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CONTENTS

STUDY OF ROMANIA'S DIGITAL DIVIDE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE IMPACT OF HUMAN CAPITAL AND ACCESS TO INTERNET ON INTERNET BANKING USAGE

Elena Lucia Croitoru[*]

Abstract

This study delves into the dynamic relationship between digitalization, human capital, and the usage of internet banking services in Romania, shedding light on the phenomenon of the digital divide within this context. While prior research has not extensively explored the interplay of these factors, our research fills this gap by employing a multifaceted approach. We use "human capital" as a key determinant, categorizing it based on sex and levels of education (secondary and tertiary). To gauge the extent of "digitalization," we measure the percentage of the population using the internet on a weekly basis. Concurrently, we assess "internet banking usage" by examining the percentage of the population that utilizes internet banking services. The study employs statistical analysis to investigate the correlation between these three variables. Our primary focus is on exploring how the "digital divide," manifested through disparities in education and gender, influences the patterns of internet banking usage in Romania. The results of our analysis reveal the existence of a digital divide concerning education levels. Individuals with limited access to education tend to utilize internet banking services to a lesser extent compared to those with higher educational attainment. These findings offer valuable insights into the intricacies of internet banking adoption in Romania and emphasize the importance of addressing disparities in education and gender to bridge the digital divide within the realm of financial technology.

Keywords: *human capital, education, internet banking, financial sector, digitalization, digital divide.*

JEL Classification: H55; H59; J11; J14; J18

1.Introduction

In the contemporary era, digitalization has significantly altered the dynamics of economies and societies worldwide. As technological advancements continue to reshape the way individuals interact, work, and conduct financial transactions, the digital divide has emerged as a crucial societal issue. The digital divide refers to the disparities in access to and usage of information and communication technologies (ICTs) among different groups and regions within a country or across nations. This divide encompasses multiple dimensions, with access to the internet being a fundamental component.

According to A. Grigorescu, E. Pelinescu, A.E. Ion and M.F.Dutcas (2021): "All these technological changes involve transformative shifts within

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the dimension of human capital, both from the perspective of the creation and development of the technology, and the perspective attributed to the role of the user of these new technologies. Human capital has to accumulate new competences comprising of technical skills generated by human–machine interaction, and behavioral transformations that include new capabilities on interhuman relationships in virtual space, communication skills, ethical and responsibility competences.”. Also, Petya Chipeva, Frederico Cruz-Jesus, Tiago Oliveira, Zahir Irani (2018), afirm that investments in ICT conducts to a lot of economic benefits including lower costs.” In the same ideea, Y. Bayar, M.D. Gavriletea and D. Paun (2021), aims that: „the introduction of modern technologies have a great contribution in lowering the cost of financial services, increasing the customers' confidence, spurring digital involvement and reducing physical interaction, enhancing in these ways the access and usage of financial services and contributing substantially to financial inclusion.”

The recents studies, aims that educated people have easier acces to digitals than less educated ones (Lindblom and Rasanen, 2017), but also that this gap between people that have acces to internet and the ones that donțe have is related nor only with education also with the gender, because accordin with Alozie & Akpan-Obong (2017), the men ar more familiar with ICT and use internet more frequency than womens.

Romania, as a rapidly evolving European nation, has witnessed a significant transformation in its digital landscape over the past few decades. However, despite substantial progress in expanding internet connectivity across the country, disparities persist. These disparities are particularly pronounced in the realm of internet banking usage.

While internet banking and online financial services offer substantial advantages to bank customers, enabling them to execute various transactions such as bill payments, fund transfers, and access to comprehensive financial information conveniently, the adoption of internet banking (IB) in Romania remains relatively low. According to Evolution: Connected Consumer Monitor (2021), merely 42% of Romanian internet users utilize IB on a weekly basis, with a mere 9% using it daily. Gender disparities are observable in IB usage, as the study indicates that men (38%) employ IB on a daily or weekly basis more frequently than women (26%). Furthermore, disparities emerge concerning the level of education; individuals with a higher level of education exhibit a higher propensity to use IB, with 50% accessing it at least once a week compared to those with a lower educational attainment. When examining daily IB usage, the study reveals that individuals with higher educational backgrounds account for 37% of users, while those with lower levels of education constitute 26% of daily users. Combining gender and educational variables, the study highlights that highly educated men are the most frequent users of internet banking, with

74% accessing it at least once a month, 52% utilizing it at least once a week, and 41% engaging with IB daily or multiple times a week.

This study delves into the intricate relationship between Romania's digital divide, human capital, and internet access, with a specific focus on their impact on the adoption of internet banking services.

The adoption of internet banking represents a critical aspect of financial inclusion, as it offers individuals an efficient means to access and manage their finances. The digital divide, particularly in the realm of banking, carries profound implications that reverberate throughout various aspects of financial life, extending from basic tasks such as checking account balances and paying bills to more complex endeavors like applying for loans.

Understanding the factors that influence internet banking usage is pivotal in promoting financial inclusion and ensuring equitable access to modern financial services. In this context, this research endeavors to unravel the nuanced dynamics underlying Romania's digital divide and its implications for internet banking adoption.

This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of the digital divide in Romania, encompassing the role of human capital and internet access as key determinants of internet banking usage. The subsequent sections of this study will delve into the literature, methodology, empirical findings, and policy implications, ultimately contributing to a more profound understanding of the multifaceted digital divide in Romania and its repercussions on financial inclusion and economic development.

2. A study of Romania’s digital divide from the perspective of the impact of human capital and access to internet on internet banking usage.

The paper aims to conduct an analysis based on four dimensions in order to elucidate the disparity in the usage of internet banking (weekly users) between men and women, as well as from the perspective of the level of education (secondar and tertiary), over a period spanning from 2004 to 2022.

First, we analyze data on the usage of internet banking (IB) and internet access for both males (Pop-M-Secondary) and females (Pop-F-Secondary) with secondary education levels over a period spanning from 2004 to 2022. The analyze also includes data on the percentage of males (M-Using internet) and females (F-Using internet) using the internet.

The use of the internet by men has increased from 11% in 2004 to 82% in 2021. According to Table 1, there have been significant year-on-year increases, with the highest recorded in 2005 (45%) and the lowest in 2020 (1.05%), indicating market maturity. n 2004, 61% of males and 52.7% of females with secondary education had access to the internet. By 2022, these percentages had risen to 64.9% for males and 59.5% for females. The gender gap in internet access, which was relatively small in 2004, has remained relatively constant over the years, with males consistently having slightly higher access rates compared to females.

Both males and females have increased their internet usage over time. In 2004, 11% of males and 9% of females were using the internet, and by 2021, these percentages had risen to 82% for males and 81% for females. While there was a small gender gap in internet usage in 2004, it has since narrowed significantly, with females nearly matching males in internet usage by 2021.

In 2004, IB usage was virtually nonexistent for both genders but has since seen substantial growth, reaching 19% in 2022.

Table no.1 Evolution of M_Usin_Internet, F_Usin_Internet, Pop_M_Secondary, Pop_F_Secondary and Internet_Banking, 2004-2022 (%)

Year	IB	Pop-M-Seconder y	Pop-F-Seconde ry	M-Usin internet	F-Usin internet
2004	0	61.0	52.7	11.0	9,0
2005	1	61.3	53.9	16.0	13.0
2006	1	62.1	54.7	20.0	17.0
2007	2	62.9	55.4	24.0	20.0
2008	2	62.7	55.6	28.0	25.0
2009	2	62.3	54.9	32.0	30.0
2010	3	61.1	53.9	35.0	33.0
2011	4	60.7	53.7	39.0	36.0
2012	3	60.7	53.8	45.0	42.0
2013	4	60.8	53.9	47.0	44.0
2014	4	57.3	51.9	50.0	46.0
2015	5	58.3	52.8	54.0	49.0
2016	5	59.5	54.2	59.0	54.0
2017	7	60.3	55.1	62.0	59.0
2018	7	60.7	55.7	69.0	67.0
2019	8	61.3	56.4	73.0	70.0
2020	12	62.6	57.5	78.0	75.0
2021	15	64.8	59,3	82.0	81.0
2022	19	64.9	59.5	ND	ND

Source: own processing based on data from Eurostat and Unece

ND – no data available

Overall, the table illustrates a substantial increase in internet banking adoption and internet access for both genders with secondary education over the years, with 2021 being a standout year for growth. Additionally, the narrowing gender gap in internet usage is indicative of increased digital inclusion for both males and females.

The provided table (table no. 2) presents data related to internet banking usage (IB), the percentage of the population with tertiary education (Pop-M-Tertiary for males and Pop-F-Tertiary for females), and the percentage of males and females using the internet (M-Using internet and F-Using internet, respectively) over the period from 2004 to 2022.

The table includes data on the percentage of the population with tertiary education for both males and females. These percentages have generally increased over the years.In 2004, 9.0% of males and 8.5% of females had tertiary education, and these figures increased to 15.3% for males and 18.9% for females by 2022. The gender gap in tertiary education has remained relatively constant, with females having slightly lower percentages than males throughout the years.

The table also provides data on the percentage of males and females using the internet. Both genders have witnessed substantial growth in internet usage. In 2004, 11.0% of males and 9.0% of females were using the internet, and by 2021, these percentages had increased to 82.0% for males and 81.0% for females.

Internet banking adoption has shown a consistent upward trend over the years, with the percentage of users increasing from 0% in 2004 to 19% in 2022. The most significant growth in IB adoption occurred between 2020 and 2021, with a rise from 12% to 15%, followed by a further increase to 19% in 2022.

Table no. 2 Evolution of M_Usin_Internet, F_Usin_Internet, Pop_M_Tertiary, Pop_F_ Tertiary and Internet_Banking, 2004-2022 (%)

Year	IB	Pop-M-Tertiary	Pop-F-Tertiary	M-Usin internet	F-Usin internet
2004	0	9.0	8.5	11.0	9,0
2005	1	9.3	8.9	16.0	13.0
2006	1	9.7	9.4	20.0	17.0
2007	2	10.0	9.8	24.0	20.0
2008	2	10.7	10.7	28.0	25.0
2009	2	10.9	11.6	32.0	30.0
2010	3	11.8	12.0	35.0	33.0
2011	4	12.6	13.2	39.0	36.0

2012	3	13.0	14.0	45.0	42.0
2013	4	13.1	14.5	47.0	44.0
2014	4	13.5	14,8	50.0	46.0
2015	5	14.2	15.8	54.0	49.0
2016	5	14.2	16.0	59.0	54.0
2017	7	14.2	16,5	62.0	59.0
2018	7	14.3	16.7	69.0	67.0
2019	8	14.8	17.3	73.0	70.0
2020	12	15.0	17.5	78.0	75.0
2021	15	14.9	17.9	82.0	81.0
2022	19	15.3	18.9	ND	ND

Source: own processing based on data from Eurostat and Unece
ND – no data available

Overall, the table illustrates a notable increase in internet banking adoption and internet usage for both males and females with tertiary education over the years. The consistent gender gap in both tertiary education and internet usage is an important aspect to consider in discussions related to digital inclusion and access to financial services. Additionally, the sharp growth in internet banking adoption in recent years indicates a rising trend in the utilization of digital financial services among the population with tertiary education.

Differences in the level of education can significantly impact the adoption and usage of internet banking (IB). Here are some key differences between various levels of education concerning the use of internet banking:

- adoption rates: individuals with higher levels of education tend to adopt internet banking at higher rates compared to those with lower levels of education. They are more likely to be familiar with technology and comfortable with online financial transactions;
- frequency of usage: people with higher education levels are more likely to use internet banking services more frequently. They may use it for a wide range of transactions, including bill payments, fund transfers, and account management, on a regular basis;
- trust and security: individuals with higher education levels tend to have a better understanding of online security measures and are often more confident in the security of internet banking platforms. They may be more willing to trust online banking systems;

- access to information: (those with higher education levels are more likely to seek out and access information related to internet banking services. They may be more proactive in staying informed about new features and updates offered by their bank;
- resistance to change: people with lower levels of education may be more resistant to adopting internet banking due to unfamiliarity with technology or concerns about its complexity. They might prefer traditional banking methods;
- digital skills: higher education levels often correlate with stronger digital skills. Individuals with more education may find it easier to navigate online interfaces, troubleshoot issues, and adapt to changes in internet banking platforms.
- age considerations: it's important to note that age can also intersect with education level. Older individuals with higher education may have different internet banking usage patterns compared to younger individuals with the same level of education.
- digital inclusion efforts: policymakers and financial institutions may need to take into account the education level of their target audience when designing digital inclusion efforts. Tailoring educational materials and support to different education levels can be beneficial in promoting broader adoption of internet banking.

3. Conclusions

This research contributes to the understanding of the intricate relationship between digitalization, human capital, and the utilization of internet banking services in the Romanian context. The study addresses a significant gap in prior research by adopting a multifaceted approach, considering "human capital" as a pivotal determinant, disaggregated by gender and educational levels (both secondary and tertiary). Furthermore, the study measures the degree of "digitalization" by assessing the proportion of the population engaging with the internet on a weekly basis. Concurrently, it examines "internet banking usage" by evaluating the percentage of individuals who actively utilize internet banking services.

Through rigorous statistical analysis, this study has uncovered noteworthy findings regarding the influence of the digital divide, particularly in relation to education levels, on internet banking adoption patterns in Romania. Specifically, individuals with limited access to education tend to exhibit lower levels of engagement with internet banking services compared to those with higher educational achievements. These outcomes offer valuable insights into the dynamics of internet banking adoption within the Romanian context, underlining the critical significance of addressing educational and gender disparities to effectively bridge the digital divide within the realm of financial technology.

This study has provided valuable insights into Romania's digital divide, focusing on the impact of human capital and access to the internet on internet banking usage. Several key findings and implications have emerged from this research:

- Digital Divide Persistence: Despite significant advancements in expanding internet access in Romania, a digital divide still persists. Certain segments of the population continue to face disparities in terms of internet connectivity and access to internet banking services.
- Human Capital Significance: Human capital, as represented by educational attainment, plays a crucial role in influencing internet banking usage. Individuals with higher levels of education exhibit a higher propensity to use internet banking, both in terms of frequency and complexity of transactions.
- Gender Disparities: Gender disparities in internet banking usage exist, with men generally using these services more frequently than women. However, the gender gap has been gradually narrowing over the years, indicating progress in digital inclusion efforts.
- Digital Inclusion Initiatives: Policymakers and financial institutions should consider the role of education and gender in shaping internet banking adoption. Tailoring digital inclusion initiatives to address these disparities can contribute to a more equitable and inclusive digital landscape.
- Potential for Future Growth: The study reveals substantial growth in internet banking adoption in recent years, suggesting that Romania's population is increasingly recognizing the convenience and benefits of online financial services. This growth presents opportunities for financial institutions to expand their digital offerings and for individuals to enhance their financial literacy and capabilities.
- Data Limitations: It is important to acknowledge data limitations, such as the absence of data for certain years (e.g., 2022) and potentially incomplete information on internet banking usage among specific demographics. Future research should aim to address these gaps and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the digital divide dynamics in Romania.

In a broader context, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on digital inclusion and the transformative potential of internet banking services in promoting financial access and economic development. Romania's experience serves as a case study, highlighting the multifaceted nature of the digital divide and the need for targeted interventions to bridge these disparities effectively. Further research in this domain can inform evidence-based policies and strategies aimed at fostering a more inclusive and digitally empowered society in Romania and beyond.

This research not only extends the existing body of knowledge on digital inclusion and internet banking but also underscores the imperative for policymakers, financial institutions, and stakeholders to develop targeted strategies aimed at promoting digital literacy and enhancing access to internet banking services, especially among underrepresented groups. By addressing these disparities, Romania can move closer to achieving a more inclusive and digitally empowered society, ultimately contributing to broader economic development and financial inclusion.

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IN THE EYES OF GUESTS. ANALYZING COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT'S CUSTOMER REVIEWS

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Ciobanu S. Camelia Elena[*]

Abstract
In the hospitality industry, reviews are crucial since they provide insight into previous visitor experiences and affect prospective consumers' decisions. They act as an indicator of the caliber of the services rendered, offering honest commentary on every facet of the visitor experience and supporting reputation management. Reviews influence not only how customers see products but also larger industry norms and trends, which promote ongoing development. By using methods like sentiment analysis and theme categorization in their extensive review analysis, Courtyard by Marriott demonstrates a proactive commitment to visitor happiness. Through the process of responding to evaluations and choosing a representative sample for examination, the hotel builds a solid basis for evaluating and improving the visitor experience.Furthermore, Marriott's guestVoice initiative allows visitors to provide real-time insights, enabling focused improvements and customized experiences. In conclusion, reviews are essential to the contemporary hospitality scene since they influence bookings, direct operational choices, and promote openness and trust between clients and service providers.

Keywords: *hospitality; satisfaction; services; feedback; guest; quality*

1. Introduction

In the dynamic and competitive landscape of the hospitality industry, where countless choices vie for consumer attention, the significance of reviews cannot be overstated. Reviews serve as a window into the experiences of past guests, offering invaluable insights that shape potential customers perceptions and decisions. Whether posted on dedicated platforms like TripAdvisor and Booking.com, these reviews wield considerable influence over the success and reputation of hospitality establishments.

The importance of reviews in the hospitality industry extends far beyond mere testimonials. They function as a barometer of service quality, providing direct feedback on every aspect of the guest experience, from check-in to check-out. These real evaluations work as reliable guides for potential visitors making decisions in a time of rising customer expectations and an abundance of possibilities.

Reviews are also an effective technique for managing one's reputation. If a single bad review goes unanswered, it can damage a hotel's reputation and turn off prospective customers. On the other hand, a steady supply of favorable

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evaluations can increase awareness, strengthen credibility, and eventually encourage reservations. Building a positive review profile is crucial to keeping a competitive edge at a time when having an online presence. In addition to having an immediate impact on individual establishments, help to shape industry trends and standards. By collecting and analyzing massive amounts of guest feedback, hospitality workers can detect growing patterns, preferences, and areas for development. This data-driven strategy not only encourages innovation and adaptability, but it also promotes a culture of continual improvement throughout the industry. Moreover, reviews are instrumental in cultivating trust and openness between guests and service providers. In an industry centered on the commitment to hospitality and quality service, creating a relationship based on trustworthiness and genuineness is essential. Through sharing their experiences, guests not only enlighten prospective travelers but also encourage establishments to uphold standards, leading to a collective effort towards improvement and responsibility.

2. Analyzing the guest's satisfaction at Courtyard by Marriott

Given these diverse functions, it is clear that reviews are a fundamental support of the contemporary hospitality sector. Whether shaping customer opinions, increasing reservations, guiding operational strategies, or nurturing confidence, their influence permeates throughout the industry. As such, understanding and harnessing the power of reviews is not merely a competitive advantage but an imperative for success in the ever-evolving realm of hospitality. Courtyard by Marriott, as part of a prestigious hotel network, uses a variety of methods to collect and analyze guest reviews in order to continuously improve its services.

The collection of reviews begins through online platforms specialising in reviews, such as TripAdvisor, Booking.com, or Google Reviews. These platforms provide a central medium for customers to share their experiences and impressions of their stay at Courtyard by Marriott. The hotel actively monitors these sites and collects guest reviews and ratings. Direct feedback from guests is often an excellent source of information. Courtyard by Marriott collects direct feedback from customers via satisfaction surveys at check-out or follow-up emails following their stay at the hotel, allowing them to share their thoughts in a detailed and personalized manner.

The hotel uses various methods and techniques to analyse reviews. One of these is sentiment analysis, which involves the use of natural language processing algorithms to determine the overall tone of reviews. This allows the identification and quantification of positive, negative or neutral feelings expressed by guests in their reviews. Through this process, Courtyard by Marriott gains a deeper understanding of how guests perceive their hotel experience and can identify strengths and weaknesses.

Thematic categorization is another method used to analyze reviews. The hotel divides reviews into different thematic categories, such as service, amenities, cleanliness, comfort, location, etc. This approach allows the identification of aspects that are particularly appreciated by guests, as well as those that need improvement or further attention.

In addition to sentiment analysis and thematic categorization, Courtyard by Marriott identifies trends and patterns in customer feedback. By analyzing reviews over time, the hotel can observe the evolution of guest opinions and identify increases or decreases in the frequency of certain types of feedback. This allows the hotel to react promptly and effectively to changes in guest preferences and needs.

Another important aspect of review analysis is the response to reviews. Courtyard by Marriott shows a strong commitment to customer feedback by providing responses to reviews. These responses not only demonstrate the hotel's commitment to its guest relationships, but also provide an opportunity to address concerns and issues raised by guests in a direct and transparent manner.

Courtyard by Marriott chooses to analyze a specific number of reviews to gain a representative understanding of guest experiences. The sample size could be determined based on available resources and the scope of the study, but should be large enough to provide relevant and meaningful data. The sample should include a wide range of reviews, both positive and negative, to fairly reflect the different experiences and perceptions of customers. Analysis of a balanced mix of reviews allows the identification of both strengths and weaknesses of the services and experiences offered by the hotel. The selection criteria should ensures that the reviews included in the sample are relevant to the purpose of the study. This means that reviews should be specific to the Courtyard by Marriott hotel and reflect the experiences of guests in that specific context.

In order to get an up-to-date picture of guest perceptions, the hotel gives priority to more recent reviews. Analyzing recent reviews allows for the identification of trends and changes in guest preferences and experiences as close to the present time as possible. The hotel pays attention to ensuring the authenticity and credibility of the reviews included in the sample. By applying these selection criteria, the Courtyard by Marriott hotel obtains a representative and relevant sample of reviews for analysis, providing a solid basis for evaluating and improving the guest experience.

Marriott International boasts a remarkable track record when it comes to guest satisfaction across its diverse range of brands. In 2019, four of its brands - JW Marriott, Fairfield Inn & Suites, Marriott Hotels, and Courtyard - achieved top positions in customer satisfaction scores for hotels, affirming Marriott's adeptness at comprehending and fulfilling guest needs effectively.

A pivotal tool in Marriott's arsenal is the Marriott guestVoice program, which has proven immensely influential in garnering real-time insights from guests. Contrary to popular belief, guestVoice isn't synonymous with Marriott's collaboration with Alexa for Hospitality, where guests can utilize Amazon Echo devices in their hotel rooms for various services. Instead, guestVoice is a guest feedback initiative developed in partnership with Medallia specifically for Marriott properties.

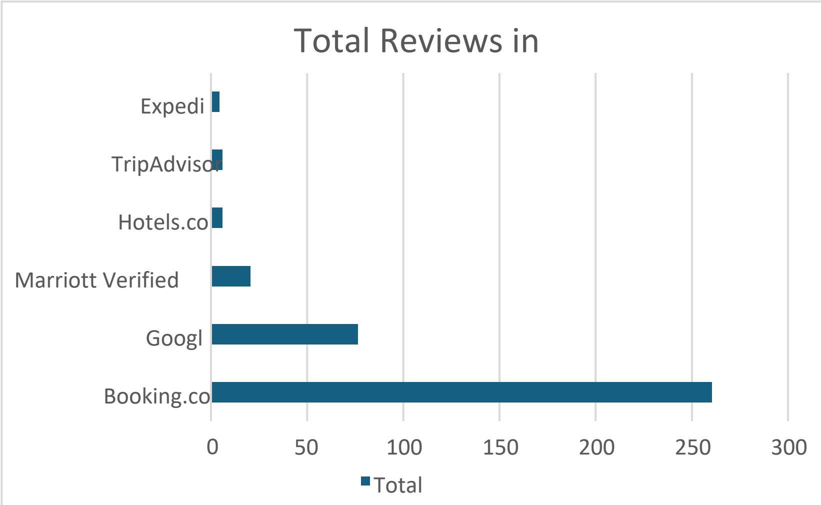
GuestVoice facilitates a streamlined guest satisfaction survey, enabling travelers to provide direct feedback to the property in a concise manner. By triangulating survey responses with social media feedback, guestVoice uncovers nuanced insights, empowering Marriott properties to enact targeted improvements that directly impact guest satisfaction scores. Furthermore, guestVoice facilitates the sharing of guest feedback across the brand, furnishing Marriott with a competitive edge rooted in comprehensive understanding and proactive responsiveness.

The process commences promptly after a guest departs from the hotel, with a succinct survey dispatched to gather feedback. Designed to be intuitive and brand-specific, the survey focuses on key aspects of the guest experience, from dining to spa services. Guests rate their experiences on a scale, with responses relayed instantly to guestVoice for analysis.

On-property staff can access real-time survey results via mobile devices or desktops, facilitating swift identification of service gaps and immediate remedial action. Compared to traditional methods, guestVoice significantly reduces feedback processing time, empowering managers to address issues promptly. Moreover, guestVoice integrates social media feedback, providing a comprehensive snapshot of the guest experience and enabling personalized responses to individual feedback.

The impact of guestVoice on Marriott's guest service paradigm is profound, fostering heightened responsiveness and personalized engagement. Managers can promptly address concerns flagged in surveys, demonstrating a commitment to guest satisfaction that resonates with patrons. Additionally, Medallia, the technology behind guestVoice, offers a suite of tools designed to enhance guest satisfaction, ranging from soliciting feedback across multiple channels to facilitating efficient response mechanisms for negative reviews.

Figure 1. Number of Reviews by Source 2023



Source: https://marriott.medallia.com

Booking.com appears to be the most prominent source of reviews, with a substantial number of reviews. This suggests that a significant portion of guests choose to leave feedback on this platform, possibly due to its popularity and user-friendly interface.

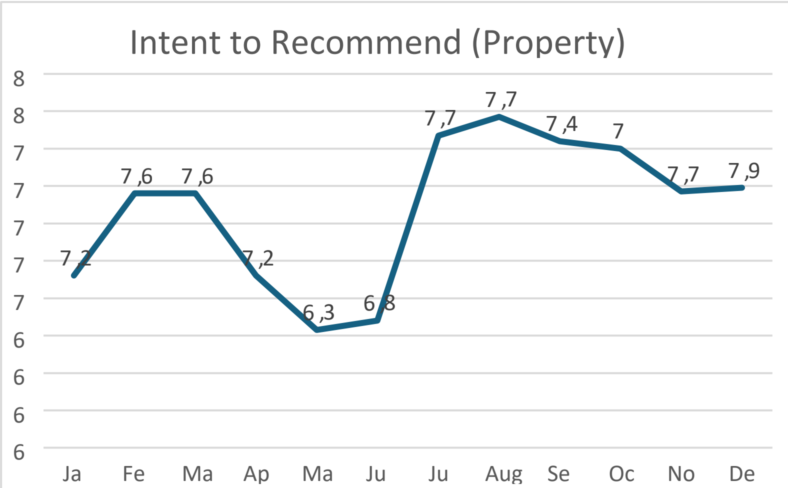
Google reviews also represent a substantial number, indicating the importance of the hotel's online presence on Google Maps and search results. Google reviews can have a significant impact on potential guests' decision-making, as they often appear prominently in search results.

