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CONSORTIUM

The Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Consortium comprise hospitality educators from HBCU Colleges and Universities with degree programs in Hospitality and Tourism management and other affiliated universities, colleges, academies, and hospitality industry partners. Founded in 1985, as its own signature group, it is a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the International Council for Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (I-CHRIE). The Consortium membership meets annually with affiliates and industry partners during the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH) Conference and at I-CHRIE to discuss issues of importance regarding student and program success to include: collaboration for on-line course delivery, coordinated multi-school travel/study abroad programs, endowed long term funding, research, and student and faculty development opportunities. The Consortium supports and facilitates research through the publication of its journal (The Consortium Journal of Hospitality and Tourism). The journal is published annually and distributed online and face to face during the Annual I-CHRIE Conference.

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Women in Hospitality Industry Leadership

Peggy Berg, Chair
Castell Project, Inc.

Our mission is to see women in more than one in three positions at all levels of hospitality industry leadership and ownership.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report shows an industry that is making slow progress toward women in leadership. Statistics paint a picture trending toward increased diversity going forward. This is supported in word and deed by men and women throughout the hospitality industry.

Future progress maybe tempered by the impact of the Pandemic and action is required now.

- "Nearly 70 percent of global travel and tourism workers were either laid off or were subject to decreased working time during the pandemic. … Most guests returned. A lot of employees didn't," according to Boston Consulting Group and NYU.[2] This exacerbates the challenges facing hospitality executives, particularly women.
- McKinsey & Company reports that: "Women are even more burned out than they were a year ago and the gap in burnout between women and men has almost doubled. In the past year, one in three women has considered leaving the workforce or downshifting their careers – a significant increase from one in four in the first few months of the pandemic."[1]
- McKinsey also notes that "42 percent of women say they have been often or almost always burned out in 2021, compared to 32 percent a year ago." In the same survey the share of men who are consistently burned out increased from 28 to 32 percent."[1]
- College and university hospitality programs are reporting significant drops in enrollment, according to a survey by the STR Share Center. These programs have been majority female for many years now. According to NYU and BCG, "larger shifts in the industry have reduced the perceived stability and longterm prospects for a career in lodging."[2] The hospitality industry has become less competitive, including for female talent.

Responding to the current and pending labor market is a driving consideration throughout the hospitality industry. Solutions from technology to improve management are rolling out. It is a transformative time for the hospitality companies that will be successful going forward. The Harvard Business Review report on why including women in the C-suite drives better business outcomes says: "after women joined the C-suite, firms became both more open to change and less risk-seeking. In other words, these organizations increasingly embraced transformation while seeking to reduce the risks associated with it."[5] This is the time to accelerate the growth of women in leadership.

In the past year, 1 in 3 women has considered leaving the workforce or downshifting their careers – a significant increase from 1 in 4 in the first few months of the pandemic.[1]

Notable statistics from the 2022 report:

- Women are gaining in hotel company leadership (CEO, president, founder, etc.). Although still skewed, women now hold one leadership spot for every 10.3 men, an improvement from one to 11.2 in 2019.
- At the manager/director levels, women now hold 1 in 2 hospitality brokerage positions and 1 in 6 at the VP/SVP/EVP level. The number of male VP/SVP/EVPs at hotel investment conferences did not change materially while the number of women doubled and broker representation went from one woman to 10.1 men in 2017 to one woman to 7.2 men in 2021. Hospitality brokerage competes with general commercial real estate for talent. CREW Network reports that more women occupy brokerage positions than ever before (29 percent), a 6 percent increase from 2015.[3]
- Women hold 22 percent of the hospitality investment conference podium, up from 16 percent in 2017. This is important because women's visibility on the podium accelerates careers and inspires other women.
- While there is parity for women at the director level, gains for women in higher level hotel company leadership are minimal. Progress is too slow and does not reflect an industry that offers opportunity to its full roster of employees. This has to change for companies to succeed in the current business climate.
- Overall, chiefs are inching closer to fulfilling Castell's mission of seeing women in more than one of every three seats. There are now 3.4 male chief officers to each woman in hotel companies and one to 3.9 at investment conferences. While most female chiefs are in HR, there is now participation across other chief roles, particularly marketing (CMO, CSO, CRO) and legal (general counsel or CLO).
- Hotel company operations as a category has lagged other fields in enabling women to compete and this must change if the industry is to be successful in the market for talent.

Enabling women to serve as leaders not only doubles the talent pool available, giving diverse companies more and better opportunities; it also aligns these companies with their customers, markets and workforce.

METHODOLOGY

This report shows two aspects of the hospitality industry, using two large data sets.

WOMEN IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP DATA SETS FOR 2022 REPORT

Year	Executive Dataset	Conference Attendee
2017		5,993
2018		7,590
2019	5,248	7,782
2020	5,172	(Cancelled)
2021	5,569	5,543

We present statistics by field, level (title) and gender. Statistics are shown in the form of the number of men per woman, for example there are 16.2 CEOs of hotel companies who are men for every woman CEO. The data are also presented as percentages.

Hotel Company Executive Dataset

The executive dataset presents the public face of hospitality industry leadership as promoted on hotel company websites. The dataset includes everyone listed on hotel company websites from director through CEO level. Data was recorded near year-end 2019, then 2020 and now 2021 providing a three-year trend.

The hotel company sample was drawn from the STR Directory of Hotel and Lodging Companies. It includes most hotel companies listed in the STR Directory that: (1) are based in the U.S. or Canada, (2) have over five hotels and/or over 700 rooms and (3) show executives on their websites. Many names were cross-referenced with LinkedIn.

While this is a large and representative sample of industry leadership, companies are selective about who they show on the web, so this public face of the industry may not be the full picture. Virtually every company has their CEO and/or president listed, and the dataset is most representative at the most senior levels. The sample is large enough through the vice president and director levels to be reasonably representative but statistical confidence declines at lower-level titles. Overall averages are skewed toward the most senior levels when compared to all employment.

The executive dataset includes 671 companies for 2021.

Chiefs are getting close to fulfilling Castell's mission of seeing women in more than one of every three seats. There are now 3.4 male chief officers to each woman in hotel companies and one to 3.9 at investment conferences.

Women hold 22% of hospitality investment conference podium, up from 16% in 2017.

HOTEL COMPANY EXECTIVE DATASET

	2019 Men	2019 Women	2020 Men	2020 Women	2021 Men	2021 Women
CDO/CIO	94%	6%	95%	5%	95%	5%
CFO	81%	19%	81%	19%	81%	19%
CHRO	44%	56%	40%	60%	41%	59%
CLO	68%	32%	68%	32%	67%	33%
CMO/CRO	55%	45%	48%	52%	53%	47%
COO	84%	15%	82%	18%	82%	18%
CTO	91%	9%	88%	12%	93%	7%
Other	61%	38%	62%	38%	67%	33%
OVERALL CHIEFS	78%	22%	77%	23%	77%	23%

HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE DATASET

	2017 Men	2017 Women	2018 Men	2018 Women	2019 Men	2019 Women	2021 Men	2021 Women
CDO/CIO	93%	7%	94%	5%	94%	6%	86%	14%
CFO	85%	15%	84%	16%	84%	16%	80%	20%
CLO	63%	37%	77%	23%	83%	17%	58%	42%
CMO/CRO	69%	31%	61%	38%	52%	48%	37%	63%
COO	89%	11%	88%	12%	87%	13%	74%	26%
Other	86%	14%	83%	18%	84%	16%	74%	26%
Total Chiefs	87%	13%	86%	14%	87%	13%	80%	20%
Director	65%	35%	70%	30%	69%	31%	65%	35%

Conference Dataset

The conference dataset is comprised of the attendance rosters of the four largest US hotel investment conferences. These are among the largest gatherings of industry leaders and attract the full spectrum including owners, operators, management companies, REITs, investors, lenders, brokers, financiers, franchisers, attorneys, some vendors, students, professors, media representatives, and a wide array of consultants. While most attendees are in business in the US, there is representation from other countries.

People who attend more than one conference are included each time in these statistics.

Levels and Fields in the Report

This study classifies each person by gender, field (such as operations, construction, finance, etc.), and level (CEO, chief, director, etc.) Because of the wide variety of titles and fields used in the industry, the titles are consolidated into eight (8) levels in these charts. Fields and levels are defined in the appendix. Functional specialties are consolidated into 13 fields in the hotel company dataset and 13 fields in the conference dataset, but there are differences. For instance, the conference dataset includes media, vendors and academia while the hotel company dataset includes food & beverage, operations and procurement. There are other differences due to the different roles represented in the two datasets. For instance, construction in the hotel company dataset is in-house while the conference dataset is largely contractors and construction managers.

We also classify each person by race and this is presented in a separate report; Black Representation in Hospitality Industry Leadership is available at CastellProject.org.

We use a separate dataset to report on board diversity and present this in a separate report; Diversity on Hospitality Industry Public Company Boards is available at CastellProject.org.

Share of Podium

Anecdotally, women are increasingly visible at investment conferences, although registration rosters still show over three men for every woman attending.

WOMEN'S SHARE OF PODIUM

	2017	2018	2019	2021
Total Podium	16%	15%	20%	22%
Panelist	14%	13%	19%	19%
Moderator	22%	23%	35%	36%
Main Stage	17%	16%	15%	20%

The conferences are working to welcome women by showcasing more women on the podium. This is important because it demonstrates there is opportunity for women in the industry and because visibility accelerates careers.

Conferences are able to put more women on the podium because there are now more female chiefs, presidents and CEOs.

Sponsors are also starting to include names of women when they have an opportunity to recommend a speaker.

We are seeing a cultural shift. Conference organizers say that women turn down speaking while men are more likely to step into the opportunity. Women leaders are now discussing this topic and encouraging others to step up and play an active role in changing this mindset.

Women are now on the podium at just under their rate of participation in the conferences. While this is far below their participation in the hospitality workforce, there are signs that the presence of women on the podium will grow.

WOMEN BY CORPORATE LEVEL

At the director level, hotel companies are now divided nearly equally between men and women. Women are also starting to gain at the CEO level. Progress is too slow and does not reflect an industry that offers opportunity to its full roster of employees. This has to change for companies to succeed in the current business climate.

Investment conference attendance is starting to improve, although gains are uneven.

CHIEFS: WOMEN IN THE C-SUITE

Overall, chiefs are inching closer to fulfilling Castell's mission of seeing women in more than one of every three seats. This is a remarkable change, particularly at investment conferences where women are now much more likely to take a public role. Rare until recently, female chief development and/or investment officers (CDO/CIO) are visible participants at investment conferences. Hotel companies have started bringing a few more women in C-suite roles to investment conferences. In particular, brands have been developing their female talent for over 20 years. They now have women in their c-suites and are showcasing them at investment conferences.

Among chiefs, CHROs are most likely to be female. This boosts the overall representation in the C-suite, but is largely not reflected at investment conferences. Their influence should become more impactful when there are two or three women in the C-suite. This is becoming more common as women gain seats, and conference attendance by these women is normalized.

Figures in this table are slightly different than total "chief" figures by level because this table includes dual titles such as President and COO or CEO and CFO.

HOTEL COMPANIES BY LEVEL: NUMBER OF MEN PER WOMEN

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Director	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1
VP	1.0	1.8	2.0	2.0
Managing Director	1.0	4.8	4.8	4.9
EVP/SVP	1.0	2.9	3.3	3.4
Chief	1.0	3.1	3.1	3.3
Partner/Principal	1.0	10.6	15.4	15.3
President	1.0	10.9	11.2	11.2
CEO	1.0	16.2	17.0	17.7

INVESTMENT CONFERENCES BY LEVEL: NUMBER OF MEN PER WOMEN

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2019 Men	2018 Men	2017 Men
Director	1.0	1.8	2.2	2.2	1.9
VP	1.0	2.8	2.8	3.2	3.8
EVP/SVP	1.0	4.1	4.2	4.9	4.0
Managing Director	1.0	7.5	9.9	9.9.	9.4
Chief	1.0	3.8	5.8	5.8	7.0
Principal/Partner	1.0	4.7	5.9	5.9	5.8
President	1.0	8.2	7.2	8.2	8.1
CEO	1.0	10.2	9.9	10.2	10.8

HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE BY LEVEL: PERCENTAGE OF MEN & WOMEN

	2017 Men	2017 Women	2018 Men	2018 Women	2019 Men	2019 Women	2021 Men	2021 Women
CEO	92%	8%	91%	9%	91%	9%	91%	9%
President	89%	11%	89%	11%	88%	12%	89%	11%
Partner/Principal	85%	15%	87%	13%	85%	15%	82%	18%
Chief	87%	13%	86%	14%	85%	15%	79%	21%
Managing Director	90%	10%	91%	9%	91%	9%	88%	12%
EVP/SVP	80%	20%	83%	17%	81%	19%	81%	19%
VP	79%	21%	76%	24%	74%	26%	74%	26%
Director	65%	35%	70%	30%	69%	31%	65%	35%

HOTEL COMPANY CHIEFS: NUMBER OF MEN PER WOMEN

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Overall	1.0	3.4	3.3	3.6
CHRO	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.8
CMO/CRO	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.2
Other	1.0	2.0	1.6	1.6
CLO	1.0	2.0	2.1	2.1
CFO	1.0	4.2	4.2	4.3
COO	1.0	4.7	4.6	5.5
CTO	1.0	13.0	7.6	10.5
CDO/CIO	1.0	19.8	19.4	16.5

HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE CHIEFS: NUMBER OF MEN PER WOMEN

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2019 Men	2018 Men	2017 Men
Overall	1.0	3.9	6.4	6.4	6.7
CMO/CRO	1.0	0.6	1.1	1.6	2.2
CLO	1.0	1.4	4.8	3.4	1.7
CFO	1.0	4.0	5.1	5.3	5.7
Other	1.0	2.8	5.3	4.5	6.0
COO	1.0	5.2	6.8	7.3	8.2
COD/CIO	1.0	6.3	15.2	17.1	14.0

HOTEL COMPANIES BY LEVEL: PERCENTAGE OF MEN & WOMEN

	2019 Men	2019 Women	2020 Men	2020 Women	2021 Men	2021 Women
CEO	95%	5%	94%	6%	94%	6%
President	92%	8%	92%	8%	92%	8%
Partner/Principal	94%	6%	94%	6%	91%	9%
Chief	77%	23%	75%	25%	76%	24%
Managing Director	83%	17%	83%	17%	83%	17%
EVP/SVP	77%	23%	77%	23%	74%	26%
VP	67%	33%	66%	34%	64%	36%
Director	51%	48%	52%	49%	52%	48%

After women joined the C-suite, firms became both more open to change and less risk-seeking. In other words, these organizations increasingly embraced transformation while seeking to reduce the risks associated with it.[5]

WOMEN BY FIELD OR SPECIALTY

The lodging accommodation workforce (largely hotels) was 53 percent female in 2020, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Hospitality programs at colleges and universities were 67 percent female and rising as of 2015, although program enrollment has since dropped sharply. This pipeline, in combination with people development and other factors, is translating into women moving up in most fields at hotel companies and at investment conferences.

The notable exceptions have been investment and development, leadership, and technology in hotel companies as well as brokerage and finance at conferences. Encouragingly, the numbers are now improving in most of these areas.

HOTEL COMPANIES BY FIELD: NUMBER OF MEN PER WOMEN

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Total	1.0	2.3	2.4	2.4
HR	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.2
Sales/Marketing	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.8
Revenue Management	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.9
Accounting/Finance	1.0	1.9	1.8	1.8
Legal	1.0	1.9	2.0	1.9
Construction/Design	1.0	3.3	3.6	3.5
Operations	1.0	3.6	3.8	3.7
Asset Management	1.0	3.7	4.8	5.6
Investment/Development	1.0	9.6	9.9	10.0
Leadership	1.0	10.3	10.9	11.2
Technology/Information	1.0	16.2	6.8	7.1

INVESTMENT CONFERENCES BY FIELD: NUMBER OF MEN PER WOMEN

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2019 Men	2018 Men	2017 Men
Total	1.0	3.7	3.9	4.1	4.1
Procurement	1.0	0.7	1.0	0.9	1.3
Architecture/ Interior Design	1.0	1.8	1.6	2.0	2.2
Consulting	1.0	2.2	2.5	2.6	2.2
Brands	1.0	2.6	2.4	2.6	2.8
Legal/Insurance	1.0	3.2	2.0	2.4	2.9
Vendors	1.0	3.3	2.6	2.2	2.2
Construction	1.0	4.5	4.8	5.9	3.8
Developers, Owners, Managers	1.0	5.2	7.0	7.6	7.7
Finance/Debt/Equity	1.0	5.2	6.3	7.5	7.9
Brokerage	1.0	7.2	9.9	11.5	10.1

CONFERENCE REPRESENTATION BY FIELD

	2017 Men	2017 Women	2018 Men	2018 Women	2019 Men	2019 Women	2021 Men	2021 Women
Architecture/Interior Design	69%	32%	66%	34%	62%	38%	65%	35%
Brands	74%	26%	72%	28%	70%	29%	72%	28%
Brokerage	91%	9%	92%	8%	91%	9%	88%	12%
Construction	79%	21%	85%	14%	83%	17%	82%	18%
Consulting	69%	31%	72%	28%	71%	29%	69%	31%
Developers, Owners, Managers	88%	11%	88%	12%	87%	12%	84%	16%
Procurement	57%	43%	48%	52%	49%	51%	40%	60%
Vendors	68%	32%	68%	31%	72%	29%	77%	23%
Finance/Debt/Equity	89%	11%	88%	12%	86%	14%	84%	16%
Legal/Insurance	74%	26%	70%	30%	67%	33%	76%	24%

HOTEL COMPANY LEADERSHIP BY FIELD

	2019 Men	2019 Women	2020 Men	2020 Women	2021 Men	2021 Women
Accounting/Finance	65%	35%	64%	36%	62%	38%
Asset Management	85%	15%	83%	17%	79%	21%
Construction/Design	78%	22%	78%	22%	77%	23%
HR	19%	81%	20%	80%	23%	77%
Investment/Development	91%	9%	91%	9%	90%	9%
Legal	65%	34%	67%	33%	65%	35%
Operations	79%	21%	79%	21%	78%	22%
Revenue Management	48%	52%	44%	56%	42%	58%
Sales/Marketing	43%	57%	42%	58%	40%	60%
Technology/Information	88%	12%	87%	13%	92%	8%

As an industry, in order to compete for talent, we need to do better for women who want career advancement as well as families and for men who want families as well as career advancement.

BY FIELD / BY LEVEL

The following charts detail the number of men for each woman by level in individual fields. Hotel company data is presented first, following by charts for investment conferences. Statistics are also presented as percentages in tables following the charts.

HOTEL COMPANIES BY LEVEL: NUMBER OF MEN PER WOMEN

ACCOUNTING/FINANCE

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Director	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.8
VP	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.6
EVP/SVP	1.0	2.5	3.6	4.8
Chief	1.0	3.5	3.7	3.8

CONSTRUCTION/DESIGN

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Director	1.0	2.1	2.2	2.0
VP & EVP/SVP	1.0	3.7	4.7	4.9

HR

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Director	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.1
VP	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.2
EVP/SVP	1.0	0.4	0.6	0.5
Chief	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.7

INVESTMENT/DEVELOPMENT

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Director	1.0	6.5	6.7	6.1
VP	1.0	5.8	7.4	9.2
EVP/SVP	1.0	11.0	11.3	10.8
Chief	1.0	15.3	17.0	14.0

OPERATIONS

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Director	1.0	2.4	2.6	2.1
VP	1.0	4.0	4.3	4.4
EVP/SVP	1.0	4.7	4.7	4.3
Chief	1.0	15.3	17.0	14.0

SALES/MARKETING

	2021 Women	2021 Men	2020 Men	2019 Men
Director	1.0	0.5	0.5	0.5
VP	1.0	0.7	0.9	0.9
EVP/SVP	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.2
Chief	1.0	11.1	1.0	1.3

STATISTICS FOR HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCES

The following charts present data from hotel investment conference rosters. There are gains overall, although they are uneven.

NUMBER OF MEN PER WOMEN AT HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCES:

ARCHITECTURE/INTERIOR DESIGN	2021 Women	2021 Men	2019 Men	2018 Men	2017 Men
Director/Manager	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.2
EVP/SVP/VP	1.0	1.9	2.5	4.7	2.4
Chief/Managing Director/ Principal/Partner	1.0	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8
CEO/President	1.0	6.0	2.2	4.2	3.5
BRANDS					
Director	1.0	2.2	1.9	2.2	1.7
VP	1.0	3.3	3.3	3.9	4.8
EVP/SVP	1.0	3.9	2.9	2.4	2.9
Managing Director	1.0	2.7	6.6	6.1	5.3
Chief	1.0	1.8	3.0	3.6	4.9
CEO/President	1.0	12.2	30.0	25.3	35.5
BROKERAGE					
Director/Manager	1.0	2.3	5.7	8.6	5.5
EVP/SVP/VP	1.0	6.0	11.0	20.8	14.6
Chief/Managing Director/ Principal Partner	1.0	36.0	38.3	34.3	25.0
CEO/President	1.0	4.4	8.8	11.0	19.5
CONSTRUCTION					
Director/Manager	1.0	2.9	2.7	3.2	2.0
EVP/SVP/VP	1.0	5.1	5.6	9.8	6.6
Chief/Managing Director/Principal Partner	1.0	6.3	16.3	17.0	33.0
CEO/President	1.0	40.0		14.7	5.8
CONSULTING					
Director/Manager	1.0	2.5	1.6	1.9	1.3
EVP/SVP/VP	1.0	1.3	1.5	1.7	2.7
Chief/Managing Director/Principal Partner	1.0	3.1	4.6	4.2	3.6
CEO/President	1.0	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.8
FINANCE/DEBT/EQUITY					
Director/Manager	1.0	2.8	4.7	5.4	3.4
EVP/SVP/VP	1.0	3.8	4.5	4.8	4.7
Chief/Managing Director/ Principal Partner	1.0	10.4	14.1	18.8	27.8
CEO/President	1.0	20.3	69.0	29.0	43.0
DEVELOPERS/OWNERS/MANAGERS					
Manager	1.0	1.9	2.0	1.8	2.4
Director	1.0	2.3	3.7	4.5	3.6
VP	1.0	2.9	3.8	4.5	5.3
EVP/SVP	1.0	5.8	7.2	9.0	5.9
Managing Director	1.0	13.6	13.1	18.6	16.8
Chief	1.0	4.3	7.6	7.9	8.7
Principal/Partner	1.0	3.3	2.6	2.2	2.2
President	1.0	9.8	15.3	14.5	11.3
CEO	1.0	19.4	14.7	17.6	23.9

Construction, brokerage and consulting have all shown significant movement in participation of women at conferences. Women now present a significant opportunity as borrowers, investors and partners. Finance is slowly starting to respond.

