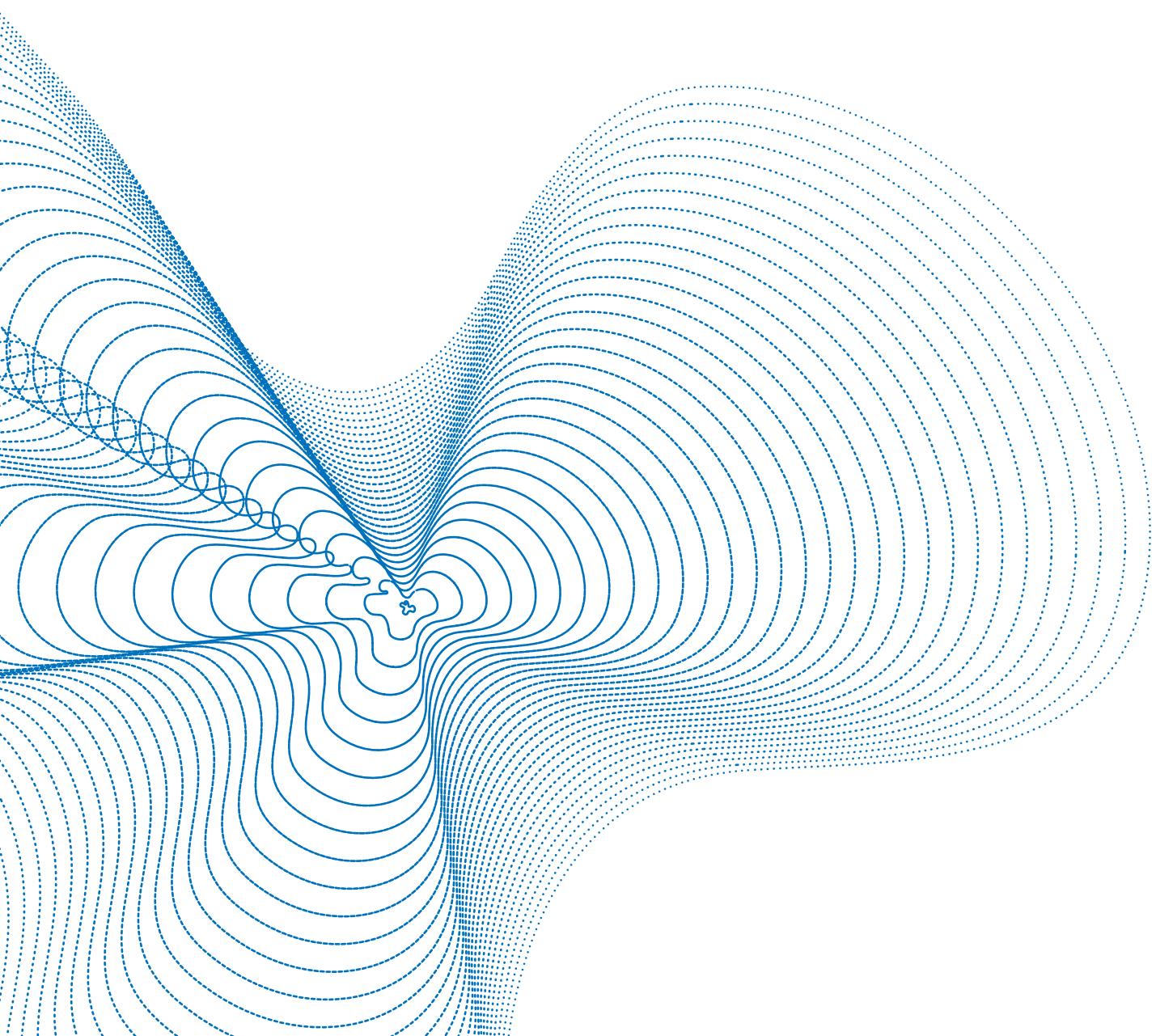


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Introduction

Green Business Practices and Sustainability in Contemporary Industries

Dr Maria Hadjielia Drotarova, Head of Research

The planetary boundaries framework (Rockström et al., 2009) has established the existential imperative for sustainable development, compelling organizations to fundamentally rethink their operational paradigms. As Schaltegger et al. (2016) demonstrate, this transition requires moving beyond compliance to develop business models that harmonize economic, environmental, and social value creation - what Porter and Kramer (2011) term “shared value” strategies. The resulting transformation spans all organizational functions, from supply chain management to customer engagement, demanding innovative approaches to sustainable value generation.