Marriott's own platform for verified reviews provides an additional source of feedback directly from guests who have booked through Marriott's official channels. These reviews are likely trusted by potential guests due to the verification process, especially for the Bonvoy members.

While the number of reviews from Hotels.com is relatively smaller compared to other platforms, they still represent a notable source of feedback. Guests who book through Hotels.com may choose to leave reviews on the platform, contributing to the hotel's overall online reputation.

TripAdvisor is a widely recognized platform for travel reviews, and although the number of reviews is similar to Hotels.com, and also Expedia reviews represent a smaller portion compared to other platforms, but they still contribute to the overall feedback landscape.

Figure 2. Intent to Recommend in 2023



Source: https://marriott.medallia.com

There appears to be some fluctuation in the intent to recommend ratings across different months. For instance, the ratings peak in July (78.7) and August (79.7), suggesting higher levels of satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the property during the summer months. Conversely, the ratings dip in May (68.3) and June (68.8), indicating a potential decrease in guest satisfaction during these months.

Despite the seasonal variation, the intent to recommend ratings generally hover around 70, indicating a relatively stable level of guest satisfaction throughout the year. This consistency suggests that the property maintains a certain standard of service and guest experience, which is positively perceived by guests across different months.

The "Elite Appreciation" review category refers to the segment of reviews highlighting the positive experiences of elite guests or members of premium loyalty programs at the hotel, in this case, Courtyard by Marriott. These reviews are written by guests who are members of the elite category of the hotel's loyalty program or who have special status within the hotel.

Reviews in this category are often characterized by appreciation and gratitude from guests for the special treatment and benefits offered by the Courtyard by Marriott hotel as part of their elite loyalty program. These reviews may highlight things like upgrades to premium rooms, personalized service, access to exclusive amenities and other special benefits offered to elite guests.

For Courtyard by Marriott, Elite Appreciation reviews are extremely valuable because they reflect the high level of satisfaction and appreciation of their elite guests, who are often their most loyal and valued customers. These reviews not only demonstrate the success of the hotel's loyalty program and its successful approach to elite guests, but can also positively influence the perception of other potential guests, enhancing the hotel's reputation and attracting new business opportunities.

Moreover, Elite Appreciation reviews also provide opportunities for the Courtyard by Marriott hotel to celebrate and promote the recognition and appreciation of its elite guests, which can further strengthen the connection with them and create a growing sense of ownership and brand loyalty.

Table 1 Members Satisfaction in 2023

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Elite Appreciation	33.3	55.6	47.4	61.1	77.8	90.0	61.5	91.7	75.0	73.3	58.8	75.0	65.9

Source: https://marriott.medallia.com

There is a general upward trend in elite customer satisfaction during the year, with minor fluctuations. This suggests that the hotel's efforts in treating and rewarding its elite guests have had a positive impact on their perception over time.

Overcrowding can be a reason that leads to busier and less personalized experiences for loyalty program members, who are used to receiving special treatment and exclusive benefits Hotel staff may be stretched to capacity during busy months, which could affect the quality of service and personal attention given to guests. The elite members may notice a decrease in the level of personalized attention and services, which could contribute to a lower perception of satisfaction. Courtyard by Marriott is a business hotel, so during busy months such as January or March, lower member satisfaction rates were recorded compared to summer months when the hotel does not have a high occupancy rate.

Table 2 Guests Satisfaction in 2023

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Cleanliness	78.7	81.6	83.1	81.2	77.9	86.7	84.5	80.3	83.5	90.0	83.5	90.9	83.4
Staff Service	77.0	73.6	80.5	75.4	72.6	76.3	75.0	77.3	79.8	77.5	77.3	92.2	77.8
Food and Beverage	56.1	67.1	57.5	69.7	57.1	56.1	74.0	69.5	71.2	63.6	63.2	70.3	64.7
Design and Decor	73.3	73.6	66.2	65.2	77.9	71.7	76.2	78.8	71.8	71.2	74.2	76.6	73.2

Source: https://marriott.medallia.com

The cleanliness of the hotel generally receives positive reviews, with an average rating above 80%. This suggests that guests perceive the hotel as being well-maintained and hygienic, which is essential for providing a comfortable and satisfactory stay.

The staff service receives moderately positive reviews, with an average rating slightly above 77%. While this indicates that guests generally find the service satisfactory, there is room for improvement to enhance guest satisfaction further. Hotels should focus on training staff to provide exceptional service consistently.

The food and beverage offerings receive mixed reviews, with an average rating below 65%. This suggests that guests may not be fully satisfied with the quality or variety of dining options available at the hotel. Improvements in menu selections, food quality, and dining experiences could help enhance guest satisfaction in this aspect.

The design and decor of the hotel receive generally positive reviews, with an average rating around 73.5%. Guests appreciate the aesthetic appeal and ambiance of the hotel's design elements. However, there may be opportunities to refresh or update certain aspects of the decor to keep it modern and appealing to guests.

Overall, the hotel earns positive scores for cleanliness, design, and decor; nevertheless, there are areas such as staff service and food and beverage choices that might be improved to increase client satisfaction and overall experience. Hotel management should carefully evaluate visitor comments and consider making modifications and additions based on these insights in order to maintain and improve the hotel's reputation and competitiveness in the hospitality sector.

3. Discussions and conclusions

The study emphasizes the importance of visitor evaluations in defining the success and reputation of hotels in the competitive hospitality business. Reviews are a direct reflection of guest experiences, providing vital insights into potential consumers' thoughts and decisions. These authentic reviews have a major impact on consumer behavior across a variety of platforms, including TripAdvisor, Booking.com, and Google, directing travelers in their hotel selection.

Furthermore, reviews serve as a barometer of service quality, giving hotels direct input on all aspects of the guest experience. Positive reviews boost legitimacy and increase bookings, whereas bad ones, if left unanswered, can ruin a hotel's reputation and turn off potential customers. Because of this, keeping up a positive review profile is essential to keeping a competitive advantage in a market where there are a lot of options and high customer expectations.

Reviews also help establish industry norms and trends, which helps hospitality workers spot new trends, preferences, and opportunities for development. Hotels may encourage a culture of continual improvement by gathering and evaluating visitor input, which will stimulate innovation and adaptability in the industry.

Courtyard by Marriott exemplifies a proactive approach to guest satisfaction through its meticulous review analysis process. By leveraging data from various platforms and employing techniques such as sentiment analysis and thematic categorization, the hotel gains invaluable insights into guest perceptions and experiences. This enables Courtyard by Marriott to identify strengths, address weaknesses, and continually enhance the guest experience.

The analysis of Courtyard by Marriott's guest satisfaction reveals strengths in cleanliness and design, while also highlighting areas for improvement in staff service and food and beverage offerings. By carefully reviewing guest feedback and implementing targeted changes, the hotel can enhance guest satisfaction and maintain its competitive position in the hospitality market.

Overall, reviews constitute a cornerstone of the modern hospitality industry, driving consumer perceptions, informing operational decisions, and fostering trust and transparency between guests and providers. Understanding and harnessing the power of reviews is not merely a competitive advantage but an imperative for success in the ever-evolving realm of hospitality.

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MACROECONOMIC CLIMATE – FROM GLOBAL ECONOMY TO NATIONAL ECONOMY

Andrei Rădulescu, Ph.D.[*]

Abstract

In the recent period the real economy presented a slow YoY growth pace, at the global, European, regional, and national levels, in the context of the consequences of the overlapping shocks over the pasts quarters, including the high level of the financing costs and the persistence of the geo-political tensions. However, at the beginning of 2024 there can be noticed the accumulation of stabilization signals for the macroeconomic climate, given the slowing-down of the inflationary pressures and the positive dynamics on the financial markets. This paper presents the recent macroeconomic developments and estimates the dynamics of the potential growth pace (by implementing standard econometric tools and using the IMF database), within an approach from the global economy to the national economy. According to the results of the estimates the YoY pace of the potential output slightly improved at the global level recently, to the highest level since 2018. However, this improvement hides the divergence between the dynamics in the developed countries and the evolutions in the emerging economies.

Keywords: *global economy, potential output, economic divergence*

JEL Classification: E10, E30, E60

1. Introduction

The dynamics of the real economic activity has been recently confronted with the consequences of the overlapping shocks, including the high level of the financing costs and the persistence of the geo-political tensions (the crisis in Ukraine and the conflicts in the Middle East).

However, since the beginning of the year there can be noticed the accumulation of stabilization signals in terms of economic activity, given the slowin-down of the inflationary pressures (with impact for the expectations regarding the monetary policy decisions) and the positive dynamics on the international financial markets (at present the stock markets hover close to the record high levels).

This paper implements standard econometric tools and IMF database order to analyse the recent developments in terms of the macroeconomic climate and to estimate the dynamics of the YoY pace of the potential output, within an approach from the global economy to the national economy.

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According to the results the YoY pace of the potential output has recently slightly improved at the global level, but there persists the divergence among the developed and emerging economies.

The rest of the paper has the following structure: chapter 2 presents the recent macroeconomic developments; the methodology and the main results are briefly described in third chapter; the conclusions are drawn in the last chapter.

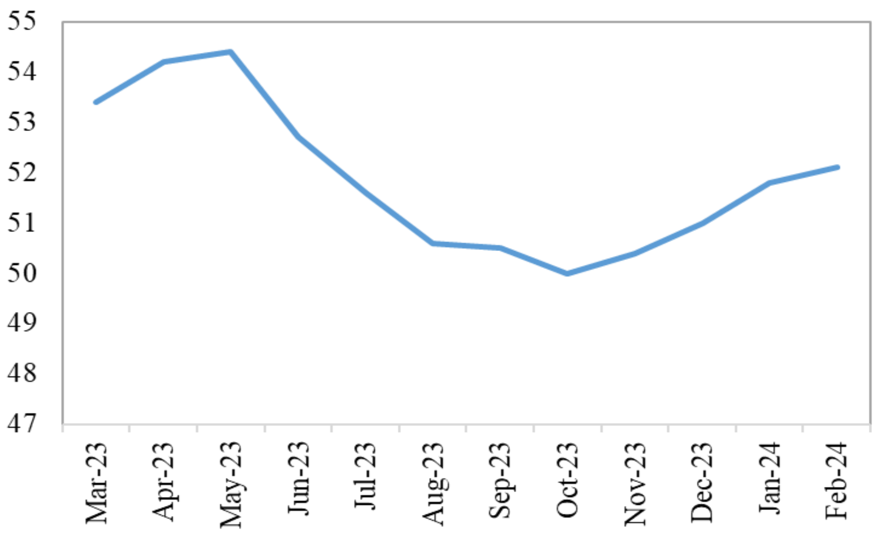
2. The recent macroeconomic developments – from global economy to the national economy

In the recent period there can be noticed the accumulation of stabilisation signals for the global macroeconomic climate, after the slowing down over the past quarters, determined by the high level of the inflationary pressures, financing costs, and uncertainties.

The stabilisation of the economic activity at the global level over the recent months was underpinned by several factors, including the prospects for the recalibration of the monetary policy in United States of America and Euro Area in 1H 2024 (given the convergence of the YoY pace of the consumer prices towards the target of the central banks) and the positive climate on the international financial markets.

For instance, the world economic activity grew for the fourth month in a row in February 2024, while the pace accelerated to the highest since June 2023, according to the PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) estimated by Markit Economics, as can be noticed in the following chart.

Figure 1. The PMI Composite indicator (points)



Source: *Markit Economics (2024)*

There can be noticed the advance of the new orders, for the fourth month in a row, by an accelerating pace, an evolution expressing positive prospects for the dynamics of the output in the short-run.

Overall, the manufacturing and the services sector grew in February 2024 by the strongest dynamics of the past nine and seven months, respectively.

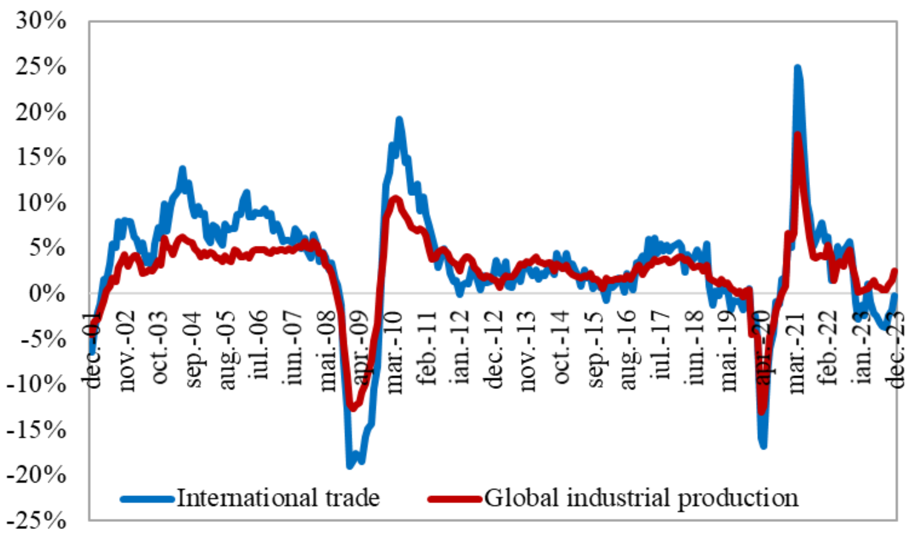
Furthermore, the YoY pace of contraction of the international trade flows diminished in intensity in December, to -0.2%, the best dynamics since March 2023, according to the figures released by the Bureau of Economic Policy Analysis in Netherlands

However, in 2023 the global trade declined by 1.9% YoY, an evolution determined by several factors, including the fragmentation between the euro-atlantic and eur-asian blocks and the increase of the financing costs.

The improvement of the global trade had a positive impact for the world industrial production, with the YoY pace accelerating to 2.5% in December, the strongest pace since October 2022, according to the same source.

Therefore, in 2023 the global industrial production grew by 0.9% YoY in 2023, slowing down from 3.2% YoY in 2022, as can be noticed in the following chart.

Figure 2. Global trade vs. world industrial production (YoY)

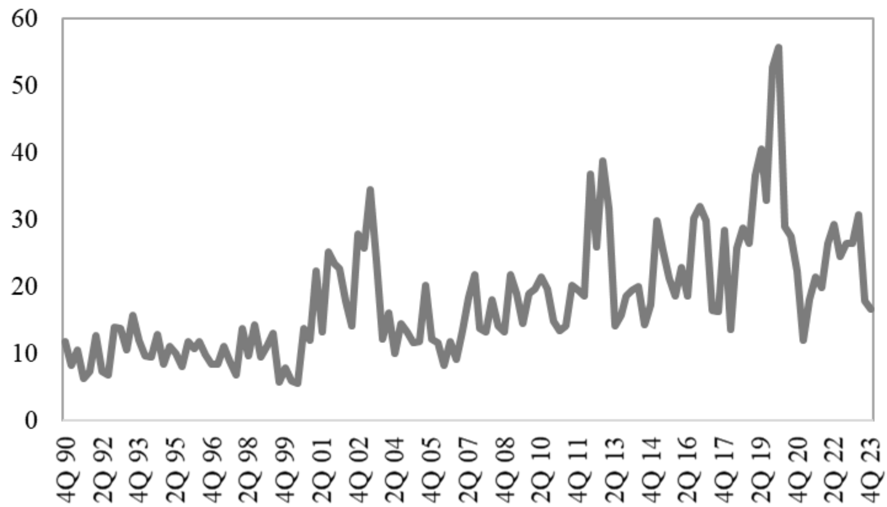


Source: *Bureau of Economic Policy Analysis of Netherlands (2024)*

Last, but not least, the uncertainty index at the global level improved at the end of 2023, the indicator estimated by Federal Reserve (FED) declining to the minimum since 1Q 2021, as can be noticed by the following chart.

This evolution reflects the fact that the households and the companies across the world incorporated already incorporated in their behaviour all the consequences of the exogenous shocks, including the persistence of the geo-political tensions.

Figure 3. Global uncertainty index



Source: Federal Reserve (FED) (2024)

In fact, according to the figures released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)[1] the military spending per capita at the global level hit a record high level in 2022 (over USD 47thousands), in the context of the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine.

At the same time, we emphasize the continuity of the total confrontation (trade, digital, and military) between United States of America and China, the largest economies in the world, contributing by around 40% to the global GDP at present.

For instance, the share of the digital economy in the GDP of China is estimated at over 40% at present, a level four times higher compared to that in United States, according to the figures released by Statista[2].

In United States of America (the largest economy in the world, with a nominal dimension of USD 28tn at the end of 2023) the growth pace continued to accelerate in February, to the highest since June 2023, according to the PMI Composite Index estimated by Markit Economics[3].

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[3] Trading Economics (2024). United States Composite PMI (tradingeconomics.com)

However, the leading economic indicators continued the contraction in January, by an accelerating MoM pace to 0.4%, as reflected by the figures released by the Conference Board[4].

This evolution expresses prospects for the slowing down of the real economic activity in the short-run, after the acceleration to 2.5% YoY in 2023, according to the preliminary estimates of the Bureau of Economic Analysis[5].

A deterioration of the economic activity in the short-run in USA is also reflected by the persistence of the interest rate spread (10 years – 3 months) in negative territory for the 16th month in a row in February, as reflected by the data published by the Federal Reserve (FED).

The Chinese economy also increased for the fourth month in a row in February, but with a pace in consolidation, according to the PMI Composite indicator estimated by Markit Economics[6].

This evolution was determined by the improvement of the new orders, in the context of the increase of the foreign component for the second month in a row, expression of the stabilisation of the global trade.

In Euroland (the main economic partner of Romania) there can be noticed the improvement of the investors' confidence in February 2024, the indicator estimated by ZEW Institute from Germany reaching the highest level since February 2023[7].

This evolution expresses prospects for the accelerating of the economic growth pace in 2024, after the GDP of the region grew by a slowing down pace to 0.5% in 2023, according to the preliminary estimates of Eurostat[8].

Last, but not least, in Romania the YoY pace of the GDP decelerated to 2.1% in 2023, but there can be noticed the acceleration of the gross fixed capital formation (to 12% YoY), an evolution underpinned by the implementation of the EU programs for the development of the critical infrastructure.

On the other hand, the household consumption (the main component of the GDP) decelerated to 2.9% YoY in 2023, as reflected by the provisional data (1) published by the National Institute of Statistics at the beginning of March 2024[9].

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The analysis from the supply side perspective emphasizes the increase of the constructions by 11% YoY in 2023, an evolution determined by the EU programs for the development of the critical infrastructure.

At the same time, the value added in the primary sector advanced by 10.2% YoY in 2023.

Last, but not least, the gross value added in IT&C climbed by 5.1% YoY last year.

On the other hand, the industry contracted by 2.3% YoY in 2023, due to the adjustments across the global trade and the increase of the financing costs.

At the same time, the economic confidence deteriorated in February 2024, the indicator estimated by the European Commission declining to the lowest level since September 2023.

3. Methodology and results

This paper employs standard econometric tools and the database of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in order to estimate and assess the dynamics of the YoY pace of the potential output, from the global to the national economy.

On the one hand, the econometric filter Hodrick-Prescott (HP) is used in order to distinguish between the structural and the cyclical components of the YoY pace of the GDP (global, developed countries, emerging economies, Euro Area, and Romania).

On the other hand, the analysis employs the statistics of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the period 1980 – 2023[10].

The Hodrick – Prescott filter[11] is one of the most employed econometric tools in order to distinguish between the structural (trend) and the cyclical components of the macroeconomic variables.

According to this method the structural component of the YoY pace of the GDP (potential output) is obtained from the following relation:

$$\mathbf{Min} \sum_{t=1}^{T} (\ln Y_t - \ln Y_t^*)^2 + \lambda \sum_{t=2}^{T-1} ((\ln Y_{t+1}^* - \ln Y_t^*) - (\ln Y_t^* - \ln Y_{t-1}^*))^2 \tag{3.1}$$

In this relation Y_t, Y_t^* şi λ represent the output, potential output, and the smoothness parameter (the lower its value, the closer is the pace of GDP to its trend).

In this paper the value applied for this parameter is 100, as also considered in the article of Hodrick-Prescott.

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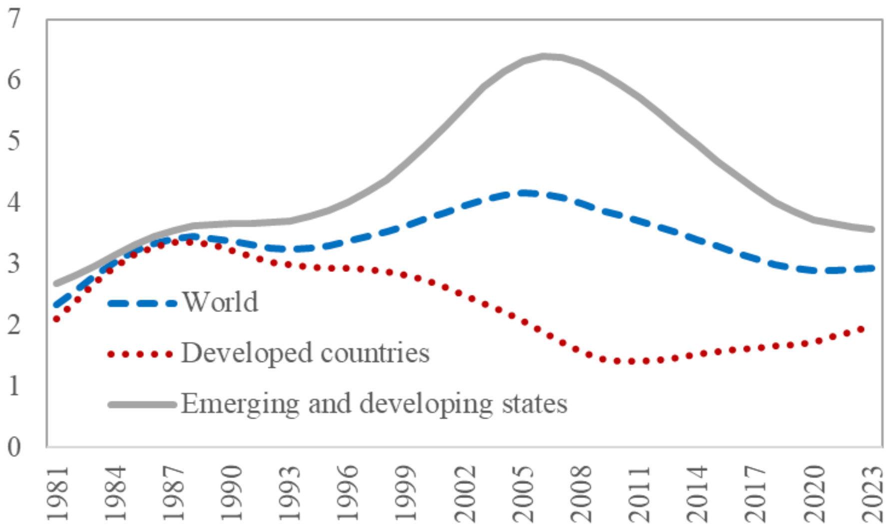
Annual data for the YoY pace of the GDP for the period 1980-2023 from the International Monetary Fund database were used in this analysis.

According to the results of the estimates the YoY pace of the potential output at the global level slightly improved to 2.94% in 2023, the highest level since 2018, as can be noticed in the following chart.

Figure 4. The YoY pace of the potential output (%)



Source: author's estimates

However, there can be noticed the divergence between the developed countries and the emerging and developing economies.

On the one hand, across the developed economies the YoY pace of the potential output improved from 1.90% in 2022 to 1.98% in 2023, the best dynamics since 2005.

This evolution was determined by the implementation of unprecedented policy-mix measures in order to counter the impact of the exogenous shocks over the past years.

In this context, we emphasize the programs implemented across the USA and European countries to contribute to the transition towards new growth and development models, based on the increase of the green energy, digitalization, and improvement of the structural resilience to shocks.

For instance, the YoY pace of the potential GDP improved in United States and Euroland to 2.50% and 1.70% respectively in 2023, the highest levels since 2003 (two decades ago), according to the results of the econometric estimates.

On the other hand, the YoY pace of the potential output in the emerging and developing economies continued on the downward trend in 2023, to 3.56%, the weakest dynamics since 1992.

In other words, these countries were more affected by the outbreak of the exogenous shocks and their consequences, including the significant increase of the real financing costs over the past quarters.

In fact, taking into account the statistics of the Federal Reserve (FED) the real cost of financing in the US economy hit the maximum since 2007, the year of the outbreak of the Great Financial Crisis (the worst economic and financial crisis since the end of the Second World War).

Last, but not least, in Romania the YoY pace of the potential output deteriorated from 3.13% in 2022 to 3.07% in 2023, the lowest level since 2014.

This slowing down trend for the YoY pace of the potential GDP in Romania was determined by the weak pace of implementation of the structural reforms in the recent years.

The national economy presented a high level of resilience since the outbreak of the exogenous shocks, given the implementation of the EU programs for the development of the critical infrastructure, but also the geo-strategic position of the country (the Eastern border of the Euro-atlantic block).

3. Conclusion

According to this analysis the global macroeconomic climate presented stabilization signals at the beginning of 2024, as the households and companies incorporated the consequences of the overlapping shocks over the past quarters.

On the other hand, the exogenous shocks since 2020 had symmetric impact and asymmetric consequences, as reflected by the divergent dynamics of the YoY pace of the potential output.

There can be noticed the improvement of the structural component of the GDP in United States of America and Euroland recently, an evolution underpinned by the unprecedented measures implemented in order to counter the impact of the shocks.

However, in the emerging and developing economies the structural stance worsened since over the past years, as the manoeuvre room in terms of economic policy was limited, while the real financing costs increased at the global level.

Last, but not least, the structural developments in the Romanian economy in the recent years emphasize the need for the acceleration of the reforms, a scenario with low probability to happen in the electoral year 2024.

At the end of this paper I underline that without structural reform the YoY pace of the potential GDP in Romania would continue to deteriorate, in the coming years, especially after 2027, when Next Generation EU and the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 end.

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EVALUATING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINING MOUNTAIN TOURISM IN THE AUSTRIAN ALPS

Ioana Cristiana Patrichi *

Abstract

The paper, "Evaluating Climate Change Adaptation Strategies for Sustaining Mountain Tourism in the Austrian Alps," provides a comprehensive examination of how climate change impacts the Alpine tourism industry in Austria. Focusing on the iconic Austrian Alps, this research paper assesses the effectiveness of adaptation strategies employed to mitigate the consequences of climate change and ensure the long-term sustainability of mountain tourism. The study combines data analysis, case studies, and stakeholder interviews to evaluate a variety of adaptation measures, including innovative snowmaking technologies, diversification of tourism offerings, and enhanced environmental conservation efforts. The findings offer valuable insights into the resilience and sustainability of mountain tourism in the context of climate change, providing essential guidance for other alpine regions facing similar challenges.

Keywords: *climate changes, mountain tourism, sustainable tourism*

JEL Classification: L83, Q01, Q26, Q54

1. Introduction

The mountainous regions of the world, including popular destinations like the Austrian Alps, have long been cherished for their scenic beauty, outdoor recreation opportunities, and cultural richness. However, these regions are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (Ulrike Pröbstl-Haider, 2021), which have the potential to disrupt both natural landscapes and tourism-based economies. Particularly, the Austrian tourism sector is prone to changing climate (Olefs et al., 2021).

The economic consequences of climate change on mountain tourism are profound. Many mountain destinations heavily rely on winter tourism, such as skiing and snowboarding, for their revenue. Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns pose significant challenges to snow reliability, leading to shorter snow seasons and increased snowmaking costs (Scott & McBoyle, 2007). The ski industry faces a critical need for adaptation strategies, such as investment in snowmaking technologies and the diversification of tourism offerings (Scott et al., 2019).

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Climate change also exerts ecological pressure on mountain regions, threatening their unique ecosystems and biodiversity. Careful use and protection of the important natural resources is an important aspect of sustainable tourism (Paunović, I.; Jovanović, V., 2017).

Warming temperatures lead to shifts in vegetation zones, endangering alpine flora and fauna (Dolezal et al., 2016). Melting glaciers and permafrost contribute to landscape transformations and the erosion of natural beauty. Extreme weather events, such as flash floods and landslides, become more frequent, impacting infrastructure and safety (Piazolo & Kane, 2016).

Social dimensions of mountain tourism are not immune to the effects of climate change. Communities that rely on tourism often experience economic fluctuations, as well as increased vulnerability to natural hazards and changing livelihoods for local residents (Blöschl et al., 2007). Unveiling changes in climate comfort for tourism can also contribute to more informed adaptation decisions within the tourism sector (Yu et al., 2023).