HOTEL COMPANY DATASET: GENDER PERCENTAGE DETAIL BY FIELD AND LEVEL PLUS SAMPLE SIZE

	2019			2020			2021		
Field/Level	**Men**	**Women**	**Sample**	**Men**	**Women**	**Sample**	**Men**	**Women**	**Sample**
Accounting/Finance	**65%**	**35%**	**839**	**64%**	**36%**	**808**	**62%**	**38%**	**866**
Chief	79%	21%	315	79%	21%	320	78%	22%	322
EVP/SVP	83%	17%	70	78%	22%	60	71%	29%	69
VP	61%	39%	157	61%	39%	152	59%	41%	167
Director	43%	57%	268	40%	60%	249	43%	57%	286
Asset Management	**85%**	**15%**	**119**	**83%**	**17%**	**104**	**79%**	**21%**	**118**
Construction/Design	**78%**	**22%**	**174**	**78%**	**22%**	**174**	**77%**	**23%**	**184**
EVP/SVP	87%	13%	30	86%	14%	28	84%	16%	37
VP	81%	19%	70	81%	19%	74	76%	24%	80
Director	67%	33%	63	68%	32%	63	67%	33%	55
F&B	**88%**	**12%**	**85**	**89%**	**11%**	**72**	**87%**	**13%**	**82**
HR	**19%**	**81%**	**331**	**20%**	**80%**	**323**	**23%**	**77%**	**337**
Chief	41%	59%	37	41%	59%	37	42%	58%	45
EVP/SVP	33%	67%	33	38%	63%	32	26%	74%	42
VP	20%	80%	102	19%	81%	99	23%	77%	103
Director	11%	89%	158	13%	87%	151	16%	84%	135
Investment/Development	**19%**	**9%**	**462**	**91%**	**9%**	**456**	**91%**	**9%**	**507**
Chief	93%	7%	90	94%	6%	90	94%	6%	98
EVP/SVP	92%	8%	106	92%	8%	98	92%	8%	132
VP	90%	10%	133	88%	12%	126	85%	15%	144
Director	86%	14%	78	87%	13%	85	87%	13%	75
Leadership	**92%**	**8%**	**936**	**92%**	**8%**	**974**	**91%**	**9%**	**1048**
CEO	95%	5%	408	94%	6%	425	94%	6%	423
President	92%	8%	285	91%	9%	311	91%	9%	366
Partner/Principal	97%	3%	89	98%	2%	88	96%	4%	100
Managing Director	83%	17%	140	82%	18%	137	84%	16%	135
Legal	**65%**	**35%**	**165**	**67%**	**33%**	**167**	**65%**	**35%**	**195**
Chief (CLO, General Council)	67%	33%	123	69%	31%	127	68%	32%	136
Operations	**79%**	**21%**	**1151**	**79%**	**21%**	**1156**	**78%**	**22%**	**1205**
Chief	79%	21%	211	76%	24%	215	77%	23%	225
EVP/SVP	81%	19%	212	83%	17%	212	82%	18%	239
VP	82%	18%	336	81%	19%	340	80%	20%	350
Director	71%	29%	313	73%	27%	310	71%	29%	306
Procurement	**65%**	**35%**	**49**	**70%**	**30%**	**46**	**66%**	**34%**	**50**
Revenue Management	**48%**	**52%**	**252**	**44%**	**56%**	**251**	**42%**	**58%**	**275**
Sales/Marketing	**43%**	**57%**	**548**	**42%**	**58%**	**509**	**40%**	**60%**	**56**
Chief	56%	44%	43	51%	49%	47	52%	48%	46
EVP/SVP	54%	46%	69	46%	54%	56	43%	57%	70
VP	47%	53%	203	47%	53%	187	43%	57%	237
Director	35%	65%	229	33%	67%	212	33%	67%	205
Technology/Information	**88%**	**12%**	**137**	**87%**	**13%**	**132**	**92%**	**8%**	**137**
Chief	91%	9%	46	88%	12%	43	93%	7%	44
VP	89%	11%	37	92%	8%	38	95%	5%	39
Director	80%	20%	46	80%	20%	46	88%	13%	48
TOTAL	**71%**	**29%**	**5248**	**71%**	**29%**	**5172**	**70%**	**30%**	**5569**

HOTEL INVESTMENT CONFERENCE DATASET: GENDER PERCENTAGE DETAIL BY FIELD AND LEVEL PLUS SAMPLE SIZE

Field/Level	2017 Men	2017 Women	2017 Sample	2018 Men	2018 Women	2018 Sample	2019 Men	2019 Women	2019 Sample	2021 Men	2021 Women	2021 Sample
Academia	**53%**	**47%**	**155**	**42%**	**58%**	**184**	**57%**	**43%**	**149**	**58%**	**42%**	**121**
Architecture/Interior Design	**68%**	**32%**	**319**	**66%**	**34%**	**380**	**62%**	**38%**	**444**	**65%**	**35%**	**325**
President	78%	22%	32	78%	22%	37	61%	39%	41	84%	16%	25
Principal/Partner	72%	28%	130	73%	27%	134	72%	28%	154	71%	29%	118
Director	55%	45%	51	46%	54%	56	40%	60%	82	34%	66%	58
Brands	**74%**	**26%**	**876**	**72%**	**28%**	**1,199**	**71%**	**29%**	**1,263**	**72%**	**28%**	**831**
CEO	96%	4%	52	96%	4%	51	95%	5%	40	92%	8%	39
Chief	83%	17%	100	78%	22%	106	75%	25%	96	64%	36%	90
Managing Director	84%	16%	44	86%	14%	64	87%	13%	76	73%	27%	55
EVP/SVP	74%	26%	132	70%	30%	175	74%	26%	186	80%	20%	168
VP	83%	17%	230	80%	20%	347	77%	23%	363	77%	23%	211
Director	63%	37%	158	69%	31%	254	66%	34%	285	68%	32%	126
Manager	47%	53%	92	46%	54%	112	47%	53%	132	52%	48%	77
Brokerage	**91%**	**9%**	**244**	**92%**	**8%**	**375**	**91%**	**9%**	**381**	**88%**	**12%**	**310**
Managing Director	95%	5%	64	96%	4%	77	100%	0%	88	96%	4%	84
EVP/SVP	100%	0%	47	99%	1%	79	96%	4%	76	93%	7%	57
VP	84%	16%	31	90%	10%	52	84%	16%	44	70%	30%	27
Construction	**79%**	**21%**	**221**	**86%**	**14%**	**318**	**83%**	**17%**	**360**	**82%**	**18%**	**244**
EVP/SVP	73%	27%	26	87%	13%	31	90%	10%	30	86%	14%	14
VP	95%	5%	42	92%	8%	66	83%	17%	63	83%	17%	47
Director	68%	33%	40	83%	17%	58	82%	18%	73	74%	26%	50
Manager	67%	33%	39	69%	31%	52	64%	36%	75	75%	25%	44
Consulting	69%	31%	473	72%	28%	593	71%	29%	508	69%	31%	268
CEO	76%	24%	37	77%	23%	44	84%	16%	32	74%	26%	31
President	71%	29%	35	71%	29%	62	64%	36%	47	67%	33%	24
Principal/Partner	78%	22%	69	79%	21%	99	78%	22%	81	68%	32%	44
Chief	90%	10%	280	89%	11%	319	88%	12%	326	81%	19%	288
Managing Director	77%	23%	109	85%	15%	123	86%	14%	115	79%	21%	53
EVP/SVP	76%	24%	37	76%	24%	54	60%	40%	62	69%	31%	36
VP	70%	30%	30	49%	51%	47	59%	41%	26	36%	64%	22
Director	59%	41%	64	66%	34%	83	61%	39%	69	67%	33%	27
Manager	51%	49%	43	62%	38%	26	66%	34%	29	80%	20%	15
Developers, Owners, Managers	**89%**	**11%**	**2,139**	**88%**	**12%**	**2,482**	**87%**	**13%**	**2,671**	**84%**	**16%**	**1,986**
CEO	96%	4%	349	95%	5%	353	94%	6%	393	95%	5%	326
President	92%	8%	296	94%	6%	326	94%	6%	326	91%	9%	312
Principal/Partner	94%	6%	206	95%	5%	273	96%	4%	277	91%	9%	136
Managing Director	94%	6%	107	95%	5%	157	93%	7%	169	93%	7%	117
EVP/SVP	86%	14%	236	90%	10%	249	88%	12%	295	85%	15%	189
VP	84%	16%	320	82%	18%	373	79%	21%	390	74%	26%	328
Director	78%	22%	184	82%	18%	241	79%	21%	253	70%	30%	140
Manager	71%	29%	62	64%	36%	86	75%	25%	100	65%	35%	69
Finance/Debt/Equity	**89%**	**11%**	**545**	**88%**	**12%**	**843**	**86%**	**14%**	**901**	**84%**	**16%**	**618**
Partner/Principal	98%	2%	53	96%	4%	53	92%	8%	79	97%	3%	61
Managing Director	97%	3%	165	95%	5%	242	94%	6%	231	91%	9%	158
EVP/SVP	85%	15%	80	86%	14%	119	82%	18%	123	78%	22%	79
VP	79%	21%	68	80%	20%	123	81%	19%	134	80%	20%	93
Director	79%	21%	61	83%	17%	109	82%	18%	110	78%	22%	63
Legal/Insurance	**74%**	**26%**	**225**	**70%**	**30%**	**280**	**67%**	**33%**	**268**	**76%**	**24%**	**125**
Principal/Partner	81%	19%	118	81%	19%	140	81%	19%	118	81%	19%	63
Media	**59%**	**41%**	**140**	**56%**	**44%**	**139**	**53%**	**47%**	**116**	**57%**	**43%**	**124**
Other/Association	**55%**	**45%**	**164**	**60%**	**40%**	**215**	**59%**	**41%**	**212**	**62%**	**38%**	**159**
Procurement	**57%**	**43%**	**88**	**48%**	**52%**	**90**	**49%**	**51%**	**87**	**40%**	**60%**	**60**
Vendors	**68%**	**32%**	**405**	**68%**	**32%**	**492**	**72%**	**28%**	**522**	**77%**	**23%**	**372**
TOTAL	**79%**	**21%**	**5,993**	**79%**	**21%**	**7,590**	**78%**	**22%**	**7,882**	**77%**	**23%**	**5,543**

LEVELS: DEFINITIONS

Titles held by men and women are organized by level in this report using the following groups of titles. The hotel company charts are in the range of director through CEO. The investment conference charts include all titles in the conference rosters.

Associate/Other

Analyst, assistant, associate, business development, consultant, coordinator, local sales manager, professor, rep, student and other titles not otherwise classified.

Director

People with the title of director, corporate director, senior director, associate director, etc. in all fields.

However, hotel level directors (director of sales, etc.) and area directors (regional director of operations, for example) are excluded from the hotel company dataset. Includes associate deans, editors, franchise sales directors, global directors, national sales directors, sales and project leads, senior advisor, senior loan officer, economist, etc.

Manager

Includes managers, general managers, account executives, architects, attorneys, consulting manager, controller, counsel, national sales manager, portfolio manager, project manager, regional director, regional manager, senior analyst, senior manager. Managers are not included in the hotel company dataset.

VP

Vice presidents in all fields. Vice presidents who also are C-suite chiefs are classified as chiefs. Those who also carry a partner or principal title are classified as partner/principal. Includes associate principals, deans, head of business development, managing editors, practice leads or heads, etc.

EVP/SVP

Executive and senior vice presidents in all fields. Those who also carry a "chief" C-suite title are classified as chiefs. Includes brand managers, division heads, senior counsel, chief economist, chief of staff.

Chief (C-suite)

Executives with "chief-officer" in their title – CFO, COO, CMO, CLO, etc. General counsels are classified as CLOs. Some chiefs also are presidents or SVPs, for instance. Dual titles including chief and director, VP or EVP/SVP are categorized by their chief role. Dual titles including president or CEO are classified as president or CEO and also shown in the distribution of chief.

Principal/Partner

Principal, partner, member, shareholder, regional managing partner, owners and founders of professional firms, members, etc.

Managing Director

Managing directors, managing principals, managing partners and senior managing directors as well as "head" titles. Includes division head or lead, global head, practice leads and heads.

President

President, owner and founder. Presidents with the additional title of CEO are listed under CEO. Those who are also chiefs are included in the leadership statistics as presidents and are also included in the C-suite detail.

CEO

CEOs, as well as CEOs with additional titles such as CEO and chairman, president or managing director; includes global or sector president, owner or founders who are not presidents.

Board

Chairman, treasurer, board director and other board titles. We do not present board representation in this report. However, our report on Diversity of Hospitality Industry Public Boards is available at www.CastellProject.org.

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Sales Leadership in Tourism: A Review and Propositions for Future Research

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ABSTRACT

Sales and sales leadership are essential business functions and concepts. Research on the extant sales literature is necessary and timely to academics and tourism professionals due to extensive advances in the sales profession resulting from the rapid development of technology and the significant changes brought on by COVID-19 in business to consumer (B2C) and business to business (B2B) contexts. This study examines the current state of the sales-related literature in tourism and proposes future research areas on this topic. The authors performed a systematic literature review on sales and sales leadership in tourism to identify research gaps and opportunities. This paper identifies areas from the academic and business sales leadership literature that tourism researchers should address and provides a research call based on seven specific propositions related to human-driven interactions, technology, consolidation, and leadership.

KEYWORDS

Tourism, hospitality sales; sales leadership; human- driven interactions; systematic literature review

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and hospitality leaders agree that a customer-oriented and effective sales unit is essential for a successful business. In addition, providing sales leadership is one of the most critical contributors to modern organizational success (Ingram et al., 2005; MacKenzie et al., 2001; Peesker et al., 2019). Research on the extant sales literature is essential as it provides new knowledge and innovation to facilitate revenue generation in a post-COVID-19 tourism industry. The proposed research on sales in tourism is critical to Tourism Sales Leaders, Business Management Operations (B.M.O.), Convention and Visitor Bureaus (C.V.B.), and National Tourism Organizations (N.T.O.). Identifying critical research gaps in sales research is essential in a post-COVID-19 environment.

The paper will specifically examine how senior sales leadership has been previously studied, including examining simple and complex tourism sales within the same organization, effectively integrating merging companies' selling cultures and best practices, examining how the training of tourism sales leaders to effectively lead their salesforce. Further this section examines, when to use technology as a replacement and when to use it as an enabler in tourism sales and how to create a competitive advantage. The paper will then go onto examine tourism sales leaders and how they build long-term relationships with clients, create value for clients beyond what they can do on their own, and implement appropriate sales leadership behaviors to better assist their salespeople. Finally, the paper will examine how the tourism salesperson has adapted to continuous change in the workplace and has worked with new technology to offer a seamless customer experience.

Tourism and hospitality leaders agree that a customer-oriented and effective sales unit is essential for a successful business.

Following the work of Denyer et al (2008), this paper employs a systematic literature review process that examines conceptual and empirical evidence on sales leadership. A systematic literature review is employed to uncover gaps in the research and determine the right approach and methodology (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, Yang et al. (2017), Streimikiene et al. (2021), and Roalina, et al. (2021). This analysis's two data sources were, (1) refereed journal articles (dated 1998 to 2020) and (2) industry journal publications (dated 2016 to 2022). Combining data sources from both the academic and industry realms was necessary to comprehensively review the state of research related to sales and tourism. Similar to Yanget al. (2017), Streimikiene et al. (2021) and Roalina et al. (2021). The paper will first provide a methodological overview of the systematic literature review process. Second, it will contextualize the literature to identify gaps in the current state of the research. Finally, the article will provide context into research gaps and discuss areas for future research.

Sales Leadership in Tourism

In a tourism context, research on sales leadership, is described as "activities performed by those in a sales organization to influence others to achieve common goals for the collective good of the sales organization and company" (Ingram et al., 2005, p. 137). As noted by Tuan (2020), while the industry acknowledges the importance of sales, few studies have focused on sales leadership. Tourism and hospitality sales have unique issues, including seasonality, intangibility, and perishability (Litvin & Crotts, 2003). The literature emphasizes the challenges of selling in a complex work environment where tourism sales professionals deal with horizontal and vertical integration, changing trends, and industry disrupters (Ahearne et al., 2010; Tuan, 2020). Technology advances and globalization opportunities are driving many of these changes (Piccoli & Dev 2021). While sales and sales leadership concepts are addressed in the academic business literature (e.g., Bass, 1997; Dixon & Tanner, 2012; Ingram et al., 2005; Peesker et al., 2019; Schwepker & Good, 2010), and the challenges of selling in a sector as dynamic and intricate as tourism has been recognized (Demir et al., 2013; Litvin & Crotts, 2003; Tileaga & Oprisan, 2018), sales leadership remains under-researched in relation to tourism (Tuan 2020). The main focus of the existing tourism literature is on technology, online selling and distribution channels (Inversini & Masiero, 2014; Ioncica et al., 2015; Law et al., 2015; Ogonowska, 2012; Piccoli & Dev, 2021; Schott, 2007). This bias in the literature facilitates the common perspective that salespeople are becoming obsolete in tourism due to technology's rise. However, as the sales function is often the sole direct revenue-generating department in a tourism organization, effective and knowledgeable salespeople and leaders are as crucial as ever, particularly in the foreseeable future as the industry moves into recovery mode post-COVID-19 Arici et al., 2021). As outlined in Arici et al. (2021), the need for increased research related to hospitality leadership has become increasingly important in a post-COVID-19 world. Given the dearth of literature related to hospitality sales leadership in particular.

METHODS

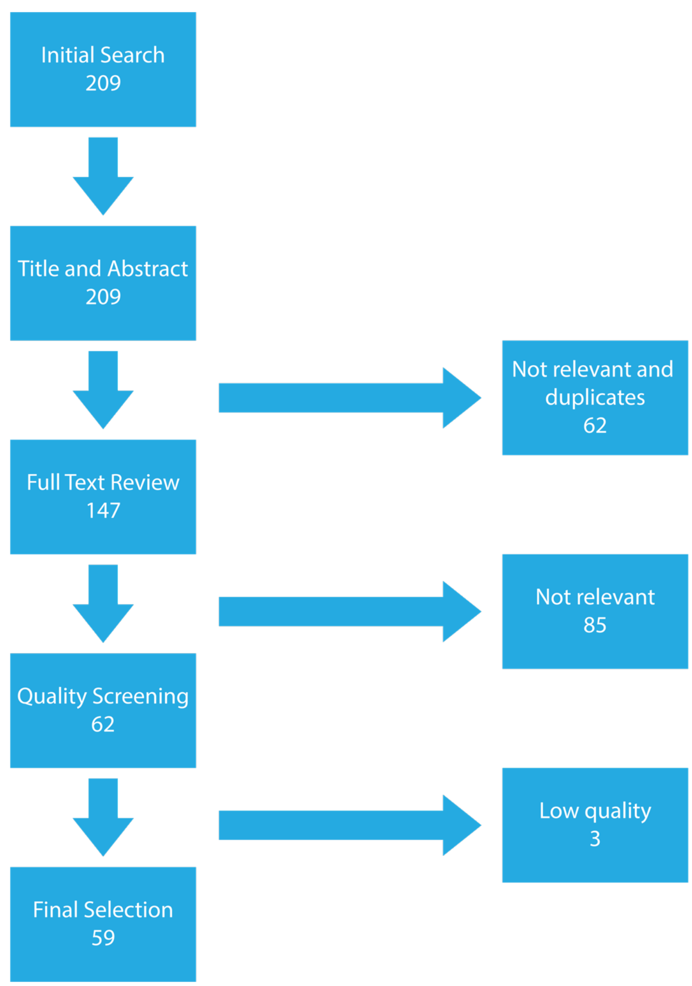
This systematic literature review aimed to critically evaluate the literature and gather new insights (Denyer et al., 2008) on how sales are optimized through leadership and tourism. The goal of the systematic literature review is to understand how leadership impacts tourism sales performance. Specifically, this technique employed the CIMO framework (context, intervention, mechanism, and outcome) to identify under what context (C) does leadership influence (Intervention) the performance of the salesperson (Outcome) and to describe the generative mechanisms (M) that link leadership and sales in tourism similar to that of Kochan and Nowicki (2018). In this analysis, leadership styles were found not just to be interventions. They may also be seen as contextual/situational, mainly when the individual exhibiting them is not consciously choosing to do so. The systematic literature review examined empirical evidence on the effects of leadership styles that sales leaders utilized on salesperson performance. The first domain includes a study of sales performance. The literature on this domain was analyzed to explain how sales performance is measured and why it is essential to study in association with sales leadership in tourism. The second domain focused on the theoretical perspectives of sales leadership in tourism.

The study employed techniques and is structured similar to previously published studies such as Yang et al. (2017), Streimikiene et al. (2021), and Rosalina et al. (2021). The systematic literature review identified 209 studies initially. After applying the filtering criteria specified in the systematic literature review protocol (Table 1), there were 59 papers identified to be included in the final analysis. One hundred forty-seven articles were recognized and reviewed as part of the relevant streams of literature focusing on demonstrating leadership in the sales and tourism context. The 147 articles were then assessed using the quality criteria Denyer et al. (2008) outlined. Of the 147 papers identified, 85 articles were not relevant. The remaining 62 papers were screened for quality, and in the final selection, 59 papers were accepted. Table 1 provides a transparent description of the selection process, and Figure 1 for the search flowchart. The next step of the systematic literature review was the data extraction process which followed the data extraction format below (Table 2). The data was then coded for research gaps that have either been identified or revealed in the systematic literature review. Based on the results, seven

Table 1: Systematic Review Selection Process

Title screening & Abstract screening	Full text screening	Quality screening
• Started with 209 articles and then followed the following process • Eliminated duplicates • Eliminated papers that did not address the research context • Eliminated papers that pertained to the research context but did not refer to the review question • Eliminated papers that were not in English • Retained 147 records	• For 147 articles a full text screen was conducted • 6 articles were eliminated because they related to disintermediation, 4 because they related to distribution, 12 because they focused on consumers rather than sellers, 12 were eliminated because they related to marketing, 7 because they related to revenue management, 29 were eliminated because they addressed a different research area, 14 were eliminated because they related to the research area but did not refer to the review question, e.g. they did not relate to any of the questions as defined in the inclusion criteria, and 1 article was eliminated due to duplication, retaining 62 articles.	• For 62 articles a quality screening was conducted. • 2 articles were eliminated due to year of publication • 1 article was eliminated due to trustworthiness • The final selection was 59 articles

Figure 1: Systematic Literature Review Process Flowchart



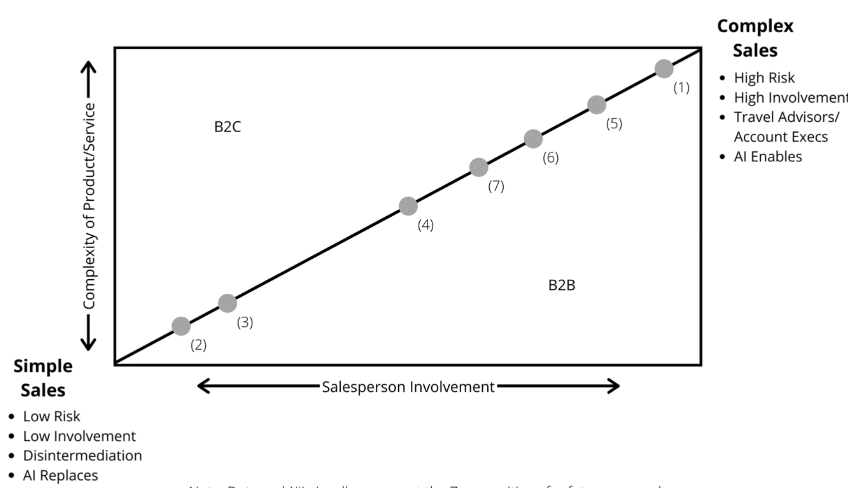
Tourism and hospitality sales have unique issues, including seasonality, intangibility, and perishability.

propositions for future research areas were placed within a theoretical framework (Table 3). The following sections will discuss each proposition in detail.

Table 2: Data Extraction Format

Aspects	Fields
Citation information	• Author • Title • Year • Type (Empirical or Conceptual) • Journal / Source • Year
Key Research Question/Purpose	• Key words • A brief description of the aim and objectives of the study
Evidential Contribution	• Key Findings – Nature of Leadership in Tourism • Key Findings – Nature of Sales Performance in Tourism • Limitations and scope for future research
Methodology	• Methods of data collection and analysis • Sample selection, size and characteristics
Study context	• Country • Sector or industry
CIMO	• Context (type of sales environment, e.g., business to business) • Interventions – Leadership • Mechanisms in the influence of leadership styles on sales performance • Outcomes – sales performance measures
Quotes	• Interesting quotes from the article

Figure 2: Tourism Sales Leadership Research Continuum



Note: Dots and (#) visually represent the 7 propositions for future research

RESULTS

Simple and Complex Tourism Sales Framework

Tourism refers to the multisector industry that provides products, services, and infrastructure meant for travel and encompasses travel, hospitality, attractions, activities, and the various intermediaries involved in the booking and executing B2C and B2B transactions. Within this framework, simple sales are characterized by disintermediation, high use of technology, and products representing lower risk and buyer involvement. In contrast, complex sales are human-centric, where technology acts as an enabler, with higher-risk and higher involvement products. This paper suggests a gap in the research related to sales and sales leadership in hospitality and tourism. A proposed sales in tourism continuum (Figure 2) helps position sales in the tourism literature. While some of the generic sales literature can be applied to a tourism context, tourism's unique characteristics, such as the aforementioned seasonality, intangibility and perishability, make tourism-specific research necessary for more practical application. The further application of sales leadership behaviors in the tourism business can enhance revenue generation and future tourism research.