In business and management, digital transformation has emerged as a critical enabler of sustainability. Buhalis and Foerste’s (2015) research on SoCoMo (Social, Contextual, Mobile) marketing reveals how technology facilitates sustainable customer relationships, while Geissdoerfer et al. (2017) provide empirical evidence for the circular economy’s potential to decouple growth from resource consumption. These technological shifts are institutionalized through ESG frameworks that, as Eccles et al. (2014) show, transform sustainability from abstract commitment to measurable organizational practice.

The hospitality sector exemplifies both the challenges and opportunities of sustainable transformation. Buhalis and Sinarta’s (2019) smart tourism ecosystems demonstrate how digital platforms can optimize resource allocation while enhancing service quality. Webster and Ivanov (2022) extend this analysis through their study of service robotics, quantifying automation’s environmental benefits. These technological solutions complement established approaches like ecolabeling (Font & Buckley, 2001) and community-embedded tourism (Sharpley, 2020), creating comprehensive sustainability architectures.

The computing sector embodies sustainability’s central paradox: while digital solutions enable environmental gains, their infrastructure carries significant ecological costs. Energy-efficient architectures (Beloglazov et al., 2012) and blockchain applications (Webster, 2023) exemplify the sector’s dual role as both challenge and solution. This tension underscores the need for systemic approaches that, as Peattie and Belz (2010) argue, fundamentally reconfigure value propositions around sustainability.

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A. Academics' Contributions

A.1 External Academics' Contributions

A.1.1 Decarbonizing Aviation: Legal Frameworks, Policy Actions, and Key Challenges

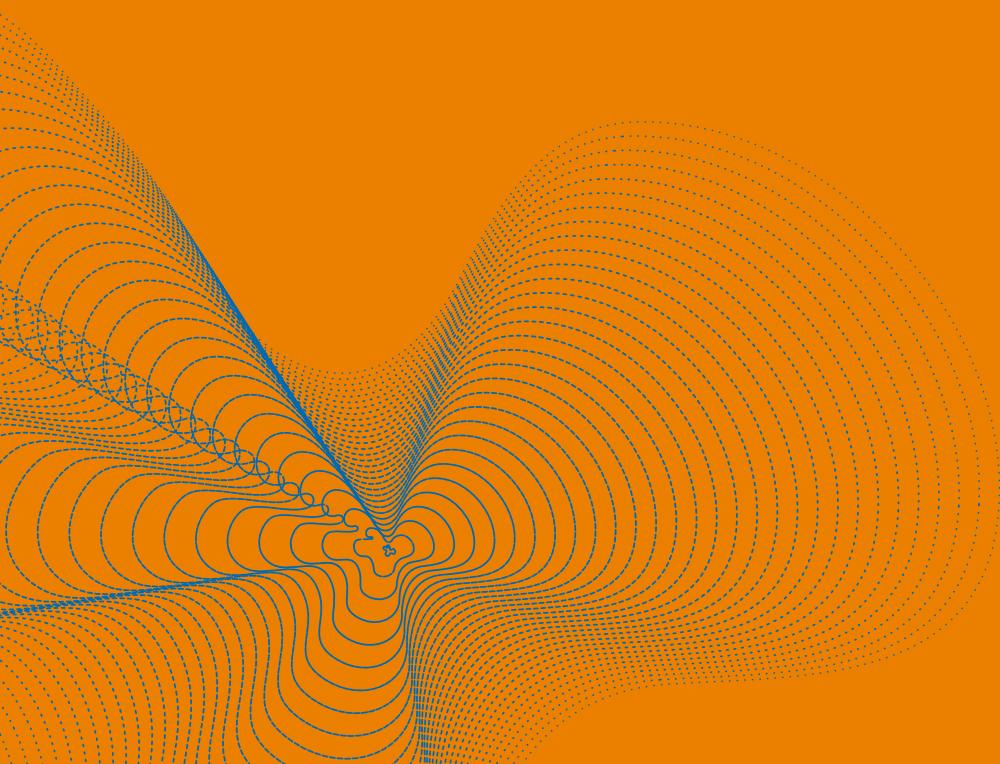
Dr Grzegorz Zajęc, Ph.D.