Moreover, cultural elements tied to mountain regions, such as traditional practices, indigenous knowledge, and historical sites, face threats due to changing environmental conditions (Jost, 2013).

2. Climate Change Impacts on Austrian Alps Tourism

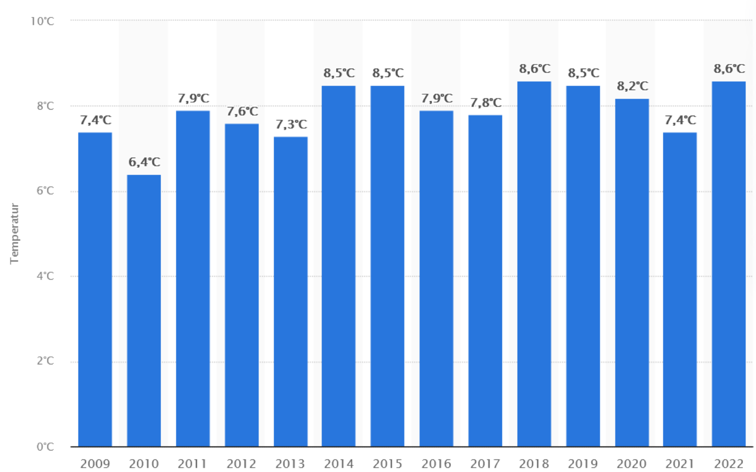
The Austrian Alps, a majestic mountain range stretching through much of Austria, are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a global icon of natural beauty. These towering peaks, pristine lakes, and lush valleys have long captivated the imaginations of travelers and adventurers from around the world. Today, the Austrian Alps are not only a natural treasure but also a major economic driver, attracting millions of tourists each year. Tourism plays a crucial role in the Austrian economy, generating billions of euros in revenue annually. The industry directly employs over 300,000 people and indirectly supports countless more in related businesses such as hospitality, transportation, and retail. Tourism also contributes significantly to Austria's cultural and social life, fostering cross-cultural exchange and promoting local traditions.

The Austrian Alps face a number of challenges as they strive to balance tourism with sustainability and environmental protection. The growing popularity of the region is putting pressure on the natural environment, leading to concerns about resource depletion, pollution, and habitat loss. Additionally, the industry's reliance on winter tourism makes it vulnerable to climate change, as rising temperatures and shorter winters threaten to reduce skiable terrain and visitor numbers.

Climate change is already having a significant impact on the Austrian Alps, and this is expected to continue in the future.

Temperature Rise: One of the most pronounced and well-documented effects of climate change in the Austrian Alps is the rise in temperatures. Over the past century, the region has experienced a significant increase in average temperatures. Winters are becoming milder, and the duration of snow cover in the lower elevations is decreasing. The average annual temperature was about 8.7 °C in the years after 1951 and about 10.7 °C in the last years before 2022. So, in less than 72 years, it has increased by about 2.0 °C.

Figure 1. Evolution of medium temperature in Austria between 2009-2022



Source: Eurostat, 2023

Reduced Snowfall: The Austrian Alps are famous for their pristine ski slopes and winter wonderland landscapes. However, climate change is leading to reduced snowfall, especially at lower elevations. This trend has a significant impact on the winter tourism industry, as well as on the mountain ecosystems that rely on consistent snow cover for their health and stability.

Researchers and scientists in Austria have been closely monitoring snowpack changes through the use of remote sensing technologies and field measurements. This data is crucial for understanding the trends, predicting avalanche risks, and informing climate policy.

The environmental impact of reduced snowfall is equally significant. Alpine ecosystems, flora, and fauna that rely on consistent snow cover for insulation and hydration are under stress. Furthermore, the decrease in snowpack has led to water resource challenges. Many rivers in Austria depend on the gradual melting of snow for a consistent flow, and altered snow patterns can affect water availability for agriculture, energy production, and daily consumption.

Also, reduced snowfall and diminished snowpack in the Austrian Alps pose significant challenges for the region's ski tourism industry. As climate change alters weather patterns, the traditional snowy landscapes that attract winter sports enthusiasts are becoming less reliable. Insufficient snow coverage limits the ski season's duration and quality, impacting the overall appeal of the region for tourists. Ski resorts, vital to the local economy, face economic uncertainties due to shorter seasons and increased reliance on artificial snow. The interplay between climate conditions, snowpack levels, and ski tourism underscores the need for sustainable practices and climate change mitigation in the Austrian Alps. Some examples are: Saalbach Hinterglemm, a popular ski resort in Salzburgerland that was forced to close its lifts in early January 2023 due to a lack of snow (the resort relies heavily on artificial snowmaking, but even this was not enough to keep the slopes open), in January 2023, Sölden resort only had about 70% of its slopes open due to a lack of snow; Zell am See Kaprun, in January 2023, only had about 50% of its slopes open due to a lack of snow.

Glacier Retreat: The Austrian Alps are home to several glaciers, and these icy giants are shrinking rapidly due to rising temperatures. Glacier retreat is not only a visual representation of climate change but also affects the availability of freshwater resources, as many rivers in the region depend on glacial meltwater to sustain their flow during dry periods. According to a study made by Austrian Alpine Club, on average, 89 Austrian glaciers observed by the organization have become 28.7 meters (94.2 feet) shorter, compared to 11 meters in 2021.

Glacier retreat in the Austrian Alps and ski tourism are inextricably linked. Glaciers serve as natural snow reservoirs, providing a reliable source of snow for ski resorts during the winter months. However, due to climate change, glaciers in the Austrian Alps have been retreating at an alarming rate. This poses a significant challenge to the ski industry, as it threatens to reduce the availability of snow and shorten the ski season.

Changes in Precipitation Patterns: Climate change has also led to shifts in precipitation patterns in the Austrian Alps. While some areas may experience increased precipitation, others face a higher risk of drought. These changes can have significant implications for agriculture, water supply, and forest ecosystems.

Increased Frequency of Extreme Weather Events: The Austrian Alps have witnessed an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall, storms, and avalanches. These events can lead to flash floods, landslides, and other natural disasters, affecting infrastructure and safety in the region.

Alpine Ecosystem Changes: As temperatures rise and snow cover decreases, alpine ecosystems are undergoing significant transformations. Plant and animal species that are adapted to cold and snowy conditions are facing challenges in adapting to the new climate. This affects biodiversity and the delicate balance of mountain ecosystems.

Water Resource Management: The changing climate is also impacting water resource management in the Austrian Alps. Snowmelt and glacial runoff are essential sources of freshwater for the region, and their variations can lead to water scarcity and conflicts over water allocation.

Austria has already a comprehensive strategy for the sustainable development of tourism. The strategy, known as "Plan T," was first launched in 2016 and aims to make tourism more sustainable and resilient in the face of climate change and other challenges.

Key objectives of the strategy include:

- **Protecting and enhancing the natural environment:** Austria is committed to preserving its alpine landscapes and ecosystems. The strategy includes measures to reduce pollution, promote renewable energy, and protect endangered species.
- **Promoting sustainable practices:** The strategy encourages tourism businesses to operate in a more environmentally friendly and socially responsible manner. This includes measures to reduce waste, conserve water, and minimize their carbon footprint.
- **Diversifying tourism offerings:** Austria is aiming to reduce its reliance on snow-based tourism and develop a more year-round appeal. This includes promoting summer activities, such as hiking, biking, and sightseeing, and investing in new tourism products and services.
- **Strengthening community engagement:** The strategy emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in the development and implementation of tourism initiatives. This helps to ensure that tourism benefits the local population and does not harm the environment or cultural heritage.

The Austrian government is investing heavily in the implementation of the *"Plan T" strategy*. A number of initiatives have been launched, including:

- **The Alpine Pearls program:** This program recognizes and promotes destinations that are committed to sustainable tourism.
- **The Green Accommodation label:** This label recognizes hotels and other accommodation providers that meet high standards of environmental sustainability.
- **The Climate Ticket:** This ticket offers visitors discounted access to public transport and other services, encouraging them to travel in a more sustainable way.

The Austrian government is also working with industry partners to develop and implement innovative solutions for sustainable tourism. For example, the government is supporting the development of new snowmaking technologies that are more environmentally friendly.

As a result of these efforts, Austria is making significant progress towards becoming a more sustainable tourism destination. The country is committed to protecting its natural environment, promoting sustainable practices, and diversifying its tourism offerings. These efforts are helping to create a more sustainable and resilient tourism industry that can benefit the Austrian economy and society for many years to come.

3. Research Methodology and results

The tourism industry worldwide is grappling with the multifaceted challenges posed by global climate change and global warming. Mountain regions, including the Austrian Alps, are particularly susceptible to the detrimental effects of climate change, a vulnerability exacerbated by their unique topography and reliance on snow-based activities. A primary driver of global warming is the excessive emission of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide (CO2).

In order to see if there is a connection between the CO_2 emissions and the changes in the annual average temperature in Austria we used the latest data provided by the International Energy Agency (IEA) and Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S). Our analysis is based on data collected between 1970 and 2022 and we used the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Based on the data collected, the following is calculated:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i = \frac{564.4}{53} = 10.649056603774$$

$$\bar{Y} = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n} Y_i = \frac{5462.7}{53} = 103.06981132075$$

$$SS_{XX} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i^2 - \frac{1}{n}\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i\right)^2 = 6221.66 - 564.4^2/53 = 211.33245283019$$

$$SS_{YY} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} Y_i^2 - \frac{1}{n}\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} Y_i\right)^2 = 622629.13 - 5462.7^2/53 = 59589.671698113$$

$$SS_{XY} = \sum_{i=1}^{n} X_iY_i - \frac{1}{n}\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i\right)\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} Y_i\right) = 61320.71 - 564.4 \times 5462.7/53 = 3148.108490566$$

Therefore, based on the above calculations, the correlation coefficient is obtained as follows:

$$r = \frac{SS_{XY}}{\sqrt{SS_{XX} \cdot SS_{YY}}}$$

$$= \frac{3148.108}{\sqrt{211.332 \cdot 59589.672}}$$

$$= 0.887$$

The complete results of the Pearson correlation coefficient

Parameter	Value
Pearson correlation coefficient (r)	**0.8871**
r^2	0.787
P-value	0
Covariance	60.5405
Sample size (n)	53
Statistic	13.7263

A Pearson correlation coefficient (r) of 0.8871 is a strong, positive correlation. This means that there is a strong positive relationship between the two variables being measured. In other words, as one variable increases, the other variable also tends to increase.

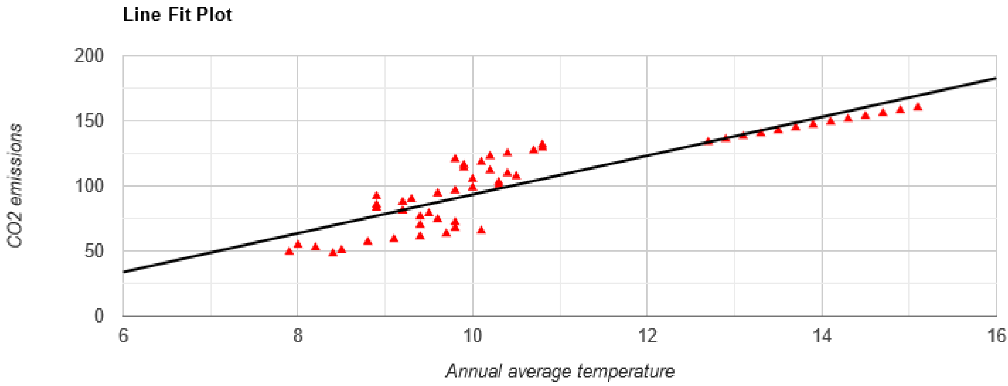
A correlation coefficient of 0.8871 is very close to 1, which is the highest possible correlation coefficient. This means that the relationship between the two variables is very strong and consistent.

The strength and direction of the correlation coefficient can be interpreted as follows:

- **0:** No correlation
- **0.1-0.3:** Weak correlation

- **0.3-0.5:** Moderate correlation
- **0.5-0.8:** Strong correlation
- **0.8-1:** Very strong correlation

In this case, the correlation coefficient of 0.8871 indicates a very strong positive correlation between CO_2 emissions in Austria and the average temperature in Austria. This means that as CO_2 emissions increase, the average temperature in Austria also tends to increase.



The relationship between CO_2 emissions and average temperature is well-established and is a major factor contributing to climate change. CO_2 emissions trap heat in the atmosphere, which leads to an increase in the average global temperature. This increase in temperature is causing a number of negative impacts, including rising sea levels, more extreme weather events, and changes in precipitation patterns.

The correlation coefficient of 0.8871 provides strong evidence of the link between CO_2 emissions and average temperature in Austria. This evidence can be used to support policies and measures aimed at reducing CO_2 emissions and mitigating the effects of climate change.

4. Conclusions

To mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and ensure the sustainability of mountain tourism in the Austrian Alps, various adaptation strategies can be implemented:

1. **Investment in Snowmaking Technology:** Snowmaking systems can artificially create snow cover, extending the ski season and providing a fallback option for when natural snowfall is insufficient.
2. **Diversifying winter sports regions:** Austria acknowledges that some winter sports regions are threatened by climate change, with reduced snowfall and shorter snow seasons. To address this challenge, the country is actively working on creating alternative offers not solely dependent on snow. This diversification aims to keep winter tourism thriving even in a changing climate.

3. **Strengthening Alpine summer tourism and development of alternative tourism activities:** Recognizing the potential of the summer season in the Alps, Austria is investing in strengthening Alpine summer tourism. This includes promoting outdoor activities like hiking, cycling, and cultural experiences to attract visitors during the warmer months.
4. **Improved infrastructure for water management:** Strengthening water infrastructure, including reservoirs and water treatment plants, can enhance the region's ability to manage water resources and ensure access for both tourism and local communities.
5. **Community engagement and education:** Raising awareness among tourists and residents about climate change and its impacts can foster a sense of responsibility and encourage sustainable practices.

In conclusion, Austria's approach to securing its position as an attractive and sustainable tourism destination is marked by a forward-thinking commitment to adapt to the challenges posed by climate change. By incorporating climate change into tourism strategies, developing climate-friendly adaptation measures, improving data-driven decision-making, diversifying winter sports regions, promoting summer tourism in the Alps, and expanding city tourism, Austria is poised to continue offering memorable and environmentally responsible travel experiences for visitors while preserving its natural beauty and cultural heritage.

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THE LANGUAGE OF ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS IN GRAHAM SWIFT'S *HERE WE ARE*

Alexandra Mărginean[*]

Abstract

The analysis at hand, of Graham Swift's novel Here We Are, consists of three main parts, which display a progressively increased degree of complexity. We are looking at the language of the entertainment business in post-war Brighton unpretentious summer shows. The first part focuses on linguistic terms and phrases that describe this business, i.e. the actual place and actors, so the level of interpretation is mainly the basic, denotative one. In the second part, we look at how the entertainer is described, drawing the conclusion that one of the main features assigned to him is versatility and a multifaceted personality. This versatility is further taken in the spotlight in the third part as the common denominator of the linguistic expression in the novel, and we look at the examples provided in the book and the subtle meanings that they convey. In the Conclusions, we pair this ambivalent linguistic manner of expression with the overall interpretations of the characters and situations, revealing the fact that they are mutually illustrative of each other. The approach is linguistics combined with cultural studies.

Keywords: *entertainment business, identity, post-WWII theatre culture, performance terminology*

JEL Classification: Z10

1. Introduction

The novel begins with three young people engaged in a late 1950s variety theatre performances in Brighton: Jack Robinson (the stage name for Robbins), the compere of the show, and the duet Ronnie Deane, a skilled magician, and Evie White, his lovely assistant. Evie and Ronnie become a couple in real life, only to be separated after a short-lived romantic relationship upon the death of Ronnie's mother, which makes him temporarily leave Evie and his career duties. While Ronnie is away to attend to his dying mother, Evie and Jack get together and will stay like this, married for fifty years. As Ronnie comes back from his trip, he sees the betrayal in Evie's eyes and orchestrates a good-bye show filled with his best tricks yet, culminating with a disappearance act, subsequent to which he never actually returns. The book is made up of a pendulation between moments from this young-age careers in theatre, Ronnie's childhood and Evie's elderly reminiscences.

The novel is filled with linguistic subtleties, especially of the pun and double meaning type. Our study starts with the analysis of the terms related to

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the entertainment business, relevant in their denotative sense, which makes their investigation rather descriptive, the purpose being the formation of a small corpus in this semantic area. The middle part consists in the examination of the status of the artist, and it mixes forthright characterizations that lack subtlety with more covert ones as far as their decoding, where the presence of the double meanings is witnessed. The last part is dedicated to the exclusive interrogation of double-meaning contexts, and presents the highest degree of subtlety of them all. The conclusions point out the connection between the double entendre that is used as a linguistic artifice and the doubt overarching characters, situations and outcomes in the novel, which are ambivalent, language and hermeneutic at the level of ideas being equally permeated by irresoluteness and ambiguity, and functioning as a reciprocal mirror for each other.

2. The performance business

The "wings", where Jack seems to try to summon his courage in the first scene of the novel, refer to the lateral spaces of the stage that are hidden from the eyes of the audience (Swift, 2021: 1). The "entrance" that he is preparing is the act of coming before the people, on stage, exiting from the wings so that one makes oneself visible to the public (*ibidem*). Jack knows how to "delay his entrance", which is a strategy to draw more attention to himself, creating momentum and suspense, and thus presence, gaining metaphorical weight as a showman (*ibidem*). The dimming of the "house lights" (*ibidem*), i.e. of the lighting that is ensured in the establishment, or, more restrictedly, in the "house" i.e. "auditorium where the audience sits" (Theatre Jargon, *Raleigh Little Theatre*, https://raleighlittletheatre.org/get-involved/volunteers/theatre-jargon/), is used to mark and separate the moments in the show, so that each performance should be differentiated from the others, and at the same time creates a state of anticipation among the members of the audience who are thus made to await more keenly the next number – this anticipation being referred to as a "thickening murmur" or "boil" (Swift, 2021: 1). Of course, there is a "dressing room" for the performers to change and rest (*ibidem*: 9), and terms like "stalls", "(back) row", "backstage", "front-of-house" (*ibidem*: 101) are used for the partitioned space of the theatre. The performances that compose a show, or the acts, are referred to with the noun "spots", which entails an order in which they take place (*ibidem*: 4). What Jack does, his lines or attitudes when he introduces the performers, as well as the content of the performers' acts are called "routines" (*ibidem*), because they are repetitive to a certain degree or fully, and his routines contain "quips", so witticisms, most of which rely on double meanings. A "billing" is "information, especially about a performance" (Billing, *Cambridge Dictionary*, https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/billing), and when the couple Ronnie and Evie move up the billing, it means that they get “star/top billing” (*ibidem*) (Swift, 2021: 166), i.e. are advertised as the best.

In the above, we notice that we have moved, with the presentation of the vocabulary related to the entertainment business, from nouns and noun phrases that describe the location, the actual space, to dynamics related to the organization of the show. Let us have a look at the content of this entertainment program, defined as a “regular seaside holiday show”, as “variety” (*ibidem*: 6). It consists, in linguistic terms, in common nouns designating people, i.e. the performers, and proper nouns that are stage names whose pomposity is intended to attract the audiences. In general, the show comprises “acrobats” (*ibidem*), “jugglers”, “plate-spinners” (*ibidem*: 7), and what Jack does himself, besides introducing every part, is “some patter”, “some gags”, and “a bit of singing, some dancing, some tapping” (*ibidem*). There appear some ing-forms of the verbs that denote the actions that compose the show. We notice that they are attributed to the main character, which may suggest that his contribution is more significant. Also, this feeling is reinforced by the numerous ways in which his routine is referred to, with the help of noun modifiers that send us to the concept of parting – “farewell routine” (*ibidem*: 7), “farewell patter” (*ibidem*: 9), the time of the day, i.e. the evening when the show ends – “goodnight routine” (*ibidem*: 8), or the organization of the show and implicitly its last part – “closing number” (*ibidem*: 9). We could say that these nouns have a “qualifying” and “attributive” nature and that in these examples they serve to express the “function” of the routine (Noun Modifiers, *Langeek*, https://langeek.co/en/grammar/course/486/noun-modifiers). The use of the determiner “some” points to the undefined nature of Jack’s act, which in his case is a way of suggesting his versatility rather than something unprofessional. More about this will be revealed in the analysis on status below.

The proper nouns that are used to individualize the numbers of the show and which also fulfil the purpose of making the show more attractive to its public are the “Rockabye Boys”, “Doris Lane” (Swift, 2021: 6), nicknamed “Mistress of Melody” and “Forces Fiancée” “in cheeky reference to one of the rivals”, and “Lord Archibald” doing pantomime and repartees on hot topics and “impersonations” of political figures (*ibidem*: 7). With these proper nouns, social and political realities come to the fore and are introduced as concerns and topics to start from for satire numbers in the performance. Doris Lane is a famous actress of the time, and the reality of the “Forces sweetheart” i.e. showbusiness entertainers, especially women, that “became a favourite of soldiers in the British Armed Forces” (Forces sweetheart, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forces_sweetheart) is inferred, as well as that of the star female protagonist cast in the film called *Forces’ Sweetheart* (which depicts precisely this cultural reality, of army men falling for a female artist) (*Forces’ Sweetheart (film)*, *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forces%27

Sweetheart(film)), Hy Hazell, who may be the rival the narrator is hinting at. The outrunning of this rival by the *persona* in the show is suggested by the status contained in the nickname: if the main character (i.e. the rival) from the movie was only a sweetheart, the woman in the show in the novel is a fiancée, suggesting a more permanent and serious liking or preference manifested by the audiences. The pantomimer named Archibald talks to his teddy-bear doing impressions of politicians, imagining dialogues between "Macmillan and Eisenhower" (Swift, 2021: 7), i.e. the British Prime Minister and the American President of the time, dialogues that imply their "wartime friendship" (Post-war Britain (1945-1979), n.a., *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-war_Britain_(1945%E2%80%931979)).

3. Status

Jack describes himself as being "nobody" (Swift, 2021: 2), which can have negative connotations, as in being no one of importance, or not a person of substance, but also positive, as the more somebody can detach from who they are, of their individuality, the better they can embody various stage personalities, becoming all these *personae*. Being on stage is associated with an act of courage, a boldness that seems to contain an element of madness to it, and with something risky, as what someone stepping on it does is "Cross the line, step over the edge." (*ibidem*: 4)

Jack is a "veteran" (*ibidem*: 1), an "old stager" (*ibidem*: 3), someone who has been in shows for years, in his case twelve. In his quality of compere, a British English term, he "introduces the various acts in a […] stage show" (Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, 2003: 259). Hence, he is the person who ensures the smooth passage between all the parts of the performance, needing to inspire and ensure a certain cohesion among disparate sections and acts which may be quite different from one another, which therefore requires him to possess a certain type of versatility.

There is a connection established intentionally between his outfit and his personality. The in-betweenness of his personality, of someone older than his age and more experienced and someone young, as he is only twenty-eight after all, as well as the mixture of innocence or conviviality, on the one hand, and trickery and shrewdness, on the other, are suggested chromatically and stylistically in his outfit. His clothes are "black-and-white", the "outdated rig of showmen, conmen, masqueraders everywhere", and he preserves, despite his young age and latest fashion that imposes leather and guitars as mandatory accessories in an entertainer's appearance, the "cane", "boater" and "tap shoes" which, together with his handsomeness, grin and mobile "lock of hair" make him an elegant dandy, with an air of dated distinction mixed with modern unseriousness. What is modern in the context of the novel is the end of the fifties, the time when the action unfolds, a post-war age in which people were yet uncured of the war trauma and looking for entertainment in an attempt to leave the horror that they had gone through behind. Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953 had "renewed" the "sense of national pride", which, along with the social phenomenon of ending conscriptions boosted morale (Post-war Britain (1945-1979), n.a., *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-war_Britain_(1945%E2%80%931979)). The elements of dishonesty and deceptiveness are suggested as part of this job and career through the nouns "conmen" and "masqueraders", on the one hand, but these amalgamate with a side of his personality that suggests confidence, on the other, a trustworthy individual and a soothing presence, as he, in his role of a compere, provides a protective fatherly figure for both the performers, who are all taken "under his wing", and the audience members, for whom he is "Your pal for the night, your host with the most." (Swift, 2021: 7). This multifaceted personality makes it obvious that the show "was all held together" by him, him being "the oil in the wheels", the glue or binder (*ibidem*). The oil metaphor is preceded by the modifier "just" as if in an intention to minimize his role out of modesty, as this characterization of himself belongs to Jack. However, we have a corrective narrative auctorial voice in the same paragraph, which states that "The impression was that it was his show.", which immediately changes his status from a subordinate to an vital one (*ibidem*). Therefore, the reunion of opposites is achieved when it comes to his power status as well, never derailing from the ambivalence that constitutes the main vein of the status description in Jack's case. The modesty with which he is endowed only makes his prominence more potent. His own reflections on himself, starting with the one in which he deems himself to be nobody, reaching his late-life nostalgic image of self as only "an old song-and-dance man" show a humbleness that only achieves the opposite effect, of propelling his figure as quintessential for the performance world; the adjective "old" is meant to inspire the concept of being unthreatening and weak (*ibidem*: 10).

However, even this last self-characterization is ambivalent. In its first-level interpretation, it only describes Jack's activities in the show, but at a subtler level, the phrase song and dance means, in British English, "an unnecessary or useless show of confusion, anger, excitement etc.", or "fuss", and, in American English, "a complicated or misleading explanation" (Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, 2003: 1290). The Britannica Dictionary provides a comprehensive explanation that starts with the first meaning of a performance combining these two artistic manifestations, mentions the US informal and "disapproving" sense mentioned above, and adds the British informal phrase "make a song and dance about (something)", similar to the Longman entry that we have presented (Song and dance, *The Britannica Dictionary*, https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/song-and-dance). The deceit element included or not, what he needed to do involves, in the more expanded interpretations, an ingredient of exaggeration.

Manipulation is not eliminated, but clearly blending as an ingredient in Jack's stage behavior. Manipulative behavior involves deceit by definition. However, in our context, it is viewed as a talent, positively-connoted and somehow part of the job: with Jack's jokes and comedy, "The note of clownish companionship was struck. They were in his palm again. It was a skill." (Swift, 2021: 9) Manipulative, in a way, is the writing at hand as well, inasmuch as it resorts to plural meanings to signal possibilities and to sometimes point out relevant truths under the impression that what is being discussed is something benign and merely the concrete reality at hand, the immediate context, while in fact making way for broader and more profound explanations. As early as the first few pages, the narrative is "dropping clues about what's ahead for these summer friends" (Charles, 2020). Since this becomes obvious from the very beginning of the book, we are going to look at this mechanism in detail in the following section.