Simple and complex sales in tourism are not distinct concepts and are better represented as a continuum. Simple sales on the bottom-left of the figure represent one extreme, encompassing primarily B2C sales, such as budget and mass individual travel. B2B sales where the travel advisor or supplier would serve merely as a substitute for an in-house travel department are also included on the continuum. Simple sales are relatively low-yield and do not require high customer engagement. Simple sales are prime candidates for direct online sales, online travel agencies (OTAs), and other technology-based media. In such cases, A.I. may replace or augment what would once require human-driven interactions. Complex sales then represent the other extreme and involve more B2B sales, such as those requiring major contracts with multi-national organizations, large events with lengthy negotiations and requests for proposals, and more intricate and/or high-value B2C sales. Examples include niche sales, as well as high-yield sales for the luxury market. To mitigate the higher risks inherently associated with complex sales, there is a greater need for high-touch interaction and involvement with travel advisors or account executives. Many travel service offerings fall on a continuum between the two extremes of simple and complex. Due to inherent risks involved with complex sales in tourism, including financial and safety concerns, these types of sales have a higher level of customer-salesperson interaction. The likelihood that a travel advisor (B2C) or account executive (B2B) will be used significantly increases in perceived risk situations. For example, at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, tourism salespeople were heavily relied on to mitigate the risks and create value and innovative solutions for their clients.

The systematic literature review identified seven propositions for future research in the proposed framework (Table 3). The first proposition based on the research and analysis is presented below.

<u>Proposition 1</u>: The further a transaction is along the continuum towards complex tourism sales, the more human-driven interactions are required, creating greater value for customers, and generating greater revenues for the organization.

Sales Environment in Tourism

The sales environment in tourism is rapidly evolving, influenced by both technological and social factors. Client buying behavior is changing in tourism in B2B, and B2C contexts as the buying decision process often starts online, prior to the involvement of sales representatives (Adamson et al., 2012).

Table 3: Summary of Industry Challenges and Research Propositions

For Whom	Tourism Industry Challenges	Related Propositions for Future Research
Tourism Senior Leadership	• Dealing with both simple and complex tourism sales within the same organization • Effectively integrating merging companies' selling cultures and best practices • Training tourism sales leaders to effectively lead their salesforce • When to use technology as a replacement and when to use it as an enabler in tourism sales • Creating a competitive advantage especially during the tourism industry's COVID-19 recovery phase	*The further a transaction is along the continuum towards complex tourism sales, the more human-driven interactions are required, creating greater value for customers, and generating greater revenues for the organization. (1)* *Consolidation has created opportunities and challenges for sales organizations, such as culture integration, leadership, and talent retention and development. (4)* *If tourism businesses were to implement the four sales leadership behaviors of coaching, collaborating, championing, and customer, it would result in a higher performing salesforce who would in turn foster better customer relationships and increased revenues. (6)*
Tourism Sales Leaders	• Training tourism salespeople to build long-term relationships with clients • Creating value for clients beyond what they can do on their own • Implementing appropriate sales leadership behaviors to better assist their salespeople	*Consumers are more independent and technology-oriented when purchasing low-value commodified tourism products, reducing the need for sales representatives in simple sales. (2)* *The role of salespeople in complex sales is shifting towards relationship-based sales in an environment characterized by high personalization. Value creation and collaboration must occur for sales representatives to enable sales performance and satisfy customers. (5)*
Tourism Salesperson	• Adapting to continuous change in the workplace • Working smartly with new technology to offer a seamless customer experience	*Technological advancements such as AI change the roles of the travel agents and advisors in simple sales. Those working in simple sales will need the ability to effectively use predictive AI to personalize offerings, as well as providing a seamless consumer experience between technology and the live agent. (3)* *Technology enables sales professionals to better meet client needs and increase the efficiency of salespeople in complex tourism sales. (7)*

Consumers are better informed with a greater depth of product knowledge (Xiang et al., 2015), which is likely to escalate in the future. Angelos et al. (2017) found that 60% of B2B transactions are initiated in online environments, and in B2C tourism, the percentage is estimated at 74% (Vidal, 2019). Zahay et al. (2014) showed that when a substantial portion of the buying process is performed on the Internet, sales activities typically performed by the sales force are supplemented by this online activity. Technology advances such as artificial intelligence (A.I.) and advanced Customer Relationship Management systems are also influencing the tourism industry (Baumgartner et al., 2016; Buhalis & Law, 2008; McKone & Lewis, 2019; Srivastava & Dhar, 2016; Syam & Sharma, 2018). New technologies will have varying impacts on sales strategies, depending on the types of sales and consumers.

Despite technological advances, sales leadership remains an essential component of a business context characterized by complexity, accountability, and collaboration (Ingram et al., 2005), spanning the entire sales ecosystem. A paradigm shift focused on enhancing the importance of relationship marketing rather than transactional sales approaches has occurred (Weinstein & Mullins, 2012), significantly impacting the tourism industry. This shift goes beyond the sales department: Every employee at each service touchpoint has the potential to encourage economic exchange. As a result, a contemporary description of selling has emerged as "the phenomenon of human-driven interaction between and within individuals/organizations to bring about economic exchange within a value-creation context" (Dixon & Tanner, 2012, p. 12). These concepts apply to all tourism businesses, not just large corporations with a dedicated sales department.

Simple Sales in Tourism

The academic literature on tourism centres on simple sales (Kallmuenzer et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2021). Most research surrounding disintermediation in tourism has focused on consumers rather than salespeople and B2B sales (Law et al., 2015). The growth of technology, the Internet, and social media have significantly changed tourism communication, distribution, and buying behavior, which are now amalgamated into one process, mainly where simple sales are concerned. With the rise of the Internet, disintermediation became a highly researched topic, and predictions began circulating, declaring the end of travel agencies (Law et al., 2015; O'Connor, 2019). Simple sales were most impacted by this development. Sales and marketing now have closer alignment, particularly in simple sales, as technology enables organizations to capture leads and drive sales (Krush et al., 2015; Peterson et al., 2015). The Internet also provided an excellent opportunity to reduce the intangibility risks associated with tourism through well-constructed websites (Ongsakul et al., 2020). Additionally, new technological applications in sales, such as A.I., help qualify, follow up, and maintain leads (Kietzmann et al., 2018; Paschen et al., 2020; Power, 2017). It has been identified that applying A.I. to sales may lead to efficiency and time gains for salespeople (Baumgartner et al., 2016). Tasks that would once require a travel agent can now be completed with data-backed A.I. (McKone & Lewis, 2019; Paschen et al., 2020; Singh et al., 2018; Syam & Sharma, 2018). One specific example is the recent introduction of chatbots. Chatbots were initially used in the industry as a Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.) tool to increase customer service efficiency (Batchelor, 2019; Paschen et al., 2020). Through internal data integration and machine learning, chatbots are capable of much more, and many travel firms are now using chatbots for upselling, cross-selling, and competitive intelligence (Batchelor, 2019; Köseoglu et al., 2019). However, humans are still engaged in the system, and a key factor for chatbot success is the ability to know when to transfer a customer conversation to a live agent, and experienced sales leaders are still required to avoid online purchase cart abandonment (Batchelor, 2019; Schmelzer, 2019). A.I. can also replace the personalized advice provided only by travel agents in simple sales (Paschen et al., 2020). Classified as algorithmic Word of Mouth (aWOM), it uses an individual's search and purchase history to predict their future needs and provide personalized recommendations (Williams et al., 2019). While this is now quite common in simpler B2C sales, it has yet to expand to more complex sales, despite growing demand and interest (Paschen et al., 2020; Syam & Sharma, 2018).

This paper suggests that a research gap exists and that there is both an opportunity and a pressing need to explore sales leadership in the value-creating context of tourism. The area of research we are primarily discussing in this article is professional selling to B2B and B2C customers to create customer value and secure revenue, which is different from the marketing distribution process. This perspective suggests that selling is not simply about the promotion or distribution of products. Instead, it is driven by the customer value proposition. The required skill set and roles for professional sales will change with the impact of new technologies (Moncrief, 2017). Additionally, industry context is critical to the sales process and to understand how customers benefit from sellers and their approach (Dixon & Tanner, 2012). Based on this analysis, the following propositions are made:

Despite technological advances, sales leadership remains an essential component of a business context characterized by complexity, accountability, and collaboration, spanning the entire sales ecosystem.

Proposition 2: Consumers are more independent and technology-oriented when purchasing low-value commodified tourism products, reducing the need for sales representatives in simple sales.

Proposition 3: Technological advancements such as A.I. change the roles of travel agents and advisors in simple sales. Those working in simple sales will need the ability to effectively use predictive A.I. to personalize offerings and provide a seamless consumer experience between technology and the live agent.

Complex Sales in Tourism

Even in complex sales, a customer can often complete a substantial percentage of the buying process online before connecting with a travel agent (Angelos et al., 2017; Buhalis & Law, 2008; Dixon & Adamson, 2011; Xiang et al., 2015). As a result, modern tourism clients are more questioning the messages they hear and more demanding value from salespeople than in the past (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Freese, 2010). In a competitive environment, knowledge is considered one of the most vital assets an organization can have to grow their competitive advantage (Köseoglu et al., 2019). Verbeke et al. (2011) described sales representatives as key knowledge brokers. Sales teams must offer value beyond the information that customers can discover and/or manage independently. For example, in the COVID-19 crisis, customers wanted to rely on a trusted travel advisor to discuss cancellation and insurance policies. One travel advisor woke up at two in the morning with the announcement of the European travel ban in early March 2020 to ensure her clients could travel home while still enjoying their last day in Paris. This involved rebooking flights and rearranging a non-refundable dinner cruise with chef Alain Ducasse (Norton, 2020). In such situations, salespeople provide additional value: The sale is no longer simple.

Customer-centric technologies are essential to effectively interact with tourism customers who have become more sophisticated and difficult to please (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Sales teams must now meet increased customer response time expectations and provide customized tourism solutions to meet specific customer needs (Evans et al., 2012; Ingram et al., 2005; Kandampully & Solnet, 2019). Complex sales will continue to require human interaction and be less impacted by A.I. outside of an enabling capacity (Syam & Sharma, 2018).

Contrary to public opinion, travel agencies have seen record sales in recent years (prior to Covid crisis) and are beginning to face staffing challenges in light of their expansion (Lenhart, 2020), showing that the human element of travel sales is still relevant. In tourism, many intermediaries are involved in the revenue generation process. There is a very complex path to market and distribution systems with search engines, social media, global distribution systems (G.D.S.), and online travel agencies (OTAs) (Kracht & Wang, 2010). To further complicate this, the distribution of tourism services provides an opportunity for the mass merging of brands vertically and horizontally, to the point where there are often only a few companies overseeing most of the market. For example, Expedia Group and Booking Holdings lead online travel bookings, and several hotel companies (e.g., Accor, I.H.G., and Marriott) dominate the hospitality market. Starwood's 2016 integration into Marriott is a key example of the challenges associated with mergers. Among other concerns was reinventing the respective salesforces of these two massive organizations, particularly where B2B sales were concerned (Edelstein, 2017). While there is a clear strength in numbers with mass consolidations (O'Connor, 2019), mergers and globalization require that such firms overcome company and cultural differences.

One way of addressing the tourism industry's challenging and dynamic environment is the contemporary shift from traditional persuasion-based selling to relationship-based sales (Demir et al., 2013; Tileaga & Oprisan, 2018). Complex sales include situations such as when several buying center members have diverse needs and the information required for individual customization is not readily available (Syam & Sharma, 2018). In this context, sales in tourism are about nurturing clients, understanding their needs, and developing trusted relationships. The sales literature demonstrates a clear relationship between sales performance and sales leadership through various outcomes (Brashear et al., 2003; DelVecchio, 1998; Mackenzie et al., 2001; Peesker et al., 2019; Rich, 1998). In such a vast and economically influential industry as tourism, the lack of sales leadership research and training is becoming more apparent and pressing.

Peesker et al. (2019) defined four sales leadership behaviors that appear to facilitate salesperson effectiveness: championing, coaching, collaborating, and customer engagement. Championing involves assisting salespeople by removing nonessential tasks and interactions to focus on revenue generation. Coaching is described as helping salespeople improve performance and recognize opportunities through personalized, hands-on instruction and assistance. Collaboration allows salespeople to interact with and learn from each other. Customer engagement involves executives initiating relationships with customers to demonstrate how to provide customers value effectively. While Peesker et al.'s (2019) research was undertaken in the technology sector, their findings apply to sales in tourism. If tourism sales leaders were trained to implement these behaviors effectively, they may have greater influence over the success of their salespeople. A stronger salesforce would create better, more long-lasting client relationships, positively impacting tourism revenues. Particularly in a COVID-19 era, a business using these techniques would significantly have an advantage over its competitors.

The nature of complex sales means that the decision-making process is longer, as more stakeholders are involved, and customer-salesperson relationships tend to be deeper and last longer (Paschen et al., 2020). While technological advances such as A.I. help with the consumption and communication of information, they enable rather than replace the human element of customer engagement (Paschen et al., 2020; Schmelzer, 2019; Singh et al., 2018). Leading businesses will need to become people-technology hybrid organizations to create a holistic experience for the client (Kandampully & Solnet, 2019). Personal selling involves numerous routine tasks, and it is these tasks rather than entire jobs that technology is most likely to replace. Technology can enhance salesperson efficiency, allowing more time dedicated to building client relationships (Paschen et al., 2020; Schmelzer, 2019; Syam & Sharma, 2018). For example, technological solutions such as Customer Relationship Management systems help record client preferences and interactions, enabling an enhancement of human connection and customer satisfaction (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Current AI technologies could alleviate up to 40% of a salesperson's time by completing menial tasks (Baumgartner et al., 2016). Technology helps organizations connect more effectively to clients; however, businesses still depend on salespeople and organizations to lead this process, particularly where emotional or social competency is required (Kandampully & Solnet, 2019; Paschen et al., 2020). This emotional aspect is crucial because only human interaction can convey the genuine warmth, compassion and general emotional intelligence needed to influence a positive 'moment of truth' service interaction (Kandampully & Solnet, 2019; Prentice, 2019).

A.I. isn't the only technology aiding tourism sales: Virtual Reality (V.R.) is also set to dramatically enhance the travel buying experience (Batchelor, 2019; Griffin & Muldoon, 2020; Griffin et al., 2022). Travel agents have begun using V.R. headsets as a promotional tool to help sell resorts and destinations

Customer-centric technologies are essential to effectively interact with tourism customers who have become more sophisticated and difficult to please.

by decreasing the intangible aspect of the tourism purchase process (Batchelor, 2019; Griffin & Muldoon, 2020). V.R. could be a valuable tool to mitigate some of these risks associated with complex travel sales by allowing customers to experience a particular property or destination before committing to purchase. Based on this analysis and discussion, propositions 4 to 7 were identified here.

Proposition 4: Consolidation has created opportunities and challenges for sales organizations, such as culture integration, leadership, and talent retention and development.

Proposition 5: The role of salespeople in complex sales is shifting towards relationship-based sales in an environment characterized by high personalization. Value creation and collaboration must occur for sales representatives to enable sales performance and satisfy customers.

Proposition 6: Tourism businesses that implement the four sales leadership behaviors (i.e., coaching, collaborating, championing, and customer engaging) may have a higher-performing salesforce that would, in turn, foster better customer relationships and increased revenues.

Proposition 7: Technology enables sales professionals to meet client needs better and increase salespeople's efficiency in complex tourism sales.

IMPLICATIONS

Tourism leaders are embracing new approaches to sales and sales leadership. For example, Contiki, a world leader in youth-focused (18-35 years old) group tours, has changed its entire culture to support relationship selling. Sheralyn Berry, C.E.O. of Contiki Canada, stated that the focus on consultative sales has been essential to their success (S. Berry, personal communication, March 24, 2018). This approach upends the traditional selling model, focusing most of the salesperson's time on building trust and talking with customers. Another company embracing new sales leadership approaches, TUI, is implementing A.I. and blockchain technologies to assist sellers in improving customer relationships and remaining competitive (Ivanova, 2019; Röll, 2019). B2B tourism companies are also executing relationship sales strategies. American Express Global Business Travel (G.B.T.) has fully embraced this model and uses technology to assist its sales team in responding to customer requirements (AmexGBT, 2020). For example, they implemented know me caller recognition that allows clients who call customer service to be automatically identified and their file pulled up before G.B.T.'s counselors take the call (AmexGBT, 2020). As an intermediary business, G.B.T. has strategic partnerships, complex global deals, and more simple sales. This technology is valuable for the simple and complex sides of G.B.T.'s business. CWT is also implementing A.I. technology to support relationship selling as "A.I. allows [them] to deal with the ordinary at scale so that people can focus on the extraordinary" (CWT, 2020, p. 5). Travel and tourism businesses and intermediaries such as Contiki, TUI, G.B.T., and CWT would benefit from the empirical analysis of sales leadership in tourism contexts to enhance sales performance. Through the development of consumer-salesperson trust, these relationships allow for creating life-long customers. This would be a key strategy in an industry with many competitors (Olsen & Thach, 2008) and struggles amidst COVID-19. The transition from persuasion-based selling to relationship-based selling in the tourism industry, a key concern to tourism business leaders, is just beginning to be discussed and researched.

CONCLUSION

This article calls for research into sales and sales leadership in tourism. Seven specific propositions, combined with sales-related industry challenges, are provided to help guide future sales and tourism research (Table 3). These elements of transformational and transactional sales leadership types require further study coping with change in a post-COVID environment (Alavi et al., 2022). There is a need to understand how sales leadership interacts with perceived uncertainty theory (Alavi et al., 2022). Further, there is a need in a post-COVID world to understand how authentic leadership affects the team selling performance relationship (Shahzad et al., 2022). This would be especially important to see how these variables are affected by the nine propositions.

The tourism selling environment is rapidly changing and will continue to do so. Technology advancements such as the Internet and A.I. have been disruptors, negatively affecting travel agencies through disintermediation and positively by creating new sales opportunities and enabling stronger relationships, particularly in complex sales. To address those changes and respond to the literature gaps, future research should focus on how to lead tourism sales teams in a dynamic business environment marked by complexity, results accountability, and collaboration (Ingram et al., 2005). Future research should also investigate how technological innovations challenge the existing assumptions of the tourism sector for tourism sales managers to utilize innovation better to increase performance. Finally, future research should look into the behaviors necessary to train tourism sales leaders to effectively lead their workforce in this changing tourism environment now led by technological advancements that have forever changed how businesses run.

For tourism sales teams, adequate research and training resources are essential to succeed in simple and complex contexts. As the tourism industry continues to evolve, sales leadership must be given the attention it needs in the academic literature to strengthen and enhance sales practices. In a COVID-19 travel and tourism world, establishing trust and restoring consumer confidence will be crucial to recovery for businesses. Qualified and well-trained sales leaders will never be more needed to develop customer-centric approaches and generate customer satisfaction and loyalty (Alavi et al., 2022; Shahzad et al., 2022).

PROPOSITIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Proposition 1:	The further a transaction is along the continuum towards complex tourism sales, the more human-driven interactions are required, creating greater value for customers, and generating greater revenues for the organization.
Proposition 2:	Consumers are more independent and technology-oriented when purchasing low-value commodified tourism products, reducing the need for sales representatives in simple sales.
Proposition 3:	Technological advancements such as A.I. change the roles of travel agents and advisors in simple sales. Those working in simple sales will need the ability to effectively use predictive A.I. to personalize offerings and provide a seamless consumer experience between technology and the live agent.
Proposition 4:	Consolidation has created opportunities and challenges for sales organizations, such as culture integration, leadership, and talent retention and development.
Proposition 5:	The role of salespeople in complex sales is shifting towards relationship-based sales in an environment characterized by high personalization. Value creation and collaboration must occur for sales representatives to enable sales performance and satisfy customers.
Proposition 6:	Tourism businesses that implement the four sales leadership behaviours (i.e., coaching, collaborating, championing, and customer engaging) would have a higher-performing salesforce that would, in turn, foster better customer relationships and increased revenues.
Proposition 7:	Technology enables sales professionals to meet client needs better and increase salespeople's efficiency in complex tourism sales.

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Benefits of a Trade Association Membership During the Covid-19 Pandemic: The Case of the Delaware Restaurant Association

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ABSTRACT

The Delaware Restaurant Association (DRA) is a non-profit trade association that advocates on behalf of its members in the restaurant and food service industry. The association normally provides training programs for its members, disseminates relevant information, and provides advocacy at the local, state, and national levels on matters that impact members and the industry. However, when an extraordinary crisis occurs, such as a global pandemic, a trade association must reorganize itself to effectively meet the unusual needs of its members. The Covid-19 pandemic was an unexpected global health crisis. Protocols from the state and federal governments that followed were especially devastating to small restaurant businesses. This paper provides a case study of how the DRA was able to assist restaurateurs and shepherd the industry through one of the worst pandemics in history.

KEYWORDS

Pandemic, Restaurant Association, Advocacy, Pro-Start, CARES Act, Foodservice.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Restaurants are a powerful cornerstone of every society. They provide many jobs to people of all backgrounds, create a community, and bring people together. Restaurants were voted the most popular industry by 66% of people employed in restaurants (DRA, 2020). In describing the importance of restaurants to the local community, the Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania stated that: "The restaurant industry fosters regional job growth, supports local agriculture, and keeps your hard-earned money in your community. When you choose to shop or dine at a local business or restaurant, you generate almost four times more economic benefits for your local community."

This statement aptly describes the multiplier effect of the restaurant business in local communities everywhere and the role restaurants have played over the years. The pandemic, with its lockdowns and strict protocols, has shown clearly just how important these restaurants are to the community beyond the economic vitality, as they provide a safe space for patrons to visit and spend time.

The Delaware Restaurant Association is a non-profit trade association that has dedicated its services to promoting, educating, and advocating for the Delaware food service industry. The State of Delaware has over 2,000 restaurants that employ 49,000 workers and has an overall impact on the economy of about $2.5 billion in sales (DRA, 2021). Restaurants are a driving force in the state's economy as the largest employer. The Delaware Restaurant Association has the interests of the industry as its main priority. The staff at the DRA is committed to keeping Delaware restaurateurs informed about the latest rules, regulations, and legislative policies that have a direct impact on their business. Organizational charts for the DRA Board and the Leadership Staff are provided in Appendix A.

The Delaware Restaurant Association has two parts – the association arm and the philanthropic arm. The association, founded in 1965, has provided constant support and advocacy for the industry. Over 800 restaurateurs in the state of Delaware belong to the association (DRA, 2021). The philanthropic arm of the association is the Delaware Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (DRAEF). The foundation was founded in 2014 in response to the need for training and education within the restaurant industry in Delaware. The foundation is mainly focused on developing and strengthening the current and next generation of the Delaware restaurant workforce, beginning with those in high school. The DRAEF provides skills, training, and certifications that are necessary for success in the industry. ProStart is one of the training programs offered by the DRAEF to high school students in Delaware. It is a two-year curriculum where students are trained and earn certifications, along with 400 hours of paid work experience in Delaware restaurants. ProStart prepares these students for a restaurant and food service career. There is also a board of directors specifically for the educational foundation and the foundation hosts events and fundraisers throughout the year to support the program.

The purpose of this paper is to present a case study of how a restaurant trade association reorganized itself to be responsive to the needs of its members during the Covid-19 pandemic and to highlight the benefits of membership in local restaurant trade associations. This may serve as a model for restaurant trade associations in other states to respond to an industry-wide crisis that may occur in the future and to communicate effectively with industry participants.

