However, tourists prefer to choose a travel agency as they offer services that are not otherwise available, such as specially trained guides for locations in Israel or a clear and well-developed program, certainly all tourist attractions will be visited.

The general recommendations are quite difficult to draw, because each agency has a different market, a different target audience and it is not possible to mention a valid universal marketing strategy. A recommendation for all agencies is to invest in websites and their

appearance, as well as the possibility of paying for trips online. It must be borne in mind that the generations that are accustomed to using the internet are getting older and will look for such services. On a website you could find information, depending on the chosen location, about the documents required to enter the country. This can be implemented by all agencies, to make the customer experience as pleasant and easy as possible.

Overall, it should be noted that the Church's involvement in the creation, promotion and sale of tourist packages for religious tourism is proving to be, without a doubt, a very profitable business.

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ABSTRACTS

Unemployment Benefits and Entrepreneurial Initiative

Irina BILAN¹ and Constantin-Marius APOSTOAIIE²

Abstract: There is a general consensus that entrepreneurship represents one of the main engines of economic growth, cutting down unemployment, spurring innovation, and increasing the competitiveness of a country, all problems that many economies are faced with nowadays. Within the global initiative to ensure a better and sustainable future for us all, as reflected in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, entrepreneurship should be a key pillar of policies targeting new job creation and growth. Also, in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, entrepreneurship is regarded as a contributing factor to building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and fostering innovation. Moreover, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in an unprecedented downturn in the global economy and increase in unemployment worldwide, support measures to entrepreneurship are the focal point of policy responses in many countries. Against this backdrop, researchers and policymakers renewed their interest in assessing the impact of factors that may hinder or foster the creation of new businesses and designing the best policies to determine individuals to become entrepreneurs.

From another perspective, many European countries have in place extensive unemployment benefit programs to protect individuals from major income losses during unemployment, and the flexibility and generosity of these programs tend to increase in times of crisis. For sure, such benefits are an important part of the welfare system

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in a country, allowing unemployed individuals to maintain a decent standard of living and preventing them from accepting jobs below their qualification. Moreover, such programs act as macroeconomic stabilizers and help the economy recover during recessions. However, undesirable side effects may occur, especially when unemployment benefits are very generous in level, length and eligibility criteria. There are two main exit strategies from unemployment: an individual may find a new job or chose to become entrepreneur and possibly create jobs for others. In both situations, there are concerns about how the features of the unemployment benefit system may influence unemployed individuals' job search behaviour or their incentive to enter entrepreneurship. While the link between the generosity of unemployment benefits and individuals' motivation to look for a new job is quite well investigated in the literature, only very few studies explore the second path. In addition, generous unemployment benefits may force firms to offer an efficiency wage and overall higher wages, and all potential entrepreneurs (disregarding their previous status on the labour market) might find these higher costs prohibiting and be discouraged from entering entrepreneurship.

Grounded on these theoretical reasonings, our paper investigates the effects of the generosity of unemployment benefit system on the creation of new businesses in the European Union countries. Moreover, we further explore whether these effects depend on the quality of governmental programs and measures for entrepreneurs and the prevailing unemployment rate.

The analysis uses secondary data collected from several macroeconomic data sources (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor database, European Commission's Tax and Benefits Indicators database, Eurostat, and World Banks's World Development Indicators database) and panel data estimation techniques. The dataset spans over 18 years (2001-2018) and 23 European Union countries, for which data for both our dependent and main independent variables were available for at least one third of the total time framework. Entrepreneurial initiative is proxied in our study by the nascent entrepreneurship rate, i.e. the share in the adult population of individuals involved in setting up a new venture that is no more than three months old, and the generosity of the unemployment benefit systems is captured by the net replacement rate, defined as the net income of an individual receiving unemployment benefits, as a share of the income previously earned

while being employed. In addition, several other potential drivers of the creation of new ventures are included as control variables, among which macroeconomic, demographic, and business environment-related factors.

The novelty of our analysis is threefold. First, while the relationship between unemployment insurance and unemployment rate is more thoroughly investigated in the literature, only few studies analyse the effects of unemployment benefits on the decision to become an entrepreneur. Second, our study focuses on a panel of European countries, while previous papers mainly dealt with OECD economies for which data are more widely available. Third, to our knowledge this is the first paper investigating the moderating effects of governmental programs and supports for entrepreneurs on the relationship between unemployment insurance and the creation of new ventures.

The results of our study generally confirm our expectations, more generous unemployment benefit systems hindering entrepreneurial initiatives and reducing the number of new start-ups in a country. However, this negative effect appears to be smaller when generous governmental programs and support measures for entrepreneurs are in place and in times of economic downturn, when the unemployment rate rises and the pressure on entrepreneurs to offer higher wages is smaller, due to the large amount of workforce available on the labour market.