A.1.2 Generational Differences In Perceptions Of Sustainable Tourism

Dr. Anna Šenková, EngD, Dr. Stela Kolesárová, PhD, Mgr. Erika Kormaníková

A.1.3 Quality Management And Sustainable Initiatives In Tourism Development

Dr. Tünde Dzurov Vargová, PhD



A.1.1

Decarbonizing Aviation: Legal Frameworks, Policy Actions, and Key Challenges

Author:

Dr. Grzegorz Krzysztof Zajac, PhD

Abstract:

The goal for this research is to explore the evolving regulatory, policy, and industry approaches to addressing climate change in civil aviation. It has been examined international frameworks, including ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and the European regulation called "ReFuelEU Aviation Regulation". It has also been discussed the sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) development and the policy approach towards decarbonization, including with the short insight of the legislation in the United States and the United Kingdom. Focusing on Europe, the paper analyzes key initiatives, including the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), the "Fit for 55" package, advancements in air traffic management (Single European Sky), and aviation fuel taxation, showcasing Europe's ambitious climate agenda. Additionally, it highlights industry efforts, particularly IATA's Roadmap to net-zero emissions by 2050, emphasizing the sector's proactive role in achieving sustainability goals. Finally, the paper addresses the challenges of adopting green aviation policies in Europe, ranging from economic and technical constraints to political hurdles. By integrating international, regional, and industry perspectives, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of the pathways and obstacles to achieving a sustainable future in civil aviation.

Keywords: *aviation emissions, climate change, CORSIA, Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), EU ETS, aviation tax,*

Introduction:

Civil aviation has experienced unprecedented growth over the last century, contributing significantly to global mobility and economic development. However, similar to other modes of transport, it is also a source of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, contributing to environmental issues. The question is, whether this impact is significant or irrelevant for the environment. When we look at the figures, the aviation industry was in 2022 responsible for 2% of global CO₂ emissions, and its emissions are expected to rise in the coming decades if no significant action is taken (European

an Commission, 2024, November 12). There are scientific studies stating that in recent years the level of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere has been decreasing in various sectors (Ritchie et al., 2020). Addressing climate change in civil aviation requires coordinated efforts at multiple levels: through international rules, national and regional policies, and concrete industry actions. This paper explores these three aspects, highlighting current regulations, emerging policies, and the necessary actions to mitigate the environmental impact of aviation while fostering sustainable development.

Theoretical background:

The goal of this article is to explore the intersection of climate change and civil aviation, analyzing the existing regulatory frameworks, policies, and actions taken to address aviation's environmental impacts. The study aims to assess the effectiveness and limitations of current policies, identify areas for improvement, and provide recommendations that balance aviation sector growth with environmental sustainability. The research problem is to present international and regional rules and mechanisms concerning civil aviation and its impact on climate changes together with the development of air transport contribution to climate change and the effectiveness of current policies in achieving sustainable aviation. While civil aviation contributes to global greenhouse gas emissions, its impact on climate change may not be as significant as commonly perceived. The hypothesis is that, the current legal frameworks and policy actions aimed at decarbonizing aviation contribute to mitigate the impact of aviation to the climate and environment, however may pose significant challenges to the sector's transition, suggesting that a gradual, phased implementation would be more effective in achieving long-term sustainability without overwhelming the industry.

Methodology:

In order to analyze the research problem and goals, as well to verify the hypothesis, the following method have been applied: review of documents method, and literature analysis method. The author has based his findings on comprehensive review of academic literature to understand current perspectives on aviation's environmental impact and regulatory approaches in mitigating emissions. Apart from that, a key part of the analysis involves an extensive document review, covering international, regional, and national regulations, norms, and conventions related to aviation and environmental protection. This includes analysis of legally binding agreements, and voluntary commitments. This allows for

a comprehensive understanding of current rules, policies, and actions taken to address aviation's impact on climate change, with particular attention to the ICAO's CORSIA framework, the EU's Emissions Trading System (ETS) for aviation, and IPCC reports on aviation emissions. It has also been conducted a policy analysis, examining how various aviation-related policies, regulations, and international agreements are designed, implemented, and what is the civil aviation's impact on environment.