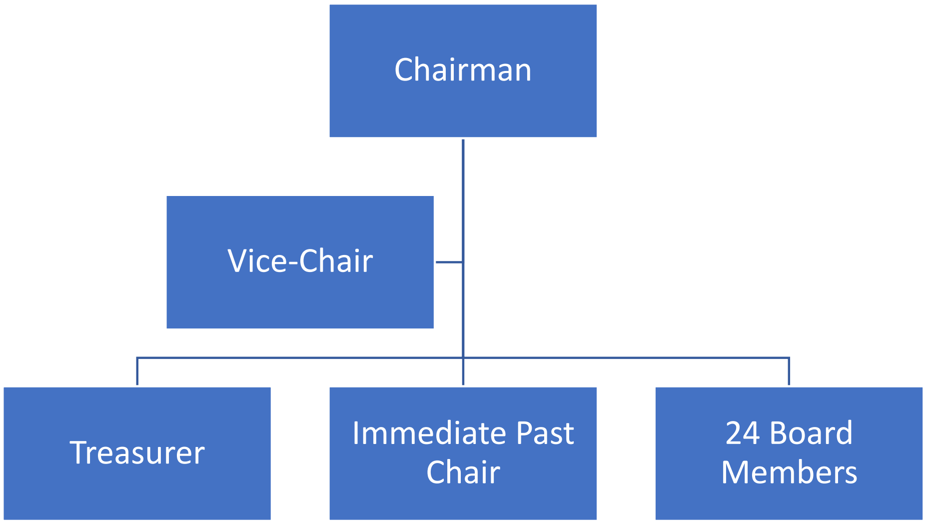
The restaurant industry fosters regional job growth, supports local agriculture, and keeps your hard-earned money in your community. When you choose to shop or dine at a local business or restaurant, you generate almost four times more economic benefits for your local community.

Benefits of Association Membership

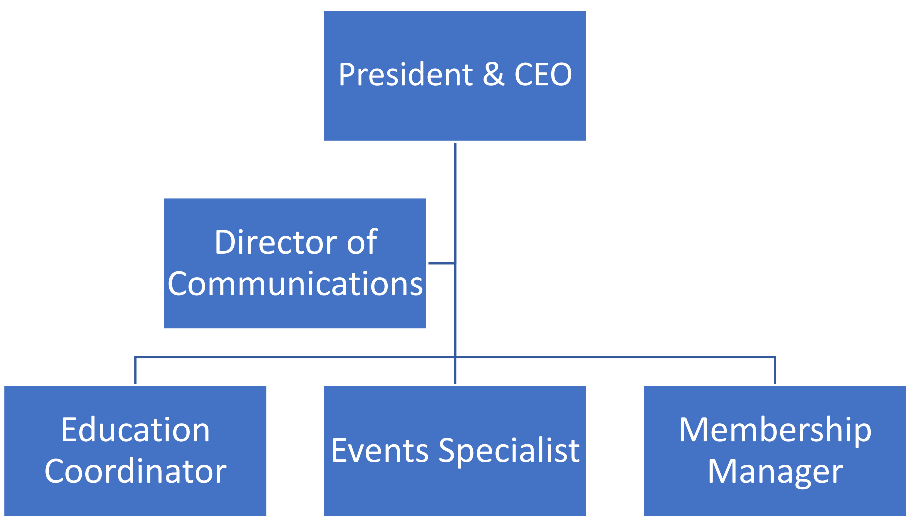
The Delaware Restaurant Association provides many benefits to its members, and these members find a great deal of value in being a member. Members of the association are offered discounted programs such as payroll management, music licensing, and other rebate programs. Members also receive support regarding governmental affairs. This includes statewide representation, DRA/PAC (Political Action Committee) fundraisers, access to lobbyists in Delaware and Washington, D.C., and an invitation to the annual NRA Public Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C. The DRA also hosts a variety of events throughout the year such as fundraisers, sports tournaments, Cornerstone Award, membership meetings, and board meetings. Members additionally have access to all newsletters, reports, and publications from the DRA. Membership also includes benefits from the NRAEF such as ServSafe training and the ProStart program. Restaurants are not the only members; the association also offers allied membership to companies that supply the restaurant industry with goods and services. This membership allows an allied member to network and connect to restaurants and to those who make operating and purchasing decisions in restaurants. Some of the categories of the allied membership

Appendix A

Delaware Restaurant Association Board Organizational Chart



Delaware Restaurant Association Leadership Staff Organizational Chart



include sanitation, banking, beverage, equipment, financial services, repair companies, legal services, linens, and more.

The Delaware Restaurant Association provides its members with materials regarding industry events, rules and regulations, and any other information that can impact a member's business. The DRA uses a variety of communication methods to ensure that the members do not miss important information. The primary method used is social media and direct communication via email. Through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, the DRA can quickly and easily convey messages and posts to the entire industry, not just owners and members. The use of social media allows those who work in the industry, such as servers, bartenders, kitchen staff, and any other positions to be informed promptly of unfolding events in the industry. The staff has created a variety of social media campaigns that have recently gone viral across the internet.

The Covid pandemic created a situation where many people were in the dark and there were often conflicting messages from the federal and state governments regarding changes in Covid-19 protocols. This was a major challenge for businesses especially smaller ones that were not well connected to reliable sources of information, such as independent restaurateurs. It was critical for these businesses to receive information promptly for planning and operating purposes, and the DRA committed to providing that service. The DRA used E-Newsletters to send members information regarding the most up-to-date state and federal information, reopening guidance, legislative updates, and webinars and communications. They also used the online video chatting platform, Zoom, for town halls, board meetings, and other events to disseminate new information and clarify protocols. Each time there were new guidelines regarding reopening or new legislative updates, the DRA would host a town hall meeting to gather members and allow them to ask any questions and express their concerns.

In addition to routine communication to members about rules and regulations, the DRA also was able to inform its members about loans and grants that had become available to help small businesses survive the pandemic. Much of this information was conveyed through social media, and members were encouraged to contact the association for assistance when applying for these grants and loans. The most important loan for these businesses was the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loans as part of the CARES Act. This loan enabled small businesses to continue to pay their employees during the pandemic, and without this assistance, many restaurants would not have survived the pandemic.

The PPP Loan was a great relief to restaurants, but it was not necessarily enough. Governor Carney recognized restaurants as the most negatively impacted business sector, and three rounds of relief grants were announced in December of 2020 to boost restaurant recovery and to assist small businesses that were struggling due to the pandemic restrictions (DRA, 2021).

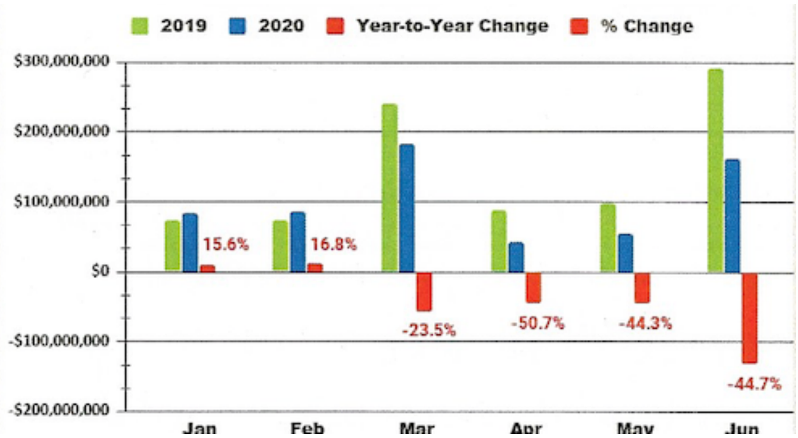
How the Pandemic Affected Restaurants in Delaware:

The hospitality industry took a complete turn during the COVID-19 pandemic. Restaurants were forced to close, and even as they started to reopen, these small businesses were restricted in terms of capacity and social distancing regulations. Between March and July of 2020, the Delaware restaurant industry lost $700 million in sales, and by the end of 2020, that number had risen to $1 billion. State revenues from restaurant gross receipts decreased to less than 50% in 2019 (See Appendix B). Two-thirds of Delaware's workforce was laid off at the peak of the pandemic, and by January 2021, employment levels were still at a deficit of 20% compared to February 2020. Eighty-one percent (81%)

The DRA uses a variety of communication methods to ensure that the members do not miss important information. The primary method used is social media and direct communication via email.

Appendix B

DE State Restaurant Gross Tax Receipts



of Delaware restaurants were projected to operate at a loss for the following 6 months (Restaurant Industry Report, 2021). For those restaurants that did survive the peak of the pandemic, there is still a long road ahead to recovery in the industry.

Delaware's restaurant industry, relative to others in the country, was one of the hardest impacted nationwide by the pandemic due to the small size of the state and the industry's significant contribution to the state's GDP. The Bureau of Labor Statistics data reports Delaware lost 66% (2 out of every 3 workers) of its eating and drinking place workers between February and April 2020. This ranked third highest in the nation, with job loss only behind Vermont (-72%) and New York (-69%), while restaurant unemployment nationwide was around 35%. To provide a further perspective on the damage to Delaware's economy, the State's unemployment rate was at 12.5% and higher than the 10.2% national unemployment rate, due to the loss of restaurant and hospitality jobs. State revenue from wage withholdings was also down significantly from the period March - July 2020, due to lost wage taxes from thousands of Delaware hospitality workers. The youth unemployment rate was 18.5% in July 2020 - compared to only 9.1% in July 2019. The loss of restaurant jobs was especially damaging to the youth and entry-level workers, many of whom gain valuable summer first job experience in the seasonal and beach communities.

DRA Pandemic Response for Members

The first action taken by the Delaware Restaurant Association when the Governor shut down the State was to pause invoices for membership dues from March through June. The collection of dues resumed on July 1, after restaurants had re-opened for one month. Membership dues are based on the annual sales of the restaurant or restaurant group, and they range from $250 per year for $499,999 in annual sales to $2,000 per year for $10,000,000+ in annual sales and $325 for allied members (DRA, 2021). Members became extremely engaged throughout the pandemic and owners and managers found a sense of community with other members. As they came together on calls and meetings and shared their stories, restaurateurs recognized that they were not alone during these challenging times. As new rules and regulations were announced, restaurants needed to be the first to know. Because of this, membership increased by 10% in 2020 (DRA, 2021). Pausing invoices, but still providing the most up-to-date information to restaurants was a valuable benefit for members.

The DRA also used E-Newsletters to send out to the members information regarding the most up-to-date state and federal information, reopening guidance, legislative updates, and webinars and communications. Each time there were new guidelines regarding reopening or new legislative updates, the DRA hosted a town hall via the Zoom platform to gather members and allow them to ask any questions and express their concerns.

The Delaware Restaurant Association had a great deal of impact and influence on state and local legislation during the pandemic. The DRA had consistent direct contact with all levels of state and local government, including state and local legislators, the highest cabinet officials, the Governor's office staff, and the Governor. The DRA hosted many calls with the Governor to allow the Board to express their concerns and feelings regarding their struggling businesses. Through this direct contact with government officials, the DRA was instrumental in getting many laws and regulations put in place that benefitted restaurants during the shutdown and reopening phases. The first major win for the association was the new law that allowed restaurants to provide alcohol for takeout. Liquor sales have always been a substantial portion of restaurants' total sales, and so having it available for takeout, increased restaurant sales during the pandemic. Once phase one for Delaware's opening began in June 2020, many restaurants were tasked with creating innovative ways to arrange outdoor seating. The DRA also lobbied the legislature to allow restaurants to expand their outdoor dining areas to accommodate more guests. These were the two main laws that the association advocated for restaurants early in the pandemic.

In addition to changes in laws and regulations, the Delaware Restaurant Association created a fundraiser through the DRAEF to benefit Delaware restaurant workers that were affected by the pandemic restrictions. This fund was called the Delaware Emergency Action Trust, or DE EATS, and donations were made to the trust from private donors, local businesses, and individuals. DE EATS raised over $290,000 and provided critical financial support to over 675 industry workers (DRA, 2021).

While the Association advocated for the restaurants' recovery and success, it also supported employees who were laid off and assisted many in their return to work. One of the major victories for the association was the priority level of vaccines for restaurant workers. Originally the industry was in group two, but the Association fought to have the industry moved up to group 1C. Restaurants were one of the only industries that interacted with people that did not wear masks, and this posed a significantly increased risk to employees. The Association created a vaccine registry in early 2021 to collect information on industry workers who were interested in receiving the vaccine. Once the priority opened to Group 1C, the DRA was able to easily contact all people on the registry with information on how to sign up.

Attracting Employees Back to the Industry

Restaurant and food service jobs in Delaware pre-Covid-19 represented about 11% of employment in the State (approximately 50,000 employees), however, as of June 2020 only 30,200 jobs had been filled (post-Covid-19). There were significant labor shortages across the State in 2020 and the situation remains today.

As vaccination rollout increased and restaurants re-opened, the labor shortage increasingly became an enormous issue for the industry. Restaurants throughout the country were struggling to find staff to meet the increasing pent-up demand for restaurant dining. Over the past couple of years, many people have chosen to leave the industry in search of higher-paying jobs with better job security. The DRA continues to assist members in filling those vacant positions through a job board on the

Association's website to which members have access. Members can post any available jobs along with the job descriptions. The newest feature of the job board is the Job Match application. Restaurants with open positions and those seeking jobs will enter their information, and the DRA will match those job seekers to potential employers. Currently, the matching is done manually through Google Forms and spreadsheets, but the DRA's IT team is in the process of creating an app that will be able to automate the process. Recognizing that this labor shortage problem will not disappear any time soon, the association has decided to transition from political advocacy to workforce development for the industry.

To begin their work with workforce development, the Delaware Restaurant Association received the Forward Delaware Grant of about $860,000 funded through the CARES Act from the Delaware Department of Labor in August 2020. This grant was given to the association to help rebuild the workforce that was lost due to the pandemic. This funding was set aside to provide state-mandated training to prepare unemployed and underemployed restaurant workers with certifications and skills that are necessary to work in restaurants. These training courses included the full ServSafe suite, Online Alcoholic Beverage Server Training, Drug and Alcohol Awareness for Restaurant Managers, and HR Competencies for Restaurant Managers. These courses are completely free through this grant, and were offered exclusively to DRA members at first. Many restaurants enrolled all their managers and employees in the free training program provided by the DRA. Restaurants who took advantage of the training saved thousands of dollars in state-mandated training, and this became an added benefit to restaurant owners who were interested in joining the association. This grant was a large undertaking that required a great deal of information to be collected and tracked for the Department of Labor, so the DRA hired an intern to coordinate all proceedings of the grant and to serve as the point of contact for every participant.

The Covid-19 restrictions have been eliminated in 2022 and there is tremendous pent-up demand for dining out, an opportunity for restaurants to begin to recover from the pandemic and to grow again. However, the shortage of labor in the restaurant industry continues to sabotage industry recovery efforts. The following are strategies being used by restaurateurs in Delaware to cope with the labor shortage challenge:

1. Some restaurants offer signing bonuses for new employees. For example, Seasons Pizza offers a $200 signing bonus.
2. Grottos Pizza transports staff from one location to another to maximize employee use.
3. Organizing more frequent job fairs.
4. Some restaurants offer cash and dinner to anyone willing to work a shift, (e.g., One Coastal Restaurant).
5. Shortened operating hours.
6. Restaurateurs share employees who are looking to earn extra money.

Across tthe country strategies for attracting employees have included: emphasizing employee safety, offering incentives, user-friendly application process online, promoting the restaurant's culture on social media, emphasizing referrals, and more.

Changes at the DRA In Response To COVID-19

The CEO of the DRA became the voice and face of restaurants in the media as restaurants struggled through restrictions and shutdowns. Her name frequently appeared on social media, and she was featured on local news and radio shows. The staff restructured their work schedule and responsibilities to respond to the needs of association members during the pandemic. For example, the CEO and staff decided at the beginning of the shutdown to take any calls from anyone that needed help, information, or just wanted to connect. The Membership Manager became the liaison between members and the association and was the point of contact when restaurants needed clarification on new Covid-19 rules and regulations or had other questions. The Director of Communications was tasked with conducting research and communicating with members as well, consequently, she dedicated much of her time to being informed about COVID-19 statistics, executive orders, and other legislative affairs. The Events Specialist focused on social media and created campaigns that went viral. The Education Coordinator was responsible for providing industry relief, specifically through DE EATS. A new staff person was hired to be a workforce coordinator to assist with the grants that the association received. While Covid-19 restrictions have eased up, the latest fight for restaurants is the labor shortage and the DRA has now pivoted its efforts to address this issue plaguing the hospitality industry all over the country.

In addition to organizational restructuring, the Delaware Restaurant Association also made financial restructuring due to the pandemic. For the first four months of the pandemic, all income streams for the association decreased. Because no dues were collected during the shutdown, the association had no revenue from this source. The association also did not receive any commission from ServSafe in-person training as it was canceled. DRA organized events throughout the year normally represented a significant source of revenue for the association, however with all in-person events canceled, this source also quickly disappeared. The Foundation received a PPP Loan early on which helped mitigate some of these event losses. The Forward Delaware Grant mentioned earlier also supplemented the DRA budget for the next 18-24 months. The DRA had reserves to support its operations during the pandemic and the grants helped the Association survive the Covid-19 years and will enable the association and foundation to secure a financial future.

CONCLUSION

Many changes have occurred in the hospitality industry because of the COVID-19 pandemic. With businesses reopening and many normal activities resuming, there is still a long road ahead to recovery as restaurants continue to struggle to get back to pre-pandemic normalcy. Many restaurant owners in the State have recognized the benefits of becoming members of the DRA and have found a great deal of value in association membership. From free training to constant communication, access to state and local political leaders, and access to the most up-to-date information, members have found a great return on their investment with membership in the Association. The DRA offers a blueprint to other state and local trade associations on how to function effectively on behalf of the members, change the traditional roles of the association's leaders to enhance communication between the association and its members, and remain relevant if another pandemic occurs.

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Factors Affecting HBCUs Student Satisfaction With the Transition to Online Classes Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many universities to move from face-to-face instruction to emergency remote instruction using Zoom or Teams as their delivery platform. This shift occurred midway through the spring 2020 semester. The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that influenced HBCU students' satisfaction with the transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data collected through an online questionnaire from 276 students belonging to 12 HBCUs was analyzed with a regression model. Results provide strong support for the important role of quality of instructor interaction, student engagement, institutional support, challenges faced by students, and affinity for online classes in influencing satisfaction with online classes during the pandemic.

KEYWORDS

Students' satisfaction, transition, online, pandemic

INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the spring 2020 semester, the COVID-19 pandemic forced college presidents across the country to move all courses from face-to-face to emergency remote learning online. The decision to transition to remote online learning was based on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, state departments of public health and environment, and other government agencies who expressed growing concern about the spread of virus in the United States, particularly with respect to gatherings of people. On March 13, 2020, the U.S. president declared a national emergency due to the COVID-19 outbreak. All guidance from authorities required the cancellation or postponement of in-person events that consist of 50 people or more, and then later 10 people or more because in-person interaction is the primary means of transmission of the virus. This drastic halt meant that college and university campuses were also on lockdown and had to figure out how to continue instruction. Students in institutions of higher education (IHE), both public and private, were sent home, encouraged to stay away from campus, and were pushed to online learning. This rapid emergency pivot to online learning (Casey, 2020) would not happen without student and faculty issues. Issues of disparity of resources, mental health problems, and the frustration and unpreparedness of the overnight move from face-to-face (F2F) learning to virtual learning were experienced by many (Casey, 2020; Hodges et al., 2020; Hussein et al., 2020; Mishra et al., 2020). Instructors faced many challenges including learning to use new technologies in a short period, designing instructional materials that fit the new environment, providing interactive remote learning environment, and adopting new assessment techniques. Many universities and schools provided professional training sessions to their faculty members to help smooth the transition from F2F to remote instruction. Many also provided internet access and laptops to their students in an effort to facilitate this quick transition. (Serhan, 2020). The move was not easy for students, instructors, or administration.

According to the Online Learning Consortium (2017), online instruction has increased in the United States each year since 2002, with over six million students enrolled in at least one online course in 2016, making up 31.6% of the entire student population. The majority of these students were enrolled in a mix of in-person and online courses. Given its rising popularity, online instruction has received much scrutiny over the past two decades, with some investigations indicating a higher dropout rate as compared to traditional face-to-face instruction (Bawa, 2016), and others highlighting a general lack of engagement in these courses (Hu & Hui, 2012). Online, mostly asynchronous instruction has been researched extensively, including studies that explore traditional classes with online components (Koohang & Durante, 2003), investigate the outcomes of online courses (Picciano, 2002), and compare in-person and online classes (Bali & Liu, 2018; Fortune, Spielman, & Pangelinan, 2011; Kemp & Grieve, 2014).

It has been imperative for HBCUs to provide competitive learning programs, more specifically online courses (Brown & Burnette, 2014). While previous research has indicated a resistance to online learning at HBCUs, this is an area that would likely be forced to change because of the COVID-19 pandemic. HBCU students must be technologically prepared for a global and web-based economy. Alston, Moore & Thomas (2017) noted the historical and current roles that HBCUs have had in responding to the social and educational needs of the times. Jones & Davenport (2018) addressed the sources of resistance to online learning at HBCUs, highlighting seven reasons why HBCUs were resistant to online education: fear of losing students, inequitable computer access, acceptance of stigma, lack of funding, competition, flaws in organizational structure, and faculty resistance. The authors noted that students who took online courses had a lower retention rate than students who took traditional face-to-face courses, which has been acknowledged by several other scholars (Cochran, Campbell, Baker, & Leeds, 2014; James, Swan, & Daston, 2016; Travers, 2016).

Access to on-campus technology was a concern for many HBCUs, which was tied to the lack of funding that they receive (Alfred, 2017; Broady, Todd, & Booth-Bell, 2017; Toldson & Lewis, 2017). This was even more of an issue as technology advanced with society, as Belsky (2019) noted that in order to sufficiently prepare a skilled global workforce, universities would need to invest more than the 3% that was currently allocated for technology in education. Bracey (2017) also noted that HBCUs have been underfunded through their entire history (p.692). Faculty resistance was also a stronghold in progressing toward online education at HBCUs, as many HBCU faculty members were older and possibly more resistant to technology in general (Jones & Davenport, 2018). While the ability for HBCUs to offer online programs would be ideal in a competitive academic market, there were real financial restraints that must be addressed. Given these aforementioned findings, one can only imagine the challenges faced by HBCUs with the emergency transition of courses to online learning.

The purpose of this study is to explore an array of student perceptions regarding their online learning experience during the transition from face-to-face to online and their level of satisfaction with the university transition during the pandemic. The study provides data on the unique situation in which the Covid-19 pandemic posed challenges for students everywhere in the world. Most of the research about online classes lies within a very different context than the one governing this study, as most previous research draws from the experience of students' choice of an online learning environment when face-to-face classes are not "convenient" (Haugen, LaBarre, & Melrose, 2001; Liaw & Huang, 2002; McEwan, 2001). The current study examines the unique situation of a forced and abrupt online transition due to the COVID-19 lockdown. This variable is considered for the following two reasons. First, it situates the study among the first to contribute to the initial body of knowledge in that area. The second is that students from different backgrounds may have had a different experience with the COVID-19 online transition. Thus, it was relevant to report the experiences of students from HBCUs, the relationship between the specified domains and student' perceptions offer a dataset for online instruction that can validates theory through practice. Additionally, this study is relevant because schools that do return to face-to-face instruction might have to transition to remote learning again if the virus resurges, as predicted by the medical profession or we experience another pandemic in the future. The following review of the literature will focus only on variables pertinent to the current study and will briefly examine student engagement, computer efficacy, instructor and challenges experienced.

THE STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. To explore how the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented institution wide transition to remote delivery of instruction influenced student perceptions of online learning.
2. To determine if students had challenges during the emergency remote learning environment and its effect on their satisfaction with instruction.
3. To examine the role of institutional support on HBCU students' satisfaction with online learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. To examine the role of student engagement and instructor interaction on student satisfaction with classes during the pandemic.
5. To examine if affinity for online classes influenced satisfaction with online classes during the pandemic

LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though research has been done over the past two decades about online learning we know little about students' readiness for real-time online learning (Tang et al., 2021), neither do we know how students will respond to in emergency situation of a pandemic that forced their classes overnight to move from face-to-face to an online format. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a real challenge for educators everywhere in the world. Hence, a need exists to investigate the perceptions of students who were enrolled in face-to-face classes and had to switch to online classes in a very short time. Previous research on online teaching and learning has generally shown that transitions are usually voluntary and/or planned; however, emergency transitions, such as the one brought upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic, have relatively little body of knowledge (Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021; Lemay et al., 2021). Considering this significant upheaval, we wanted to explore how these changes might impact student perceptions of online learning. Students' readiness in online education reflects in their perceptions related with online vs face-to-face classes. Such readiness cover domains such as student attributes, time management, technical and communication competencies (Martin, Stamper & Flowers, 2020.