4. Puns and double entendre

A person who "was truly nobody, truly nowhere" is Jack's father (Swift, 2021: 3). One page after he has described himself as nobody and nowhere in metaphorical terms, Jack implies that his father is like that, but this time in the first, literal senses of the terms. Or is it in this first sense? This basic meaning refers to the father's physical absence from his life, as his mother has remarried a garage owner (Carter). We do not know yet whether Jack employs the two terms – negative pronoun and place adverbial – metaphorically, with any other pejorative connotation, perhaps as a reproach for his father's symbolical absence from the life of the family as well. We may suspect it at this point due to the narrator's predilection for ambiguous and double meanings, which we notice as early as the third page. To provide an extra example in this respect, another term that can function as a synonym for break, intermission, interval in theatre – i.e. "in between" – is also translated to another context, to mean a period of time between his mother's two relationships (with his father and then with Carter), during which she went on stage herself. The translation of the term from its potential meaning of recess in the context of theater life to an amount of time in someone's existence meant to suggest a break from relationships already suggests the treatment of life as a theatre performance and vice versa. Jack seems dissatisfied with his mother's decision to perform, as he calls it a "cruel bastard business", seeing it as somewhat degrading (*ibidem*). He seems to judge his mother for having made this decision, as he asks "And who did she have to push her?", seemingly implying that she was not forced to do it. However, the question is ambiguous, as he could also refer to something positive instead of manifesting anger; since he has described already that a shove in his back used to be his mother's form of encouragement to him right before he would go on stage, he could also be in fact simply wondering, with this interrogation, who was there for her when she needed reassurance (*ibidem*). Therefore, the pushing could be either positively or negatively connoted, and the decision an either bold or reckless act.

In one of his quips on stage (which, as we have already mentioned, are often based on double meanings or puns), Jack introduces a joke "about the garage owner's wife", which means that he mixes his life experience with what he does on stage, sometimes using it as a source of inspiration. Here, the message seems to be that illusion and reality become indistinguishable from each other to stage people like him. As far as puns, he uses the name of Brighton – the place where the show is put on – for one that capitalizes on the similar pronunciation between the proper noun and the verb "to brighten" as in "brighten up" i.e. become joyful or happy: "'You're in Brighton, folks, so bloody well brighten up!'" (*ibidem*: 4).

While commenting on Ronnie and Evie's status, Jack plays upon the two meanings of the adjective "engaged", i.e. being in a serious long-term relationship that involves a promise and prospect of marriage, and having a contract to do their number in the theatre for the respective season: "they were engaged to do the summer season, they didn't have to get engaged to each other too" (*ibidem*: 5). Some pages later, Jack uses a third meaning of "engaged" while talking about his own situation when he skipped the double dates with the couple (on which he used to bring a different girl each time), saying about himself that these absences meant that he was "otherwise engaged" – suggesting intimate relations with these occasional partners, i.e. occupying or spending his time romantically with them (*ibidem*: 14).

When the couple breaks the engagement, they cannot, nevertheless, break the stage engagement, which Jack comments upon again, using the phrase "the show must go on" (*ibidem*: 5), the same that he used a little bit earlier to refer to the way his own mother has changed husbands. The saying refers to the ambition not to interrupt a performance at all costs, literally, as well as to the way in which one should surpass all hardships in life and not give up living, and is obviously based on the already-obsessive metaphor of life being a theatrical performance.

When the couple become the favorites of audiences and their number moves to the final spot, Jack feels that his closing act "became, in more ways than one, a little trickier" (*ibidem*: 8). The narrator warns us that the term "trickier" plays upon a double meaning of the implied root adjective "tricky", which can be understood in the literal sense, i.e. full of tricks or jokes, and metaphorically, as something posing a higher degree of difficulty.

Plays-upon-words are heavily relied on throughout the novel, but especially in the beginning, where they abound in relation with Ronnie and Jack's jobs. When they joined the army, and they had to write down their occupations to be enrolled, they stated "magician" and, respectively, "comedian", which was perceived as a way of challenging the authorities although they had no such intention, an idea phrased like this: "In neither case were they dishonest or – even in Jack's – joking.", as Jack could be joking in his quality of a professional joker, as it were (*ibidem*: 11) By 1958, while Jack had pointed to Ronnie that a useful tactic to manipulate the public into liking him more would be to take a female partner, which could enchant the people watching them, Ronnie understood the value of his friend's point of view: "He was a magician, but he'd learnt some of the unenchanting truths of the entertainment business." (*ibidem*: 13). This phrasing is based on the common trait of [+enchantment] had in common by: the art of a magician; an appealing woman and/or a woman who casts spells (i.e. sorceress, enchantress, witch); entertainment as a practice overall. Also, in all cases, the [+enchantment] trait entails the [+illusion]/[+deceit] traits. Strating from the root adjective "enchanting" in the same word family bearing the same meaning traits, something "unenchanting" – the opposite adjective built using the negative prefix "un-" – shows not only the absence of the positive traits above, but also the presence of the opposite attitudes and emotions, i.e. displeasure and rejection. Hence, a magician who thrives on the optimistic and awe-indulging moods induced by the effects of his art is confronted with a harsh reality where he is lost in unfamiliar territory that opposes his nature and where Jack comes to rescue.

The account of Ronnie's childhood occasions a series of double entendres related to the potential early signs that he would choose the career of a magician, of the relevant details that stuck to him and marked his way of perceiving the world in such a manner as to push him towards his future occupation. In order to protect him on the brink of war, his mother, Agnes Deane, sent six-year-old Ronnie away on a train in 1939, to Evergrene, Oxfordshire, to live with Eric and Penelope Lawrence, to whom he becomes attached. In this way, he notices that people "might keep changing into a variety of roles", as his avid observation of the couple who hosts him yield as a conclusion, Eric being an accountant, a warden (watching the sky for any danger of bombings), doing a magic show and business (*ibidem*: 37). The concept of roles refers here to social roles, as those implied by the existence in the world of every individual, but it is a term employed in order to function as an early sign for the stage roles that adult Ronnie will get to play as an entertainer later in life. Hence, the word is a harbinger, in its initial meaning, for the career that will involve roles in the other meaning, i.e. acting on stage. This analogy goes hand in hand with life being like a stage performance, which the narrator obsessively suggests on various occasions. When Ronnie is introduced to friends of the Lawrences, they deem him "charming", an adjective that gets repeated and made to form a sentence on its own in order to draw our attention to it, because it is again used with one meaning, i.e. likable, cute, but made to suggest another, i.e. filled with magic or magical (*ibidem*: 41). This technique is employed a couple of instances more in the same context, in the comment that Ronnie is “displayed”, “being made an exhibit of himself”, and the child wonders whether what the guests – who have prepared in wearing their best outfits and strive to be nice – are doing is what “putting on a show” meant (*ibidem*: 42). Ronnie being an exhibit does not necessarily have negative connotations, as he has sensed as a child how fond the Lawrences are of him, and how Penelope wished she had been his real mother, so what they are doing in showing him to their friends happens out of pride and love. However, from the way in which the phrase is formulated, we realize that an element of illusion an unreality is present, as what is introduced is solely a version or side of himself. We notice the association of being shown as an exhibit to what an entertainer does on stage, and therefore that his choice of words hints at his future status. The other phrase, related to how people put on a show is, of course, again, a play upon words and meanings, as we can understand it literally, describing what Ronnie will do as a magician, and metaphorically, meaning doing something with ostentation, which is what the Lawrences’ guests do. In the case of this expression, the metaphorical meaning suggests the future literal one, as it is the case with the term “roles”, while with the other terms – “charming”, “displayed”, “exhibit” – the move is from the concrete or literal to the figurative.

There is an insistence on the overall uncanny peacefulness of Oxfordshire in comparison with the presupposed terrible war zone of the capital, London. Child Ronnie is in a state of disbelief as to the reality of this war and the horrible bombings he has heard are happening at the very same time in another part of the same country. Also, his disbelief is of another nature as well, that of who his real family is, as the Lawrences appear to be more real as parents than his biological ones, who have never acted and functioned as a family for him. The amazement of having these new parents determine him to feel magically lucky, and think of Eric Lawrence as if he were a magician, figuratively, although he was one in real life, going by the name Lorenzo. Penelope’s repeated exclamation “Here we are!”, pointing to the bliss of them being together in that peaceful countryside will come to be remembered by Ronnie as a quintessential expression of this magic and happiness (*ibidem*: 49). These aspects highlight even more the suspension of disbelief when it comes to something that is an illusion, undermining at the same time what one knows to be real, consequently contributing to the construction of the concept of interchangeability between life and acting on a stage. Disbelief is Ronnie’s reaction when the Lawrences inform him about his father’s death at sea, which is why they wonder whether he has understood the situation, if “any of it sunk in”, “Which was an unfortunate way even of framing the question.” (*ibidem*: 45). There is, again, a double meaning that is played upon – the literal sense of something, an object, sinking in water, becoming submerged, and the figurative way of referring to whether a piece of information has been properly and thoroughly taken in, comprehended. The idea of submersion is insisted upon, reoccurring obsessively as a semantic feature of the modifiers present in the phrases that describe the thoughts and emotions related to the reception of this news. Thus, we encounter phrases like "swamping confusion" and "drowning gratitude" (Ronnie's, for being safe with his adoptive parents) (*ibidem*: 47).

The perpetual and recurring ambivalence resorted to in the examples above plays the role of enhancing the potentiality of illusion, of second guessing of things, of a reminder that everything is questionable, that reality may be an illusion and illusion may be more real than what is conventionally real. We realize that this is the underlying theme in the whole novel, and that double meanings only point to it in a concrete manner, showing that what seems to be in a certain way might as well be in another.

The use of double meaning can occur simply for the pleasure of witticism, at a more limited contextual level of a sentence, making sense in the immediate linguistic context, without functioning as an anchor to some other, more complex connotation. An example is the interpretations of the term "ring", as sonority and, respectively, the concrete adornment object or piece or jewelry: "'Pablo and Eve'. Yes, it had a ring to it. And now she was wearing a ring." (*ibidem*: 75) The situation refers to the couple that Ronnie Pablo and Evie form, both on stage and in real life. A more complex meaning is contained in Ronnie's exclamation to the audiences after a number with Evie, as she emerges safely from a box in which she was supposedly sectioned in half: "Meet Evie. Meet Eve. My other half. Halves." (*ibidem*: 89) Here, we have, first, the double meaning of "half", as "bisection of", concretely, and wife/spouse, figuratively. The term "halves" makes sense in the plural because the woman is Ronnie's partner both romantically, in real life, as Evie, and on stage, as the female assistant Eve, so there are two personas in one. To this double entendre, we may add the one resulting from the immediate context of the trick that the two have performed, which involves the woman's alleged sectioning, and who ultimately comes out of the experiment in both the alleged halves of her, reunited. Hence, the term "halves" is an umbrella one for both interpretations. The following fragment highlights the issue of Ronnie not hurting Evie during a performance trick on stage, and at the same time the soon-to-be-damaged relationship that they have in real life, overlapping the two planes through the concrete and figurative use of the term "hurt": "'[…] You don't have to worry at all. I'm never going to hurt you.' Nor did he. It was never that way round." (*ibidem*: 92) The reference to potential physical, tangible hurt sends to the emotional, intangible hurt. Also, the implication is that Evie is the one who will hurt him and damage their relationship. When she is inside the box, Ronnie never asks "Evie – are you still there?", but "being there" is again taken metaphorically as well as literally through the subsequent comment of the narrative voice (which is Evie's) hinting at her betrayal "But perhaps he should have asked nonetheless." (*ibidem*: 93) This "being there" will later in Evie's life function as a clue related to her hopes that he has found a way to be present around her in an invisible, almost paranormal manner, due to him having been such a great magician, as Evie the narrator obsessively feels his presence like an invisible thread, like the energy of the rope he has used between them in his final disappearance act on stage.

A lot of years after, when Evie, aged seventy-five, is faced with the death of her fifty-year- partner Jack, she gives us the most prominent voice in the novel – "mostly we are with Evie in 2009" (Baker, 2020). Just as her narrative seems the most poignant and direct, Ronnie has been the actual main character, despite the flamboyant praiseful characterization offered to Jack in the first pages: "it is neither charismatic Jack nor steely Eve whose back story sits at the heart of this novel" (Hughes, 2020). Swift is here a bit deceitful with us, resorting to ambivalence himself, in the sense of playing with our expectations. Evie likes to think of Jack as "gone" instead of "dead" as the former word is less "uncompromising", it can keep up the appearance of something that is only "temporary", thus favoring illusion (Swift, 2021: 76). In this case, the plural meaning of "gone" creates an ambiguity that makes the harsh reality of death less prominent, interpretable and therefore easier to cope with, as one can choose to disregard or suspend it, at least upon occasion. She has come to experience what her mother had warned her about, that life was not fair, i.e. that "her turn would come", which it has, "And look what a turn it had turned out to be." (*ibidem*: 77) Here, we have three meanings of the term "turn", with a change of part of speech for the third: the first use denotes someone's spot in an order, the second refers to change, and the last is a phrasal verb that points to an outcome. This is another example of plural meaning employed in the limited, linguistic context of two sentences.

Ambiguity of linguistic expression points to another overarching theme of the novel: the way people can play more roles. At some point in his career, compere Jack Robinson took a turn himself, called a "lucky break" by him, and signed as a sitcom actor, revealing the depth of his talent in cinema as well (*ibidem*: 82). This break, while the term usually means interruption or dismantling of something, comes to connote the very opposite, i.e. a putting together of things and a continuation. Jack gains the opportunity of capitalizing upon and displaying another side of his complex personality, i.e. of embodying another role. Evie too grows from a prancer in her youth into a businesswoman in her mature years – having a company with her husband, the actor, producer and equally-accomplished businessman.

5. Conclusions

The novel begins with the middle part of the three main characters' lives and their progressively successful act in Brighton in the last two years of the fifties – master of ceremonies Jack, and the magician's act performed by Ronnie and Evie. In this part, the preoccupation seems to highlight compere Jack as the central figure of the novel, portraying him as a versatile, brilliant individual who holds the whole show together. However, in less than twenty pages, the spotlight and chronology quickly go back in the year before the outbreak of WWII, describing Ronnie's childhood and adolescent years, for quite a lengthy part of the book, taking into account its modest number of pages. Then, the narrative planes shift back and forth, mostly covering the middle ages of the three friends' lives, to finally get to Evie, depicted in her final years, when we realize that control in terms of narrative voice has slowly but definitely passed on to her. This creates a bafflement for the reader, as we have left one apparently gifted individual who seemed to be the hero-material in the beginning, Jack, to occupy ourselves in detail with Ronnie, to then bow to the female protagonist's authority in terms of both main narrator and versatility as a character. Moreover, although she left Ronnie in her youth for Jack, with whom she has had a fifty-year-long successful marriage, we are left to wonder if she did not in fact regret Ronnie, and just how soon this happened, since she visited Evergrene in the hopes of finding him there, and it is his presence that she feels in the room with her as an elderly lady, and face that she thinks she sees in the mirror one year after her late husband Jack passes away. More clues to this conundrum are the way she named her company – Rainbow – given that the appearance of a rainbow on stage was the final trick that Ronnie did before literally disappearing before the eyes of the audience who was already in awe. Also, the rope he used to unroll on stage, coming out of his mouth and pulled by Evie in the same final show, which looked as something that united them as they were on opposite ends of the stage, becomes the invisible thread that grey-haired Evie seems to suggest has been secretly connecting them all these years.

We are left wondering about the answer to at least a few questions: Who is the protagonist of the book? Is the protagonist male of female? Who was the better entertainer? Who did Evie truly love more? Is Ronnie still alive? The overall interpretation of the novel seems to be ambiguous, as each character or situation appears to be and not be in a certain way at the same time, open interpretations lying everywhere, and this ambivalence is paired with one in linguistic expression, in the tool of the double meanings, the two aspects ending up mirroring each other. This is the reason why we have tried to analyze the language, focusing on its quality of doubleness, as it reflects the main feel of the story, which is plural meanings. We can therefore agree and support Massie's contention that Graham Swift requires "careful reading", as one "might so easily miss the significant line", and, as a soulful writer, Swift has indeed "the lightest of touches" (Massie, 2020).

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SPECIALIZED LANGUAGE – PECULIARITIES, FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS

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Abstract

An abstract science through concepts, hermetic and language needs to be understood by the more or less informed receiver. It is a cognitive process that can only be done interdisciplinary, through strategies of a linguistic and pragmatic nature. It is the assertion from which we start in our research. In our scientific approach we aim to research the relationship between linguistics and terminology, through descriptive-linguistic, cognitive and functional research of language functions – at the level of specialized discourse. The overall objective of the study is to highlight the interdisciplinary character of terminology, as well as the role of linguistics in ensuring coherence, accessibility and relevance of the message. Starting from the specification of language functions in communication – theorized by R. Jakobson – we aim to identify some of the ways to achieve these functions in medical discourse: the informative level is under the referential function, the illustrative level of demonstrations, graphic representations, cumulative constructions, appositives, etc. is under the sign of the phatic function, the use of quotation marks, markings in italics, etc. are located under the sign of the metalinguistic function. There are elements that help adapt information to the receiver's level of understanding – in general. The general conclusion that emerges is that terminology is an innovative science whose didactic strategies are closely related to the functions of language, language sciences, linguistics, logic, etc.

Keywords: *terminology, interdisciplinarity, functions of language, field of knowledge, qualities of language*

JEL Classification: Z10

1. Introduction

Medicine is an abstract science through its concepts and cryptic through its language. Nevertheless, it needs to be understood by the more or less informed recipient. The reception of the message from the written medical text can only be achieved through interdisciplinary means, through linguistic and pragmatic strategies. This is the assertion from which we start in the introduction to our research - given the breadth of the subject. In medical terminology, precision and clarity are paramount due to the potential life-or-death implications of miscommunication. Terminology must accurately convey complex medical concepts to ensure proper diagnosis, treatment, and patient care.

Medical terminology encompasses a wide range of subfields, each with its own specialized vocabulary and terminology. From anatomy and physiology to

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pharmacology and pathology, each area requires unique terminology tailored to its specific context and requirements. Medical terminology evolves continuously to accommodate advances in medical science, technology, and clinical practice. New discoveries, treatments, and diseases necessitate the creation of novel terms and the adaptation of existing terminology to reflect current knowledge and practices.

Effective communication of medical terminology is essential not only for healthcare professionals but also for patients. Clear and accessible language empowers patients to participate in their care decisions, understand medical instructions, and advocate for their health needs.

Terminology serves as a bridge between different disciplines within healthcare, fostering collaboration between clinicians, researchers, educators, and policymakers. Interdisciplinary dialogue facilitates innovation, knowledge exchange, and holistic approaches to healthcare delivery and research.

These additional points underscore the complexity, importance, and dynamic nature of medical terminology in the context of healthcare delivery, education, and research.

2. The referential function and the marks of the objectivity

In medical communication, the referential function plays a dominant role, with the involvement of other functions being secondary. R. Jakobson noted: "The verbal structure of a message depends primarily on the predominant function. However, even if the aim of the referent, the orientation towards the context - in short, the so-called 'denotative', 'cognitive', referential function - is the dominant task of many messages, the secondary participation of other functions in such messages must be taken into consideration by an attentive linguist." (R. Jakobson, p.214)

One of the characteristics of the referential function is the *objectivity*, whose features we have identified in medical language as follows:

- *at a conceptual level*: there are no completely complementary premises and interpretations of a subjective nature - this trait is supported lexico-semantically by the use of impersonal verbs ("presents", "represents", "installs", "realizes"), passive voice verbs ("is centered", "is dependent", "is visualized"), gerunds, long infinitives, constructions with the verb "to be able to" + short infinitive ("can suggest", "can be simple")
- *at a linguistic level*: objectivity is achieved interdisciplinarily through the use of the literary language variant of Romanian; neonymy and lexical neology are indicators of objectivity and standardization - which we consider the key to controlling objectivity. In the lexicon of Pulmonology, for example, over 97% of neonyms are of French origin.

Neutral attitude - connotative meanings are eliminated; conceptual and terminological metaphors in the researched field are predominantly denotative (I. Oliveira, 2009), whether we consider *the scenario of the tree* (*branches* of the pulmonary artery, the *trunk* of the pulmonary artery, pulmonary artery *branches*, bronchial *bifurcation*, *root* of the aorta, etc.), *the war scenario* (*attack* of phagocytic cells, frequency and severity of *attacks*, *attack cure*), orientation metaphors (the posterior wall of the right bronchus, the left main bronchus), catachretic metaphors from domains of the material world, civilization, and culture (alveolar canal, pleural compartment, thoracic duct, glassy-matte condensation, pyramidal cells, fibrocartilaginous middle tunic, alveolar sacs, pulmonary vessel, rhythm disorders).

Precision and clarity: Each terminological unit corresponds to a single medical concept;

Impersonal style - discourse focuses on processes, phenomena, conceptual material, cause-effect relationships, etc.

Logical coherence - the discourse follows a clear, logical line in presenting concepts;

Uses specialized terms, symbols, figures;

Monosemy. At the syntactic level, objectivity in specialized communication is also achieved through the cause-effect relationship; gerundial and infinitival syntactic constructions. These are constructions that contribute to the de-subjectivization of language.

3. Mechanisms of the cognitive interaction in the medical language and the phatic function

We cannot speak in specialized discourse of a *sui generis* phatic function, but rather of a process in which the phatic function holds pragmatic values. It is a process through which conceptual cohesion and the development of informational processes are ensured, through the two components of an utterance - *the theme* and *the rheme*.

In the tradition of studies by Bühler and R. Jakobson, *the phatic function* is linked to communication - as an element of human interaction. It is oriented towards the physical, psychological contact between sender and receiver (through utterances such as: “Can you hear me? Do you understand me?”) - with the intention of maintaining communication. In written medical discourse, the phatic function operates at a procedural level. It does not act on human relationships directly but indirectly, through specific pragmatic procedures that engage other mechanisms. The “interaction” between sender and receiver is of a cognitive nature, it is a *purely intellectual* connection, not psycho-active, as happens in the direct interaction between speaker and receiver.

In the example:

"Muscle function is assessed by measuring maximal inspiratory pressure (*PImax = the lowest pressure during a sustained forced inspiration with airway obstruction*) and maximal expiratory pressure *(PEmax = the highest pressure developed during a sustained forced expiration with airway obstruction*).", the mechanisms of cognitive interaction are graphically indicated within parentheses.

The mechanisms of the phatic function exhibit distinct characteristics within medical discourse. In this specialized context, where effective communication is critical for patient care and scientific exchange, the phatic function serves to establish and maintain social bonds, reassure patients, and facilitate smooth interactions between healthcare providers. Through greetings, expressions of empathy, and acknowledgments of understanding, medical professionals create a supportive environment conducive to patient trust and cooperation. Moreover, in academic and professional settings, the phatic function fosters camaraderie among colleagues, enhances teamwork, and encourages open communication, ultimately contributing to the overall effectiveness of medical practice and research.

The mechanisms of the phatic function have specific characteristics in the medical discourse:

a. The scientific statement does not include words and/or expressions with a phatic function, as they are used in direct communication;
b. The absence of interrogative style in the medical discourse;
c. Interaction between the author and an undefined and undifferentiated receiver;
d. Cognitive interaction focuses on a new, simplified, or explained conceptual equivalent in the rheme if:
   - the antecedent in the theme is a hermetic expression: "...pulmonary lymphangioleiomyomatosis (LAM)..." - through the use of abbreviations;
   - the antecedent is ambiguous or has polysemantic value: "Pulmonary atelectasis represents consolidation (alveolar opacity)..." - where consolidation is a polysemantic lexical unit;
e. The author ensures the receiver's good understanding of prominent information by resorting to discourse management techniques. One of these techniques is the explicit reformulation of new scientific content:

"In the case of expiratory flows reported to FVC, predefined values are used, which delimit the normal: FEV1/FVC (bronchial permeability index, BPI)".

f. The author's "intervention" in their own discourse is indirect, mediated through written text. It certifies that the recipient remains focused on the prominent information.

g. The author can update the concept from the antecedent through metaphor, terminological phrase, utterance, scientific definition, etc.

We observe, in the tradition of the Geneva School, that *the structure of medical discourse is hierarchical*. We consider two constituents: the act of language from the antecedent (*theme*) and the author's "intervention" (in the *rheme*); the "intervention" is a linguistic act that maintains the hierarchical denotative, referential relationship with the recipient - with consequences for message reception. It belongs to the same sender and does not have markers of direct interaction, only graphic markers - such as parentheses, braces, separating lines, etc. + new information. It differs from the antecedent by terminological, semantic, and cultural markers. Parentheses are part of a synchronization system between author and recipient, through which the author ensures (Cosnier 1982) the transparency of the message;

"The sputum examination is not suitable for the correct detection of the following pathogens: *Pneumocystis jirovecii*, *Aspergillus spp.*, *Candida albicans* (due to insufficient mobilization of these pathogens from the bronchopulmonary focus), *Legionella spp.* (due to antagonism by oropharyngeal microbiota)." The "intervention" should not be confused with the didactic function or with the metalinguistic function - even though clear differentiations cannot always be made between phatic mechanisms, metalinguistic, and didactic function. It is necessary to determine the contribution of each of these functions.

4. The linguistic characteristics of the mechanisms of the cognitive interaction in the medical discourse

In the realm of medical discourse, the linguistic characteristics of cognitive interaction mechanisms play a pivotal role in facilitating effective communication. One notable feature is the emphasis on precision in terminology, where the use of standardized and accurate language ensures the clear transmission of complex medical concepts. Authors often employ various clarification strategies, such as explicit definitions or examples, to elucidate new or specialized terms for readers, thus promoting comprehension.

A fundamental aspect of the linguistic characteristics of cognitive interaction in medical discourse is the promotion of contextual understanding. By providing clear context and framing information within relevant clinical scenarios, authors facilitate readers' grasp of the significance and implications of the presented material. Furthermore, these mechanisms operate in tandem with other language functions, such as referential and metalinguistic functions, synergistically enhancing the overall effectiveness of medical discourse.

The author's *cognitive intervention* is carried out with the purpose of conceptual interaction with the recipient, as follows:

- At the level of *signification*: The emitter's appeal to the explicitation of a *focused* notion is conducted to ensure the understanding of the new concept.

"It is effective in moderate forms of PAH, chronic treatment with Bosentan (endothelin receptor antagonist), or in combination with prostacyclin derivatives in severe forms of PAH."

- At the *syntagmatic* level, the equivalent of the information contained in the antecedent occupies the first position in the statement highlighted by the author, enclosed in parentheses.

"Non-digitalis *inotropes* (*dobutamine* or dopamine in acute right ventricular decompensation)" – "*Inotropes*" and "*dobutamine*" are terms formed based on two neonyms - abstract nouns in medical language.

- At the *paradigmatic* level, it can function as a synonym with the neonym from the antecedent.
- At the level of term *form* (the signifier, in the tradition of Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics), the forms of terms, of phrases, are invariable in terminological inventories, in databases, etc.
- At the *semiotic* level, there is cognitive value (understanding of the context), and at the cognitive level, the author's goal is to maintain communication with the recipient.