Our findings support the call for properly designed social insurance systems, that do not reduce the incentive of individuals to work nor hinder their entrepreneurial initiatives. However, in modern welfare states, where there is a long tradition of generous unemployment benefits and high social pressure towards preserving them, adequate government programs and measures supporting entrepreneurs could help mitigate the side-effects of a too generous unemployment insurance system.

Keywords: unemployment insurance, nascent entrepreneurship, new businesses, governmental programs and supports, panel-data analysis, European Union countries.

JEL Codes: L26, M13, H53

Artificial Intelligence in Tourism&Hospitality – Tourists` Perception by Generation

Mihaela-Filofteia TUTUNEA¹

Abstract: In recent years, new technologies through the solutions and applications offered by them, have brought important changes both individually and in the business environment; we all noticed that in a short time everyday life began to be marked by various acronyms such as IoT, AI, VR, AR, etc.; also, we are all accustomed both to the use of the solutions offered by the new technologies, as support in various daily activities and to their intrusions in our private life; in the conditions of this pandemic, which humanity is still going through, the solutions offered by the new technologies, it has been proved that they can offer viable alternatives for supporting the specific activities of all industries; one of the most adaptable and up-to-date industries, to the new technologies, is the tourism and hospitality industry; companies in this industry are aware of the need to keep up with tourists, who are always updated with new technologies and applications; starting from these considerations, the present study aimed at identifying the changes that can be brought by the adoption of AI (Artificial Intelligence) solutions and applications in the tourism and hospitality industry; in order to be able to give a more complete picture on this aspect, the study was detailed on two levels, namely the companies in this industry and the tourists as end users of AI solutions; in the case of the companies, only secondary information was used in the study, to identify the AI solutions dedicated to this industry and which can be adopted by companies, thus being able to ensure a competitive advantage and an important level of differentiation; in the case of tourists, starting from the well-known differences between the

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generations regarding the new technologies, the level of acceptance and their use in the tourist experience was followed; we believe that the results of the study can provide a very important support for other studies related to the same industry or for comparative studies, which identify the level of use of new technologies, as well as the changes brought by them in various fields of activity.

Keywords: artificial Intelligence, AI, tourism, hospitality, generations.

Classification JEL: L86, M15

The Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Public Finance in Turkey

Omer Faruk OZTURK¹

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic was firstly appeared in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and then rapidly spread in the globalized world. The countries have generally applied lockdowns and isolated from the rest of the world and economic life has stopped. Furthermore, the countries have supported countries supported the businesses and households financially. The aforementioned developments have led considerable decreases in tax revenues and considerable increases in government expenditures. This paper examined the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on public finance balance during the January 2020-March 2021 through descriptive analysis and revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant disruptive effect on the public financial balance in Turkey.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Tax Revenues, Public Expenditures, Turkey.

JEL Classification: H20, H30, H60

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Competitiveness in tourism industry. Scenario of Romania under the shadow of COVID-19

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Abstract: On an international scale, during the past decade, competitiveness has become a central issue creating challenges for businesses and countries, especially sustainable prosperity for economy.

This paper covers a short analysis of the impact of competitiveness in the tourism sector in Romania according to The Travel & Tourism competitiveness index. The analysis targets Romania and other East European countries affected by Covid-19.

Keywords: competitiveness, tourism, travel, COVID-19.

JEL: L83, Z31, Z32

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COVID-19 Risks and Travel Health Insurances

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Abstract: Travel health insurance (T.H.I.) is one of the most common insurance in the market. As most of travelers are using it when travelling abroad, the pandemic occurrence reset all the principles of the insurance companies. As usual, pandemic risks are excluded by insurance companies, this is why during the year 2020 all insurance companies recorded significant decreases in gross written premium related to T.H.I. Now once Covid pandemic became a certitude in our lives, insurance companies are rethinking the coverage offered to their clients. Within this paper we will analyze how insurance companies adjusted their coverage, prices – in order to offer to their clients a viable solution and a safe travel. Data will be collected from European and USA insurance companies, then it will be analyzed and interpreted based on ages of tourists, country of origin, level of education.

Keywords: Covid 19, insurance, travel.

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The COVID-19 Impact ON Airbnb

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Abstract: Airbnb, a pioneer in the peer-to-peer accommodation, is nowadays one of the most important players at the global level in hospitality. This online platform links the owners of houses, apartments or rooms and professional units (boutique hotels) with potential guests, all over the world. An important role in the Airbnb model it is played by the host, who provide support, extraordinary or regular experiences for their guests and customize guest's trips.

The COVID-19 pandemics determined significant changes in many fields of activity. Tourism, through its international openness, contributed to the pandemic's spread, while at the same time, it was one of the sectors the most affected. This paper focuses on the impact the pandemics has on Airbnb stakeholders, emphasizing the changes occurred in their behavior.