Student Engagement

In this study we are adopting a definition of engagement specific to online from Dixon (2015) in an article validating the Online Student Engagement Scale (OSE). "Engagement involves students using time and energy to learn materials and skills, demonstrating learning, interacting in a meaningful way with others in the class (enough so that those people become 'real'), and becoming at least somewhat emotionally involved with their learning (i.e., getting excited about an idea, enjoying the learning and/or interaction)" (Dixon, 2015, p. 4). Researchers using the OSE have found numerous variables that impact student engagement in online courses. Boling et al. (2011) found that from the student perspective, the most successful online classes incorporated diverse strategies for engagement, such as live conversations with experts in their field. However, there was not a comparison online course that relied on regularly scheduled classes; instead, synchronous meetings were one of many tools that instructors used. Bolliger & Halupa (2018) found that engagement is predicted by transactional distance which Moore (1991) explains is the perceived distance students feel due to geographical distance and other factors that instructors need to overcome in their online courses. Transactional distance is impacted by dialogue, course structure, and learner autonomy, all of which need to be considered in teaching online courses. Timely responses to questions and feedback on assignments were rated by students as the most important online facilitation strategy (Martin, Wang, & Sadaf, 2018). Students rated instructors' use of technology to hold synchronous sessions as the least important facilitation strategy. However, others have confirmed that learning technologies support student engagement (Chen, Lambert, & Guidry, 2010). Chen and colleagues controlled for individual and institutional characteristics and still found a relationship between engagement in online courses and engagement with course-related technology. They argued that using technology is an important facilitator of student engagement, especially for first year students. What is apparent after this brief overview is that the fast transition to remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic made forethought and planning for course aspects that are related to engagement difficult at best because of the lack of time to prepare.

Instructor

Some research has explored online learning self-efficacy as a distinct form of self-efficacy in the academic context. Shen, Cho, Tsai, & Marra, (2013) identified five factors of online learning self-efficacy. These include self-efficacy to complete an online course, to interact with classmates socially, to interact with classmates for academic purposes, to use online tools, and to interact with instructors. Using this theoretical framework, online learning self-efficacy moderately predicted learning satisfaction. Online learning depends on the instructor and on the individual students' characteristics that play a major role in their ability to be successful in online learning (Colorado & Eberle, 2010). For example, the impact of a student's ability to manage their time (Mason & Weller, 2000) and their skill set regarding self-directed learning (Hartley & Bendixen, 2001; Song & Hill, 2007). Many researchers have found that high quality online instruction can foster similar learning to face-to-face instruction (Jensen, 2011; Johnson Aragon, Shaik, & Palma-Rivas, 2000; Waschull, 2001). In an online learning environment, faculty must regularly access the course page, respond consistently to student inquiries, and grade assignments in a timely manner (Alston, 2017; Bailey & Card 2009). One particular study found that faculty instructional methods was the single most important factor in student satisfaction (Gayton, 2015). In online learning, timeliness is more critical for student success than facilitating synchronous interactions (Martin et al. 2019). Additionally, students appreciate an instructor's engagement with the course (Price et al. 2016); higher levels of instructor interaction predict improved learning and higher course satisfaction (Boling et al. 2012; Driscoll et al. 2012; Fish & Wickersham 2009). In an emergency remote transition, this regular communication can also serve to reduce student anxiety about the transition. Scarborough (2020) research during the pandemic found a discouragingly high 63% of college students reported that instruction has gotten worse since the necessary switch to emergency remote learning online, which had only just begun at the time the report collected data. While this evaluation is telling, it is also valuable for understanding the transition, there is still much to be understood about students' experiences with the transition to online.

Technology

Online instruction introduces distinct challenges and skills not present in the traditional classroom, such as technological attitudes and familiarity (Cussó-Calabuig, Farran, & Bosch-Capblanch, 2018), as well as online academic help seeking (Cheng, Liang, & Tsai, 2013). HBCUs have been slow to move toward online learning which might negatively impact the transition during the pandemic. Data in the Riggs study (2019) from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics in 2018 showed that approximately three quarters of students who attended public and private predominantly white institutions took online courses. Yet, Riggs found that while the number of online programs at HBCUs has increased, "it can be concluded that roughly only one third of 102 HBCUs" offer online courses (p. 15). This can impact the transition to remote learning at some HBCUs. Online instruction places a heavy emphasis on technology, certainly more than the traditional physical classroom. Computer has become an imperative instrument in every organization, particularly in today's era of globalization. Students must successfully interact with hardware and navigate various software to succeed in online instruction. Therefore, students' perceived level of skill and anxiety when dealing with technology should be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of online instruction. A student with computer anxiety may experience fear of the unknown, feeling of frustration, possible embarrassment, failure and disappointment hence, resulted avoidance towards computer usage (Olatove, 2009). In addition, Glaister (2007) found that people who reported to have medium to high levels of computer anxiety performed less well than those with low level of computer anxiety in an examination involving the use of computers. Computer self-efficacy plays a significant role in mediating the impact of anxiety on perceived ease of use, Saade & Kira (2009). During the pandemic in spring 2020, students were forced into online learning environments with little time to master the technological tools and interfaces that suddenly became requisite components of their courses. It stands to reason that computer anxiety may play an important role in students' perceptions of their transitioned online courses, and potentially impact their performance in those courses.

Challenges

Often with little to no training, instructors made rapid decisions about how to adjust their courses for remote instruction, many only had time to take everything they were already using and put it online. Suryaman et al. (2020) looked into how learning occurred at home during the pandemic. Their findings showed that students faced many obstacles in a home learning environment, such as lack of mastery of technology, high Internet cost, and limited interaction/socialization between and among students. The most common strategy for faculty was to embed the existing course in a learning management system (LMS) while holding synchronous meetings; this remote transition maintained the same teaching strategies, activities, and outcomes from face-to-face learning (Lederman 2020a; Supiano 2020b). Many faculty also reported changing how students were assessed, such as by modifying exam formats or reducing the number of assignments (Lederman 2020a, 2020b). These preliminary findings also show that a small subset of faculty shifted their course to a primarily asynchronous format, allowing students to move through course content in a more flexible, self-paced way (Supiano 2020a).

Students, meanwhile, had to adjust to these new course structures along with many added barriers in their own lives that made completing their academic work more difficult. Technology issues quickly surfaced: Lack of reliable Internet, a dedicated workspace, or adequate technology particularly impacted participation in synchronous meetings, such as those held over web-conferencing software like Zoom (Flaherty 2020; Lederman 2020b). Additionally, many students found themselves balancing multiple commitments, such as child care or work responsibilities, which impacted their ability to learn successfully. In analyzing the transition to emergency remote instruction, it is imperative to consider the prevalence of such barriers as well as how some groups were at disproportionate risk of encountering them, thus potentially leading to unequal learning outcomes. Research has consistently highlighted the importance of organized course design, regular communication between faculty and students, and extensive institutional support for faculty as they design online courses (Alston 2017; Bailey & Card 2009; Martin et al. 2019). Although such research is helpful for contextualizing and evaluating student experiences of the emergency transition to remote learning in the spring of 2020, we recognize that this transition because of the COVID-19 pandemic, although heavily reliant on technologies commonly found in online teaching, represents a distinct teaching and learning phenomenon.

Satisfaction

Student satisfaction can have many different factors related to the student's overall satisfaction within a course, including instructor presence within the course, quality of the course itself, and the amount of work versus the perceived learning by the student (Caskurlu et al., 2020). Student satisfaction is an important factor when analyzing online courses. Research has shown that student interactions in online courses are linked to overall satisfaction and success in their courses (Eom et al., 2006; Cole et al., 2014). However, student satisfaction in online courses at HBCUs has not been evaluated in great detail in relation to interactions. The success that HBCUs have had in engaging and nurturing their students through learner-instructor interactions on the traditional campus has been heavily documented. Learner-instructor interaction may be evidenced by an instructor providing information, feedback, or encouragement to assist their students, as well as learners communicating with their instructors by asking questions (Gutierrez, n.d.). The impact of learner-instructor interaction was also a focal point in a study conducted by Salvo, Shelton & Welch (2019). Semi-structured interviews with research participants revealed some challenges that the students experienced in their online courses, notably their interactions with online faculty. More specifically, participants noted lack of professor interaction, immediate feedback, notifications, teacher-directed instruction, and teacher-mediated assessments. The aforementioned study has shown the positive impact that instructor had on their HBCU students contrasted with the negative impact that lack of communication with instructors had on African American students.

Although there has been a limited amount of research on HBCUs and online education (Flowers et al., 2012; Gilbert, S. 2020), there has been enough information to provide evidence of what aspects of online learning have been beneficial and what could be improved. Human interactions and cultural affirmation have been highlighted as strengths that HBCUs have in encouraging and motivating their students. Furthermore, based on the literature review, research has indicated that learner-instructor, learner-learner, and learner-content have all had varying impacts on student engagement and satisfaction in online courses. Singh et al. (2020), who examined students' experience during the COVID-19 pandemic using a quantitative descriptive approach. Their findings indicated that students appreciated the use of online learning during the pandemic. However, half of them believed that the traditional classroom setting was more effective than the online learning platform. In March, shortly after college campuses closed, the Scarborough (2020) research agency conducted a nationwide assessment of the impact of the pandemic and campus closures on current and aspiring college students. Among current college students, Scarborough (2020) found that 41% of college students reported that their opinion of their institution had worsened since the pandemic began.

Hypotheses

Learning is connected to a learner's participation within a community (Oliver & Carr, 2009; Sanders & Melton, 2010). In the context of remote learning, the supportive environment might exist in an immersive learning community, virtual community, or remote learning environment. A sense of community in both online and on-campus settings has academic and social benefits for students which include deeper learning and enhanced emotional well-being (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2010; Kwapy, 2018; Rovai, 2003;). Online environments enable students to communicate frequently and easily with one another. Student-to-student interaction is an important element of a class experience and contributes to the sense of belonging to a virtual community and satisfaction with the online class experience. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Student engagement with online classes will be positively associated with satisfaction with the transition to online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interaction via technology, if used effectively, allows students and teachers to mutually engage and collaborate (Bower, 2019; García Botero, Questier, Cincinnato, He, & Zhu, 2018; Gonzalez et al., 2020). Technology allow the interaction between teachers and students which is an essential feature of the success of online learning. A lack of interaction between the teachers and the students is a major challenge for students in online classes and has been found to be an issue (Gregory, 2003; Wilkes, Simon, & Brooks, 2006). Research shows that learner-to-instructor interaction leads to higher student engagement in online courses (Dixon, 2010; Gayton & McEwen, 2007; Jung et al., 2002; Ozfidan, & Mitchell, 2020). Among the most critical factors that affect overall student experiences is the quality of feedback that they receive from their teacher. Feedback is an essential element in the educational cycle of learning. In most research conducted about successful online learning environments, student satisfaction with interaction and feedback was key (Awofeso & Bamidele, 2016; Eom et al., 2006; Muilenburg & Berge, 2005; Ozfidan, 2021: Ruey, 2010; Song et al., 2004). Effective feedback is essential for the students to keep them engaged in their courses and the feedback must be given in a timely manner to compensate for the distance between the teacher and the students (Tanis, 2020). The relationship between perceptions about faculty interaction and satisfaction is hypothesized as follows:

H2: Student perceptions of the quality of instructor interaction will be positively associated with satisfaction of the transition to online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students faced difficulties and challenges adapting to the abrupt and unplanned shift to online learning (Baticulon et al., 2021). Students experienced life disruptions such as becoming ill, job loss, taking care of a sick family member, or home-schooling children (Blankstein et al., 2020; Fishman & Hiler, 2020; Garrett et al., 2020). Students may find it even more difficult to stay motivated in their learning, presently, as they balance working obligations and family needs (Blankstein et al., 2020; Fishman & Hiler, 2020; Hinton, 2020). Orben et al. (2020) stress the importance of peer interaction on young peoples' social development and caution that physical distancing may have a disproportionate effect on 18–24 year olds, an age group that represents the vast majority of undergraduate students. Online education has been studied for decades and effective online teaching is the result of careful instructional design and planning (Hodges et al., 2020). With this emergency remote learning, if students lack confidence with the technology they are using or do not feel a sense of cognitive engagement and social connection, the result may affect negatively the students' learning outcomes (Bower, 2019). Riggs (2019) study found that while the number of online programs at HBCUs has increased, "it can be concluded that roughly only one third of 102 HBCUs" offer online courses (p. 15). This can be a challenge for HBCUs students with the transition to online classes. Students' attitudes towards educational technology directly affect their learning process (Ali, 2020).

H3: Challenges experienced with online classes will be negatively associated with satisfaction with the transition to online classes during COVID-19 pandemic.

Providing high-quality and equitable student support services is not only important to student success during the average semester but especially so during a pandemic. Many students and faculty were not familiar with learning in the virtual space, nor were they familiar with the available technology, software, or services and support for online students (Garrett et al., 2020). Higher education institutions were encountering new challenges with working, teaching, and learning from home related to lack of technology and inadequate bandwidth as well (Garrett et al., 2020), signaling the need for additional remote support structures for faculty, staff, and students alike. Many distance learning programs are successful, and students have thrived when they have been adequately supported (Lemay et al., 2021). Ultimately, if the student believes they have knowledge and resources to support them, it will positively influence their use of the application (Alghamdi, Karpinski, Lepp & Barkley, 2020; Yakubu & Dasuki, 2019). The more successful transitions to online learning are influenced by the user's intention and the usefulness of the technology (Kemp, Palmer, & Strelan, 2019; Yakubu & Dasuki, 2019). Therefore, institutional support provided during the pandemic would have a positive effect on satisfaction.

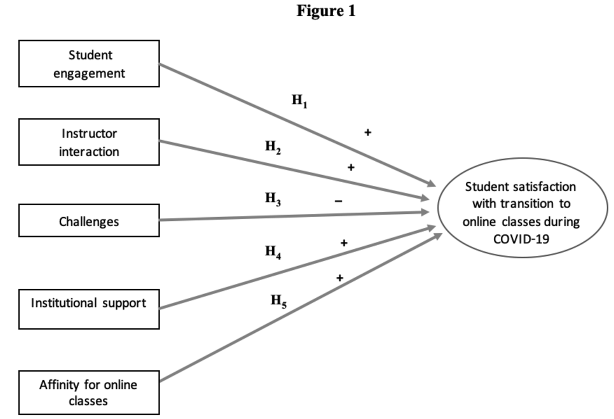
H4: Student perceptions of institutional support will be positively associated with satisfaction with the transition to online classes during COVID-19 pandemic.

Online learning's effectiveness highly depends on the degree of acceptance of the user (Tarhini, Hone, Liu, & Tarhini, 2016). Students' attitudes towards educational technology directly affect their learning process (Ali, 2020). Another consideration is the user's affect toward the learning experience. Affect includes the user enjoyment and satisfaction with the prior use of an information system, the affect toward the use of technology, and the individual's emotional state (Kemp et al., 2019). Online learning effectiveness is also associated with the ease of use; ease of use refers to the degree to which a user expects the target system to be free of effort. It implies prior experience and knowledge about educational technology (Kemp et al.,2019). Students achieve online learning self-efficacy based on previous experiences with technology and may require training and assistance to use learning tools and platforms before the start of an online course (Heckel & Ringeisen, 2019

H5: Affinity for online classes will be positively associated with satisfaction with the transition to online classes during COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposed research model (Fig. 1)

Figure 1



METHODOLOGY

This study assessed student perceptions of the specific factors associated with student engagement, instructor interaction, challenges faced by students, and technology support for students during the university transition from face-to-face classes to online because of the COVID -19 pandemic. A non-experimental design was used with a convenience sample of students from 12 HBCUs. Students responded to an online survey after providing their consent to the study. The survey was developed and administered on the Qualtrics platform. The respondents of the survey were students who were actively using e-learning platforms for their regular course during COVID -19 lockdown. Section I of the questionnaire covered basic demographic information, including class, major, GPA, and number of courses completed online. Section II had statements which were prepared based on extensive review of literature and discussion with experts to minimize researchers bias. To analyze and summarize the perception, statements, they were rated on a seven-point Likert-type continuum scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). All items assessed perceptions and responses during the online phase due to the pandemic relative to pre-pandemic face-to-face classes. The key variables used for student perceptions are (i) Student engagement: interaction levels with other students and involvement in learning (ii) Challenges: difficulties faced with transition to online classes from face-to-face (iii) Institutional Support: services provided by the institution during the transition, (iv) Instructor interaction: faculty communication and feedback, (v) Affinity for online classes: student comfort level and liking for online classes and (vi) Satisfaction: evaluation of the experience with online classes during transition. Quantitative data from surveys were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics v27. Multiple regression was used to explore the relationships between the hypothesized factors and satisfaction with online classes during transition due to the pandemic. Factor analysis was used to assess dimensionality of the data and scale construction. The hypothesized model as seen in Figure 1. was tested with multiple regression.

RESULTS

A total of 301 students responded to the survey, of these, 276 were usable. Characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

The sample had more females than males (62% vs. 38%). About 76% of the respondents were between 18 years and 23 years. About 81% were African-American, 7% were Caucasian, 2% were Hispanic, and the remaining were from different racial backgrounds. About 80% of the respondents were from business-related majors. The remaining were from other majors like engineering, agriculture, sciences, and education. The sample had more respondents from junior and senior classes than freshman and sophomore classes. Reported GPA ranged from 13.8% below 2.80 to 33% between 3.60 and 4.00. About 33% reported having taken between 4 and 6 online classes previously. Only 5% had taken between 1 and 3 online classes previously, while 24% had taken more than 12 online classes previously.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=276)

	Frequency (n)	%
Gender		
Female	171	62%
Male	105	38%
Race/Ethnicity		
African-American	224	81%
Hispanic	5	2%
Caucasian/White	20	7%
Other	27	10%
Age		
18 - 20 years	100	36%
21 – 23 years	109	40%
24 – 26 years	13	5%
27 – 30 years	16	6%
>30 years	38	13%
Year		
Freshman	16	6%
Sophomore	48	17%
Junior	107	39%
Senior	105	38%
GPA		
3.60 – 4.00	92	33%
3.20 – 3.59	70	25%
2.80 – 3.19	75	27%
< 2.8	39	14%

Scale purification

Factor analysis was used to examine the dimensionality of the constructs. Results of the rotated solution of the Principal Components Analysis are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Factor Analysis after Rotation

	Dimensions					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
VAR 4	.594					
VAR_9	.664					
VAR 12	.700					
VAR 13	.664					
VAR_17	.763					
VAR 18	.713					
VAR 19	.743					
VAR 30	.610					
VAR 1		.777				
VAR_2		.505				
VAR 5		.679				
VAR 6		.771				
VAR 21			.523			
VAR 23			.858			
VAR_24			.829			
VAR 25			.797			
VAR 14				.792		
VAR 15				.742		
VAR 26				.438	.	
VAR_3					.642	
VAR 10					.749	
VAR 16					.644	
VAR 20						.700
VAR 27						.525
VAR 28						.528
VAR_29						.607
VAR 7		.470		.594		
VAR 8		.444		.616		
VAR 11		.	.503	.506		
VAR 22	.578					-.422

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Equamax with Kaiser Normalization.ª; Rotation converged in 9 iterations; Loadings below .40 not shown.

Recommendations from Hair et al (2009) were used for factor loading cut-offs. Hair et al. (1998) recommend a cut-off of 0.40 for sample size of 200 and 0.45 for sample size of 150 for assessing practical significance of factor loadings. For this exercise, a 0.40 loading cut-off was used. Six dimensions were identified.

Based on the rotated component matrix from the factor analysis results, scales were constructed for the six constructs, corresponding to the six dimensions. Dimension 1 corresponded to challenges faced by students, dimension 2 corresponded to student engagement during the transitions period, dimension 3 corresponded to institutional support, dimension 4 corresponded to instructor interaction, dimension 5 corresponded to affinity for online classes, and dimension 6 corresponded to satisfaction with the transition to online classes. Four variables (VAR 7, VAR 8, VAR 11, and VAR 22) that had significant cross-loadings (Table 2) were not used for construction of scales for each dimension. Internal consistency of the scales is listed in Table 3. All scales except affinity for online classes, had Cronbach alpha values exceeding 0.70.

Satisfaction level with the transition to online classes was not high (mean = 3.95 on a 7-point scale). However, there is no benchmark to compare to satisfaction levels with pre-Covid classes or online classes that were taken by students by choice. Similarly, student engagement (mean = 3.40) and quality of instructor interaction (mean = 3.92) also appear to be low. Interestingly, perception of challenges and level of institutional support were considered higher (Table 3).

Table 3: Constructs and Scale Properties

Constructs	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's Alpha
Student engagement	3.40	1.96	.82
Instructor interaction	3.92	1.82	.75
Challenges	4.50	1.88	.87
Institutional support	4.69	1.630	.85
Affinity for online classes	4.94	1.76	.60
Satisfaction	3.95	1.43	.79

Hypotheses testing

The hypotheses were tested with multiple linear regression. The dependent variable was satisfaction with transition to online classes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The independent variables were student engagement, instructor interaction, challenges faced during transition, institutional support, and affinity for online classes. The regression model was significant ($F_{5,270} = 69.80$, $p < .0001$) with an adjusted R-square value of 0.57. The results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 4.

The results of the regression analysis show that student engagement was positively associated with satisfaction with online transition during Covid-19 pandemic ($\beta = .178$, $t = 3.27$, $p < .01$). Student engagement was a function of level of interaction with other students, amount and frequency of communication with other students, and involvement with learning during the transition to online classes relative to the phase prior to the onset of the pandemic. Therefore, this result supports H1.

Table 4: Factors Affecting Satisfaction with Transition to Online Classes during Covid-19 Pandemic (Regression analysis)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	*p*
	B	Std. Error	Beta β		
Student engagement	.159	.049	.178	3.27	.001
Instructor interaction	.302	.053	.314	5.74	.000
Challenges	-.232	.046	-.228	-5.05	.000
Institutional support	.229	.053	.213	4.31	.000
Affinity for online class	.116	.052	.107	2.23	.026

Dependent variable: satisfaction with transition to online classes during Covid-19 pandemic; Model adjusted R-squared = .57; $F_{5,270} = 69.80$, $p < .0001$

Instructor interactions with students during the transition was hypothesized to have a positive effect on satisfaction. Instructor interaction was operationalized as a function of ease and frequency of communication with faculty, as well as promptness and quality of feedback on assignments and other student work. Student perceptions of faculty communication had a significant positive effect on satisfaction levels with the online transition during the pandemic ($\beta = .314$, $t = 5.74$, $p <.001$). Therefore, H2 was supported

Students faced many challenges during the transition to online classes due to the pandemic. There were varied reasons to perceive challenges during the transition to online classes. Besides, challenges of dealing with unfamiliar technology and competing responsibilities at home, students potentially faced difficulties in teamwork, low motivation, and greater perceived difficulty with the learning material in online classes. As hypothesized, challenges experienced by students had a significant negative association with satisfaction with the online transition during Covid-19 pandemic ($\beta = -.228$, $t = -5.05$, $p <.001$). Therefore, H3 was supported.

Universities provided many forms of support during the transition with multiple channels of communication, technical support, training, and in some cases even equipment like laptops, and cameras to help students with the transition to online classes during the pandemic. Student perceptions of the extent of this support had a significant positive effect on satisfaction levels with the online transition during the pandemic ($\beta = .213$, $t = 4.31$, $p <.001$). Therefore, H4 was supported

Affinity for online classes was measured as a function of a student's desire to take online classes because of its convenience, inclination to be not discouraged from technical challenges involved with online classes, and spending more time doing class work in online classes. This favorable inclination for online classes had a significant positive association with satisfaction with the online transition during Covid-19 pandemic ($\beta = .107$, $t = 2.23$, $p <.05$). Therefore, H5 was supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Central to concerns of transitioning face-to-face courses to online delivery are the teaching practices and administrative support required to sustain meaningful student engagement (Wingo et al., 2017). The results of the regression analysis of the current study shows that student interaction was positively associated with satisfaction with the online transition during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is consistent with previous research, recent studies show that students like synchronous meetings, which offer the opportunity for real-time discussion, questioning, feedback and reflections, which has a positive effect on student online learning satisfaction (Wart, Ni, Ready, Shayo & Court, 2020). Synchronous meetings via web applications, such as Zoom or Teams meetings, allow for immediate feedback and interactions in a way similar to face-to-face meetings. The results of the current study support the idea that student interaction is positively associated with students' satisfaction with online courses.