Research and discussion:

The paper delves into the critical intersection of international, regional, and industry-level efforts to address climate change within the context of civil aviation. It begins by exploring the international rules governing aviation emissions, with a focus on frameworks such as ICAO's Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) and the Paris Agreement, which form the cornerstone of global climate commitments for the aviation sector.

Building on these global agreements, the discussion transitions to policy and regulatory measures aimed at greener aviation, including the promotion of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), the ReFuelEU Aviation Regulation, and legislative developments in the United States and the United Kingdom. These initiatives highlight the increasing emphasis on decarbonizing aviation through innovation and regulation.

At the European level, the paper examines policy initiatives that strive to align aviation with broader climate goals. Key measures include the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), the "Fit for 55" package, advancements in air traffic management through the Single European Sky (SES) initiative, and debates surrounding the taxation of aviation fuels. Together, these policies reflect Europe's ambitious agenda for reducing aviation-related emissions.

The role of the aviation industry is also scrutinized, with attention given to industry-led actions such as IATA's Roadmap to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. These voluntary commitments complement regulatory efforts, showcasing a unified vision for a sustainable future in aviation.

Finally, the paper addresses challenges facing the adoption of green aviation policies in Europe, including technical, economic, and political barriers. It considers how these challenges might impede the sector's transition to sustainable practices, offering a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved.

By integrating these perspectives, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the rules, policies, actions, and obstacles shaping the decarbonization of civil aviation.

The article is a concise approach to this complex research issue. The author has synthetically presented a broad issue and has analyzed the research problem in an orderly manner. This topic is rarely discussed in the literature.

International rules governing aviation emissions:

International aviation is not only a key part of modern life and connecting people and economies around the globe, but also contributes around 2% of global CO₂ emissions. With the urgency to combat climate change, the international aviation sector faces increasing pressure to reduce its environmental impact. At the same time, there is a need to maintain the key role of global mobility and economic growth.

To tackle this challenge, the international institutions show their responsibility in this regard and establish some global action. This part of research will take a closer look at the rules governing aviation emissions, namely CORSIA and Paris Agreement, exploring how they are designed, their effectiveness, and the challenges faced in their implementation.

In the beginning of my analysis, it should be mentioned a general approach to climate change policy. An important regulatory framework is the Paris Agreement, which was adopted on December 12, 2015 during the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21), is a landmark international treaty aimed at addressing climate change. Its central goal is to limit global warming to well below 2°C, with a target of 1.5°C, compared to pre-industrial levels, by the end of this century. This requires nations to significantly reduce emissions and transition to cleaner energy sources. This ambitious agreement involves nearly every country in the world, which voluntarily commits to reducing their greenhouse gas emissions through nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Voigt (2023) admits that the Paris Agreement sets a minimum standard for action on reducing greenhouse gas emissions required by States, which is relevant in fulfilling their duties. While the Paris Agreement does not specifically target aviation, the sector plays a significant role in the global emissions landscape. As a result, aviation is indirectly affected by the agreement's broader climate goals, especially through initiatives like CORSIA, innovations in more fuel-efficient technologies, including sustainable aviation fuels (SAF), and electric aircrafts.

The regulation of civil aviation's environmental impact is primarily governed by international organizations, particularly the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a specialized United Nations agency. One of the key international regulation addressing aviation emissions is the Car-

bon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), adopted by ICAO in 2016 (ICAO, Annex No 16, Vol.4).

CORSIA is a global initiative aimed at mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from international air travel. Its primary goal is to cap the growth of CO₂ emissions from international aviation at 2020 levels and ultimately reduce these emissions to more sustainable levels. As a market-based mechanism, CORSIA allows airlines to offset emissions by purchasing credits (certificates) from approved carbon reduction projects, such as renewable energy initiatives and programs improving energy efficiency.

Airlines, that exceed their emissions targets will be required to purchase certificates to offset their excess emissions. These offsets come from Certified Emission Reduction (CER) projects, which are carefully checked for their environmental impact. Initially, from 2021 to 2023, participation in CORSIA was voluntary, with countries choosing whether to join. Between 2024 and 2026, CORSIA will become mandatory for all international flights departing from ICAO member countries that agree to participate in the program. In the third phase, from 2027 onwards, this will be mandatory for all international flights (Aviation Benefits).