Keywords: sharing economy, Airbnb, COVID-19.

JEL Classification: Z32, L83

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The Business of Transylvanian Wineries

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Abstract: The research behind this paper relies on how Getz et al. (1999) defined wine tourism. The authors focus on the development of sustainable tourism. In this respect, a multifaceted research study has been drawn-up with the purpose of assessing the potential of wine businesses in Transylvania, Romania, to develop in a sustainable way. From a methodological point of view, desk research, qualitative and quantitative methods and tools were blended together, contributing to the development of this research paper. The authors focus on investigating the financial situations and the online presence of the identified wineries. Instead of conclusions, the authors have sketched a framework highlighting the perspectives of Transylvanian wineries' sustainable development, keeping in mind those elements that motivate international and also Romanian wine-tourists to visit this destination. Furthermore, the authors emphasize the need for coherent policies and strategies that are needed in order to ensure the sustainable development of wine tourism in Transylvania. The authors also point towards the measures that can be adopted by winemakers in this respect and they also provide a list of ancillary services that can be considered by the owners and managers of the selected wineries.

Keywords: wine tourism; sustainable businesses; small, medium and large enterprises; hospitality services; desk research; qualitative and quantitative research; supply-side perspective; profitability rates; online presence; Transylvania; Romania.

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Commerce amidst Covid-19

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate and explore how E-Commerce forms are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic; it also aims to perceive how their value chains have changed. This paper will help students gain professional and practical skills being undertaken in this kind of circumstances, especially those who wish to pursue a career in E-commerce. This study strives to be utilized as an assisting guide for e-commerce firms dealing with the current pandemic or similar future pandemics. Precisely, the study ought to answer the overarching questions: 1.) How are e-commerce firms affected by the Covid-19 outbreak; 2.) What parts of their value chains are being affected by Covid-19. Henceforth, Descriptive and Exploratory Quantitative Research Design, Purposive Sampling, General Weighted Mean, Frequency Distribution, and Ranking have been utilized. Furthermore, the researchers surveyed the respondents by giving out closed-ended, web-based questionnaires. With our study region, Makati City, Manila, 30 respondents were interviewed. The data will be bestowed case by case by presenting the graphs from the actual data concerning the concepts. The cases will begin by presenting some general information about the sellers, followed by how the Covid-19 situation has affected them and their value chains. Overall, we conclude that E-commerce firms increased

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their sales, but their expenditures increased and found it challenging to meet demands and expand due to the problems they faced because of the pandemic. Consequently, with the researchers' realization, these findings are needed by online sellers as it is beneficial to them to identify the problem and devise solutions.

Keywords: E-commerce, Covid-19, Value Chain, Digital business environment, Online Selling

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Aviation Industry

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Abstract: The aviation industry can be affected by various factors, including terrorist attacks, oil crises, economic recessions and disease outbreaks. Their impact can be very strong and fast, reflected in the cancellation of a large and sudden number of flights, travel bans or border closures. This paper highlights aviation risks in general, but also the unforeseen pandemic risk. The year 2020 was one in which the aviation industry looked different compared to previous months or years. The COVID-19 pandemic taught us that no matter how big and unknown the challenges are, we must analyze the situation and adapt until it is too late. The financial impact on this industry is very large, reflecting losses of hundreds of billions of dollars. Also, the airports were quite affected, the income streams vital for their operation and sustainable development coming from two sources: the primary ones, namely the aeronautical activities, respectively the secondary ones, the non-aeronautical activities. It is mandatory to take measures regarding risk management, such as: use of masks and protective equipment, physical distance, disinfection, COVID-19 testing, vaccination etc. The crisis has highlighted the fact that all actors must adapt to customer needs, requiring a correlation between risk transfer and industry. It is expected that the aviation industry will enter a period of rebalancing, but recovery will take quite some time.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, aviation, risk, airport.

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Empowering Our 2030 Vision

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Abstract: This paper emphasizes that Romania must identify a way to ensure a sustainable development and stable economic growth. This development has undoubtedly been affected as a result of the world pandemic. The research questions of this paper were asked with the objective of elucidating what some possible solutions may help in policymaking. Thus, these questions were “How will the 2020 sanitary crisis project on the development of each economic sector?” and “Is it possible that Romania sustainably develops going forward?”. The research was conducted using quarterly GDP data starting with 2005 Q1 and its objective is to simulate the development of Romania’s economic sectors by Gross Value Added to order the previously stated questions. Hence, this research is empirical because it bases itself on real data taken from Eurostat to simulate possible outcomes of the economic sectors by Gross Value Added. The main findings of this paper were that the communications sector will likely have the highest growth in 2021 and subsequent years, with growth being fueled by a faster adoption of digitalization and remote working needs. Moreover, the lowest growing sector is likely to be Agriculture. Value is created through this paper since it may help in policy making going forward.

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