The sudden change in instructional delivery requires different skills from teaching faculty and students. Students with high online learning self-efficacy reflected positive online learning satisfaction (Alqurashi, 2016). Although perspectives of technological usage and learners' self-efficacy significantly impacted online learning satisfaction (Naji et al., 2020). Student satisfaction and other course-related perspectives are influenced by online teaching strategies towards online course development following COVID-19 (Demuyakor, 2020). In this vein, students' online learning satisfaction proved crucial to harness learning aptitudes for online learning (Yang et al., 2020). The results of the current study show that students favorable inclination for online classes had a significant positive association with satisfaction with the online transition during Covid-19 pandemic. This support the findings of previous research.

A sound understanding of learning satisfaction from students' viewpoints proved necessary to consider COVID-19-oriented anxiety and fear. Although online learning modules offer experiential and constructive learning environments (Alqurashi, 2016), most students perceive online learning to be challenging as first-time online learners during COVID-19 (Demuyakor, 2020). As hypothesized in the current study, challenges experienced by students had a significant negative association with satisfaction with the online transition during Covid-19 pandemic. The challenges were many, studies have shown evidence that technologies used, student support, feelings of connectedness, and instructional strategies impact satisfaction with online learning experiences and student retention (Gayton, 2015; Shim & Lee, 2020). Dinh & Nguyen (2020) compared college student satisfaction with online courses and face-to-face courses, the participants indicated that there were few difficulties in internet connection or problems in internet quality, but they were more satisfied with face-to-face courses. Ease of access to educational materials and the ability to choose the time and place to study were shown as the strongest advantages of online learning among respondents in our survey. Remote access is of particular importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students' online learning satisfaction requires advanced teaching pedagogies and technological know-how to garner students' attention and instruction delivery (Baber, 2020; Hsu et al., 2019).

For many institutions, the sudden transition to remote teaching constituted a prolonged emergency because the pandemic appeared to be getting worst. Capacity for remote teaching depends on information and communication technology infrastructure; available training, support, and funding; institutional and departmental teaching culture; student preparedness for remote learning; and faculty workload and motivation, among other factors (Knysh & Dudziak, 2020; Meyer & Xu, 2007). It was clear from the examined studies that institutional support was vital to the success of transitioning to online learning (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020; Davies et al., 2020; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020; Kara et al., 2020; Tartavulea et al., 2020; Todd, 2020). Supporting students remotely is very different from on campus, it requires the use of certain software which many universities didn't have. The suggested support improvements could take many forms such as providing clarity on plans and decisions as they evolve (Davies et al., 2020), providing support resources for faculty and students struggling with transitional arrangements to online learning (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020), and paying for subscriptions for popular SM platforms used by faculty (Kara et al., 2020). The current study aligns with previous ones showing that student perceptions of the extent of the university support had a significant positive effect on satisfaction levels with the online transition.

The aim of online communication is the same as that of face-to-face communications: bonding; exchanging information; being heard and being understood. Fostering a sense of community in online classes will make the students' learning experience more meaningful and it can help them stay connected during the course life. When instructors communicate with students, whether in a face-to-face class or an online class, they communicate for the purpose of offering knowledge or having information to gain understanding and develop relationships. Communicating with students in an online environment requires a little more thought and planning than communicating with students in the traditional environment because the online environment lacks body language. Research have shown that students like the asynchronous part of online learning (Chung, Subramaniam & Dass, 2020; Dinh & Nguyen, 2020; Gillis & Krull, 2020; Ramo, Lin, Hald & Huang-Saad, 2020; Nugroho, Basari, Suryaningtyas & Cahyono, 2020). The result of the current study supports previous research, it indicated that student perceptions of faculty communication had a significant positive effect on satisfaction levels with online transition, this is very similar to results from the previous research mentioned.

Student satisfaction plays a significant role in student retention (Gayton, 2015; Yang & Durrington, 2010). Many studies have shown that teaching online requires a unique approach and differing pedagogy from the traditional, face-to-face classroom (Fetherson, 2001; Hardy & Bower, 2004; LaMonica, 2001; Oliver, 2002). Many institutions of higher education have not examined student satisfaction in relation to online learning experiences. Studies available have found that student characteristics, elements of course design and structure, and social environment impact student satisfaction and retention rates (Cummings, 2020; Gayton, 2015; Gayton, 2013; Boling, 2011; Shim & Lee, 2020). Further, studies have shown evidence that technologies used, student support, feelings of connectedness, and instructional strategies impact satisfaction with online learning experiences and student retention (Appana, 2008; Boling, 2011; Shim & Lee, 2020; Stanford-Bowers, 2008). Colleges began to worry about retention among college students balancing the realities of virtual instruction against fears about the health risks of in-person classes. Leading indicators of the effect of covid-19 on retention were not reassuring, particularly with regard to low-income college students. By late spring of 2020, FAFSA renewals had declined by 5% over the previous year, suggesting that some low-income college students were not planning to re-enroll (College Board Report, 2021). Colleges must therefore address the retention rate issues to prevent further erosion of their revenue. Unfortunately, most student retention models have been designed for the face-to-face classroom, making it very difficult to apply them to the online learning environment (Gayton, 2013).

To examine student opinions concerning areas of instructional strength and areas for instructional improvement that influenced their satisfaction with their online learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic is an important thing to do. Lessons can be learned that helps us to improve online teaching and learning for faculty, students and administrators. We hypothesize that due to the abruptness of the COVID-19 transitions, that student satisfaction with online learning experiences may be affected. The advent of the pandemic fundamentally changed the way learning occur. In order to cope with restrictions on person-to-person interactions, universities have accelerated their transition to online learning with profound consequences for both students and faculty. This transition has been facilitated by the integration of online technologies such as Zoom, Teams, Moodle and others into course delivery systems which have in turn instigated changes to the traditional face-to-face pedagogical practices to accommodate e-learning for different knowledge domains.

This review has identified that some of the same factors that are important and aid learning in the face-to-face mode are as important in online learning e.g. Student engagement, the instructor and technology. Other important factors that the university should learn from as they are closely related to the pandemic are the level of support that the institution gives, challenges of emergencies and the level of students' satisfaction. Institutional support should be visible and multifaceted with a particular focus on online learning materials development and technology support for faculty and students. Second, in order to mitigate the effects of any future crises, blended learning should be embraced as a component of face-to-face instruction in a post-COVID world. Training in educational technologies and their effective use should be available to faculty and students who need it. The capacity for learners to participate in online learning communities needs to be enhanced to ensure that a similar sense of connectedness can be retained if programs transition to online-only modes of delivery.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study are limited by its focus on HBCU students during a time when the COVID-19 pandemic forced universities to shut down. It is hoped that the preliminary findings in this review will inspire more comprehensive investigations into the impact of this once-in-a-lifetime global disruptor of higher education, and the lessons learned from these experiences. As the study participants belonged to mostly business majors from HBCUs may make the findings only applicable to similar contexts. For generalizability, a survey based on our findings should be conducted across a random sample of students from across the USA. Despite the limitations, the findings offer an understanding of students' experiences and universities reaction to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and suggest recommendations for improvement in online learning, which is here to stay.

There are many potential areas for future research. During the transition, students took online classes that were synchronous as well as asynchronous. More research is needed to assess student satisfaction and effectiveness of online classes when students lack the choice of which mode they take. In the pre-pandemic era, students typically had discretion over taking online classes, most of which were asynchronous. The consequences of fatigue associated with too many synchronous classes that tried to mimic the traditional class schedules is a needed area of future research. The perspective of faculty members about the transition during the pandemic would also be very valuable in helping universities understand how to tackle challenges and realizing the potential in transitioning to online classes.

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Cross-Cultural Diversity in Tourism Business Operations: Finding Space for Strategic Partnership Amongst the Nations (India-EU)

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ABSTRACT

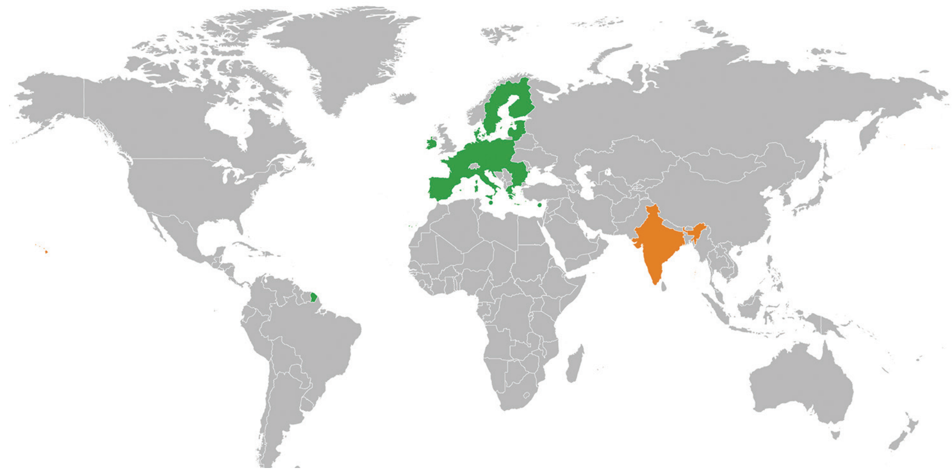
Various cultural factors generally influence the communication and success potential of a business. Cultural awareness provides direction to many organizations which perform in a cross-culturally defined market at the international level. Understanding cultural aspects are among the most effective practices for institutions, like tourism, to create a competitive edge in the global market. In terms of tourism, sustainable development, and politics, differences in the work culture and ethics make the nations draw a cooperative framework to stand amongst the global competition. Globalization is linked with procedures, such as the internationalization of services and products, international relationships, unification and diversity, local and global, and many more. India-EU relations are growing exponentially towards rectifying the trade and fiscal relationship and covering all possible interaction segments (Council of the European Union, 2005). This study analyzes the key methodological concerns of cross-cultural issues in the tourism business and how understating the business culture amongst both countries can contribute effectively business production? This study also offers a framework for developing competitive benefits for tourism firms to establish international business with European nations.

KEYWORDS

Cross Cultural Business, Business operations, Service Sector, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Businesses working towards internationalization are in transformation because of unifications, trendy achievements, and strategic alliances where all entities share unique organizational cultures. For business collaborations to succeed, executives are liable to draft a synergy amongst different organizational cultures. Since India and the European Union are the world's largest democracies and are believed to share common values and ideologies, they are natural partners (Muller et al., 2021, p. 7). India and European Union have developed relations since 1993 Declaration (European Commission, June 2000). India and European Union have so much to share for creating a collaborative order, United Nations and World Trade Organization lead the examples (Ikenberry 2011, p. 58), thereby providing the opportunities to support and promote effective multilateralism. In other words, they (EU and India) are sharing common values and encourage worldwide peace and stability. According to Sizoo et al. (2005, p. 250), service interactions in tourism now also involve service-providers culture as they belong to different cultural backgrounds and ethics. When Indians are defined by their responsible and robust work ethics, European employees willingly shift around the clock to compensate for the time difference in their work (Malhotra, 2016, p. 99).



Understanding cultural aspects are among the most effective practices for institutions, like tourism, to create a competitive edge in the global market.

Cultural acumen supporting cross cultural transition and integration that expresses our conviction that a specific sort of acumen is required to work effectively in the multicultural area and to promote fruitful communication and interaction between cultures (Lobanova & Shunin, 2008, p. 59). In the tourism organization, workforces cooperate continuously with other staff, administrators, and clienteles from different cultures. These frequent communications involve a workforce to be aware of the differences and similarities between cross-cultural diversity in tourism business operations. Collaborations between staff who are unaware of cultural terms and guests from diverse cultures may lead to complications and unhappy clientele. Henceforth, tourism and hotel industry face a big challenge in handling and filling the needs of those clientele to sustain their faithfulness. There is need for cooperation between business cultures and its values in order for organizations to successfully perform (Bird - Mendenhall, 2016, p. 8). Cultural values, beliefs, and ethics become limits when establishments cross borders (Emelifeonwu & Valk, 2019, p. 232). Such aspects reflect the value system, expected behaviors, and attitudes inherent in business organizations. Accordingly, the purpose of this research is to deliver a deeper understanding of the imperative drivers and motivators associated with travel and tourism business culture with Indian counterparts, and to draw an outline for creating a prominent market for tourism establishments for Europeans in India. The research also addresses the elementary concept of culture from a business context and the basic features of corporate culture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Fatehi (1996, p. 236), businesses rely on efficient dealings with given surroundings for long-term survival. Here, culture is defined as experiences that guide employees' work practices (Cole, 2017, p. 85). This dependency comprises the relationship between the organizational culture and the cultural beliefs (Lewis 2017, p. 21).

The business culture adopted by EU, India assured EU to give it a monetary preference over the other countries such as China, Russia, and Japan (Mathew & Kumar, 2005, p. 3). The main changes that are most noticeable are found within cross-culture engagements are the correspondence designs, the exhibitions or confidence towards the work of individuals and the technique for use in the business. The origination of social acumen helps in the personal adaptation of language, space, relational and intrapersonal connections. (Kawar, 2012, p. 1). Cross cultural leadership, even in the eminence of gender diversity, should be refined wisely in order to proceed with coordination and business correspondence design inside the different blend of labourers working under these pioneers (Zheng, 2011, p. 7). Though the marketplaces are growing globally there is a widespread research that occurs so as to examine the customer behaviors for resemblances and differences across the numerous targeted cultures. The exercises ought to be refereed and examined dependent on the way of life and administration supplies and assumptions for the customer. Also, to gauge the extents of the way of life we need to operationalize the interaction to make it more effective.

Moreover, tourism industry administrators are needed to complete international projects, where administration are able to work effectively with coworkers from different cultures. Consequently, it is not enough for tourism administrators to simply know about cross culture business procedures such as human resource management, marketing or finance, managers/administrators must have skills and involvement in communicating with persons from different cultures. There are various similitudes and fluctuations in the manner individuals speak with one another relying upon their social foundation. In any case, it is important to have great principles of correspondence between directors or with the representatives (Zeng, 2018, p.325). The fundamental reason for any culturally diverse unprofessional direct is the inability to adjust to the new culture because of change matters (Panibratov, 2017, p.7). It is important when considering interactions within diverse societies to recognize the perspective of the customer, administrator and the organization (White, 2015, p.4). The culture essence, culture importance, culture conduct and the culture appearance are all managed by the organizational culture, with collective shared standards being fundamental.

In the present worldwide business, the ability to communicate effectively and multiculturally can't be disparaged.

Organizational ethics are gathered throughout some stretch of time with the dynamic agreement of the pioneers and impacted by the social climate. Operational administration and correspondence help in portraying a typical hierarchical culture that unites and takes an interest in people from various countries (Brown et al., 2021, p. 66).

Organizational cultures outline the framework through which management performs in various organizations, which is blended by the beliefs, value, and assumptions held by structural members and represent how organizations cope with internal and external forces (Jo-Joo 2011, p. 361). People from different societies or cultures maintain different standards, degrees of strength, and ways to handle the situations. They may have different beliefs about significant goals in life that serve as guiding principles (Motti-Stefanidi, 2018, p. 103). Accordingly, culture has its importance in the business system, which is a hierarchical ordering of standards in terms of their significance. Business value serves as a fundamental tool to business management practices which is also a dimensional sub-set of business culture (Prasad Kanungo, 2006, p. 24). The culture as a primary determinant of system-specific changes and if the globalized aspect is considered, the business world is majorly defined with relationship-focused and deal-focused cultures. India believes in a relationship-focused culture where businesses are more people-oriented, and importance is given to maintain harmonization and long-term relationships (Steel et al., 2018, p. 14). The EU has deal-focused culture, where organizations believe in task orientations and people direct and aggressive.

If an association needs to teach cultural awareness in their work force, they must oblige original workers from disparate social conditions. In addition to this, corporate culture has to develop its arrangements concern diverse culture between the nations. It(Vaara et al., 2019). Organizations have effectively understood the advantages of a very much oversaw assorted labor force like expanded portions of the overall industry, expanded productivity and inventive items. According to diversity experts, organizations use variety methodologies for upper hand with more tension on obligation and estimation which also help in assessing the adequacy of the variety the board drives.

In the present worldwide business, the ability to communicate effectively and multi-culturally can't be disparaged. After study of various research articles the few point comes which can positively impact on Indian European business culture like work culture across the nations, Cultural Values, Work Attitude amongst employees, Work ethics in business, Redefining the Cultural Communication Process, the Negotiation Practices in Business, By Shaping Employee Regularity and Punctuality, Work Efficacy Amongst Employees. For example in information technology and information technology enabled services businesses, people at all levels travel worldwide to customer locations and business head office. This mobility across locations decreases the work-related variances or difficulties experienced by them. Various work has been done on cross-cultural diversity in business among the nations and a positive relationship has been found in other parts of the world too, for example, Hajjar (2010, p. 252) in USA, Zhao et al., (2009, p. 311) in China, Whitelock & Rey (1998, p. 259) in Europe. A human resource management enactment link has been well recognized and now there is an attention in reconnoitering this connection in the perspective of developing markets.

The differences in management practices are directly related to political, societal, and monetary fluctuations (Turner, 2000, p. 451). However, values may change to cope with the significant changes in economy, expertise, and policies. According to Lambert (2016, p. 75). Business values through multiculturalism deliver resource procurement, reduced costs, promotion advantage, and vision, problem-solving and managerial flexibility. Hence, during cultural deviations, the organizations must comprehend their styles and decide how they vary from the standard from other countries standards of other countries (Bird-Mendenhall, 2016, p. 5) before preceding any business collaborations and setting out the criteria for the employees.

METHODOLOGY

The research is qualitative and is based on secondary data analysis collected from India-EU International Trade in Goods Statistics, Report, (2020), India-EU Indian exports to the European Union financial year 2020 report, EU shapes its ambitious strategy on India, November, 2018, Council of European Union (2005), and Eurostat Report (2018). The intent of this study is to create more opportunities for India-EU business cooperation and EU investment and improve economic activity, proficiency, and global attractiveness of the Indian service sector.

In order to examine the role of business culture between European Union and India, this paper adopted a qualitative approach. The paper explains an overview of the culture and value systems of India and the EU tourism business. After this, a definition and analysis of Business culture and ethics are given in context to the tourism framework. The paper subsequently presents the link between business culture and other corporate ethics that determines the tourism practices amongst Indian and EU employees. The study confers the concern with the help of literature review, which focuses on this vibrant tourism interaction and corporate contexts of India and the European Union.

Analysis of Work Cultural Contexts Amongst Nations

Globalization is pushing Indian syndicates and their managers across more borders. India is the 6th largest destination for EU services exports (European Commission Report, December 2018). According to the Eurostat report (2018), some 6,000 EU corporations are present in India, providing directly 17 lakhs jobs and indirectly 50 lakhs jobs in a broad range of sectors. In its professional relations with India, European Union works towards developing a comprehensive, open, transparent, non-discriminatory and predictable business atmosphere for European organizations in India, thereby comprising the protection of their investments and intellectual belongings. To this, various tourism organizations in India and Europe are provided with relocation services. They recommend cross-cultural workouts that covers aspects leading from language skills to the complexities of local etiquettes, such as whether or not to tip a taxi driver for supervisors and their families moving abroad (Lehman, 2017, p. 38).

Where off-shoring and commercial subcontracting opportunities are growing in Europe, Indian companies have also started attaining firms overseas earnestly, and many of them, especially in the service sector, are rushing without adequate preparation (Kanyan et al. 2016, p.191). Literature has found that the organizations that carefully select and organize their processes to adapt to a new business culture speedily are the ones that succeed in advanced success rate in wide-reaching business projects. From the European Union perspective, while Indians are highly respected for brain power and intellect. Indians are considered to be somewhat less cultured where Indian businesses often look for stock in skills and talent than in polish and style, and attaining a position in a foreign nation is believed to stretch the attention, enhance the recommence and tremendous the bottom line (De La Cruz 2014, p. 46).

Additionally, cross culture is reflected when different features enlighten principled concerns and evaluations are conceived through the understanding of a variety of aspects reflected below:

- ***Defining the work culture across nations:*** Culture is the term by which people understand their experiences and actions are directed (Cole, 2017, p. 75). Culture gives directions to the thoughts through which people intellectualize and represent the life to self and the world (Thompson, 2018, p. 1). It is all about shared notions and meanings about life and its style, standards, beliefs, and associated actions (Kramsch- Zhu 2020, p. 5). Accordingly, Indian businesses tend to highlight the positives, define their gracious and amusing environment, and sometimes be reluctant and over. On the other hand, European business culture is blunter, which could be perceived as harsh or impolite (Weiss 2015, p. 128).
- ***Understanding the cultural values:*** In European countries, startups value creativity and freedom and majorly are located in their flat organizational structure (Kollmann et al. 2016, p. 95). Managerial (Decision-making) values rely on cooperative directions that respond to the international community's recognition and preference, such as how to behave, think, and administer the businesses (Caprar et al. 2015, p. 1013. In other words it serves as a standard for selecting alternatives available (Rezaei et al., 2016, p. 15). It makes the businesses more sensitive towards their operations and practices. Whereas Indian businesspersons are not obligated to perform like this, in the technology and service sectors, employees are found to anticipate a European level of sovereignty and participation (Pruthi et al., 2018, p. 232).
- ***Understanding the work attitude amongst employees:*** Attitudes are erudite tendencies and are not innate. Culture is amongst the significant sources of attitude development (Fiske, 1992, p. 45). An elevated individual in a specific culture might obtain and nurture attitudes. Various researches in sociology, psychology, and management have established that attitudes vary by the culture of people (Bird–Mendenhall, 2016, p. 9). It has also been recognized as one of the significant dimensions of business and decision-making. It helps an individual interact efficiently with people who belong to other cultures (Mohsin, 2014, p. 308). Where Indians are more enthusiastic and look for long-term aspects of work, Europeans work with daily and look for more comfortable and balanced work conditions.
- ***Defining the work ethics in business:*** The formalities vary between nations (Präg – Mills, 2017, p. 293). Greetings frequently comprise surnames rather than titles or other honorifics, while a strict formal uniform code may not apply to each interaction. Handshaking with both female and male business friends is also the norm; vegetarianism is less common in Europe than in India (Gesteland, 2005, p. 331).
- ***Redefining the cultural communication process:*** Various values within an organizational culture are transferred in a mutual way by which different management performs through business contexts (Li et al., 2016, p. 471). Europeans do not need an individual relationship to work together and pay excessive deference to persons in authority. European communication is formal, and subsequent, the established procedure is critical to building and upholding an excellent work interaction (Naurin, 2011, p. 16). In Europe, solitary managers on the top level in the organization may have adequate authority to make decisions. It gives organizations a chance to influence their decision in direct and indirectly (Kelly & Kalev, 2006, p. 390).
- ***Elaborating the negotiation practices in business:*** Negotiation is appropriate in order to set parameters to consider the best cultural operational structure to exist within the nations. (Bell & Mandell, 2018, p. 52). In European Union, negotiation devotions are often clear as the dealings follow a logical, exact approach. Obtaining lower-cost bits and pieces or services, fast access to intellectual property or technology, thinning out one's influence on markets through alliances, and so on, all have a shared denominator (Baker et al. 2017, p. 70). European nation's entrepreneurs may not involve in an arrangement if it holds durable potential but does not propose a benefit in the future term. Indians negotiators can look honestly unlike in contrast. Negotiators are mainly prepared to divide the number of facts into smaller parts, the platform of circumstances being negotiated, eager to create allowances if they help progress the negotiation, assumed that the total value of the package still run into their objective (Díaz-Bonilla & Laborde, 2015, p. 1).
- ***Shaping employee regularity and punctuality:*** The truths of living in a heavily populated country like India can mean that punctuality is an extravagance rather than compulsion (Thompson, 1967, p. 38). Here, overworked administration relies upon paperwork that implies filing and responsible work setup. But in European nations, these aspects are least considered, and efficient time management is looked at as professionalism and admiration (Mas & Pallais, 2017, p. 3754). The European organization has its benefits, though with the administrative elements of business being well-organized.
- ***Analyzing and regulating the work efficacy amongst employees:*** Europe has endorsed numerous rules that look for defending their employees and how their life superiority is developed. The consequence may involve

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advanced business expenses, but they are appreciated by employees and develop their efficiency. India needs to workout out this aspect of human resources. Institutions working beyond their regular hours of work are supposed to pay for overtime, and earnings at times are twice their normal salary (Mas – Pallais, 2017, p. 3757). Flexible work hours and operational arrangements are generally found amongst Indian employees (Lyonette et al., 2016, p. 490).). Less value is also placed on superiority, and it is not unusual to see capable employees rise through the ranks quicker than more long-standing ones.