This approach is designed to limit the growth of aviation emissions in a cost-effective manner while promoting the development of more sustainable aviation technologies and alternative fuels. Although CORSIA represents a major step forward, and is a first international regulation to address emissions for the aviation transport sector, it is also criticized for its reliance on offsetting rather than directly reducing emissions. Heuwieser (2021) emphasizes that CORSIA only covers a small part of aviation emissions and that the system is based on compensation and does not take into account other effects than CO₂, which are responsible for more than doubling global warming. She emphasizes that the reduction in aviation emissions is due to reduced supply and demand, mainly in the countries of the so-called Rich North, including the reduction in short-haul flights. These elements are important, but it must be taken into account that aviation is a pillar of the global system of economic connections, facilitates the flow of international trade and services and opens up development prospects for the workforce in various countries of the world – global village (Heuwieser, 2021).

Policy and rules towards greener aviation:

Many countries and regions are formulating policies to ensure that the aviation industry contributes to climate goals. These policies often include economic instruments, fuel ef-

ficiency standards, and incentives for the development of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF).

The definition of SAF can be found in EU Regulation 2023/2405, so-called ReFuelEU Aviation Regulation (European Union, 2023). This legislation is part of Fit for 55 package . According to Article 3 (7) of the ReFuelEU Aviation Regulation, sustainable aviation fuel is either a synthetic aviation fuel, or aviation biofuel, or recycled carbon aviation biofuel. Moreover, a gradual increase of SAF share in the total composition of aviation fuel was also determined and its minimum values that will have to be implemented on the given dates. According to the guidelines, these will be the following values: starting from January 2025, a minimum share of 2 % of SAF; starting from January 2030, there will be a minimum share of 6% of SAF, but in 2050, there will be a minimum share of SAF at the level of 70% of the whole aviation fuel product (European Union, 2023, Annex 1).

SAF represents a crucial innovation in the aviation sector's efforts to reduce its carbon footprint and transition toward sustainability. SAF is derived from renewable and waste-based sources, such as used cooking oil, agricultural residues, and algae. Unlike traditional fossil-based jet fuels, SAF can reduce life-cycle greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by up to 80%, compared to conventional jet fuel (Wang et al., 2024). However, its widespread adoption requires robust policies and coordinated efforts among public entities like governments and international organizations, and private entities, including airline manufacturers, engine manufacturers, and many more.

In the United States, the “Sustainable Skies Act” (U.S. Congress. House, 2021) provides tax credits to airlines that use SAF under the Inflation Reduction Act, offering up to \$1.75 per gallon for SAF (McConnell, 2024) that meets specific emissions reduction criteria. These measures aim to make SAF more competitive and attract private investment in production. In the UK, a reward policy has been adopted. On 19 July 2022, the Advanced Fuel Fund was established by the UK government’s Department for Transport. The fund allocated £165 million for grants to companies producing and conducting research and development on SAF (UK’s Department for Transport, 2023). This instrument fits into the national Net-Zero strategy announced in 2021. It is expected to operate until 31 March 2025 (Advanced Fuels Fund).

According to IATA, sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) could contribute to around 65% of the emission reductions needed for aviation to achieve net zero CO₂ emissions by 2050

¹The Paris Agreement is an international treaty adopted within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016.

(IATA, SAF, 2024). ICAO has emphasized SAF as a key element of its CORSIA initiative. Airlines using SAF can reduce their offsetting obligations, which is an incentive to adopt them in fuel product. SAF policies drive economic growth by creating green jobs in fuel production and fostering innovation. Moreover, they align with global climate goals, such as those outlined in the Paris Agreement, by supporting the decarbonization of aviation.

Specialists hold varying opinions on the effectiveness of measures implemented to address climate change, particularly concerning the ReFuelEU Aviation regulations at both national and EU levels (Pilszyk et al., 2024). However, we cannot put aside our efforts to have a cleaner air. Sustainable Aviation Fuel policies are vital for achieving the aviation industry's environmental objectives without losing a crucial role of aviation development in air travel and air mobility.