There is a simultaneity of language functions in the lexicon of Pulmonology, as can be deduced from the examples above, where the mechanisms of cognitive interaction occur simultaneously with the referential function, with the metalinguistic function, etc.

In summary, the linguistic characteristics of cognitive interaction mechanisms in medical discourse serve to optimize communication between healthcare professionals and readers, ensuring clarity, comprehension, and contextual understanding of complex medical information.

5. The metalinguistic function in the pulmonology discourse

The metalinguistic function plays a crucial role in the discourse of pulmonology, where precise and clear communication is paramount for effective diagnosis, treatment, and research. In this specialized field, metalinguistic functions serve to clarify terminology, correct misunderstandings, and ensure the accuracy of scientific communication.

One prominent aspect of the metalinguistic function in pulmonology discourse is the use of terminology clarification. Given the technical nature of medical terminology, authors often employ various strategies to define and explain specialized terms to ensure that readers, including medical professionals and researchers, grasp their intended meanings accurately. This may involve providing explicit definitions, offering examples, or contextualizing terms within specific clinical scenarios.

Furthermore, the metalinguistic function in pulmonology discourse extends to the correction of errors or misconceptions. Authors may use this function to address common misunderstandings, clarify ambiguous statements, or rectify inaccuracies in previous research or clinical practices. By doing so, they contribute to the ongoing refinement and advancement of medical knowledge within the field.

Additionally, the metalinguistic function facilitates coherence and cohesion in pulmonology discourse by providing summarizations, reiterations, or syntheses of key concepts or findings. This helps readers navigate complex information, reinforce understanding, and recognize the significance of certain findings or conclusions within the broader context of pulmonary medicine.

The metalinguistic function is a language-oriented function that "highlights the code." At the logical level, specialized literature makes the necessary distinction between object language and metalanguage, the latter being used in the study of object language. For example, in the statement "Un *și* ar fi fost necesar" ("One *and* would have been necessary"), "*and*" is used in the metalanguage, while the other elements of the statement are the "object language", the tools through which speech about "*and*" is made. These are two languages that often overlap. The doctor speaks in Romanian about concepts expressed in the same language.

The enunciative instances in written medical text are: the author, the recipient, the subject of discourse, the text.

At the functional level of the medical discourse, the argumentative function is oriented towards the purpose of scientific communication.

At the syntactic and semantic level, topicalization is achieved through paradigms comprising impersonal formulations such as adjective + verb "to be": *"it is important*", "*it is essential*", "*underscores*", "*notes*", etc.

"Mucormycosis is an aggressive infection, and we consider early diagnosis to be essential for successfully managing the disease" (215),

where the second sentence surpasses the relationship of cognitive equivalence with the first sentence through argumentative and semantic variation. It is a metalinguistic complement.

Researchers in the field (Yujing Ji and Agnès Tutin, 2019) include in the metalinguistic function any form of classification, repair, reformulation, comments on form or meaning, functions of classification, and terminological precision, considering that there are two types of reformulations: paraphrastic reformulation and non-paraphrastic reformulation.

The authors of the Pneumology Treaty use numerous markers of metalinguistic nature to reformulate content. We have focused on three patterns:

a. *Reformulation for clarification*: there is a relationship of conceptual equivalence between the preceding concept and the reformulation:

"Molecules that confer antigenic specificity (respectively individuality) are called *antigenic markers*, and those with the function of 'information gathering' are called *receptors*, i.e., membrane structures specialized in receiving information." - where the sequence i.e., "membrane structures specialized in receiving information" is a reformulation for clarification - in metalanguage, the marker of which is "i.e.".

Reformulation for clarification also has other markers with metalinguistic value: *in other words, namely, respectively*, etc.

b. *Repair reformulation* aims to correct or cancel the notion from the antecedent through markers with metalinguistic value: "maybe it should have been," "...it might have been necessary...". These are formulas through which the author modifies the statement from the previous sentence:

"The patient was positioned upright, but maybe the doctor should have stood behind the patient, with palms symmetrically palpating the thoracic wall, and the patient should repeatedly pronounce '33' (thirty-three)."

In the given example, the pragmatic change through reformulation has surpassed the relationship of equivalence between the first statement and the following ones.

c. *Recapitulative reformulation* has formulations with metalinguistic value: *summarizing, in short, therefore*, etc.

"It is explained, briefly, why maintaining PaO2 > 60 mmHg is necessary in clinical practice. In summary, pulse oximetry is an easy, non-invasive method of determining hemoglobin saturation, but not very accurate."

The translation elucidates the intricacies of metalinguistic functions within the context of pulmonology discourse. Through various reformulation strategies, such as clarification, repair, and recapitulation, authors navigate the complexities of scientific communication to ensure clarity and precision. These linguistic maneuvers, marked by specific indicators and formulations, facilitate effective transmission of medical knowledge and maintain the integrity of scientific discourse. The analysis highlights the importance of metalinguistic awareness in medical writing, underscoring its role in conveying complex concepts accurately and comprehensively to diverse audiences.

6. Conclusion

The general conclusion drawn is that terminology is an innovative science whose strategies are closely linked to the functions of language, language sciences, linguistics, logic, etc. The role of linguistics is to ensure the coherence, accessibility, and relevance of the message. The ways of achieving these functions in medical discourse: the informative level falls under the scope of the referential function, the illustrative level of demonstrations, of new information marked by parentheses, braces, etc. falls under the sign of the phatic function, the use of jargon, markers in italics, etc. are situated under the sign of the metalinguistic function. These are elements that help adapt the information to the understanding level of the receiver, conferring interdisciplinary value to terminology.

Terminology plays a crucial role in standardizing communication within specific fields such as medicine, technology, or law. Standardized terminology ensures consistency and clarity in communication, reducing the risk of misunderstanding or misinterpretation.

Terminology is not static; it evolves over time to reflect advancements in knowledge, changes in technology, and shifts in societal norms. This evolution requires constant updating and adaptation to ensure relevance and accuracy.Effective terminology facilitates communication across different disciplines and professions. It allows experts from various fields to collaborate, exchange ideas, and solve complex problems by providing a common language and framework for discussion.

Terminology often becomes more specialized as fields of study become more nuanced and complex. Specialized terminology enables experts to communicate precisely and efficiently within their domain while also serving as a barrier to entry for outsiders.

While specialized terminology is essential for experts, it can pose challenges for non-specialists or those new to a field. Efforts to make terminology more accessible, such as glossaries, explanatory notes, or simplified language, can enhance understanding and promote inclusivity.

In an increasingly globalized world, terminology also plays a role in facilitating communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Standardized terminology allows for effective communication between speakers of different languages, promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing on a global scale.

These additional points highlight the multifaceted nature of terminology and its importance in various aspects of communication and knowledge dissemination.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN BUCHAREST-ILFOV REGION IN THE NEW GEO-POLITICAL AND POST PANDEMIC CONTEXT

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Abstract

Bucharest-Ilfov region represents the biggest economic power of Romania. Regardless of the economic, pandemic or political context, this region has had the highest contribution to Romania's GDP. As for tourism indicators, Bucharest-Ilfov is also facing the negative effects of the European and global political and economic crisis. Even though the accommodation capacity of Bucharest has tripled in the last 20 years, the Covid 19, the Ukraine war and, more recent, the war in Gaza Strip and Middle East, have had negative repercussions on tourism activity. The number of foreign tourist arrivals has been significantly influenced by these negative events and the geographical localization of Romania determines fluctuations for tourism flows indicators, as well. This study aims to present the impact of these events on the tourism economic environment in Bucharest Ilfov and will accentuate the factors that are contributing to its spectacular revival of the travel and tourism industry, in this unexpected context.

Keywords: *geo-political context, tourism, foreign tourist arrivals, Bucuresti-Ilfov tourist region.*

JEL Classification: Z30.

1. The impact of covid 19 pandemic and the ukraine and gaza war on romanian tourism

The tourism industry is, by definition, one of the most vulnerable one in regard to economic, military or heath potential crisis. Therefore, the new geo-political context, but also the new global challenges, has run to malfunctions and mutations of tourism companies, not only in Bucharest, but also in Romania and the entire South East Europe. The study of Bucharest's situation is required based on multiple considerations, as it represents, first of all, the main engine of Romanian economy and secondly, this is where, the biggest challenges in terms of survival, revival, development, innovation and legislation of Romania are experienced. After the significant decline of Covid19 cases, war has broken out in the Ukraine, with a negative effect on economy

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and tourism, in the border area of Romania and Bucharest as well. The Bucharest initiatives, in accordance with the European directions, have led to important attempts of assisting and supporting the HORECA sector, which has already been hit hard by the pandemic. The pandemic and Ukraine war have generated massive inflation, major labour force shortages, and reduction of financial access. As crisis continues since 2020, in 2023 begins the Gaza war, affecting once more the Romanian tourism.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had dramatic effects for the tourism industry and the Romanian businesses have not been bypassed.[1] The pandemic has generated a strong impact on global tourism, influencing the requirement for a safe, clean and sustainable tourism practice. Europe countries are striving to remain major tourism destinations. Tourism represents one of the most affected sectors; 27 million people were actively working in this industry, representing around 10% of European Union's GDP.

Ever since the beginning**, the Ukraine war,** has affected European tourism, especially in Eastern Europe and South East Europe and Ukraine nearby countries and therefore Romania. At first, the Russian invasion in Ukraine has produced a significant decline of tourism flows in the Eastern Europe, particularly in Romania and Poland [2] but the reductions of tourist arrivals have also been registered in Bulgaria, Latvia and Hungary. As for Romania, the 2023 Russia's attacks on Ukraine Danube ports, has damaged significantly the Danube Delta tourism industry.[3] Tourism in Maramures[4]county has faced important difficulties for incoming, as tourists are concerned regarding the proximity to Ukraine border. In Bucharest case, the situation has rapidly straightened and tourism has been slightly influenced, as the entire country. The accommodations of Ukraine refugees, subsided by European funds, have diminished the tourism drops determined by the war.

The inflation – a rise in inflation of 17%[5] for accommodation prices, registered in 2022. The negative consequences of the war are expected to be at larger extent on a medium and long term, especially regarding the real economy[6]. In 2022, tourism has undergone considerable change in terms of

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[1] https://www.amfiteatrueconomic.ro/temp/Articol_2987.pdf; Vol. 23 • Nr. 56 • Februarie 2021

[2] https://economedia.ro/invazia-ucrainei-a-prabusit-turismul-est-european-romania-si-polonia-cele-mai-afectate-tari-localnicii-vad-o-scadere-mare-in-special-in-jurul-zonei-deltei-dunarii-cea-mai-apropiata-de-uc.html

[3] https://www.romania-actualitati.ro/stiri/romania/atacurile-rusiei-asupra-porturilor-dunarene-din-ucraina-afecteaza-turismul-din-delta-dunarii-id182568.html

[4] https://www.diacaf.com/stiri/actualitate/turismul-rural-din-maramure-afectat-de-r-zboiul-din_124126049.html

[5] https://www.infofinanciar.ro/cum-a-afectat-razboiul-din-ucraina-turismul-romanesc-cazarile-au-crescut-cu-17-din-cauza-inflatiei.html

[6] https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/economie/cele-mai-grave-efecte-ale-razboiului-din-ucraina-asupra-economiilor-din-europa-vor-aparea-in-urmatorii-ani-2515213

prices increase, causing major concerns for Romanian citizens, as gradual return to normality has reported to occur in 2022, after two years of Covid 19 pandemic, with restrictions and prohibition of travel, the main focus becoming the Russian invasion in Ukraine.

The lack of labour force is an issue of international concern. Moreover, tourism industry and its specific seasonality is highly affected, this been the case of Romania as well. Employees from Asia, Republic of Moldova, and recently Ukraine refugees are working in the tourism industry, as a solution to the shortage of labour force.

The lack of access to finance[7] - one of the specific challenges of the tourism industry resides in the lack of the spending opportunities and the difficulties of identifying them; this is generated by a series of factors, such as private sector's limited access to funding, for cooperation, innovation, renewal, creating activities, packages, souvenirs, and improvement of culinary offer, activities which are not consisted with the current tourist trends, the instability of the legal framework for developing and promoting tourist activities.

The Israel war has had a massive effect on Romanian tourism, as Romanian–Israeli bilateral tourism, has been a commune practice for many years, both well known for incoming and outgoing tourism activities between the two countries. Not so long ago, regarding the number of tourists arrivals in Romania, the Israeli tourists were placed second (234.500 arrivals in 2019), but at the same time, most foreign visitors in Bucharest were from Israel. Before the war, the average expense of an Israeli tourist in Romania was around 580 de euros, with the addition of 100 euro daily for food, shopping etc.; the average length of stay was five nights. In conclusion, every Israeli tourist spent around 1.100 de euro, generating over 1.2 billion RON revenues in Romania, from over 230.000 Israeli visitors, in 2019, representing the number one spenders in Romania. Romanian visitors were situated on top ten incoming visitors to Israel at a global scale and on top five at European level. They were representing 17.5% of incoming to Israel, from Central and Eastern Europe, ranking first in the region, surpassing Poland, even Canada and Brazil, at an international level[8].

According to Forbes[9], Bucharest has registered the third most negative performance, in terms of foreign tourists in 2020, (-83%), from a number of 15 European cities from East and South East Europe. As the number of tourist arrivals has increased in January 2023 compared to January 2022 with 67.6%,

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[7] https://www.dailybusiness.ro/stiri-interne/retrospectiva-2022-turismul-romanesc-ingenuncheat-de-covid-si-razboiul-din-ucraina-320678/

[8] https://www.fanatik.ro/cati-bani-pierde-turismul-romanesc-din-pricina-razboiului-din-israel-suma-depaseste-miliardul-20509559,

[9] https://www.forbes.ro/poate-deveni-bucurestiul-o-destinatie-populara-randul-turistilor-straini-post-pandemie-227725

Forbes study[10] underlines the factors contributing to this spectacular recovery and the revival of travel and tourism industry in an adverse context.

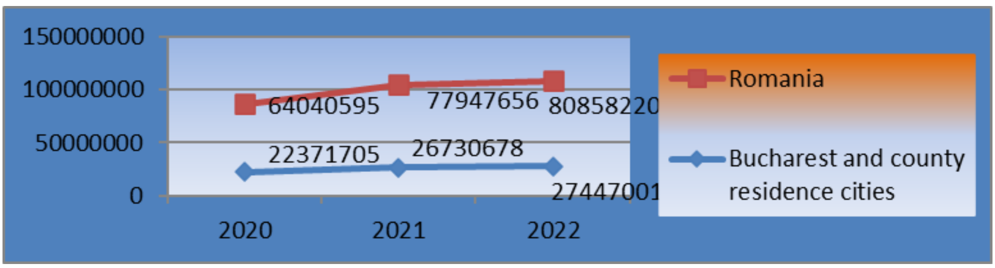
The statistics reported by the accommodation establishments of Romania showcase diminished tourism activity in Romania, with a drop of 54,2% of accommodation units in 2021 compared to 2020, and a slow recovery in 2022, with 138 new units in the entire country (102,95%).

Table 1. Accommodation indicators

Indicators	2020[11]		2021[12]		2022[13]	
	Bucharest and county residence cities	Romania	Bucharest and county residence cities	Romania	Bucharest and county residence cities	Romania
Establishments of tourists' reception with functions of tourist's accommodation-number	1.582	8610	1.142	4667	1142	4.805
Existing accommodation capacity in use-beds-days	22.371.705	64.040.595	26.730.678	77.947.656	27.447.001	80.858.220

Source: www.insse.ro

Figure 1. Existing accommodation capacity in use-beds-days



As for Bucharest and county residence cities, the numbers are more favourable; only 440 accommodation units were closed in 2021 compared to 2020. In 2022 the number of accommodation units in Bucharest hasn't recorded

[10] https://www.forbes.ro/ins-a-crescut-numarul-de-sosiri-ale-turistilor-in-bucuresti-si-la-nivel-national-ianuarie-2023-325046

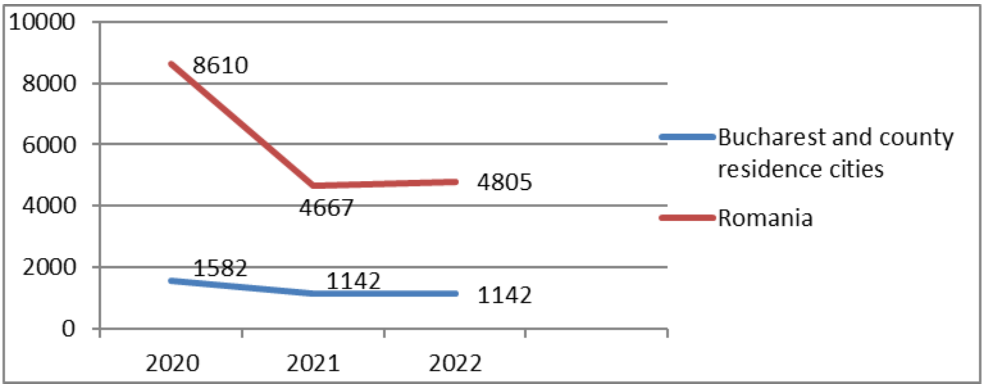
[11] https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/seria_turism_in_anul_2020.pdf

[12] https://insse.ro/cms/ro/content/seria-turism-%C3%AEn-anul-2021

[13] https://insse.ro/cms/ro/content/seria-turism-%C3%AEn-anul-2022

any modification, remaining at 1142 units, indicating the investors' reluctance to reopen the existing units or new ones.

Figure 2. Establishments of tourists' reception with functions of tourist's accommodation- number



During the Covid 19 pandemic, tourism arrivals were represented mainly by domestic tourists, this was the case of Romania as well, with a number of only 453.265 foreign tourist arrivals, 80% of them visiting Bucharest and county residence cities. These have significantly grown reaching 176.18% in 2021 compared to 2020, with continues increase at 192.29% in 2022 as opposed to 2021 and at 338.79 % in 2022 in regard to 2020.

Table 2. Arrivals of tourists in the tourist reception establishments with tourist accommodation functions

Indicators	2020[14]		2021[15]		2022[16]	
	Bucharest and county residence cities	Romania	Bucharest and county residence cities	Romania	Bucharest and county residence cities	Romania
Total arrivals	2.355.336	6.335.401	3.654.167	9.276.719	5.020.092	11.299.111
Residents	1.990.402	5.882.136	3.011.208	8.436.145	3.783.702	9.718.046
Foreign Tourists	364.934	453.265	642.959	840.574	1.236.390	1.581.065

Source: www.insse.ro

[14] https://insse.ro/cms/sites/default/files/field/publicatii/seria_turism_in_anul_2020.pdf
[15] https://insse.ro/cms/ro/content/seria-turism-%C3%AEn-anul-2021
[16] https://insse.ro/cms/ro/content/seria-turism-%C3%AEn-anul-2022

Figure 3. Arrivals of tourists in the tourist reception establishments with tourist accommodation functions

The National Strategy for Tourism Development 2019-2030 shows that the hospitality industry in Bucharest is generating higher revenues (1.350 billion euros) , than the private sector of tourism from all other Romanian localities; with 40.953 employees[17], almost 15% of the jobs in the Romanian tourism industry – the only city where large enterprises represent an important part of the market; The result of the study regarding Bucharest tourism point out that May, September and October are the busiest months, followed by the summer months. August is the less crowded month, accentuating the fact that Bucharest is a business and city break destination.

For the first half of 2023 (January-June 2023) the number of arrivals in tourist reception establishments with tourist accommodation functions (including apartments and rental units) has registered higher values: Bucharest - 867.000 tourists, Brasov - 667.700 tourists and Constanta - 331.600 tourists, as for the overnight stays, the situation is similar: Bucharest (1,745 millions), Brasov (1,246 millions) and Constanta (897.800). In term of country of origin, the foreign tourists mainly arrive from: Germany (94.400 tourists), Italy (87.300 tourists) and Israel (77.500 tourists)[18].

2. Bucharest tourism trends in the new geo-political context

To underline the importance and strength of Romanian tourism, its recovery and development, active tourism types can be mentioned: cultural tourism cultural, extreme and adventure tourism, wellness and spa tourism, clubbing tourism, medical tourism, sport tourism, culinary tourism, communist/red tourism, dark tourism, event tourism, transit tourism, shopping

[17] http://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Strategia-de-Dezvoltare-Turistic%C4%83-a-Rom%C3%A2niei-volumul-1-Raport-privind-Evaluarea-rapid%C4%83-a-sectorului-turistic.pdf

[18] https://www.dcbusiness.ro/crestere-a-numarului-de-turisti-in-romania-in-2023-bucuresti-brasov-si-constanta-cele-mai-cautate-destinatii_657416.html

tourism, political event tourism, business (MICE), urban tourism, gambling tourism.

Cultural tourism refers to travelling in order to meet the cultural and spiritual needs, to visit art and architecture monuments, historic places, museums, art galleries etc. Based on its motivations, venue and organising frame, the cultural tourism, is consisted with the urban tourism, and also leisure and business one.[19]

Regarding the museums and public collection displays, 20% can be found in the Central Region (centre of Transylvania – counties of Alba, Brasov, Covasna, Harghita, Mures, Sibiu), 17.21% are located in North West Region (including Iasi and Suceava – Bucovina Region), 15.45% in the South Region (including Prahova County). The ranking of regions, according to the number of museum visitors outlines that the first two are also the regions with the higher numbers of museums***. On third place, based on the number of museums and visitors in the region, Bucharest-Ilfov represents the cultural centre of the Country***[20] (the region includes Bucharest and the metropolitan area – Ilfov County, a much smaller territory than the other regions).

Extreme and adventure tourism – adventure theme parks represent the perfect alternative to enjoy free time by experiencing thrilling sensations. Located in the nearby woods of Bucharest, these parks offer cater for both adults and children, as they provide routes with different degrees of difficulty. Helicopter rides over Bucharest and Ilfov County are also part of adventure tourism, as well as the equestrian tourism, with riding centres around Bucharest and Petricani area.

Wellness and spa tourism – Wellness and spa are one of the major global trends with increase attractively among tourists, based on the need to proper balance the work and personal life, with more time for relaxation and individual wellbeing. Bucharest is an important destination for wellness and spa. It is situated first in the top for European destinations with the highest development potential, according to Mastercard Global Index of Urban Destination 2019, with over 1.4 million tourists using the accommodation services. Important publications such as Trip Advisor and Culture Trip recommend Therme for the uniqueness of the experience, as well as for visiting Romania. Therme, the largest centre for wellness and relaxation in Europe, and the most exotic Romanian destination, all year round, attracts tourists not only from Bucharest and other cities, but also many foreign tourists, over 25 %[21] visitors coming

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[19] https://www.studocu.com/ro/document/universitatea-transilvania-din-brasov/turism-international/forme-de-turism-clasificare/21604169

[20] http://sgg.gov.ro/1/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Strategia-de-Dezvoltare-Turistic%C4%83-a-Rom%C3%A2niei-volumul-1-Raport-privind-Evaluarea-rapid%C4%83-a-sectorului-turistic.pdf

[21] https://www.europafm.ro/bucurestiul-pe-harta-turismului-de-relaxare-si-wellness-la-nivel-mondial-p/

from Italy, Bulgaria, Israel, UK, Germany or USA. Ever since the beginning, at least two operating flights a day from Tel Aviv, were visiting Therme. [22]

Clubbing tourism represents an attraction on its own for foreign tourists. In the last years, Bucharest has been well known abroad[23], especially for clubbing and pub facilities.

Medical tourism - In Romania, in larger cities and therefore Bucharest, the medical tourism has been developing considerably, in the last years. Patients from all over the country and abroad have begun using complete medical services in Bucharest, on public or private clinics. There are four major categories of tourists that choose Bucharest for medical services: serious health problems, aesthetic surgery, dental treatments, and obesity surgery[24]. Bucharest offers numerous hospitals and modern clinics, highly professional doctors and up to date medical technologies. Horse therapy[25] can be considered an important component of medical tourism.

Sport tourism – a specific type of leisure tourism, it's mainly represented by summer water sports, winter sports, fishing and also other occasional sportive events. Bucharest is organising numerous international sporting events, for athletics, cross county, football, rugby, handball, fencing, swimming etc.

Culinary tourism – it refers to culinary experience of a geographical region and it's considered to be an important component of tourism and particularly of agritourism.[26] The culinary experience has become a significant factor in choosing a destination, as tourists are searching for memorable food experiences and have developed a culture of F&B tasting. Social media plays an important part in arousing interest and enthusiasm for culinary experiences. It has become more popular around Millennials, which are sharing their culinary experience on social media. This is why, promoting this type of tourism is using food festivals, brunches, cooking workshops and others encouraging Millennials to share their experience online. Such trends include food bloggers, special food videos, Instagram specialised accounts, reviews and recommendations, millions of Instagram pictures with tags #foodie, #foodporn or #nom.[27] Sharing the experience online is generating thousands of followers, drawing attention to the visited destination, increasing the brand awareness of the particular destination, and therefore improving the tourism industry. The

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[22] https://www.dcnews.ro/bucurestiul-sta-o-resursa-extrem-de-valoroasa-din-tel-aviv-veneau-cate-doua-avioane-pe-zi-pentru-asta-investitorii-israelieni-au-vrut-chiar-sa-si-faca-sate-turistice_936610.html
[23] https://turismclub.ro/tag/club/
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food tours are rural ones (so called green)[28] or urban ones. Culinary tours[29] in Bucharest are also promoted in the online environment, for instance, the site *Get your Guide*. The festivals and culinary markets play an important part for the culinary tourism of Bucharest.

Communist tourism – The communist tourism from Central and Eastern Europe stands apart from the Red tourism in China, by numerous elements, among which, the lack of authority planning and control of tourism activities, target audience being represented by adults and seniors of Occident and a less developed educational side. Based on these significant differences, communist tourism is considered to be an independent part of cultural tourism, separated from China's red tourism.[30] In Eastern Europe, the communist tourism has been developing after 1990, when a considerable number of occidental tourists have chosen to visit Central and Easter European ex-communist destinations. A decade later, the accession to European Union of these ex-communist states has determined the increase of tourist arrivals.

Dark tourism – implies visiting places that are well known for tragic events in history. Following the international trend, the dark tourism attractions of Bucharest are represented by Belu Cemetery, Heroes of Revolution Cemetery, Foreign Heroes from the Second World War Cemetery etc.

Events tourism – Festivals are major events that are appealing to a large number of tourists searching for experiencing different cultures, take part in colourful events, with allegorical chariots, specific dancing, and other activities. More than that, tourists are able to interact with the local community, immerse into their culture, having a unique and authentic experience. In this category, there can be presented music, theatre, film, literature, dance, art and fashion festivals in Bucharest[31], with around 230 festivals, such as: National Theatre Festival, Green Sounds Festival, Summer Well Festival, Film and Animation International Festival, B'ESTFEST, Metropolis, Asia Fest, WishFest etc.[32].