Amba-Rao (1993, p. 571) and Prasad Kanungo (2006, p. 26) discuss that overall establishments explicitly build business accountability by instructing values into cross-cultural business strategies. On the other hand, comprehensive formations function in various countries, where cross-cultural practice is significant to sustain tourism business processes. The variation has indorsed multiple ways people live, enjoy, classify, and cooperate in a diverse cultural setup that provides various prospects for investments in the service sector and improvement to various nations. Overall, it can be said that tourism services have multiple dimensions and multiple businesses have diverse cultures.

DISCUSSION

Spacing Out the Strategic Partnership Amonst the Nations

Tourism signifies significant socio-economic composition in European Union that explains wide-ranging influence not only for its economy but also on its social development and is a powerful tool (Defourny & Develtere, 2009, p. 28). Nevertheless, the tourism sector has also encountered numerous challenges that need to be handled by practices to be followed by tourism businesses of both nations (Eurostat, 2018). In tourism, challenges are majorly related to lower managerial levels, including employee management and directing, planning, and controlling work practices (Mehta et al. 2006, p. 331). For example, the major challenges are to motivate the employees according to the basic organizational culture to cope with the work conditions, client demands and stand up with the competition (Bhatnagar, 2007, p. 646). Thus, organizations must identify challenges and serve the employees with relevant information, training, and support.

A decent understanding of the hidden potentials, principles and misgivings of Indian culture and their work atmosphere is fundamental for the accomplishment of your business. India is a huge, congested and assorted nation enveloping an extensive types of societies, dialects, personalities and religions. It is very difficult to thoughts about Indian culture. Nevertheless, some tips that can support you with accepting business culture in India and escort you in Indian responsibility. India is a multi-ethnic, multilingual, and diverse culture, and huge societal dissimilarities can be seen amongst North and South India. Identify about the societal diversity and be careful around estimations. English is the consultant language of business, prepared for meetings to initiate. Moreover, a formal and various leveled association between supervisors and other employee in India. Indians' residence extraordinary worth on influences-established the determination to foster associates and influences. Feasible communication is crucial for the completion of any undertaking, yet it is particularly elementary when there is a candid risk of your communication receiving lost in translation. In various worldwide administrations, English is the factual language of corporate. Though, somewhat additional than the language you conversation, it is the resources by which you convey your message that is noteworthy. Similarly, at ease with English language may provide you a proficient boost universally, accepting the importance of unobtrusive non-verbal communication between the social orders can be correspondingly pivotal in global business.

Further, perceptions about competitions exceed pressure, so authorities must have a positive attitude regarding the sector's future goals (Bufquin et al., 2017, p. 19). The significant opportunities available with the cross-cultural business practices include a high potential for development, collaborative approaches, and new consumer partnerships; for example, European businesses are now outsourcing high-end business practices (Todeschini et al., 2017, p. 769). Moreover, consumers are looking for enduring and stable linkages where tourism businesses are required to move beyond outsource culture and ethics adoption (Thite et al. 2016, p. 7). Also, safety and security are both likewise and fully integrated, and it constantly improves an organization's safety and security culture (Ifinedo, 2012, p. 91). Hence firms are required to recognize these opportunities and organize consequently to sustain for a longer period and maintain their outsourcing practices (Mehta et al. 2006, p. 331

IMPLICATIONS

Indians put some additional exertion into making an individual association. This could be just about as straightforward as getting the telephone as opposed to sending an email, pose an open-finished inquiry rather than 'yes or no' questions. That way, Indians have the chance to give you more information and for you to recognize a potential issue or "no". Notwithstanding the fact that both the UK and India embrace a fewer conservative effort atmosphere, they don't undervalue the importance of tradition and enlightened organization when working in India. The utilization of civility is a crucial method to show regard. As in numerous societies freestanding the UK, time is observed as existence considerably additional liquid and adjustable. There is to a fewer extent a sentiment of taking the choice to regulator and oversee time. In India, connections are basic to working together successfully. As indicated by Mele (2008 p.64), social chronicled contrasts among most nations of Europe are important to the point that it is difficult to make speculations about business morals draws near. Indians depend more on instinct, more on social ascribes of explicit cases (e.g., surveying who is engaged with a specific circumstance). Ang et al.,(2006 p. 27) tracked down that Indian chiefs consider genuine devotion to their connotation an outstandingly ethical conduct, actuality in this regard like the Chinese and profoundly exclusive in relation to respondents from Europe, US and Australia.

Indians put extra effort into making an individual affiliation (i.e. positive personal relationship, care about forming, maintaining, or re-establishing a favourable affective bond). This could be just probably as clear as getting the phone instead of sending an email. Represent an open-completed request as opposed to 'yes or no' questions. That way, Indians get the opportunity to give you more data and for you to perceive a possible issue or "no". Regardless of the way that both the UK and India embrace a less regular workplace, they don't disparage the meaning of custom and reformist framework when working in India. The usage of mutual respect is a significant strategy to show respect. As in various social orders outside the UK, time is seen as being impressively more fluid and versatile. There is less significantly a sensation of having the alternative to control and regulate time. In India, associations are fundamental to cooperating effectively. As demonstrated by Mele (2008), social chronicled contrasts among most countries of Europe are essential to the point that it is hard to make hypotheses about business ethics moves close. Indians rely more upon impulse, more on friendly credits of unequivocal cases (e.g., reviewing who is locked in with a particular condition). Jackson (2001) found that Indian bosses consider real commitment to their affiliation an outstandingly good direct, being in such manner like the Chinese and on a very basic level novel comparable to respondents from Europe, US and Australia. Culture is a basic part in occupational effec-

Global partnerships and interactions are profitable in tourism businesses; global leaders must approach and adopt the phenomenon majorly from competencies, cultural analysis, attitudinal differences, and development.

tiveness and is an essential course of the business. Culture influences on the board, varieties and all professional dimensions from secretarial to formation. You may now contemplate open culture, nevertheless it is unbiased a solitary perspective, corporate culture is a novel measurement of it. That includes landing on the precise base, get-togethers, conversation, customs, web-based mass media use, admittance level positions and effort engagements, and other featured mechanisms. Occupational culture is acknowledged with bearing, ethics, behaviors. A corporate culture comprise an association's qualities, visions, operational grace, beliefs and tendencies.

Multi-cultural personnel is becoming the norm. To accomplish organizational goals and avoid possible risks, the managers should be culturally subtle and promote creativeness and motivation through flexible leadership. This paper helps to create awareness between India and the European Union Nations where a corporate cultural outline does not exist to endorse vibrant lines of communication and healthier relationships. Global partnerships and interactions are profitable in tourism businesses; global leaders must approach and adopt the phenomenon majorly from competencies, cultural analysis, attitudinal differences, and development. Hence, this paper also help understand the work cultural atmosphere and leverage the diversity inherent to the tourism business where a diverse workforce requires a broader skill base, creativity, and innovation that allows the employees to emphasize the consequences that matter performs at a global level high performance. It also discusses some salient differences between European Union and presents implications and how it helps to understand both countries' business culture. The country alliances bring about from study that illustrates the departures and flows of both in the present tempestuous commercial atmospheres, establishing provincial importance on wealth creation—the liability of duty for notifying and guiding ethical judgment which constructing procedures within organizations exist. The idea of timeliness can similarly vary concerning cultures in a comprehensive corporate climate. Various opinions of what comprises presence "on schedule" be able to frequently quick errors or undesirable societal insights. Together with differences in decorum, come differences in demeanor, particularly in the direction of belongings similar work atmosphere conflict, rules and guidelines, and predictable employed hours. Although several may reflect occupied extended phases of time and suggestion of accountability and execution, others may reflect these extra hours a show of nonappearance of expertise or the deprioritization of important personal or family time.

The human resource authorities and their aptitude to comprehend the influence of generating and supporting an ethical professional culture at a worldwide low cost are of critical significance. They have endeavored to scrutinize administration from a cross-country observation opinion. It has now become vibrant that cross-culture business beliefs between India and European Union essentials a cross-country relative measurement and an intercontinental standpoint. This remarkable paper corresponding to the contemporary journeys of the EU and India, comparable and distinctive procedure of organization constructing with essential to balance grassroots rights and their necessity for consistency, comprehend the leading representative in the domain culturally and linguistically. The organizations are largely found ignorant of the managerial and work culture and ineffective knowledge-sharing relationships of nations. Some inroads are required to be created. However, in the future, the concept requires considering other sub-sectors with the context of hospitality and service management that could direct the improvement of sharing value-added practices for defining management so that tourism business can be accepted and comprehended at the international level too in a collaborative way.

India and European Union are persistent with their mutual economic and investment relations successfully for a decade. The EU has emerged as a significant destination for numerous international travel movements from the Indian sub-continent because of such intellectual ties. Considering the movement of experts and students, the EU has found India as the foremost business partner in tourism.

CONCLUSION

A Way Forward

India and European Union are persistent with their mutual economic and investment relations successfully for a decade. The EU has emerged as a significant destination for numerous international travel movements from the Indian sub-continent because of such intellectual ties. Considering the movement of experts and students, the EU has found India as the foremost business partner in tourism. Considering this, the present study realized that organizations in deal-focused culture inadequate to do business in India need to realize that for Indians employees, having trusting relationships is more important than contractual observance to create effective joint ventures. They favor working with well-known parties and individuals they can trust. Tourism Organizations also have to look for flexibility, endurance and foster personal relationships that keep the business sustain at the international level.

The European Union and India relations have been established quite favorably in recent years. India's durable transnational role and fast economic growth be responsible for new grounds for collaboration with the EU. However, the model of globalization increases the significance and role of workforce diversity in organizations in terms of "business culture." The changing trends and competition from non-EU destinations may positively influence the traditional model of the tourism industry of these two nations (India-EU) by making the sector more aggressive eye-catching, and sustainable. International tourism practices and creativities should ensure that tourism is granted with sufficient cultural discernibility at the required level. The study revealed that Indian businesses tend to be equitably hierarchical, where information is passed through proper channels and manner. The few probabilities of relaying that blame up the chain by lower-ranking personnel and in Europe and primarily in startups, authorities like innovative free will, are much more cooperative and trendy concerning international relations. Accordingly, the Indian service sector highlights the positives, which explain a polite and enjoyable environment. Still, it sometimes may lead to over courteousness and become reluctance to say things as they really are.

Overall, the context includes cross-border responsibility and generally requires harmony and demands across multiple sections in diverse regions and nations where research on global travel organizations and businesses is frequently implied (Bird & Mendenhall 2016, p. 20). India is known for a strong special devotion to a particular interest; a business culture is based on decisions made on the nature of the condition or circumstance. EU is reflected as a strong Universalist Nation where rules and regulations are severely taken by, and these severe practices can be practical to any given condition. Intercontinental organizations must formulate and upsurge transparency, significant of business cultural practices and standards that positively comfort business communication by minimizing the gap. Further, to take advantage of the possible benefits of cultural diversity in workgroups, organizations are required to increase a competitive improvement in creativity, problem-solving and flexible adaptation to organizational culture.

Findings

India is the second fastest-growing and one of the largest economies in the world and is an important player in global economic governance. India is one of the largest trade and investment partner for the European Union, with an annual GDP growth rate of around 6%. EU is the third-largest importer of India with 11.1% of total Indian trade and second-largest exporter with 14% after the USA (pre-Covid-19). Around 6000 EU companies is in India, which provides 17 lakhs jobs and indirectly 50 lakh jobs in various sectors. India, as a nation, is so varied that it is multifaceted for a marketer to recognize collective gossamers of Indian culture and principal standards. Numerous dissimilar subcultures live together in Indian culture with their characteristic standards, customs, principles and behaviors. So, In India, individuals are socialized by receiving contribution from their cultures and essential morals. As a consequence, the garments vendor of India, S Kumars Group, tries to capture this essential significance of Indian culture over and done with their communication that platforms slight acts of honesty, truthfulness and traditionalism and highlights traditional Indian principles.

In spite of the positive ambiances between both the nations, the moot concern is that India's exports in the competitive EU market are not doing well even in products where we have competitive advantage relative to peers. So keeping in mind this research article would help the tourism sector and other industries people conduct better business and form greater alliances. The researchers can gain immensely by understanding the aesthetics of doing business and writhing about them further.

Limitations

The European Union nations engaging with India to confirm that such an agreement is economically expressive. Both nations convey a new market opening in various sectors to both sides, comprise a solid rules-based component, and comprise a widespread trade and sustainable expansion. This research article only focuses on eight valid points to understand Indo-EU business culture. There are many more points to discuss, and the study, for now, stands valid only for two nations India-EU and cannot generalized for other nations. It still has to work upon further in order to make it more generalized. The study is also theoretical in nature and it has to be validated by further quantifying it and investigating it empirically. Empirical investigation would back up the qualitative work done so far.

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How Trust and Speed in Social Media and Information in Content Marketing Affect Customer Purchase Intention in the Hotel Industry: The Case of Mongolia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how content marketing and social media affect customer purchase intention in the hotel industry. Data that explored content marketing, social media, and customer purchase intention. was collected from customers of selected Mongolian hotels The results indicated that content marketing displays six informational variables that are positively associated with social media. Two social media variables, trust and speed positively influenced customer purchase intention. All six variables of content marketing showed a positive influence on customer purchase intention. Marketers can use these findings to develop better content marketing strategies on social media for the hotel industry, especially in emerging Asian markets.

KEYWORDS

Social media; content marketing; customer purchase intention; hotel industry: emerging Asian markets

INTRODUCTION

Hotels are considered an important economic component in any country. The impact of hotels on the global economy is extremely significant. Worldwide, the hotel and tourism industries encompass 334 million jobs and contributes 10.4% of the gross domestic product (GDP) globally (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). This suggests that the hotel industry is one of the most important sectors for economic development, especially in some developing regions (Noone et al., 2011). A major issue and challenge for hotels is how to maintain competitiveness and retain their customers and customer loyalty. In early 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic devastated the global tourism and hospitality industry. However, pent-up demand is sparking an amazing recovery. The revenue of hotels is expected to reach US$ 284,779 million while the annual growth rate (CAGR 2021-2025) will reach 12.51%, while the market volume will reach US$ 456,275 million by 2025 (Statista, 2021). These figures will outpace 2019, considered the last base year pre-covid.

Social medias (i.e., Meta, Twitter, LinkedIn) changed how people interacted in their communities, and it also become one of the major marketing channels for companies. These companies spent major marketing money for advertisements online to their customers. Meta (META), formerly Facebook Inc, reached more than 2.91 billion active monthly users by Nov. 2021 (Investopedia, 2022). Hotel management teams realize that social media plays a critical role and provides a competitive advantage in developing their business for the consumer-driven online marketplace (Al-Msallam & Alhaddad, 2016), This is especially so for Gen Z consumers (Chen, Zhao, & Wang, 2022). Social media provides customers with current information, immediate responses; and service anywhere, anytime, to satisfy customers with efficient responses from hotels. Hotels design their social media presence to influence customers' attention and share information with others (Chang et al., 2015; Colliander, 2012; Lo & Fang, 2018). Al-Msallam and Alhaddad (2016) found that content marketing positively influences customer awareness and increases brand value in social media. The content of this marketing can use social media as a less costly marketing tool than traditional media (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). In addition, hotels learn about guests' needs and wants when they respond to customer requests on social media (Jones, 2009). All these factors contribute to improving sales, service, and market shares of every hotel and also increase customer purchase intentions (Lockyer, 2007). This study discusses the relationship between content marketing, social media, and customer purchase intention. The results may offer hotel managers keen insights to leveraging marketing performance for profitable hotel management.

In this study, we assess the relationship between content marketing, social media, and customer purchase intention, using select Mongolian hotels as an example from the global hotel industry. The contributions of our study are expected to benefit both academicians and practitioners. The theoretical purpose of this study is to enhance the knowledge of the influence of content marketing on hotel customer purchase intention. This study measures key variables and provides meaningful results for each variable. In addition, the findings are expected to identify the effects of content marketing variables and social media variables on hotel customer purchase intention. Content marketing strategies must be differentiated and focus on the appropriate variables, as some variables appear to be critical for hotel customers. The findings of this research are expected to broaden the knowledge of social media, content marketing, and purchase intention in the hotel industry. Secondly offering valuable perspectives on increasing the effectiveness of content marketing on consumers' purchase intention.

Content marketing positively influences customer awareness and increases brand value in social media. The content of this marketing can use social media as a less costly marketing tool than traditional media.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study reviewed the literature on content marketing, social media, and customer purchase intention in the field of hospitality. The first stream of research review relates to whether content marketing affects social media in the hotel industry. The second stream aims to understand whether social media applied in the hotel industry influences customer purchase intention. Finally, the third stream seeks to understand whether content marketing affects customer purchase intention in the hotel industry. To guide our examination of these areas, we review the relevant research and discuss how our study corresponds to the three literature streams.

Content Marketing

Pulizzi and Barret (2010) noted that content marketing is focused on creating, publishing, and distributing content for a targeted audience online. Moreover, content marketing can attract potential customers into becoming current customers and maintain existing customers loyalty to leverage the value of their contributions to the top level. (Simsek & BatuhanDincel, 2019). That supports value creation involving the firm and its customers and stakeholders (Grönroos, 2006). This prospect of "narrowcasting" to a specific group, as opposed to "broadcasting" to a mass audience was heralded, at least as early the late eighties (Boger, 1987). Subsequently, many studies have demonstrated that content marketing makes business successful (Handley & Chapman, 2010; Lieb, 2012; Pulizzi & Barrett, 2009) and has been adapted for business-to-business service development (Wang et al., 2019).

Previous studies explored that product information delivered by streamers can shorten consumers' decision making (Chen, Zhao, & Wang, 2022). Also, Simsek and BatuhanDincel (2019) indicated that interesting and non-sales-oriented marketing content applying new technologies could reach current and potential customers to shorten the gap between supply and demand in the tourism industry. Researchers have identified six factors that influence the variables of content marketing: information quality, information credibility, information needs, attitude toward information, information usefulness, and information adoption. These six essential elements relate to how information significantly affects consumers' purchase intentions (Erkan & Evans, 2016). First, the message embedded in information strengthens the meaning of information quality (Yeap, 2014). Information quality has been studied and applied in many fields (Cheung, 2010; Cheung & Thadani, 2012) and was found to be influential in consumer intentions and behaviors (Lee & Shin, 2014). Research shows that the quality of reviews on social media positively influences purchase behaviors (Park et al, 2007). Second, information credibility is considered a critical factor in consumers' decision-making process (Awad & Ragowsky, 2008; Wathen & Burkell, 2002). Many studies have revealed information credibility influences consumers' purchase intentions (Dou, 2012; Hsu & Tsou, 2011; Nabi & Hendriks, 2003; Park et al., 2007; Prendergast, 2010). Third, consumer information needs have been studied using the perspectives of "opinion seeking" (Chu & Kim, 2011) and "advice-seeking" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). Fourth, attitude toward information was adapted from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). TRA assumes the attitude forms behavioral intention.

Consumers' trust in social media influences purchases intentions as customers' beliefs affect their behavioral intentions.

Subsequently, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Bagozzi, 1992; Davis, 1989) showed the relationship between attitude toward behavior and behavioral intention. Prendergast (2010) examined the relationship between content marketing and purchase intention. Fifth, information usefulness was highlighted by Erkan and Evans (2016), who showed how information usefulness influences purchase intention is worth studying. Many researchers have found that information usefulness is positively related to purchase intention (Chang & Dong, 2016; Lee & Koo, 2015; Xia & Bechwati, 2008). Finally, previous studies reveal that information adoption is positively related to purchase intention (Cheung et al., 2009; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Information adoption occurs when consumers are highly involved in content marketing information and it positively affects their purchase intention. Information adoption was identified as a social media content marketing variable that influences consumers' purchase intentions (Cheung et al., 2009). Sharing information also plays a crucial role in social media and enhances customer purchase intention (Yoong & Lian, 2019).

Social Media

Social media is defined as forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content such as videos (Merriam-Webster, 2022). It is a tool that companies can use to manage their brand awareness and enhance customer purchase intention (Chen, 2017; Chen et al.,2022; Yoong & Lian, 2019). Many studies have discussed social media while exploring the variables of social media and how social media can help companies formulate marketing strategies to arouse consumer attention (Voramontri, & Klieb, 2019).

However, systematic theoretical studies on social media remain limited. Taprial and Kanwar (2012) indicated that digital marketing can generate consistent and viral effects in information spread. Also the effect of opinions in traditional marketing may dissipate and become difficult to track, The research identified two powerful properties, trust and speed, to distinguish the difference between social media and traditional media. Trust refers to consumers' trust in social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Online trust is a hot issue at the present time. In the context of e-commerce based on internet trust, the main participants are consumers and e-vendors, meaning that trust can be interpreted as trust in web vendors and businesses. Furthermore, Chen et. al. (2022) mentioned that livingstream, a type of social media can influence consumers' purchase intention via trust building. Exploring conceptual frameworks for strengthening trust, previous studies of the relationship between trusting beliefs and trusting intentions (Miltgen, Popovic, & Oliveira, 2013; McKnight et al., 2002; Oliveira, Faria, Thomas, & Popovic, 2014; Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2016) Consumers' trust in social media influences purchases intentions as customers' beliefs affect their behavioral intentions. Compared to a real-life network, speed is one of the most valuable advantages of online social networks, especially communication and dissemination speed. The study discussed the speed of online users' response and its influencing factors in the field of health emergencies (Zhang, Xu, & Zhang, 2017). Furthermore, Dunn and Grimes (2022) indicated speed of response on social media can partially reduce the negative impact of negative user-generated content (NUGC) on the issue of CSR.

Purchase Intention

Davis (1989) defined the relationship between intention and purchase as the likelihood that a customer visits an e-commerce website and purchases for the first time. Their repurchase intention for continued purchases is online consumers' intention to return to the website and purchase again. Zwass (1998) subsequently proposed that intentions can be described as a consumer's purpose to proceed with an electronic exchange relationship with an e-commerce web business operator. It can

People learn information from ratings, reviews, and comments of social advertisements along with social medias. This suggests managers of social media or social community marketing should build up the systematic social commerce constructs.

be enhanced by sharing information and conducting transactions to maintain a relationship with customers. Purchase intention is a crucial process in the decision making, in which a consumer intends to buy a particular brand (Shah et al., 2012). Especially for developing countries, people learn information from ratings, reviews, and comments of social advertisements along with social medias. This suggests managers of social media or social community marketing should build up the systematic social commerce constructs (Riaz, Guang, Zafar, Shahzad, Shahbaz, & Lateef, 2021).

Consumers evaluate specific products and or services to determine whether to buy them. Then they will also consider the conditions under which they will make that purchase. Some research has also indicated that social media apps have become one of the most used avenues via smartphones to purchase food and access restaurants (Alalwan, 2020; Okumus & Bilgihan, 2014; Wang, Tseng, Wang, Shih, & Chan, 2019). Laroche et al. (2013) argued that social media influences a consumer's brand loyalty. Yoong and Lian (2019) revealed that diversified marketing activities launched on social media can facilitate customer purchase intention. An appropriate discount and or coupons launched in marketing campaigns will enhance consumers' purchase intention (Chen et al., 2022). Hotels that advertise environmental content on social media, such as Instagram, can positively affect customers' booking intentions (Tanford et al., 2020). Both internal and external motivations affect consumers' intention when they proceed with the purchase process. Credibility and trustworthy information are the essential conditions of a customer's behavioral intention (Herrmann, 2006). Trust is a key factor in purchase intention, as more trustworthy content makes consumers more inclined to make a purchase (Liu et al., 2019). As a result, before consumers make a purchase decision, they will spend more time and effort obtaining product information (Ahmed & Zahid, 2014).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Overview of the Global Hotel Industry

The hotel industry is widely viewed as the key provider of facilities and services for accommodation in both business and leisure activities. This includes entertainment, recreation, meetings, conferences, business communication and transmissions. Hotels are a choice by locals for amenities as well as a social center for different communities. This makes the hotel industry a source of employment for thousands both locally and from abroad, across a range of occupations (Medlik & Ingram, 2000).