European Policy Initiatives:

European Union (EU) policy initiatives to mitigate aviation's environmental impact have evolved significantly over the past two decades. These policies aim to address the rising emissions and environmental footprint of air transport as the EU pursues its ambitious climate goals.

There has been a debate over how to reduce the impact of air transport on the environment over the last decades. The European Union has implemented several initiatives in this area, and some of them will be analyzed further in this paper. These are:

- a) the inclusion of aviation in the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), together with the "Fit for 55" package,
- b) improving air traffic management,
- c) the issue of aviation fuel taxation.

Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), and "Fit for 55" package

There has been a discussion for many years about including air transport in the scope of the European Emissions Trading System (EU ETS). Trading in allowances involves setting a limit on the total emissions from a group of entities and then letting the market determine the cost of each tonne of emissions. This method is likely to be an important element of the future strategy to combat climate change.

ETS was originally launched in 2005 and it was designed to limit greenhouse gas emissions across energy-intensive industries. In 2012, the idea was, that ETS was to be extended to all flights from and to the (European Economic Area) EEA zone, requiring airlines to purchase allowances

to cover their emissions. However, due to the huge pressure from international organizations (e.g. ICAO) and industry (including airlines, aircraft manufacturers), only the intra-European flights were covered by the EU ETS system (Rao, 2023). This approach aims to gradually reduce emissions, effectively convincing airlines to invest in cleaner technology and more efficient practices. In 2022, aviation emissions in Europe accounted for 3.8% to 4% of the EU's total GHG emissions (European Commission, 2024, November 5). According to the 2019 European Green Deal, which aims to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, it is assumed that emissions in the entire transport sector will be reduced by 90% by that time compared to the base year 1990 (European Commission, 2019). However, it did not stop at these assumptions. The 2021 "Fit for 55" package proposed a radical tightening of the ETS limits, as well as a reduction in free allowances for aviation.

Due to numerous comments on the issue of including air transport in the strict restrictions resulting from the ETS, further analyses were carried out and in a revised form, in February 2023, the European Parliament, together with the Council of the EU, reached a political agreement on this issue. According to it, a gradual phase-out of these free allowances is planned by 2026 according to the following mechanism: 25% in 2024, 50% in 2025 and 100% from 2026 (Council of the European Union, 2023). This means that allowances will be auctioned in their entirety from 2026. It was also decided that the EU ETS emissions trading system will cover civil aviation in the scope of intra-EU flights (including to Switzerland and the United Kingdom), while for operations to third countries (except the above), the ICAO CORSIA system will apply until 2027. As regards the latter, it was stipulated that in the absence of satisfactory results in the implementation of these targets, the European Commission will propose in 2025, after analysis, the inclusion of all flights in the EU ETS system (Council of the European Union, 2023; this is a proposal to amend the par.28 (b) of the Directive 2003/87/EC).

Improving air traffic management:

Another issue is air traffic management. Research is increasing the scope of future possibilities, while in the short term there is great potential in more efficient air traffic management. An important approach is the process of defragmenting the European sky, which has been reflected in the

²Fit for 55 Package is a set of 13 legislative acts, which were introduced by European Commission on July 14, 2021. All of these proposals have been adopted in the years 2021-2024 and are legally binding laws.

Single European Sky (SES) concept. The defragmentation of European airspace is primarily embodied in the Single European Sky (SES) framework, initiated by the European Union in 2004. The SES framework consists of several key regulations, with two major legislative packages known as SES I (2004) and SES II (2009), and further reforms proposed in SES II+ (2013) and the more recent SES2+ proposal (2024), which aims to modernize air traffic management (ATM) further.

This initiative plays a critical role in reducing aviation's environmental impact and improving operational efficiency in the whole Europe. It is very important for safety of air travel, as fragmentation leads to inefficient flight routes, longer flight times, increased fuel consumption, and, consequently, higher carbon emissions. By creating a unified airspace, the SES initiative aims to streamline air traffic management, enabling airlines to use direct routes and reduce delays. This results in substantial fuel savings and emissions reductions, contributing significantly to the European Union's climate goals. Additionally, SES improves overall safety, increases airspace capacity, and reduces congestion, supporting a more efficient and environmentally friendly aviation sector.