Transit tourism – the proximity to Henri Coanda International Airport and many consular representations in Bucharest[33] are stimulating the transit tourism. The geographical localization, as a connection between west and east and between north and south also determines Bucharest as a destination for transit tourism. (Bucharest as a connection to Bucovina, Maramure, mountain

[28] https://www.amfiteatrueconomic.ro/temp/Articol_2583.pdf
[29] https://www.getyourguide.com/ro-ro/bucuresti-l111/bucuresti-turul-gastronomic-pe-jos-t325528/
[30] https://www.academia.edu/2023861/VALORIFICAREA_%C3%8EN_TURISM_A_PATRIMONIULUI_COMUNIST_DIN_MUNICIPIUL_BUCURE%C5%9ETI
[31] https://www.bucuresteni.ro/info/festivaluri/
[32] https://www.helloromania.com/blog/unde-te-distrezi-in-bucuresti-evenimente-si-festivaluri/
[33] https://travelblog.md/bucuresti-mic-ghid-de-vizitare-ceea-ce-mi-place-in-bucuresti/

areas, seaside and Danube Delta). 3600 of Israeli tourists[34] were using weekly charters for accessing mountain areas or the seaside, Bucharest representing in this case, a transit destination.

Shopping tourism consists in visiting different cities or countries in order to experience purchasing activities. It has become one of the most important motivations for travel, for millions of people,[35] a main transformation factor for the ***destinations promotion strategies*** around the world. Bucharest shopping tourism was a strong segment for Israeli tourists which combined gambling, transit and city break tourism.

Business tourism/MICE – travelling for work purposes, including: participating to business meeting, fairs and exhibitions, conferences and meetings. Nowadays, business tourism is representing around 20% of international travelling and almost ¼ of tourism receipts[36], with important differences from one country to another, in terms of tourism and economic development.

Political events tourism is represented by participating at political events/summits. One of the important trends of tourism development at international level and in Romania as well, consists of congress tourism.[37] Related services, visits for participants, entertainment programs etc. can also be provided, so the offers become more complex, generating higher revenues.

Urban tourism refers to spending free time for visiting cities or different activities, such watching shows, exhibitions etc. Due to this acceptance, it has an extremely wide coverage and is therefore quite difficult to particularize in relation to other types of tourism. As a rule, the proportion of domestic urban tourism is higher than international one. To all of this, it is necessary to add that around 80%[38] of city travelling consists only of urban tourism.

Gambling tourism - over the years, by historic cities, like Constanta or Sinaia have been known for gambling tourism, Bucharest being the representative destination for this type of tourism and the Israeli tourists were the major segment of this market.

3. Conclusions

Romanian tourism has faced a negative impact, starting with the Covid 19 pandemic, followed by the Ukraine war and, most recently, the Gaza war. The

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[34] https://www.dailybusiness.ro/turism/bucurestiul-destinatie-de-city-break-pentru-3600-de-turisti-israelieni-ce-vor-sa-vada-99454/

[35] https://evisionturism.ro/turismul-shopping-instrument-cheie-marketingul-destinatiilor/#google_vignette

[36] https://www.studocu.com/ro/document/universitatea-transilvania-din-brasov/turism-international/forme-de-turism-clasificare/21604169

[37] http://politici.weebly.com/turism/turismul-de-conferinte-si-evenimente

[38] https://www.studocu.com/ro/document/universitatea-transilvania-din-brasov/turism-international/forme-de-turism-clasificare/21604169

policies and strategies for tourism development required permanent adjustments, creating new strategies for shorter periods of time, analysing the necessary resources and reaching new markets or segment of tourists. The private-public partnership must coordinate its initiatives in order to find the proper way not only of dealing with the crisis, but also to influence the development of tourism.

Even though there are numerous types of tourism in Bucharest and other Romanian cities, there is no overtourism, the tourism industry can have a substantial contribution to GDP. In Romanian struggling economy, the tourism industry is to become more important, based especially on the notoriety of cities such as Bucharest, Sibiu, Timisoara, Brasov, Constanta and Cluj as cultural, event or city break tourism.

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INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN HOSPITALITY. CASE STUDY: FOUR SEASONS

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Abstract

The tourism industry is one of the most dynamic and competitive in the world, and companies operating in this sector must be able to provide high-quality services and respond quickly and efficiently to customer demands. In this context, organizational culture becomes a key factor in the success of tourism companies. It can directly influence how the company achieves its objectives and how it adapts to market changes. The aim of this paper is to explore the importance of organizational culture in tourism companies. In this regard, the project will focus on analyzing the main elements of organizational culture and how they can influence the success of the company and customer satisfaction. Additionally, the project will examine how tourism companies can develop a strong organizational culture that enables them to remain relevant and competitive in a constantly changing market. The paper will begin by presenting the concept of organizational culture and how it can be defined and measured. Furthermore, the main elements of organizational culture, such as customer orientation, employee personal development, effective communication, and social responsibility, will be examined. Additionally, the importance of leadership and management involvement in developing a strong organizational culture will be analyzed. In conclusion, it will be argued that a strong organizational culture is essential for the success of tourism companies and that developing such a culture should be a priority for any company wishing to be competitive and provide quality services to customers. The project will also provide specific recommendations for tourism companies to help them develop a strong organizational culture and achieve their long-term objectives. In this context, qualitative and quantitative research was conducted on the organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the level of employee satisfaction, identify practices and cultural traditions that contribute to the company's performance, and suggest recommendations for improvement. The sample consisted of 100 employees from all major departments of the Four Seasons hotel group, selected globally. The research revealed a correlation between the company's values and organizational culture with its commitment to quality and customer satisfaction, as well as an identification of employees with the company's values and organizational culture and high satisfaction in this regard. These results suggest that encouraging and strengthening the organizational culture of the Four Seasons company through employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, and programs to promote organizational culture among customers and business partners can contribute to its success and performance.

Keywords: *organizational culture, hospitality, tourism industry, Four Seasons Hotels.*

JEL Classification: Z30.

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Literature review

Organizational culture is a crucial component of an organization, affecting both its effectiveness and the members' quality of work life (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1992; Cameron & Quinn, 1999; Schein & Schein, 2016; Miranda-Wolff, 2022). According to Schein (1992), organizational culture is a phenomenon made up of distinct parts. The most frequently mentioned aspects of organizational culture, according to Schein's model, are artifacts, norms, attitudes, values, and fundamental presumptions (Schein, 1992). To put it another way, the fundamental attitudes, values, and beliefs that permeate an organization, as well as the behavioral patterns that develop because of these common meanings and the symbols that convey the relationship between these attitudes, values, and actions of organizational members (Denison, 1990).

Differentiations in values, beliefs, practices, and organizational methods result from the cultural traits of the society's organizations. The distinctions between the various organizations are determined by these differences. Consequently, it is believed that organizational culture reflects social culture. The management literature defines organizational culture as shared values, conventions, and understanding behaviors among organizational members (Beyer & Trice,1987). Organizational cultures, according to Hofstede (1998), are qualities that organizational members show through their verbal or nonverbal behavior.

The development of organizational culture takes place over time. It is the outcome of the accumulation of experiences that people acquire through socialization; it offers continuity, lessens employee uncertainty, and affects their job satisfaction and emotional health; it is a source of motivation and can be a competitive advantage (Lukáová, 2010).

Organizational culture is a critical factor that influences the behavior, attitudes, and performance of employees within an organization. In the hospitality industry, where guest satisfaction and service quality are paramount, organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of guests and the job satisfaction of employees. Understanding the role of organizational culture in the hospitality industry is essential for hospitality managers to create a positive work environment that fosters employee engagement, improves guest experiences, and enhances organizational performance.

The hospitality industry encompasses a wide range of sectors, including hotels, restaurants, resorts, cruise lines, and event management, among others. According to Pizam (2018), the concept of hospitality is an organizational culture that forms within an organization and serves to identify it. When compared to other industries, the hotel industry has a distinctive and particular culture (Dawson; Abbott; Shoemaker, 2011). Companies that provide lodging, food, and beverages as well as meeting space for visitors, business travelers, and locals in the area where they are located make up the hospitality industry (Pizam, 2009).

According to Barrows, Powers, and Reynolds (2012), the hotel industry is made up of a variety of businesses that provide people who are away from home with shelter, food, and entertainment. The hospitality sector has its own distinctive characteristics, such as the front- line staff members who not only deliver tangible goods but also intangible ones like manners and experiences (Kao; Tsaur; Wu, 2016). The hotel industry places a high priority on service (Gjurasic; Loncaric, 2018). The perception of service quality is developed during the production, delivery, and consuming stages (Kao, 2016), and in this industry, excellent service influences a guest's decision to return to the hotel (Gjurasic; Loncaric, 2018). Hotel staff cooperation and support are essential for enhancing service quality (Gjurasic; Loncaric, 2018). Human resources are one of the key advantages of the hospitality and tourist sector (Kusluvan et al., 2010). The hospitality industry is characterized by the complexity of managing guest experiences, which forces human resource managers of businesses in this sector to develop novel approaches to managing relationships with both employees and visitors (Azic, 2017). Promoting knowledge management and service innovation has the ability to boost organizational performance and help the hotel industry reach its strategic objectives (Kasemsap; Sood, 2017).

Extensive research has been conducted on organizational culture in the hospitality industry, shedding light on the importance of cultural factors in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors, as well as guest satisfaction. Organizational culture is a critical factor that influences the behavior, attitudes, and performance of employees within an organization (Denison & Spreitzer, 2014; Schneider et al., 2016). According to the findings of a different study, the fervor, devotion, and absorption of employee engagement characteristics affect contextual performance. Worker job performance is influenced by vigor and absorption. When it comes to contextual performance, vigor exhibits the highest level of contribution, followed by absorption and devotion, whereas absorption exhibits the highest level of contribution when it comes to task performance. Experimentalism, autonomy, and trust were discovered to be the three organizational culture subvariables that most significantly predicted enhanced contextual performance and worker task performance (Bhawana Bhardwaj & Namrita Kalia, 2021). It might also be argued that having a strong organizational culture would improve the trust between hotel owners and staff, which would presumably affect the latter's dedication to the organization and performance (Justwan et al., 2018). The role of organizational culture in promoting diversity and inclusion in the hospitality industry has also been studied (Kang et al., 2018). Organizations with a positive organizational culture, characterized by diversity and inclusion values, leadership support, and formalized diversity programs, are more likely to have a more inclusive work environment. In the hospitality industry, understanding the role of organizational culture is essential for creating a positive work environment that fosters employee engagement, improves guest experiences, and enhances organizational performance. A study by Yurdanur Yumuk (2020) found that hotel businesses have two types of organizational culture, such as hierarchical culture and clan culture. In the research conducted by Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Ting- Ding (2016), it was found that clan culture and adhocracy culture dominate in hotel business. In the research conducted in 5-star hotels, it was found that workers alienate themselves from their organization mainly on the dimensions of meaninglessness and powerlessness. Also, the type of organizational culture should be adopted as the basis for person- organization fit. In organizations where workers' opinions and suggestions are valued and managers take on a mentoring role, progress is more likely to occur.

Organizational culture – key element in tourism companies

The tourism industry is one of the most important industries in the world, with a significant impact on the global economy. Companies in this field face unique challenges, such as ensuring quality services to customers, efficiently managing personnel, and maintaining a positive image in front of clients. To address these challenges, organizational culture is a key element in tourism companies.

Defining organizational culture

Organizational culture refers to the values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors that govern the behavior of employees within a company. These elements are learned and shared among employees, contributing to the creation of a unique identity for the company and how it operates. Organizational culture can be influenced by various factors, such as the company's history, external environment, organizational leaders, and employees' experiences. As culture is created and managed, the objective should be to align the organization's values, vision, and mission and articulate them appropriately for all staff members. When thoroughly cultivated throughout the organization, company culture can serve as a catalyst to help guide the behavior employees exhibit towards each other. Simultaneously, it can encourage more pleasant behavior towards guests and customers, creating a positive environment that guests will want to experience again and again. Culture is defined as a set of shared understandings among members of an organization that influence decision-making processes and are shared and transmitted to new members of the organization. In addition to the expressed values, vision, and mission, organizational culture refers to the collective beliefs, ethics, and behaviors that make up the business structure. It is more about a feeling that is created than specific programs that are implemented. It is affected by how the organization is led and has a significant influence on the organization's success. In tourism companies, organizational culture can have a significant impact on the quality of services provided to customers. Employees who identify with the company's values and norms will be more motivated and dedicated to providing quality service to customers. Additionally, a strong organizational culture can help create a positive work environment where employees are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions, develop professionally and personally, improve their skills, and cooperate effectively to achieve the company's objectives. A strong organizational culture can also contribute to maintaining a positive image in front of customers. Customers who experience superior quality services will be more likely to return in the future and recommend the company to others. Additionally, a strong organizational culture can help increase employee loyalty and reduce absenteeism and workforce turnover.

Key elements of organizational culture in tourism companies

A positive hotel culture attracts talent, engages hoteliers in their work, and influences performance. A successful hire is more than a candidate with the right technical skills to perform specific tasks or duties. A good cultural fit between employee and employer is crucial to ensure performance, satisfaction, and engagement. This cultural personality of the hotel business is influenced by everything. Hotel leadership, hotel management, workplace practices, policies, people, and much more have a significant impact on a hotel's culture. The biggest mistake hotels make is allowing workplace culture to form naturally without first defining what they want it to be. Culture is as important as strategy.

The best hospitality organizations have a culture of quality, guided by the belief that ultimate performance resolves itself when all organization members commit and practice quality management. This focus entails understanding what customers want and delivering services accordingly by minimizing and eliminating perceived problems, annoyances, and deficiencies. Hospitality organizations that create an environment for establishing and maintaining a culture of quality are long-term survivors. Culture creates the organization's environment and influences the nature of long-term plans that move the organization toward its vision. Culture also dictates policies and processes that enable the organization to live its mission every day. By bringing all these elements under the umbrella of organizational culture, business success becomes inevitable.

There are certain key elements of organizational culture that are particularly important in tourism companies. These elements include customer-oriented service. Tourism companies must be able to provide quality services to customers to achieve long-term success. This involves the ability to understand customer needs and expectations and provide personalized and detail-oriented services. Organizational culture should encourage employees to be sensitive to customer needs and willing to go the extra mile to please them.

Another important category refers to customer relationship management. In a competitive industry, maintaining loyal customers is essential for long-term success. Organizational culture should focus on developing customer relationships so that a solid base of loyal customers can be built. Employees should be trained to approach customers in a friendly tone and try to establish a personal connection. Moreover, in a dynamic industry like tourism, communication is essential for long-term success. Organizational culture should encourage open and transparent communication among all employees so that challenges can be quickly addressed, and efficient solutions found to current issues.

Tourism companies must take social responsibility, as their impact on the environment and local communities can be significant. Organizational culture should encourage employees to be aware of their impact on the environment and take steps to reduce it, such as reducing waste and energy consumption. Additionally, companies should be involved in local communities and support social and sustainable development projects. Innovation is an important element for the success of a business in hospitality. The tourism industry is constantly changing and evolving, and companies must be able to adapt and innovate to remain relevant and competitive. Organizational culture should encourage creativity and innovation so that employees can find new solutions and offer innovative services to customers. Finally, leadership and management involvement are crucial for a strong organizational culture. Managers must be role models and encourage and support employees in achieving company objectives. Additionally, management involvement in developing organizational culture can be beneficial for employees and for the company's success.

The influence of organizational culture on the strategic management of the four seasons hotel group

Founded in 1960, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is dedicated to enhancing the travel experience through continuous innovation to the highest standards of hospitality. Currently operating 119 hotels and resorts and 44 residential properties in major urban centers and residential destinations in 47 countries, with over 50 projects in planning or development, Four Seasons consistently ranks among the world's best hotels and most prestigious brands in reader surveys, traveler reviews, and industry awards.

Isadore Sharp from Toronto, Canada founded Four Seasons. The first Four Seasons hotel opened in 1961, and from there the chain began to expand. Due to the development of the hotel and tourism industry, Four Seasons managed to become international and entered the USA and England, as well as expanded in

Canada, during the 1970s. As mass tourism developed in the 1980s, the Four Seasons brand became recognized in countries worldwide. Four Seasons created private residences and added new locations to their portfolio, allowing them to go public in 1986. Furthermore, the hotel chain expanded into Europe and Asia in 1992, surpassing 10,000 guest rooms and 20,000 employees worldwide. By the early 2000s, the company held 50 properties on every continent except Antarctica. More than ever, Four Seasons Private Residences and other branded residential offerings were integrated into urban Four Seasons locations. The brand's strength had become a promise of a quality lifestyle. The story of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is one of continuous innovation, remarkable expansion, and a unique dedication to the highest standards. The Canadian company has transformed the hospitality industry over 60 years by combining personalized and authentic care with an unwavering commitment to excellence. In the process, Four Seasons has redefined luxury for the modern traveler.

The primary objective is to be recognized as the company that manages the best hotels, resorts, and residential clubs wherever they are. Four Seasons creates properties of lasting value using superior design and finishes and supports them with a deeply ingrained service ethic. This enables Four Seasons to meet the needs and tastes of customers and maintain its position as the world's first luxury hospitality company. Four Seasons' greatest asset and the key to success are its people (employees). The company believes that each employee needs feelings of dignity, pride, and satisfaction in what they do. Because guest satisfaction depends on the united efforts of many, the greatest efficiency is achieved when working together in cooperation, respecting each other's contribution and importance.

Four Seasons demonstrates its beliefs most significantly by how it treats each other and the example it provides to one another. In all interactions with guests, clients, business associates, and colleagues, the principle of "We treat others as we would like to be treated" is kept in mind.

The organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group

The leadership of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts truly understands the value of its human capital and, therefore, prioritizes employee satisfaction and motivation. While employees are assigned challenging objectives, the management addresses their concerns and avoids pressuring them, which could lead to employee burnout. The balance between task demands and employee orientation is achieved through: assigning challenging objectives and providing rewards to maximize task performance, offering the necessary training, mentoring, and guidance to employees to accomplish their assigned objectives, discouraging employees from making overtime hours a common practice at the workplace, motivating and training employees to manage stress and time, which is important for both task performance improvement and psychological well-being.

When an organization successfully creates alignment between its structure, culture, and business strategies and understands the complex association between underlying assumptions, core values, and observable behaviors, it can use organizational culture as a tool to gain strategic benefits. Organizations with a strong work culture secure their position in the hyper-competitive market, and Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is an example in this regard. Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts ("the Company") has earned an enviable reputation for delivering high-quality services to customers and fostering an excellent employee relations climate. Such a reputation must be carefully maintained by ensuring a clear understanding and personal responsibility for the key principles and behaviors it is based on. The ongoing effectiveness of the company depends on recruiting, training, and developing engaged, qualified individuals known for each position; individuals who earn the trust and respect of coworkers and managers, demonstrating the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.

At the core of the employee experience and social impact is the promotion of diversity and the encouragement of a culture of inclusion and belonging. It does not tolerate any form of discrimination - no one should be treated differently based on race, gender, age, religion, nationality, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or any other perceived differences. To ensure that all employees feel valued and belong to Four Seasons, they have accelerated their global Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) strategy in recent years. Progress in 2021 included the following categories:

Strategy and Vision - Every year, they distribute a transparent DIB Journey Map, which presents their annual plan to all employees, linking the global employee experience with the group's business objectives.

Leadership - Leaders, from mid-level managers to the executive team, participate in annual education workshops focused on advancing diversity, promoting inclusion and belonging, and creating psychological safety.

Listening and Communication - At the core of their approach is ensuring the dissemination of important messages and stories, understanding employees' sentiments and diverse needs, and obtaining feedback on the DIB approach. In the annual global employee pulse survey, they include specific questions regarding DIB and publish a quarterly DIB newsletter.

Systems and Policies - Education is fundamental to their approach, ensuring that employees have consistent language and knowledge to discuss DIB and promote these values. They have hosted eight DIB Speaker Series sessions for employees, where external experts and Four Seasons leaders discussed current DIB issues.

Brand and Partnerships - They continue to strengthen DIB in the brand's external marketing, including creating profiles and providing a platform for diverse experiences. Through the global Four Seasons brand's social media channels, collaboration with influencers and content creators, and brand marketing, including Four Seasons Magazine, they continue to share authentic DIB stories in a manner that celebrates diversity among guests, residents, and employees globally.

The Golden Rule - Four Seasons' guiding principle is the Golden Rule. People live each day with deep empathy and always treat others as they themselves wish to be treated. Their commitment to the Golden Rule comes to life through how they treat guests, residents, partners, communities, and the environment around them, and, of course, how they treat each other.

Learning and Career Development - Their approach to learning and development ensures that employees feel confident and prepared to be their best. Whether creating a creative cocktail or supporting essential business group functions, employees will have the tools, motivation, and support needed to become the best craftsman, leader, and/or business partner possible.

Four Seasons provides a place where employees can develop an extraordinary career. Career paths offer many growth options and the opportunity to try out various roles and functions. The global portfolio offers an extraordinary opportunity to work worldwide or the option to develop a career locally while learning from industry leaders. Learning and growth offerings include a learning professional at each property to drive employee development; on-the-job training; luxury service training; managerial and executive development programs; Global Task Force opportunities, offering short-term missions in other locations; a wide array of digital learning, including internal virtual courses, LinkedIn Learning, eCornell, and virtual coaching; a competitive tuition reimbursement program, allowing employees to pursue formal learning courses; educational partnerships with academic leaders, including Cornell School of Hospitality Management and École Hôtelière de Lausanne. The Four Seasons Manager in Training (MIT) program is designed to bridge the gap between the education participants receive in hospitality management university programs and the operational reality of leadership in a luxury hotel environment. During the 12–18 month program, MIT participants will rotate through two operational leadership experiences, depending on the chosen division. Additionally, MIT participants will be exposed to all aspects of the leadership experience, be assigned a strategic project, have a partnership with a senior leadership mentor, and receive feedback throughout the program.

Advantages and Benefits - Four Seasons offers a variety of benefits to support employees at all stages of life. It provides competitive medical and dental coverage and vacation plans, as well as ongoing personal support through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). Additionally, each hotel offers other additional benefits and perks to support well- being. Moreover, the global employee travel program, a market leader, allows employees to travel the world while discovering all that the group's properties have to offer, learning best practices, discovering new and innovative ideas, and at the same time building connections with colleagues from around the world.

The code of ethics - Four Seasons has adopted a Code of conduct and business ethics, which has been approved by its Board of directors and senior management. The Code reflects, among other things, Four Seasons' most current assessment of internal and external bribery risks and the fundamental standards that Four Seasons imposes on those who provide services to and for it— including employees, contractors, and agents—and are required to adhere to when acting on behalf of Four Seasons. If a law conflicts with this code, employees must comply with the law. If a custom or local policy conflicts with this Code, employees must adhere to this Code. Compliance with laws, rules, and regulations, both in letter and in spirit, is the foundation on which the company's ethical standards are based and is essential for its reputation and continued success. All employees must comply with the laws of the various jurisdictions in which the Company operates. While not all employees are expected to know the details of these laws, it is important to know them sufficiently to determine when it is necessary to seek advice from supervisors, managers, or other appropriate personnel. Members of the corporate legal department are always available to assist employees in understanding applicable legal requirements.

Anticorruption laws - Employees are prohibited from engaging in acts that could be considered "bribery" and/or improper payments. "Bribery" refers to the direct or indirect offering, promising, or giving of any financial or other advantage, or anything of value, to influence them to behave improperly or to reward them for improper behavior, in connection with business or employment activities. Employees must comply with all applicable laws ("Anti-corruption laws") that prohibit "bribery" and improper payments, including the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (United States), the Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act (Canada), the Bribery Act (United Kingdom), and any similar laws applicable. Examples of activities that may raise ethical questions and may be problematic under anti-corruption laws include, but are not limited to:

Facilitation payments - Certain laws prohibit payments to government personnel to facilitate or expedite routine actions, such as obtaining a building permit, that are not legitimate payments as part of a formal and transparent process for expediting government actions. This prohibition does not apply to payments that are specifically permitted by applicable written law.

Gifts - Business gifts are customary courtesies designed to build goodwill and constructive relationships between business partners and may include things like tickets to sporting or cultural events and other goods or services. In some cultures, they play an important role in business relationships. However, gifts may constitute the basis of an offense under certain anti-corruption laws when these courtesies:

Compromise or appear to compromise the recipient's ability to make fair and objective business decisions;

Are intended or appear to be intended to be an inducement or reward for improper behavior, to gain an unfair advantage, or to unfairly influence a business relationship;

Are known or suspected to violate the recipient's applicable gift and hospitality police.

Therefore, gifts may be offered only where they are reasonable, proportionate, and offered in good faith and where the purpose of the gift is to enhance the Company's and/or the hotel's image, promote the Company's and/or the hotel's products and/or services in an ethical manner, or to strengthen relationships with the recipient in the ordinary course of business.

Political and charitable contributions - Political and charitable contributions must not be used as a means of making payments that would otherwise be prohibited under anti-corruption laws and must not be made at the request or with the agreement of government personnel, where the intent is to influence government personnel and to obtain or retain business or a commercial advantage for the company; or where the intent is to induce or reward improper performance of functions or activities by any individual. Political donations must always be made in accordance with applicable laws governing political donations. It should be noted that restrictions on contributions are not limited to monetary donations but may also apply to the provision of corporate facilities, sponsoring political events, providing corporate services at a reduced rate, and contributions to organizations other than political parties with political purposes.

Receipt of loans, benefits or advantages - Employees responsible for purchasing goods or services on behalf of the Company or the hotel must exercise particular care to avoid soliciting or accepting any advantage from a supplier or other third party in circumstances where this could influence or might influence a purchasing decision.

Conflicts of interest - A "conflict of interest" exists when an employee's private interests interfere in any way with the interests of the Company or the hotel. A conflict of interest may arise when an employee takes actions or has interests that may make it difficult for an employee to perform his or her work for the hotel objectively and efficiently. Conflicts of interest may also arise when an employee or their family members have a material interest in a transaction or receive undue personal benefits because of the employee's position at the hotel. Employees are not allowed to work for a competitor as a consultant or board member and must not have any beneficial interest in any hotel, restaurant, or other accommodation, food, and/or beverage services, whether competitive or not, with the company or the hotel, unless approved in writing by the general manager or, in the case of planning committee or higher level, by the regional president, operations. Employees must disclose to their supervisor any job offer accepted by them from a party with which the Company or the hotel has a business relationship.

Confidentiality - If an employee has access to confidential information, they are not allowed to use or share that information for any purpose other than carrying out hotel activities. Employees will not use the Company's private information or any private information about or relating to guests, residents, or fellow employees obtained as a result of their employment at the hotel for personal purposes.

Protection and proper use of company assets - Employees should protect the company's and the hotel's assets and ensure their efficient use. Theft, negligence, and waste directly impact the profitability of the company and the hotel. Any suspected incident of fraud or theft must be promptly reported. They have an obligation to maintain confidentiality regarding intellectual property information, even after employees cease to have a relationship with the hotel or company. Company and hotel assets (such as funds, products, or proprietary information) may only be used for legitimate business purposes. Company and hotel assets must never be used for illegal purposes.