The hotel industry has seen numerous changes and great growth in recent decades. This is especially observed in developed countries, which have experienced many dynamic structural changes in their societies. Economic growth has provided the foundation for improved living standards in these countries (Hassan, 2021). This includes increased disposable incomes, cheaper and easier travel, and more leisure time. Firms in the hotel industry have thus strengthened their efforts to attract potential consumers and have them repurchase products and services. The most effective way to increase customer purchase intention is to enhance content marketing. Thus, as it influences electronic words of mouth (E-WOM), it also increases customers' intention to book hotel rooms (Siripipatthanakul, Limna, Siripipattanakul, & Auttawechasakoon, 2022). The economic and social impacts of the hotel industry at the global level are positive. The host countries are the first to benefit from this industry. In this study, we will examine the Mongolian hotel industry as an example. Mongolia will help us show some of these important dynamic relationships in the hotel industry.

The Mongolian Hotel Industry

The Mongolian hotel industry emerged in the 1960s, with the Ulaanbaatar Hotel being the first hotel built in Mongolia in 1961. In 1991, the company was restructured as a pioneer joint stock company in Mongolia. In 2009 the global economic downturn heavily impacted the hotel industry. This resulted in global declines in hotel income and revenue performance, including Mongolia. At this point, the Mongolian hotel industry's growth slowed even further, to only 5%. It has since continued declining and become stagnant in recent years.

The limited customer purchases from Mongolian hotels are attributed to many weaknesses, including the shortage of labor resources, the productive structure, destination management, and seasonality patterns. In Mongolia during the summer, some hotels reach 100% occupancy, but during the low season this can drop to under 30%. Differences between the low and high seasons have become less significant in recent years due to the constant flow of business travelers as a result of the economic boom. Mongolia's hotel business environment is limited as most customers are foreign visitors. Mongolian hotels are also very inactive on social media. They are not used to making efforts to attract consumers or provide good services or information to customers. On the whole, Mongolian hotels lack good relationships with customers.

Social Media Content Marketing Influences Customer Purchase Intention in Hotel Industry

One of the key characteristics of content marketing is its emphasis on the provision of valuable information to consumers. Social media supports content marketing efforts to reach customers and affect customer engagement (Mandloys Digital Marketing, 2013). Social media thus plays a critical role in content marketing. It distributes the message and enhances communication with potential consumers via an internet platform that enables users to generate, collect, exchange, and modify by sharing content and information continuously (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social networking sites (SNS's) provide consumers different interactive experiences from advertisement of social medias (Alalwan 2018; Yin et al. 2019). Furthermore, content marketing provides a useful element for social media as individuals or companies could interact with each other under specific conditions (Chen, Lu, & Gupta, 2016). Social media marketing can reach the desired and specific communities as consumers or potential customers' purchase intention and choice are mainly influenced by information of social commerce (Shanmugam et al. 2016; Chen, Lu, and Gupta 2016; Riaz et al., 2021). Social media and content marketing can work mutually to increase the target audience's awareness and consideration. The marketing content is then delivered over social media platforms to the individuals. Information and knowledge exchanges no matter if its needed or not, and whether the product sellers are trustworthy or not (Chen, Lu, & Wang, 2017).

Research has discussed how social media plays a crucial role in content marketing to leverage customer purchase intention. Social media has become the contemporary tool for consumers to find useful information on products and services. This information is then used to predict consumers' purchase intention for companies (Riaz et al., 2021). Pjero and Kercini (2015) indicate that when consumers observe the product and service information on internet platforms, it influences consumer behavior and positively affects consumers' purchase intentions. Similarly, Dehghani and Tumer (2015) argue that content marketing strategies deployed via social media can significantly affect customers' behavior. Social media can generate consumers' purchase attention as it accelerates their reactions and offers viral delivery to enhance their purchase intention (Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Harshini, 2015; Riaz et al., 2021).

Meta is one of the most powerful examples of social media. Meta raises the level of awareness around hotel customer purchase intention by connecting the hotel with its guests (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Lo & Fang, 2018; Investopedia, 2022). Internet celebrity endorsements are mainstream in social media marketing. By offering an attractive approach to content marketing these celebrities engage with their followers widely and effectively (Geng et al., 2020). For example, in the selfie era, Kim Kardashian West has attracted 210 million Instagram (IG) followers and more than 34 million Facebook (FB) followers. Social media celebrities transfer the value of their followers into income by promoting products such as cosmetics and mobile games. The celebrities know how to interact with their followers by managing their content on social media thus increasing revenue (Geng et al., 2020).

The relationship between social media and content marketing discussed thus far shows that social media plays a key role in content marketing. This leverages interactions with potential consumers and facilitates the conversation between current consumers and providers. From this perspective, social media has a direct influence on consumers' engagement and purchase intention. The more in-depth and accurate the content marketing, the higher the consumer's intent to book online. This means content marketing in social media can steer customers to successful transactions and encourage them to purchase the products and services again (Li & Zhang, 2002). Research shows that social media content marketing positively impacts the hotel's image and customer engagement. This attracts customers, promotes their satisfaction and purchase intention, reduces high-costs, and increases the hotel's profits (Ahmad et al., 2016; Yoong & Lian, 2019). Any hotel can create its brand or increase its benefits by using social media content marketing to ensure the company's sustainable existence in the future.

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis Development

The following hypotheses are developed based on the literature:

H1. Content marketing positively affects social media.

H2. Social media positively influences customer purchase intention.

H2a. Trust as a social media variable positively affects customer purchase intention.

H2b. Speed as a social media variable positively affects customer purchase intention.

H3. Content marketing variables positively affect customer purchase intention.

H3a. Information quality positively affects customer purchase intention.

H3b. Information credibility positively affects customer purchase intention.

H3c. Information needs positively affect customer purchase intention.

H3d. Attitude toward information positively affects customer purchase intention.

H3e. Information usefulness positively affects customer purchase intention.

H3f. Information adoption positively affects customer purchase intention.

Sample and Data Collection

This study uses a convenience sampling and the questionnaires were distributed by google form to conduct an online survey sent to 233 guests stayed in Mongolian hotels. The questionnaire was initially developed in English, but as the survey was conducted in Mongolia, scholars translated it into Mongolian. The questionnaire was taken for 2 months and the period of data collection is from 02/2021 to 04/2021. Demographically, the participants comprised 50.2% males and 49.8% females; 77.3% of respondents were 18–29 years old and 19.7% were 30–49 years old. The majority of respondents held a bachelor's (69.5%) or master's (14.2%) degree. The majority of (46.8 %) the respondents were employed (full/part-time), while 29.2% were students, 9.4% were self-employed, 7.7% were unemployed, 2.1% were retired, and 4.7% were homemakers. More than a third of respondents (36.1%) earned \$501–\$700 per month, 26.6% earned \$200-\$300, 23.6% earned more than \$700 and 13.7% earned \$301–\$500. The level of income affects consumers' purchase intention. If incomes are steadily high, consumers generally have more discretionary income with which to make purchases. If incomes are stagnant or falling, demand for consumer goods is likely to fall as well.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability is a concept described as the consistency of a measuring test study or research study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Three principles and rules are used to evaluate whether a measurement achieves reliability including stability, internal reliability, and inter-observer consistency. Stability can be demonstrated if the measurement result is stable over time. The similarity of measurement examined at various times is considered necessary for research-

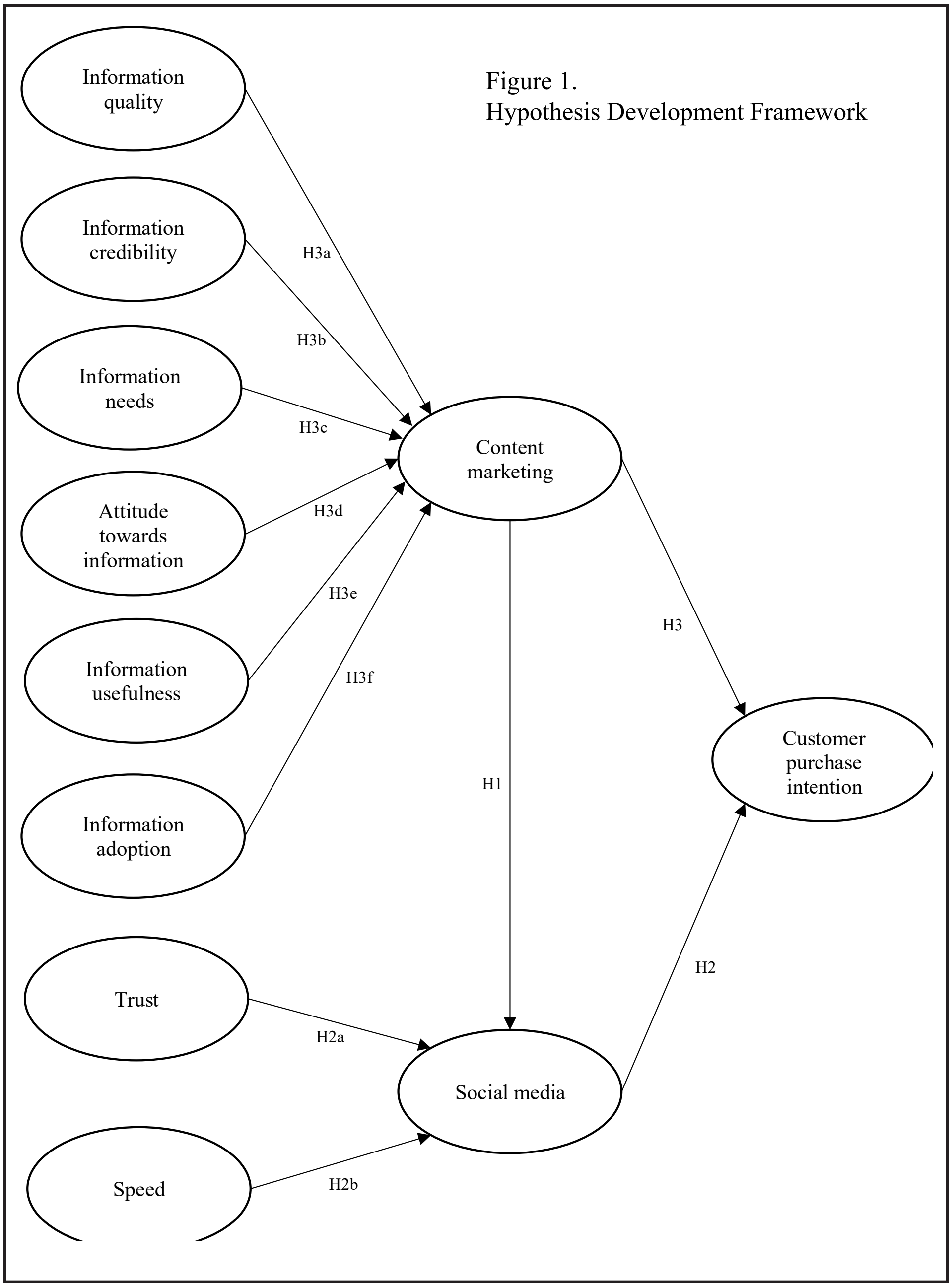

Figure 1.
Hypothesis Development Framework

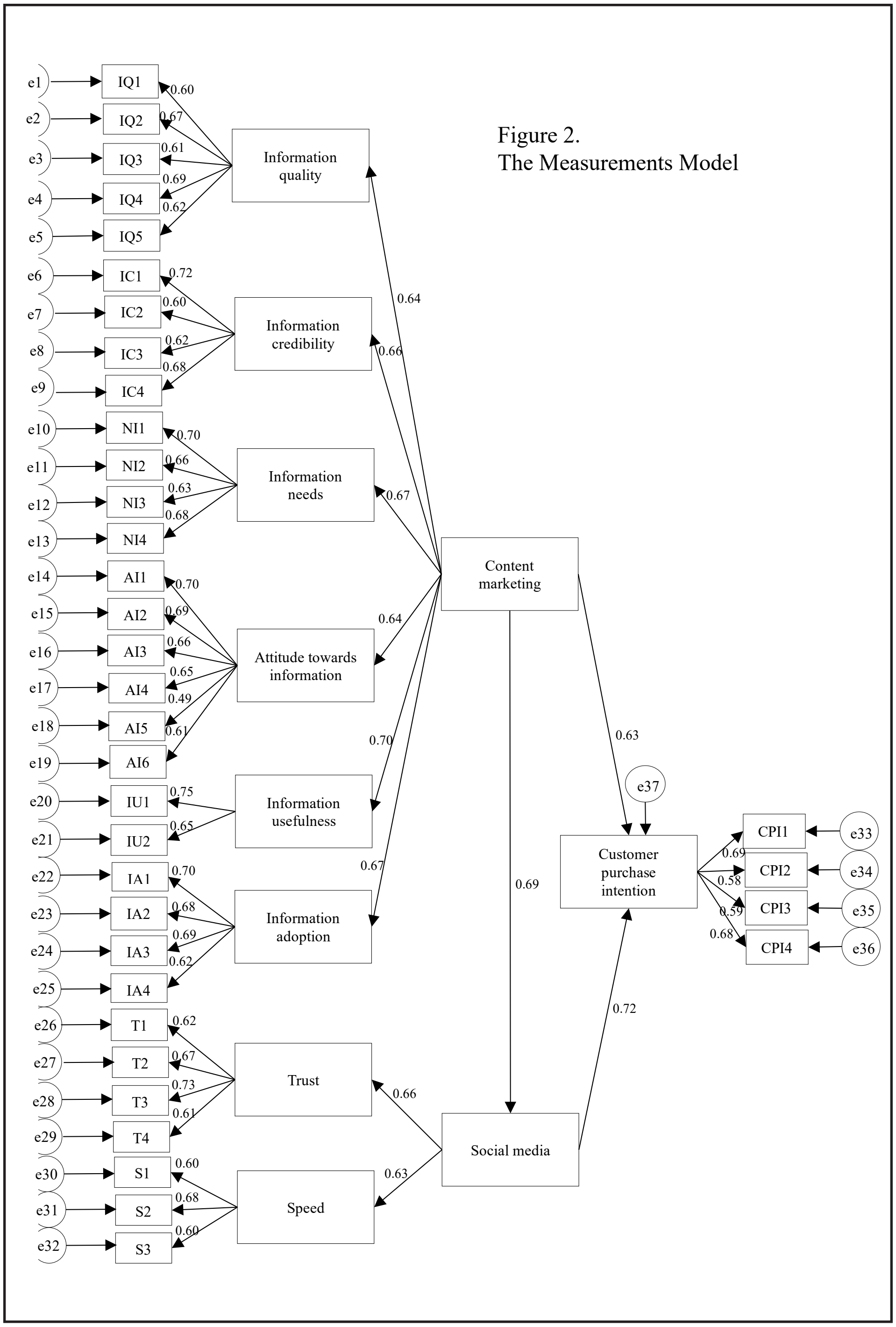

Figure 2.
The Measurements Model

ers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Internal reliability measures the specific research construct by examining the multiple indicators, where all indicators should be related to each other and consistent (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Inter-observer consistency is generally considered an important condition, especially when different observers are involved in a research measurement, which may result in inconsistencies in their ratings. This research study employed internal reliability based on the principle of its different constructs with multiple measures. Cronbach's α is generally considered one of the most useful tools for testing internal reliability (Hair et al., 2010). For examining the internal reliability of this study, Cronbach's α figures are presented in Table 1.

Instrument and Measures

The study evaluated and adapted previous studies to develop the questionnaire items, altering them as necessary to achieve the objective of the study. The survey consisted of four sections: (1) demographic information; (2) variables of content marketing; (3) variables of social media; and (4) customer purchase intention. The questionnaire contained 36 questions: 15 related to content marketing, 7 referring to social media and customer purchase intention, and 4 questions to estimate sampling characteristics. This study employed the measurement tool of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis Testing

For testing the hypotheses this study used structural equation modeling (SEM) via Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) software.

Figure 2 shows the results of the SEM analysis for the hypotheses. The test found that the relationship between content marketing and the social media coefficient estimate was 0.69 (<0.001), which means content marketing had a positive effect on social media. The social media variable trust had a more positive effect on customer purchase intention than speed (trust = 0.66, speed = 0.63). The relationship between social media and customer purchase intention coefficient estimate was

Social media plays a key role in content marketing. This leverages interactions with potential consumers and facilitates the conversation between current consumers and providers. From this perspective, social media has a direct influence on consumers' engagement and purchase intention. The more in-depth and accurate the content marketing, the higher the consumer's intent to book online. This means content marketing in social media can steer customers to successful transactions and encourage them to purchase the products and services again.

Table 1. Reliability assessment for variables.

Multi-Item construct	Number of the measures	Cronbach's Alpha	Type
Content marketing	25	.921	Excellent reliability
Social media	7	.832	High reliability
Customer purchase intention	4	.732	High reliability

Note. The ideal Cronbach's alpha value is considered over than 0.70 by researchers (Hair, 2010). More specifically, as a rule of thumb, a figure of ≤0.90 is considered as excellent reliability, 0.70-0.90 is regarded as high reliability, 0.50-0.70 is viewed as moderate reliability, and below 0.50 is considered as low reliability (Hinton, 2014).

0.72 (<0.05), meaning that social media had a positive effect on customer purchase intention. The most strongly positive content marketing variable influencing customer purchase intention was information usefulness (0.70), followed by information needs (0.67), information adoption (0.67), information credibility (0.66), information quality (0.64), and attitude toward information (0.64), as shown in Figure 2. The six variables of content marketing had a positive influence on customer purchase intention. The relationship between content marketing and the customer purchase intention coefficient estimate was 0.63 (<0.001), indicating that content marketing had a positive effect on customer purchase intention.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) Fitness Index

Table 2 summarizes several indices: $\chi 2/df$ and p-value suggested by Hoyle (1995) as well as the goodness of fit index (GFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) suggested by Browne and Cudeck (1992). The model fitness indices indicate an acceptable model fit based on the Chi-square value: $\chi 2/df = 2.592$, p-value = 0.000, GFI = 0.936, RMSEA = 0.048, and AGFI = 0.802. The results of the social media measures were good: $\chi 2/df = 2.315$, p-value = 0.000, GFI = 0.941, RMSEA = 0.042, AGFI = 0.841. The results of customer purchase intention measures were also good: $\chi 2/df = 1.847$, pvalue = 0.000, GFI = 0.972, RMSEA = 0.039, AGFI = 0.918.

Table 3 summarizes the hypothesis results based on SEM analysis, showing that content marketing positively affects social media (coefficient estimate equals 0.69). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported. The social media variables (1) trust and (2) speed positively influence customer purchase intention. Therefore, hypotheses 2, 2a, and 2b are all supported. The content marketing variables of information quality (0.64), information credibility (0.66), information needs (0.67), attitude toward information (0.64), information usefulness (0.70), and information adoption (0.67) positively affect customer purchase intention. Therefore, hypotheses 3, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, and 3f are all supported. In sum, all hypotheses in this study are supported.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has demonstrated that social media content marketing positively influences customer purchase intention in the Mongolian hotel industry. This suggests that hotel marketers should focus their efforts on leveraging the efficiency and effectiveness of hotel marketing campaigns to collect and evaluate appropriate content marketing materials when launching their marketing campaigns on social media. Hotel marketers should capture the attention of consumers and potential customers as hotels promote their new properties and boost engagement by introducing the brand story, offering greetings, and promoting attractions near the hotels (i.e., "Natural Attractions Surround Hotel and Followers Greeting"), and hotel services (Lo & Fang, 2018). Furthermore, speed and trust in social media influence customer purchase intention. This result further elucidates the positive relationship between digital content marketing (DCM) in the tourism industry (Mathew & Soliman, 2021). Finally, content marketing positively affects customer purchase intention, and information. That is, information usefulness, information needs, information adoption, and information credibility. All play essential roles in content marketing based on this study. This finding further demonstrates that sharing information via social media is positively correlated to customer purchase intention (Yoong & Lian, 2019).

IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Implications

This research offers several implications for scholars. It addresses the knowledge gap regarding the influence of content marketing on hotel customer purchase intention. This study provided meaningful results for each variable investigated. In addition, the research findings revealed the influences of content marketing variables and social media variables on hotel customer purchase intention. Content marketing strategies must be differentiated

Table 2. Content marketing, social media and customer purchase intention measurement

Measures	Threshold	Content marketing Output of statistics	Social media Output of statistics	Customer purchase intention Output of statistics	Result
X^2/df	<3	2.592	2.315	1.847	Good
P-value	>0.05	0.000	0.000	0.000	
GFI	>0.9	0.936	0.941	0.972	Good
RMSEA	<0.05	0.048	0.042	0.039	Good
AGFI	>0.8	0.802	0.841	0.918	Good

Note. n = 233. GFI = goodness-of-fit-index AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit-index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

Table 3. Results of hypothesis

Hypothesis			Coefficient	Influence	Result
Independent variable	Dependent variable				
Content marketing	Social media	H1	0.69	Positive	Supported
Social media	Customer purchase intention	H2	0.72	Positive	Supported
Trust	Social media	H2a	0.66	Positive	Supported
Speed	Social media	H2b	0.63	Positive	Supported
Content marketing	Customer purchase intention	H3	0.63	Positive	Supported
Information quality	Content marketing	H3a	0.64	Positive	Supported
Information credibility	Content marketing	H3b	0.66	Positive	Supported
Information needs	Content marketing	H3c	0.67	Positive	Supported
Attitude towards information	Content marketing	H3d	0.64	Positive	Supported
Information usefulness	Content marketing	H3e	0.70	Positive	Supported
Information adoption	Content marketing	H3f	0.67	Positive	Supported

and focused on the appropriate variables, as some variables appeared to be crucial for hotel customers. Thus, owners of hotels should focus on strengthening their marketing strategy on social media. The results of this study further support the use of a content marketing variables and social media variables, such as those of Mathew and Soliman (2021), Yoong and Lian (2019), Lo and Fang (2018), Park et al. (2007), Prendergast (2010), Chu and Kim, (2011), Cheung (2009), Bailey and Pearson (1983), Lei (2009), and Wu et al. (2010). Also supported as well, is the conceptualization and measurement of content marketing in hotels' social media presentations. The findings of this study expanded the research on social media content marketing in the hotel industry, building on previous studies to offer new insights.

Practical Implications

This study provides useful insights for marketing professionals, managers, and hoteliers. First, this study demonstrates that content marketing variables in social media are essential concerns in improving a hotel's financial revenues and development. Information is a key success factor (KSF) in content marketing. Hotel marketers should manage the hotel information especially focusing on information usefulness for customers. Hotel marketing teams should consider if the information is relevant in the duration of consumers' stay from the side of customers or potential customers' care. This means, providing useful information to help customers get important and updated details of hotel promotional packages, discounts, hotel facilities, tourist attractions, local festivals or events near the hotel.

Second, this research has revealed that content marketing's six variables and social media's two variables can be used as a diagnostic tool to increase customers' purchases and hotels' income. Both trust and speed in social media affect customer purchase intention and are influenced by social media information. To win customer trust, hotel marketers must promptly respond to followers' inquiries and messages with clear, concise, and accurate information. If practical, hotel marketers should strategically respond to customers' questions with thoughtfulness within 24 hours. It is particularly important to oversee crisis issues immediately as many customers and social medias followers of hotels usually pay more attention to critical matters.

In sum, the findings of this study provide managers with valuable insights into the variables that impact hotel customer purchase intention.

Limitations and Future Research

There were several limitations in this research. First, although the age groups of respondents included the most frequent social media users in Mongolia, they may not reflect the nationwide population. In addition, the survey was administered via Google docs, meaning respondents not familiar with online surveys may have been overlooked. Second, the questionnaire was written in English and translated into Mongolian. Naturally, the findings should not be broadly generalized beyond the sample population. The majority of the sample was young adult respondents, between 18 and 29 years old, who are more active social media users than their elders. However, that is the real point to social media communication, i.e., to reach out specifically to identifiable select target markets. Accordingly, results for the major demographic that emerged from the study reflect maximum validity.

This study concluded that social media content marketing has positive effects on customer purchase intention. These variables can be included in additional models to increase the scope of the investigation. Future studies can examine and develop an understanding of content marketing, social media, and hotel customer purchase intention. Future researchers examining this region should research additional variables not covered in this study that may contribute to performance.

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