Aviation fuel taxation:

One of the initiatives of the European Union (EU) to fight against climate change is an issue of aviation fuel taxation. Recently, it has become more necessary initiative in order to be in line with the goal to reduce carbon footprint to 2050 in accordance with EU environmental policy. This is a crucial tool in reducing carbon emissions from the aviation sector. Almost all data show, that air travel is increasing, especially the high demand for short-haul flights. It is worth noticing, that the introduction of aviation fuel taxation represents a significant shift for an industry that has traditionally enjoyed tax exemptions on kerosene under international agreements (both multilateral and bilateral). However, the new EU policy in this regard has the goal to encourage sustainable practices, promote the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), and reduce emissions from the sector.

As it was already mentioned, until recently air carriers benefited from specific tax exemptions for kerosene, which was linked to the relevant provisions of the Chicago Convention. Additionally, in bilateral agreements on air transport there was always included a clause on exemption from all fees, duties and other taxes on aviation fuel. Interested parties granted each other such a privilege, and it was a practice all over the world.

We should look back when did it all begin. The European Union had already proposed in the 2001 White Paper on

Transport to abolish the tax exemption for kerosene only on intra-Community (now intra-EU) flights (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). However, this approach was strongly criticized due to the discriminatory provisions against other third-country carriers operating intra-EU flights. The European Commission has put forward various proposals, one of which was to modify existing bilateral air transport agreements to introduce clauses enabling taxation of aviation fuel. Such a solution was welcomed and found wide acceptance.

Directive 2003/96 of 2003 allowed fuel for the purpose of air navigation to be exempt from all taxes (Council of the European Union, 2003, Article 14 par. 1.b). The exception to this rule is domestic flights or existing provisions in bilateral air transport agreements. Existing tax exemption provisions are one of the most fundamental freedoms that air carriers can enjoy. There are positions to tax aviation fuel, as the argument is that fuel for other means of transport is not exempt from taxes. One of the environmental organizations in the United Kingdom, The Aviation Environment Federation (AEF), in September 2024 submitted its position to the Treasury Department, demanding taxation of aviation fuel (Aviation Environment Federation, 2024). Their arguments focus on the issue of potential revenue for the state budget, indicating that by imposing a tax at a rate similar to that for passenger cars, the state budget would increase annually by approximately GBP 12 billion (Aviation Environment Federation, 2024). The organization even goes further in its position and argues that if the tax were higher, it would also help to meet some of the climate commitments related to civil aviation.

There are various research studies indicating the consequences of taxation of aviation fuel. According to a 2021 report prepared for the European Commission, applying a minimum tax rate of €0.33 per liter on kerosene could reduce CO₂ emissions from intra-EU flights by 11% by 2030, while pointing out that the introduction of this tax will lead to a 10% reduction in the number of flights compared to 2016 levels (Ricardo, 2021). This may result in the flight frequency remaining unchanged from 2016 levels, or even reduced in some regions (Ricardo, 2021). Similar position is stressed by Bernardo et al. adding to this, that introducing taxes on flight tickets will reduce the number of flights per airline-route by 12% on average, which will result in a 14% reduction in carbon emissions (Bernardo et al, 2024). However, it must be stressed, that the economic impact of such a tax could be substantial. The proposed kerosene tax could increase operational costs for some airlines, leading to higher ticket prices. This situation can potentially affect demand and regional connectivity. Low-cost airlines, which depend

on minimal operating costs and attract passengers through low-priced fares, would face significant risks.

Another argument is the risk of lower flight safety. If fuel continues to be exempt from tax in non-EU countries, but is taxed in EU member states, carriers may take advantage of this situation by refuelling in countries where the tax does not apply. The pursuit of financial savings may therefore cause safety considerations to fade into the background. However, the discussion on taxing aviation fuel is still ongoing and, in an era of increasing awareness of climate change and the need to take care of the natural environment, it can be expected that gradual solutions to this issue will soon appear.

Due to the fact that the implementation of the above actions leads only to a partial solution to the problem of the negative impact of aviation on the environment, further steps are needed to change this situation.