Competition and fair treatment - The company seeks to excel and surpass any competition fairly and honestly, through superior performance rather than unethical or illegal business practices. Employees are required to respect the rights and deal fairly with the Company's/hotel’s competitors, as well as with individuals with whom the Company/hotel have a business relationship. No employee shall unfairly benefit from anyone through illegal behavior, manipulation, concealment, abuse of proprietary information, misrepresentation of material facts, or any other intentional practice of unfair treatment.

Discrimination and harassment - The diversity of individuals is an extraordinary asset for the company. The company is firmly committed to providing equal opportunities in all aspects of employment and will not tolerate any discrimination or illegal harassment of any kind. Examples include derogatory comments based on racial or ethnic characteristics and unwanted sexual advances. Employees are encouraged to speak to their supervisor or human resources director when a colleague's behavior makes them feel uncomfortable and to report any discrimination or harassment.

Health and safety - The company strives to provide all employees with a safe and healthy working environment. Employees have the responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy workplace by following safety and health rules and practices and reporting accidents, injuries, and unsafe practices or conditions to a supervisor or department head. Violence and threatening behavior are not allowed. The use of illegal drugs in the workplace will not be tolerated. Employees must report to work in a condition to perform their duties without the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.

Accuracy of company records and reporting - The company's and hotel's accounting records are based on producing reports for directors, shareholders, government agencies, and individuals with whom the Company conducts activities. All financial statements of the Company, accounting records, must properly reflect the Company's activities, comply with applicable legal and accounting requirements, as well as the Company's internal control system. The Company does not allow the intentional misclassification of transactions regarding accounts, departments, or accounting records. Employees must avoid exaggeration, derogatory remarks, or inappropriate characterizations that may be misunderstood. This requirement applies equally to communications of any kind, including internal and external emails, informal notes, internal memos, and official reports.

Use of electronic systems - Access to and use of hardware devices, software, applications, databases, networks, email, internet resources, and similar technologies ("Electronic Systems") are provided by the company to assist employees in carrying out their duties. Employees may access electronic systems, documents, or messages using only the assigned username and password. Occasional and incidental personal use is permitted, but never for personal or inappropriate purposes, including accessing, downloading, storing, or sending any information that could be offensive to another person, such as explicit sexual messages, exaggerated jokes, indecent proposals, derogatory comments based on racial or ethnic characteristics, or any other message that could reasonably be considered harassment. Documents and electronic messages (including voicemail, email, and SMS messages) sent, received, created, or modified by employees are considered company property, and employees should understand that they are not "personal" or "private."

Reporting any illegal or unethical behavior - The company is strongly committed to conducting its activities in a legal and ethical manner. Employees are encouraged to speak with supervisors, managers, or other appropriate personnel about any observed illegal or unethical behaviors and when they have doubts about the best course of action in a particular situation. The company has established procedures to allow employees to file, on a confidential and anonymous basis (to the extent possible in accordance with applicable law), good faith complaints regarding violations of the Code. Employees who are genuinely concerned about illegal or unethical behaviors can report their concerns through EthicsPoint, Inc. ("EthicsPoint"), the third-party reporting services provider of the company. The company ensures that any complaint is addressed through a fair process, considering the interests of the Company, the person filing a complaint, and the person or persons against whom the complaint is filed. In general, individuals identified in a complaint will: be promptly informed of the complaint (but will not be provided with information that could identify the complainant) in a timely manner (considering the need to ensure that relevant information is not destroyed) and be given the opportunity to correct the information in a complaint if it is inaccurate.

Research on employee satisfaction in relation to the organizational culture of the four seasons hotel group

Research methodology

In conducting the research, methodology represents the essential factor in approaching the proposed topic. The methodology used in this scientific approach considers the utilization of a set of knowledge accumulated to obtain results and achieve elaborated objectives. The research began with the formulation of the research question, "What are the values, practices, and cultural traditions of Four Seasons, and to what extent do they contribute to the performance and satisfaction of employees?".

Research objectives

The research objectives were formulated in accordance with the proposed topic, considering the specific characteristics of the field, existing literature, as well as the analysis and understanding of the organizational context of the Four Seasons hotel group. Thus, the objectives were formulated considering the need to investigate the organizational culture of the company and its impact on employee satisfaction, as well as to identify cultural practices and traditions that need to be improved or changed to enhance performance and satisfaction levels. Additionally, the objectives were adapted to be achievable through the methodology and resources available for the research.

Theoretical objectives

Understanding the values and organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group.

Evaluating the level of employee satisfaction with the organizational culture of Four Seasons.

Identifying cultural practices and traditions that need to be improved or changed.

Identifying ways to encourage and strengthen the organizational culture of Four Seasons.

Practical objectives

Examining the core values of the company, such as ethics, commitment to quality, and customer orientation, as well as identifying cultural practices and traditions that characterize the organization. Analyzing data regarding the level of employee satisfaction with the values, practices, and cultural traditions of the organization and identifying factors contributing to employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Identifying cultural practices and traditions that could be improved or changed to enhance the company's performance and employee satisfaction through the analysis of less favorable results obtained from the research.

Identifying ways in which the company can encourage and reinforce the values, practices, and cultural traditions that contribute to its performance and success. These methods may include employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, as well as programs to promote organizational culture among customers and business partners.

Research hypotheses

Employees of the Four Seasons company identify with the values and organizational culture of the company and are satisfied with it.

The cultural practices and traditions of Four Seasons contribute to its performance and the satisfaction of both customers and employees.

Identifying cultural practices and traditions that need to be improved or changed can enhance the company's performance and the level of employee satisfaction.

Encouraging and consolidating the organizational culture of Four Seasons through employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, and programs to promote organizational culture among customers and business partners can contribute to its success and performance.

Research variables

Demographic variables of employees, including age, gender, level of education, previous work experience, and roles within the company.

Cultural variables including organizational values, practices and traditions, such as commitment to quality, attitude towards customers, teamwork, and respect for cultural diversity.

Employee satisfaction variables including the level of satisfaction with the company's organizational culture, as well as their satisfaction with job requirements, relationships with colleagues and management, work-life balance, satisfaction with benefits and salary, as well as opportunities for professional development.

Variables for encouraging and consolidating organizational culture, including employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, as well as programs to promote organizational culture among customers and business partners.

Research steps

The research was scheduled in the following stages, which took place throughout the academic year 2022 - 2023:

Study and documentation regarding the "Organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group";

Collection of feedback from employees within the Four Seasons hotel group;

Centralization and analysis of the obtained results;

Drawing conclusions;

Drafting of the research report.

Research subjects

The conducted research was qualitative but also had quantitative components and took place between 2015 and 2023. The selected sample, consisting of 100 feedbacks, was large enough to provide relevant statistical data, and the analysis of these feedbacks across multiple categories represents a quantitative method of data analysis. At the same time, the collected feedback provided a subjective perspective of employees' experiences and opinions about various aspects of the organization, which represents a qualitative method of data collection. For the selection of participants, a practical sampling model was used, specifically simple random sampling. The participant sample consisted of 100 employees from the Four Seasons Hotel Group from all major departments, selected globally.

Description of research methods and tools/techniques

In conducting the research, the starting point was represented by understanding the organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group. To achieve the proposed objectives, the following methods, and tools specific to this approach were used:

Documentation from the preliminary stage included adequate research to gain an in- depth understanding of the organizational context. This involved studying existing literature, examining previous research and studies conducted on organizational culture, especially those focusing on the hotel industry and the Four Seasons hotel group. Additionally, preliminary documentation involved analyzing internal reports and documents, studying financial and performance reports, company policy and procedure manuals, as well as other internal documents providing a deep understanding of the organizational culture and work practices of the company. A brief analysis of the competition was also conducted, examining the organizational cultures of competitors in the hotel industry to understand what practices and cultural traditions Four Seasons could use to improve its performance and employee and customer satisfaction, as well as to determine the group's market position in terms of organizational culture.

Research was the main method of acquiring primary information, on which the scientific approach was based. Research on the organizational culture and employee satisfaction of Four Seasons was applied to a total of 100 employees of the group. The research includes the analysis of important categories, divided into 6 categories: compensation and benefits, relationship with management, job security and promotion, work-life balance, work environment, and finally, organizational culture.

An important step in conducting the research, after the data collection stage, was processing the obtained information, which involved systematizing the data and treating them statistically to obtain the necessary system of statistical indicators for analysis. In this context, the analysis was performed in the EXCEL program, commonly used in research in the Social Sciences field, and specific formulas were used to facilitate further analysis. The analysis of the obtained information led to the elaboration of the research conclusions, based on which the final report was drawn up. The final report mentions both the research conclusions and a series of proposals for ameliorative actions required in the identified situation. Additionally, the report includes references to research directions that could continue the study of the addressed theme in this paper, organizational culture and its effect on the level of satisfaction of employees and customers.

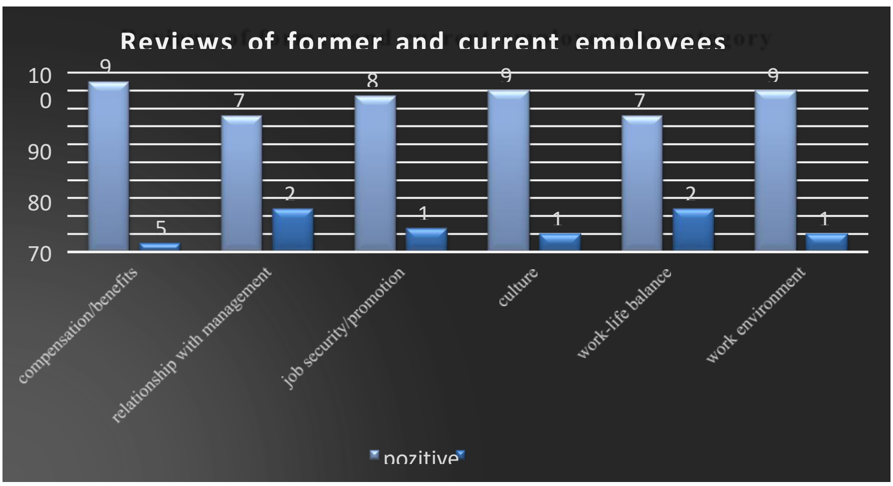
Research results and interpretation

Presentation and analysis/data processing

The initial aspects of the research aimed to identify the experiences of all employees in relation to each of the 6 categories mentioned earlier, namely how many of the analyzed feedback and the percentage in which they declare themselves satisfied/dissatisfied.

Thus, the research begins with a question regarding the percentage of employees (former or current) of the Four Seasons hotel group who declare themselves satisfied/dissatisfied with the following categories: compensation and benefits, relationship with management, job security and promotion, work-life balance, work environment, and finally, organizational culture.

Chart 3.1 Reviews of former and current employees by category



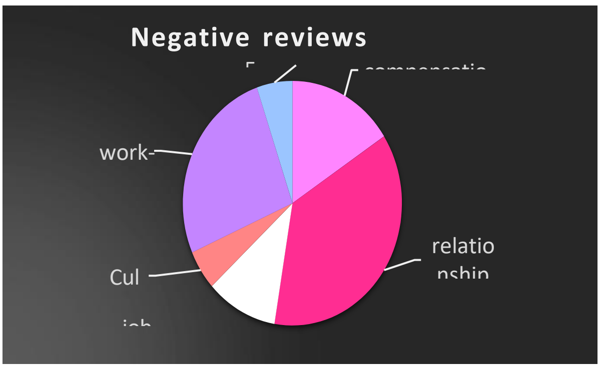
Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

Analyzing the selected feedback, it can be concluded that all categories were considered positively by the majority of employees (over 70%), specifically compensation/benefits with a percentage of 95%, work environment with 90%, culture with 90%, job security/promotion with 87%, relationship with management with 76%, and lastly, work-life balance with 76%.

The categories with the highest percentage of negative feedback, namely 24%, are the relationship with management and work-life balance. These results are influenced by the industry, as many of the employees who rated work-life balance negatively stated that they are aware that such a demanding schedule applies anywhere in the hotel industry. The fewest negative feedbacks, 5%, were given to the compensation and benefits category, with many respondents ranking Four Seasons as a top employer considering this category. For culture and work environment, negative feedback accounted for 10%, while for job security/promotion, the percentage of negative feedback is 13%.

Another relevant aspect was identifying the reasons why current employees are dissatisfied, in order to detect the practices and cultural traditions that need to be improved or changed.

Chart 3.2 Negative reviews from current employees

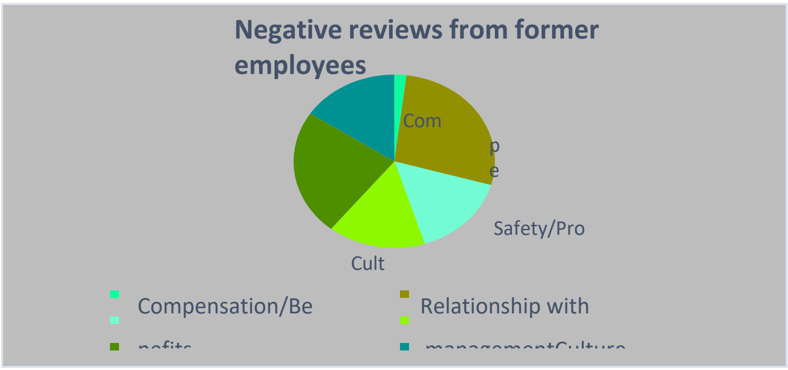


Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

The above graph shows that the main reasons for current employees' dissatisfaction are the relationship with management, with a percentage of 37%, and work-life balance, which registered a percentage of 26%. It can be concluded that increased attention needs to be paid to the communication relationship between management and staff, as well as the fact that employees desire more time for their personal lives, with many stating that the biggest issue is the need to be available even during off-hours to respond to work-related demands at any time. Another conclusion drawn from the analysis of the above graph is that only 5% represents the negative percentage assigned to the categories of work environment and culture, demonstrating that the social environment in which they operate is appreciated by the majority of current employees. Additionally, it can be affirmed that the values and organizational culture of Four Seasons are in line with its commitment to employee satisfaction, with the entire hotel group adhering to the golden rule of treating others as they would like to be treated.

Another analysis involved examining the reasons why employees resigned, specifically the categories that former employees rated negatively.

Chart 3.3 Negative reviews from former employees



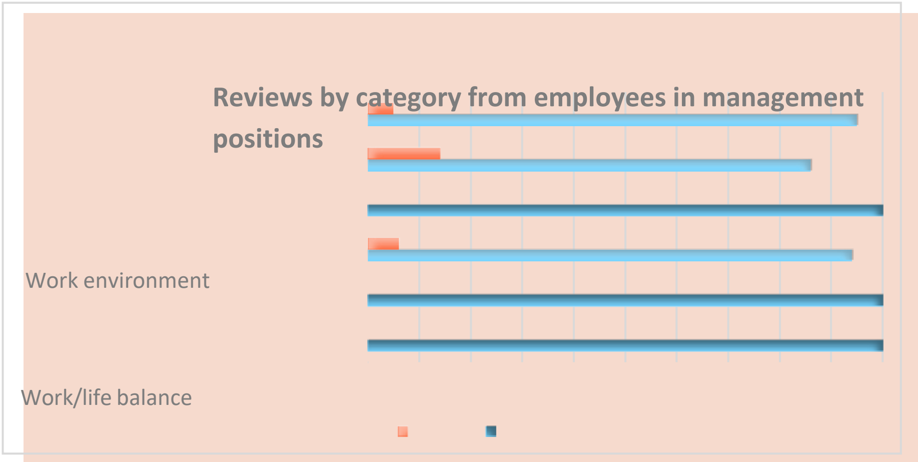
Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

Analyzing the reviews provided by former employees, it can be observed that the primary reason considered most negative among the proposed categories is the relationship with management, which registered a percentage of 27%, followed by work-life balance, which registered a percentage of 23%. Three categories recorded the same percentage (16%), namely work environment, culture, and safety/promotion at the workplace.

The category that recorded the lowest percentage of dissatisfaction among former employees is represented by compensation and benefits, which registered a percentage of 2%.

Former employees also highlight the main reasons for dissatisfaction as the relationship with management and work-life balance, which are the same as those found among current Four Seasons team members. However, the negative percentages are significantly lower than the positive ones, indicating that although improvements can be made in these two categories, the hotel group does not face serious issues regarding employee satisfaction. For an in-depth analysis, a comparison was made between the reviews from employees in managerial positions and those in executive positions. Thus, the feedback of those in management roles was analyzed first, focusing on their level of satisfaction with each of the 6 categories.

Chart 3.4 Reviews by category from employees in management positions

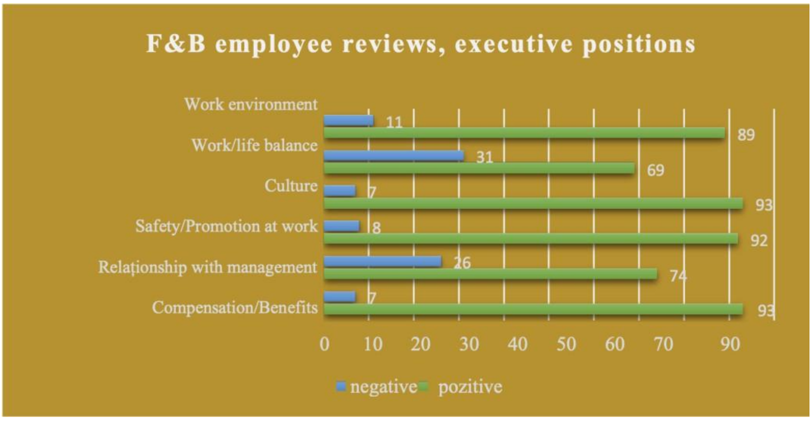


Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

Employees in management positions have given 100% positive feedback to the categories of compensation and benefits, relationship with management, and culture. They provided positive feedback in the percentage of 94% for safety and promotion at the workplace, 95% for the work environment, and 86% for work-life balance. The work-life balance category received the highest negative feedback, namely 14%, followed by safety/promotion at the workplace with 6%. It can be observed that those in leadership positions did not give negative reviews for the categories of compensation and benefits, relationship with management, and culture. It can be concluded that holding a leadership position entails numerous responsibilities, which require employees to spend a considerable amount of time at work and to be constantly dedicated, as reflected in their negative ratings for the work-life balance category. However, the positive responses to other important categories such as the work environment and organizational culture reflect their satisfaction with being part of the team and their alignment with the company's values and organizational culture.

Another important graph represents the reviews of employees in executive positions from the Food & Beverage department. Food & Beverage is considered a department that requires a lot of physical work, extensive time spent with guests, and is one of the departments with the highest turnover rates in a hotel. Therefore, it was deemed appropriate to analyze the opinions of F&B executives, specifically those occupying the following positions: waiter, bartender, line cook, chef, pastry chef, waiter assistant.

Chart 3.5 F&B employee reviews, executive positions



Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the results of the feedback analysis

From the above graph, it can be observed that employees in executive positions in the Food & Beverage department rated compensation-benefits and culture as the most positive categories, with a percentage of 93%, followed by safety-promotion at the workplace, with a percentage of 92%, the work environment with 89%, relationship with management with 74%, and lastly, work-life balance with 69% positive ratings. Employees in executive positions in the F&B department gave the highest negative percentages to the categories of work-life balance - 31% and relationship with management - 26%. The rest of the categories proposed for analysis, namely compensation-benefits, culture, and safety-promotion at the workplace, were rated as negative in small percentages of 7 – 8%. It is noteworthy that the Four Seasons hotel group succeeds in conveying its culture to employees, making them identify with its principles and actions. The compensation-benefits and culture categories received the highest percentages of positive reviews from both categories of employees, with management positions and executive positions in F&B, which may conclude that the bonus system is fair for all employees. However, the fact that both categories of employees gave negative feedback in the highest percentages to the work-life balance category leads to the conclusion that the employees' work schedule needs to be carefully monitored, and there is a need to provide more free time for personal activities.

Interpreting the results of the research

The core values of the company are focused on service quality, respect for both customers and employees, innovation, and commitment to sustainability. These are crucial values for the organization's success and should be further promoted and reinforced to the employees. The data has indicated a high level of employee satisfaction with Four Seasons' organizational culture and practices, but there are also some weaknesses, such as the level of workplace stress and the ability to express opinions within the organization, especially in front of those in leadership positions. It is recommended that these aspects be taken into account and improved to increase employee satisfaction and engagement. Among the most important positive aspects of employee satisfaction are the opportunities for personal and professional development. Employees mentioned that they had access to training and personal development programs, as well as mentors who helped them improve their skills and advance in their careers. These programs are perceived as significant benefits by employees, contributing to their overall satisfaction. Through the analysis of all reviews, it was found that employees received periodic performance evaluations as well as constant feedback from their superiors. These practices helped employees improve their performance and feel valued within the organization. However, the research also highlighted certain aspects that could be improved to increase employee satisfaction. Among the most significant negative points is the high level of workplace stress, with many mentioning that the workplace is quite stressful, leading to fatigue and demotivation. They consider that work-life balance is lacking. It is important for the organization to identify the causes of this stress and take measures to improve working conditions and reduce fatigue. Additionally, some employees stated that they do not always feel confident expressing their opinions in front of leadership, which can lead to frustration and dissatisfaction. It is crucial for the organization to create an open environment and encourage employees to voice their opinions.

Research conclusions

Validation / invalidation of research hypotheses

Following the conducted research, it can be observed that the formulated hypotheses are validated. Regarding the first hypothesis, data analysis showed that the values and organizational culture of Four Seasons are indeed in line with its commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. Employees and managers of the company emphasized the importance of this commitment and how it is integrated into all aspects of the organization's activities.

Concerning the second hypothesis, the research indicated that employees of the Four Seasons hotel group do identify with its values and organizational culture and are highly satisfied with it. This was reflected in the research results regarding employee satisfaction with the organizational culture, as they provided positive feedback in this category.

Regarding the third hypothesis, data analysis revealed that the practices and cultural traditions of Four Seasons are indeed important for its performance and for the satisfaction of customers and employees. This was reflected in the positive feedback given by employees regarding the services and products offered by the company, as well as in the customer appreciations.

As for the fourth hypothesis, the research showed that identifying the practices and cultural traditions that need improvement or change can enhance the company's performance and the satisfaction level of its employees. This was reflected in the recommendations made by employees and managers in the reviews provided to improve certain aspects and practices.

Regarding the fifth hypothesis, data analysis demonstrated that encouraging and consolidating the organizational culture of Four Seasons through training and development programs for employees, performance recognition and reward programs and programs to promote the organizational culture among customers and business partners can indeed contribute to its success and performance. This was reflected in the recommendations made by employees and managers in the reviews to consistently strengthen and promote the organizational culture, as well as in their testimonies regarding the positive influence of the company's culture on their performances and motivation to meet the highest quality standards.

Recommendation for future research

Following the research carried out on the organizational culture at the Four Seasons hotel group, the following recommendations could be useful for future research:

Expanding the sample: If the research is continued or repeated in the future, it might be useful to expand the sample of participants so that a more complete picture of organizational culture at the global level can be obtained.

Benchmarking: If data from other similar companies is available, future research could analyze and compare the organizational culture of Four Seasons with other similar companies in the industry to identify any differences or similarities in cultural values, practices and traditions.

Use of mixed methods: Instead of using only qualitative or quantitative methods, future research could use mixed methods such as case studies and surveys to get a completer and more accurate picture of organizational culture. Investigating internal relationships: In future research, it may be useful to further investigate the internal relationships between employees and company management through interviews to determine the extent to which these relationships contribute to organizational culture.

For future research, the perspective of Four Seasons customers and how they perceive the company's organizational culture and its impact on their satisfaction could also be considered. Moreover, newer and more advanced research tools such as sentiment analysis, social network analysis or more sophisticated data analysis techniques could also be used for future research in order to gain a more complete picture of the company’s organizational culture.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the research conducted on the organizational culture of the Four Seasons hotel group aimed to evaluate employee satisfaction, identify organizational values and culture, practices and cultural traditions, as well as proposed improvements to consolidate and promote the organizational culture. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, feedback was collected from 100 employees from all major departments, selected globally.

The research results indicated that the values and organizational culture of Four Seasons align with its commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. Employees also identify with the company's values and organizational culture and are satisfied with them. Additionally, the company's practices and cultural traditions contribute to its performance and the satisfaction of both customers and employees. Additionally, identifying practices and cultural traditions that need improvement or change can enhance the company's performance and employee satisfaction.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Four Seasons hotel group continues to encourage and strengthen its organizational culture through employee training and development programs, performance recognition and reward programs, and organizational culture promotion among customers and business partners to ensure its continued success and performance.

Overall, the research has made a valuable contribution to understanding the organizational culture and employee satisfaction within the Four Seasons hotel group. These findings can help improve the organizational culture and performance of the company, as well as increase the satisfaction of employees and customers.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTION IN THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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Abstract:

Promotion in tourism is dependent on the elements that individualize the tourism market in general. This must relate to the particularities of the internal and international customers. In order to have an adequate policy in tourism, it must be carried out with appropriate strategies, put into practice with the help of related tactics. All this is achieved through proper management. The promotion strategy must be correlated with the strategies of the other components of the marketing mix: product, price, distribution. This must follow the alignment with the general objectives of tourism development and participate in their achievement: increasing tourist flows, entering new markets, diversifying destinations and products, ensuring a sustainable development of tourism.

Keywords: *strategy, marketing, management, tourism.*

JEL Classification: Z30

The promotion expresses the key image concept of the tourist activities carried out by any economic agent in this field of activity. Also, promotion contributes decisively to a better level of entry and positioning on the profile market.

Along with the evolution of the tourism industry, the trend of deepening and specialization of tourism marketing became more and more obvious. The evolution of its structure was a phenomenon related to the socio-economic dynamics of human society, to the increasingly rapid changes in the attitudes of potential consumers. The evaluation of promotion in tourism must start from the context of the particularities that define marketing in this economic field.

Tourist activities are constituted as a whole made up of several well-individualized components that imprint a series of particularities on marketing and, of course, promotion. Any planning of a tourism marketing strategy addresses the specificity, components and objectives of the promotion.

The promotion of the tourist product is a specific form of communication, which consists in the transmission of messages and information through different channels intended to inform the tourism operators and potential

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tourists about the characteristics of the tourist product and about the component elements of the tourist services offered for sale, to develop a positive attitude towards companies providing tourist services, with the aim of causing favorable changes in the mentality and habits of tourists.

- ✓ The focus is on increasing the fame of the tourist product, encouraging the purchase of a new tourist product, encouraging the purchase of existing tourist products, building the loyalty of existing customers, presenting other new tourist products. From the totality of product promotion techniques, those that are able to best value a specific tourist product are selected.
- ✓ The means of promotion are selected depending on the particularities of the product, the presence or absence of competition, inciting the customer to buy a tourist product, the form of presentation etc. As the data and information transmission technique develops and modernizes continuously, the promotion policy tries to use the most appropriate and efficient means.
- ✓ In the new CRM system, the emphasis in the relationship with customers is on promotion. The increasingly modern promotional tools try to deepen the relationship between the client and the repeated purchase of tourist services. An important strategic tool in the marketing-mix, but also in the customer-focused one (CRM), promotion has the role of strengthening the relationship with customers. Trust, fidelity, balance are pillars of support for such a relationship.
- ✓ The new way of conceiving promotion has several notable effects in the field of tourism:
    - – achieving a high responsiveness to all tourist requirements and motivations in order to be able to include several market segments and a constant demand for the products offered;
    - – the evaluation and permanent knowledge of tourist motivations depending on the particularities of tourists and those of the economic and social ones that can influence purchase decisions;
    - – the continuous adaptation of the activities that make up the tourist products and services, which implies great flexibility in changing some of their components;
    - – the use of the spirit of creation and invention to be able to bring to fruition all existing tourist resources in a given space and the creation of original and authentic products;
    - – the application of a unitary concept in all stages and on all the components that make up the tourist products and services so that there are no dysfunctions in their development;

– achieving maximum efficiency in terms of consumption of raw materials and energy, in the use of employed personnel given the fact that in the future we want to recognize quality through eco-labelling of tourist products and services.

In this context, promotion ensures the systematic building and permanent correction of the relationship with customers. This fact shows that promotion is a very dynamic phenomenon subject to the increasingly strong pressures of the tourist markets.

An integral part of marketing, promotion also benefits from strategic management. Although included in tourism, within the mix strategies, promotion must face the increasingly complex problems of the contemporary economic environment. Thus, the elements of creativity and originality are increasingly appreciated.

In this context, a close relationship is identified between communication and careful planning of the promotion action. Orientation towards the customer implies an increasingly intense and interactive communication.

Over time, promotional activity has diversified its forms of manifestation, from simple to complex and very modern ones. The variety that exists today is given by the content, means used, way of manifestation which are determined by the existing potential, strategy and financial strength of a company. Along with the general, very brief presentation of the specific forms of promotional communication, it is also important to address their main characteristics in tourism.

Promotion activity in tourism is dependent on all the elements that individualize the tourism market in general. Its very definition focused on the equation of sale - purchase of tourist products leads to particular aspects of promotion.

In this context, promotion depends on the attributes of tourist products and customers, and at the same time, it must take into account the characteristics of the tourist market. Also, tourism promotion must be related to the particularities of the domestic and international clientele.

The promotion strategy must be correlated with the strategies of the other components of the marketing mix: product, price, distribution. Also, it must follow the alignment with the general objectives of tourism development and participate in their achievement: increasing tourist flows, entering new markets, diversifying destinations and products, ensuring a sustainable development of tourism, etc.

The role of promotion results from the fact that it balances tourism demand and supply and must take into account the following major requirements:

– identifying the expectations of potential consumers, in order to favor the purchase decision;

- addressing the essential aspects of tourist products in order to highlight their originality and uniqueness;
- highlighting next to first-rate tourist objectives and other less well-known ones;
- providing consumers with correct information in order to choose an informed package of tourist services;
- knowledge of close and distant competition in order to use promotional tools suitable for a certain segment of the tourist market.

The excessive development of the Internet and the development of virtual products can attract potential customers to visit such sites, but not to buy those presented products in the end, because either they were not made according to the requirements and lifestyle of the visitors or they are very expensive .

These problems show that there are actually two markets, in which the promotion must establish its action strategies:

- the partial market, which can take place at the regional, local level and which focuses on the idea of specialization "product - segment" and on the strategy of low prices;
- the global market with a wider spatial orientation, focused on "quality governance", with aggressive strategies of higher prices.

The phenomenon of extensive or exclusive distribution has as a support point different promotion tools through which they can select and attract their customers. Moreover, no actor on the tourist market can sell his products, services on an ever wider market without benefiting from the concrete and real support of promotion.

Therefore, in tourism, another mode of action of promotion is highlighted, focused much more as a strategy for attracting and satisfying customers, their loyalty. Today's information technology has all the attributes to support this process.

Moreover, what emerges as a novelty from what has been presented is the fact that the process of conception-implementation of any promotion action is based on the strategy of differentiation.

During the course of the promotion, two types of analysis must be carried out:

- analysis of the industry (field of activity) that can be carried out at the international, regional, national, local level and which determines the level of competition;
- the analysis of the economic agent, which, depending on the existing business environment, must have its own promotion strategy.

Under these conditions, the success of tourism at the level of a country, region, locality also depends on the promotion strategy and the objectives proposed and put into practice; moreover, promotion is shown to be the link between customer expectations and what exists as an offer on the tourist market at a given moment.

The variety of promotion objectives also interferes with the type of strategy applied (permanent, intermittent, concentrated, differentiated etc.). The positive results are due to creativity and performance in the communication process. All promotion objectives must be integrated into the marketing strategy, as a unitary vision, intended to ensure an upward evolution of national tourism.

The promotion of tourism at the European and international level depends on several factors. Among them, the strategic objectives of each country, the experience, the budget at its disposal, the way of organizing the activity of the central tourism administration etc. can be included.

Promotion policies have become essential components of tourism policies in most of the destination countries. Considering the high costs of international promotion campaigns, the development of these policies and their application are carried out, in most cases, at the joint initiative of public authorities and tourism entrepreneurs.

The national tourism administrations or authorities ensure, mainly, the promotion of national tourism, the sectoral orientation of tourism activities, based on general development strategies. To them can be added the local and regional administrations, which are increasingly involved in the promotion of tourist destinations.

Professional tourism organizations are also involved in tourism promotion, especially in terms of the professional activity or the market segment they represent.

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THE STRATEGY OF DIVERSIFYING THE SERVICES OFFERED BY THE TRIPADVISOR COMPANY

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Abstract:
TripAdvisor is a popular online travel platform that provides a range of services and resources for travelers and businesses in the travel and hospitality industry. TripAdvisor is best known for its vast collection of traveler-generated reviews and ratings for hotels, restaurants, attractions, and other travel-related businesses. Travelers can read these reviews to make informed decisions about their trips. For businesses, maintaining a strong online presence on TripAdvisor and providing excellent customer service is essential for attracting and retaining customers. Responding to reviews, both positive and negative, can help build a positive reputation. TripAdvisor also enforces policies to prevent fake reviews and maintain the integrity of the platform.

Keywords: *travel platform, online, information tehnology, e-tourism.*

JEL Classification: Z30.

Introduction

Tourism has been strongly influenced by the advent of the Internet and its integration into commerce and everyday life. One of the companies that evolved with the market was TripAdvisor, founded in 2000 to support tourists from all over the world in their search for the perfect place for accommodation, dining or leisure activities. Thus, a tourist guide was created, constantly updated, fed by the users themselves, in a virtual space optimized for all types of tourism and for all the needs of a traveler.

Based in Needham, Massachusetts, TripAdvisor is the world's largest social travel website, with approximately 315 million followers (active and inactive) and approximately 500 million reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions and other business-related travels.

The importance of this type of platform is invaluable in today's era, when an instant response is expected at any time, under any conditions, when a tourist wants to plan a visit to a tourist location, be it closer or further away.

Platform functionality and customer registration

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The platform, since the beginning, has operated on the basis of advertisements, with customer accounts being free, their data being used to display advertisements and thus generating revenue for the company. At first it functioned like a forum, but it quickly grew to the appearance of the application for mobile phones, and now it offers various services for a fee that bring a considerable profit margin to the company.

TripAdvisor is a travel website that offers its users various payment options for services offered, such as hotel reservations, plane tickets or tour packages. Accepted payment methods may vary by travel provider and country of payment, but in general TripAdvisor accepts the following payment methods:

1. Credit/Debit Cards - This is one of the most common payment methods accepted by TripAdvisor. The site accepts most credit/debit cards, including Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover.
2. PayPal - TripAdvisor accepts payments through PayPal accounts. To pay with PayPal, users must log in to their PayPal account and complete the payment. 3. Payment via Bank Account - In some cases, TripAdvisor may accept payment via a bank account. This can be a popular option for those who don't want to use credit/debit cards or PayPal.
3. Bank Transfer - TripAdvisor may accept payments by bank transfer directly from the user's bank account. This option may be available for certain types of transactions or for users making large payments.

It is important to note that accepted payment methods may vary depending on the travel provider and the country where the payment is made. Users should check the accepted payment methods before making a reservation or purchasing a tour package on TripAdvisor.

These tourist services and products appeared as a consequence of the homogenization of the offer within the market, most sites (Booking.com, TripAdvisor, Google) now have search engines dedicated to each functionality, from the location of objectives, reviews and ratings to reservations and tour packages, regardless of their former specialization.

Now either platform contains most of the functionality found in the others. Registering a new user on the site or accessing the account is easy, similar to all other accounts on similar platforms. The user of the platform must log in to their personal account in order to make a reservation, and to facilitate the process, the customer can log in to the platform with their Google or Facebook account, for a faster connection.

The data relating to the customer's bank card are only necessary when he requests accommodation at a property where certain payment conditions are imposed or when purchasing a plane ticket or renting a car to the destination. Access to these facilities is only possible after paying them online, there is no possibility to use cash through the application, with delivery at the location, to benefit from special prices, bonuses or promotions.

The main function of the platform is to discover international tourist attractions, share recommendations and rate visited locations. For any tourist, information is important, and those that come from some visitors offer an extra perspective on the experience. Reservations are made easily, by filling in the fields with the vacation period and the desired location. After that, the platform chooses the best matches for the desired service, taking into account the chosen filters and criteria, similar to Booking.com, Trivago or similar platforms.

The next steps to make a reservation are intuitive and easy to follow, and managing reservations is easy on the app. TripAdvisor has other platforms available to customers to purchase other services, such as JetSetter, The Fork, Viator, Cruise Critic, Seat Guru, each serving a different function and being an individual brand

TripAdvisor’s applied business models

TA has built a portfolio of travel brands and companies, guiding visitors to destinations, activities, accommodation and travel and dining experiences in more than 40 international markets. Now there is the option to compare the available options on the site and reservations can be made directly from TripAdvisor, with the reviews and the competition at hand to find the perfect option. Their business model is to provide more options to customers, but also other customers' opinions about them. This type of presentation provides customer confidence and options for multiple customer categories.

Customer rating

Similar to the scoring mode offered by Google or Facebook, the platform offers its own service scoring solution, which differs from the others by: 1. Notes can only be given by users who have purchased the service in question 2. Not a single grade is given, but a set of grades that reflect the important details, the platform, displaying at the end the final average of these grades (the grading criteria are pre-set by Booking). Also, the client must make a brief description of their personal experience or in the form of a strengths, weaknesses scheme. 3. Service providers have the opportunity to respond to customer commentsților

Clients

People who visit the TripAdvisor website have access to comments, which allows them to view the provided mentions, descriptions, can compare prices with each other, access photo galleries. When the user has decided on the trip he wants to take or has chosen the right hotel where he wants to stay, by a simple click on a link on the website, they will be redirected to a travel agency online or to the website of the chosen hotel. The company acts independently of Expedia, it sends orders to a parent company, just as it happens in the case of all travel agencies. When users become members of this agency, they can express their opinion by simply logging into the site. No payment is required to become a member on this platform, which is why in May 2020 the number of members reached the impressive figure of 20 million usersBrand and software quality.

The company's logo is represented by its name itself, which gives it an important advantage: it remains more easily imprinted on the customer's mind. Green and black tones are presented, both in the company logo and in the design of the platform. The purpose of the logo is to draw attention to the name itself; The colors are also used because of their meaning: Green: nature, the privilege of living in areas with a lot of greenery, but also suggests the need to go on an adventure outside. Blue: success, satisfaction, trust. Emphasis is placed on the image portfolio of the properties or other services offered. The name of the platform is extremely suggestive. TripAdvisor, translated from English means "search advisor". The logo consists of a square with the classic symbol associated over time with the company, the face of an owl. It symbolizes experience, continuous search and learning, but also simplicity. The easy-to-follow design of the website and associated app provides a pleasant user experience for both tech-savvy users and those with limited knowledge, which is important for attracting and retaining customers.

TripAdvisor online presence

The company is active online and promotes current offers, platform capabilities and news. The official Facebook page focuses on the presentation of short articles, which have the role of proposing new tourist destinations to the reader and inspiring the feeling of vacation. Also, images are published on the page, which document the experiences that a tourist can experience in the respective tourist area; Online presence is important now, as a majority of customers and potential customers are active on social media platforms or for entertainment. Using them to present the company and its products covers several aspects of marketing, such as brand permanence, free advertising, PR, advertising, presenting the company's mission, vision and values, running promotions, accelerating sales and promoting new features. Customers receive information faster, information channels are improved to serve everyone's needs, and thus the market can be penetrated more effectively without investing heavily in mass advertising, and companies have been able to use these resources in other departments of the company.

Advantages and disadvantages of using TripAdvisor

TripAdvisor is one of the oldest and most used platforms dedicated to sharing tourism enthusiasm, with the information provided by users being essential in evaluating each objective. Although the ratings on these sites are important and reflect the level of customer satisfaction, they can be objective or subjective, depending on a wide range of factors. Thus, the platform has a number of important advantages and disadvantages that must be taken into account before establishing a tourist route based on it.

Advantages

• Accessibility: Any user can access the platform and search for reviews and ratings of hotels, restaurants or tourist attractions in a particular city or destination.

• Useful information: On the TripAdvisor platform there are reviews of tourists about their experiences, so they can provide useful information to other travelers who plan to visit those places. The platform also provides price details, photos and other relevant information.

• Ratings and recommendations: Users can express their ratings and offer recommendations to other travelers, so they can help in the decision to choose a particular tourist destination or service. Disadvantages:

• Quality of reviews: There are also fake or biased reviews on the TripAdvisor platform, so it can be difficult to separate the useful from the untrue.

• Failure to cover all areas: In certain areas or regions, the platform may be less developed or less used, so it may be difficult to find useful information about those destinations.

Disadvantages:

The TripAdvisor platform can be useful for users, but it can sometimes be harmful for tourism businesses, which can be affected by negative reviews or influenced by fake reviews.

Marketing Research

TA has relied heavily on search engine marketing and its affiliate program to drive customers to their site. Director of Revenue and Traffic Management, Dena Yahya, stated that managing search engine marketing is a real challenge for them. In 2010, the company planned to spend 10 million dollars on this marketing, by purchasing more than 100 million words from Yahoo, Google, or other search engines. Examples of words of this kind can be considered the following: hotels, accommodation, three-star hotels in. The number of keywords will increase considerably once all possible destinations around the world are included, but also if and when the translation of keywords into different languages is added. In terms of monetization, TripAdvisor has three main sources of revenue, namely: display advertising, subscription fees from partners and clicks on text links. To create traffic on its own website, the agency focused on three things: public relations (PR), social media, but also marketing research.

Public Relations

The agency's public relations capability leveraged a brand to stay current. At the moment, the number of members joining the TA collective has grown, and at the same time, the feedback obtained from completing the questionnaires.

Text Links

The agency charges hotels by online travel agencies on a cost-per-click basis. Costs are targeted somewhere between $0.25 and $1, they may differ depending on the language, country or location of the link. For most online travel agency businesses, the profitable part is the hotels. Visitors read hotel descriptions to decide where they will stay during their stay. Many people click on the check rate button to find out the hotel's rating and its availability in the desired period.

Business list

In January 2020, the agency incorporated business listings to approve business owners to put hotel contact details on the TA agency website. The image was initially based on small transactions, and this service allowed owners to manage their own account by adding their respective phone number, web address, email and consumer discount coupons. To add an extra touch, TA agency gave away free widgets and in this way the business was promoted with the help of TA business rankings, helping the owners. These business listings signify a service that observes an annual fee ranging from $200-$10,000, fluctuating depending on the size of the business. In May 2020, the service became part of TripAdvisor's newly launched business.

Social media

In 2010, the app had 5 million active members, and in the summer of 2010 it introduced Trip Advisor Trip Friends, with which users could ask their Facebook friends for travel advice. In the same year, the company launched a site for mobile phones that quickly grew significantly and became very popular Since 2009, the company has been on the Twitter social network, reaching 92,199 users in less than a year. It helped TA to have a closer relationship with both travel influencers and travel bloggers.

Social media investment return

89% of global travelers say that they are influenced when they want to stay, and 96% of hoteliers say that reviews are influenced in generating reservations 1. Guests visit TripAdvisor with more priority than booking 2. Properties with strong reputations across all distribution channels perform better overall 3. Higher review scores allow hotels to charge up to 11% more while maintaining occupancy rates

Challenges

First of all, integration for any company in China market is first of all difficult challenge for any international company. Google has now pulled out of this struggling Chinese market, following the failure of Ebay and Yahoo. The local competition is scrambling very fast and replicating everything it sees that works, whether it works in the US or elsewhere. Local teams must do everything in their power to be successful. The challenge is to find ways to maintain coordination that meets the requirements with headquarters. Less than

10% of Chinese consumers decide to keep a travel reservation online. Second, the Chinese online population is generally low-income and young. Also, the manner but also the consumption behavior in China is distinct. Chinese people choose to travel only once a year, by choosing a nearby destination, and they lack the skills and experience of hotels in certain tourist destinations. Most of them choose to do so. The market needs to be educated and monetization is a challenge. In conclusion, the agency has a number of 15 full-time employees, but they want to increase their number to 60 employees or 70 by the end of 2010 and to 100 employees by 2011.

The future growth of the platform

Although TripAdvisor is a large company with a long history related to the young Internet, there are always opportunities to grow economically to secure a larger market share. Tourism is a dynamic, seasonal industry, full of trends and habits, and these variables make any investment a gamble. To be able to remain as competitive as well as innovative, TripAdvisor should invest in technology to be able to maintain its positions. The advance of artificial intelligence, the post-pandemic technological infrastructure capable of more functions and the increased interest in certain novelties are a way to become a market leader. ϖ In the period before the pandemic, the company had net profits of $1 billion, this trend starting in 2014 ($1.246 billion). The only decrease in profit was in 2019, when TripAdvisor made $1.560 billion, $55 million less than in 2018. The year 2022 brought a return of the tourism industry and the profits again reached over the threshold of $1 billion, more precisely $1.492 billion and bringing back new updates to the platform to bring new users and the return of others. The company may look for expansion opportunities in emerging markets where there is high potential for growth in internet users and interest in travel. This may involve adapting the platform to suit the specific needs of these markets and establishing partnerships with local tourism service providers. TripAdvisor may explore partnerships and collaborations with other companies in the travel industry, such as airlines, hotels, travel agencies and other booking platforms. These partnerships can create opportunities for profit and user growth through the integration and distribution of TripAdvisor content on other online platforms, such as specialized websites, YouTube channels, Instagram, etc.

1. TripAdvisor could also invest more in its digital marketing strategy. Collaborations with well-known brands from other industries, the organization of fairs and events online and offline, advertisements with well-known people in the field of tourism and travel in international markets are just a few ways in which the concept of the platform can become known to a large number of new customers, creating thus an influx of users. The travel industry is constantly changing and TripAdvisor should be responsive to these changes and adapt quickly. For example, tourism trends can change from one season to the next

and can be extremely different from country to country, and political conflicts, pandemics, temperatures and rainfall can also play a role in volatilizing market demand and supply. The company should regularly adjust its marketing tactics to be able to adapt quickly.

TripAdvisor is a popular online travel platform that provides a range of services and resources for travelers and businesses in the travel and hospitality industry. It was founded in 2000 and has since become one of the world's largest travel websites, offering information and tools for planning trips and vacations.

Here are some key aspects and features of TripAdvisor:

1. Traveler Reviews and Ratings: TripAdvisor is best known for its vast collection of traveler-generated reviews and ratings for hotels, restaurants, attractions, and other travel-related businesses. Travelers can read these reviews to make informed decisions about their trips.
2. Accommodation and Restaurant Listings: The platform includes detailed listings of hotels, vacation rentals, restaurants, and other businesses in various destinations. Users can search and compare options based on reviews, ratings, and pricing.
3. Travel Forums: TripAdvisor hosts discussion forums where travelers can ask questions, seek advice, and share their experiences with others. These forums cover a wide range of travel topics and destinations.
4. Booking Capabilities: TripAdvisor allows users to book accommodations, flights, and activities directly through its website or mobile app. It partners with various travel booking providers.
5. Travel Guides: TripAdvisor provides travel guides, including recommendations for things to do, places to visit, and itineraries for various destinations. Users can create personalized trip itineraries.
6. Mobile App: TripAdvisor offers a mobile app for travelers to access information, read reviews, and make bookings on the go.
7. Management Tools for Businesses: For businesses in the travel and hospitality industry, TripAdvisor offers management tools to claim their listings, respond to reviews, and promote their services to potential customers.
8. TripAdvisor Plus: This is a subscription service that offers benefits such as discounts on hotel bookings and access to premium features for a monthly or annual fee.
9. Travel Deals and Discounts: TripAdvisor provides information on travel deals and discounts, allowing users to find special offers and promotions from businesses on the platform.
10. TripAdvisor for Restaurants: A dedicated section for restaurant listings and reviews, helping users discover dining options and make reservations.

11. TripAdvisor for Attractions: A section focusing on attractions and activities, providing information and booking options for various tourist experiences.

It's important to note that the accuracy and credibility of reviews on TripAdvisor can vary, as they are user-generated. Travelers should read a range of reviews and consider the overall rating and trends in the feedback.

Traveler reviews and ratings are a core feature of websites and platforms like TripAdvisor. Here's a more detailed explanation of how this feature works:

1. User-Generated Reviews: Travelers who have visited hotels, restaurants, attractions, and other travel-related businesses can submit their reviews on the TripAdvisor platform. These reviews are written by ordinary travelers who share their personal experiences, opinions, and feedback.
2. Rating System: In addition to written reviews, travelers can rate businesses on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest rating. These ratings are typically used to provide an at-a-glance summary of a business's overall quality, with 5 stars representing excellent and 1 star indicating poor quality.
3. Review Categories: Travelers can often rate businesses based on specific categories, such as service, cleanliness, location, value, and more. These category ratings help provide a more detailed view of a business's strengths and weaknesses.
4. Pros and Cons: Reviewers often list the pros and cons of their experience, allowing potential customers to understand what they can expect. This can include information about the quality of food at a restaurant, the cleanliness of a hotel, the friendliness of staff, and more.
5. Helpful Votes: Other users can indicate that a review was helpful by clicking a "Helpful" button. Reviews with more helpful votes tend to appear higher in search results and are considered more reliable by other users.
6. Response from Businesses: Business owners can respond to reviews, which can provide additional context or address any concerns raised in the reviews. This interaction can help businesses manage their online reputation.
7. Review Trends: TripAdvisor often provides trends and insights based on reviews and ratings. This can include ranking businesses by category or highlighting trends in traveler preferences.
8. Filtering and Sorting: Users can filter and sort reviews to find the most relevant ones. For example, they can filter by traveler type (solo, family, business, etc.), time of year, and language.

9. User Profiles: Travelers who write reviews often have user profiles that show their past reviews, ratings, and contributions to the TripAdvisor community. This can help users assess the credibility of a reviewer's opinions.

Traveler reviews and ratings are valuable resources for individuals planning trips. They offer real-world insights into what to expect when visiting a business, which can help travelers make informed decisions. However, it's essential to read a range of reviews, consider the overall rating and trends, and be aware that individual experiences can vary. Additionally, businesses should pay attention to these reviews as they can significantly impact their online reputation and influence potential customers.

For businesses, maintaining a strong online presence on TripAdvisor and providing excellent customer service is essential for attracting and retaining customers. Responding to reviews, both positive and negative, can help build a positive reputation. TripAdvisor also enforces policies to prevent fake reviews and maintain the integrity of the platform.

Creating a strategy for TripAdvisor, whether you're a business owner or a traveler, can be beneficial. Here are strategies for both groups:

For Travelers:

1. Research and Planning: Use TripAdvisor to research destinations, accommodations, and activities. Read reviews and compare prices. Create a travel plan based on this information.
2. Contributing: Contribute by writing reviews, posting photos, and sharing your experiences. This helps fellow travelers and enhances your profile.
3. Ask Questions: Utilize the forums and Q&A sections to ask specific questions about your trip. Locals and experienced travelers can provide valuable insights.
4. Engage with the Community: Connect with other travelers by joining travel forums and discussion groups. Share your knowledge and seek advice.
5. Use the Mobile App: Download the TripAdvisor app for on-the-go access. You can find restaurants, attractions, and accommodations nearby.
6. Save Favorites: Use the "Save" feature to bookmark places and activities you're interested in. This can help you plan your trip efficiently.
7. Get Deals: Subscribe to TripAdvisor's email alerts to receive updates on deals and discounts from hotels and restaurants.
8. Customized Trip Guides: Use TripAdvisor's trip planner to create customized itineraries based on your interests.

For Business Owners:

1. Claim Your Business: Ensure that your business is listed on TripAdvisor, and claim ownership. This allows you to manage your listing and respond to reviews.
2. Optimize Your Profile: Make your business profile appealing with high-quality photos, accurate contact details, and descriptions. Use keywords relevant to your business.
3. Monitor Reviews: Regularly monitor and respond to customer reviews. Address negative reviews professionally and use positive feedback to your advantage.
4. Engage with Customers: Encourage customers to leave reviews and rate your business. Offering incentives for reviews (within TripAdvisor's guidelines) can be effective.
5. Quality Customer Service: Focus on delivering exceptional customer service. Satisfied customers are more likely to leave positive reviews.
6. Special Offers: Utilize TripAdvisor's features like Special Offers to attract travelers with discounts and promotions.
7. Advertise: Consider using TripAdvisor's advertising services to boost your business's visibility on the platform.
8. Analyze Data: Use TripAdvisor's analytics tools to understand how travelers find and interact with your business. This can help you make data-driven decisions.
9. Engage with the Community: Participate in TripAdvisor forums and discussions related to your industry or location. Be a valuable source of information.
10. Stay Updated: Keep up with TripAdvisor's policies, guidelines, and algorithm changes. These can impact your business's visibility and reputation.

Both travelers and business owners should remember the importance of honest and ethical use of the platform. Fake reviews, for instance, can harm both parties and the platform's credibility. TripAdvisor's policies should be followed to maintain trust and a positive experience for all users.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the TripAdvisor platform can be useful in planning a trip, but it should be used with caution and both its advantages and disadvantages should be considered. Its importance must be correctly evaluated by tourists, weighing all the possible sources of information online or from other sources, but also the possibility to reserve what is necessary for a trip by other methods, with a lower or higher cost, with another set of benefits or with greater involvement. Finally, experiences may differ from individual to individual, each having other interests or previous experiences, and the assessment may be helpful in establishing a visit or may even be detrimental. The company has reached maturity and can no longer cover a larger percentage of the market without investments in technology. Without investments in the platform and the addition of new functionalities.

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