Actions by the Aviation Industry:

The aviation sector has recognized the need for a coordinated global effort, leading to several voluntary initiatives aimed at reducing emissions. Many airlines and aviation companies have pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, aligning with the goals of the Paris Agreement. For example, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has set a target for the aviation industry to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 (IATA, 2024, p.7). In order to achieve this goal, IATA published several strategies during the last years adjusting them to the current fulfillment of these goals. IATA has established the following Roadmap and an action within the three stages (IATA, 2024, p.9 onwards):

- a) immediate action until the end of 2025 – unlocking eligible emission units (EEU) in the CORSIA system, increasing the share of sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) from renewable sources in the fuel mix, as well as lower carbon aviation fuels (LCAF), investing in new technologies to develop more sustainable aviation fuels,
- b) mid-term policy action 2026-2030 – eliminating barriers to the distribution and end use of SAF, including enabling access to the existing fuel structure, increasing the diversification of the scale of cleaner aviation fuels, deepening research and development work on new technologies in the field of decarbonisation,
- c) long-term policy action 2031-2050 – periodic reviews of the implementation of climate policy in aviation; further innovations in the development and production of non-biological SAF.

³The “Fit for 55” package is a set of proposals for 13 legal acts, which was proposed on 14 July 2021 by the European Commission. See: European Commission, 2021).

Airlines such as British Airways, Delta, and Lufthansa have outlined roadmaps for achieving these targets through a mix of SAF, operational efficiency improvements, and investment in emerging technologies. IAG Group has committed USD 865 million in SAF investments so far (British Airways, 2024). British Airlines (2024) sets target of 10% SAF by 2030. The American carrier DELTA has set itself a similar goal (Clancy, 2024). Meanwhile, German Lufthansa wants to halve its net CO2 emissions by 2030 compared to 2019 (Lufthansa, 2024), and have a 6% SAF share in the total fuel product (Surgenor, 2024). Not only airlines, but also aviation manufacturers are actively investing in more fuel-efficient aircraft and exploring alternative propulsion systems. Airbus is developing hydrogen-powered aircraft, aiming to launch the world’s first zero-emission commercial aircraft by 2035 (Airbus, 2024). Boeing has committed to ensuring that all of its aircraft are capable of flying on 100% SAF by 2030 (Boeing 2020).

Airlines are focusing on improving operational efficiencies to reduce carbon footprint. Measures such as optimizing flight routes, reducing aircraft weight, and improving air traffic management can significantly cut emissions. For example, the Single European Sky initiative seeks to modernize Europe’s air traffic management system to reduce delays and improve efficiency, leading to reduced emissions.

Despite progress, significant challenges remain in achieving a targeted goals in aviation sector. The reliance on carbon offsetting in schemes like CORSIA has been criticized for not directly reducing emissions. Additionally, the development and introduction of SAF are hindered by high costs and limited availability. However, the potential for innovation in sustainable aviation technologies offers hope for the future. Investment in SAF production, electric and hydrogen aircraft, and more efficient air traffic management systems could pave the way for a low-carbon aviation industry.

Challenges for Adopting Green Policy for Aviation in Europe:

The civil aviation sector in Europe is under increasing pressure to align with ambitious environmental goals, both

⁴The Single European Sky (SES) is an initiative by the European Union aimed at improving the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of air traffic management across Europe. Its goal is to reorganize European airspace to reduce fragmentation, enhance coordination, and optimize flight operations, in order to minimize delays and environmental impacts. By introducing harmonized regulations and advanced technologies, SES aims to meet growing air traffic demands while reducing costs and carbon emissions. SES was a package of 4 regulations introduced in 2004, which were later amended.

those outlined in the international CORSIA system, as well as in the European Green Deal and Fit for 55 package. These initiatives aim to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, where aviation should be a model for all to follow. However, adopting green policies for aviation faces different challenges, including technological, economic, and regulatory hurdles.

The biggest challenges are:

- a) rise in operational costs,
- b) reduction in the competitiveness of European airlines,
- c) higher airline ticket prices,
- d) reduced flight demand,
- e) job losses and possible bankruptcy of airlines.

The European Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package represent master ambitions by the European Union (EU) to combat climate change by drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions across various sectors, including aviation. While these initiatives are vital steps toward a more sustainable future, they bring with them significant challenges, particularly for the aviation sector. As it is well known, aviation is contributing to global emissions, policymakers have intensified regulatory pressure on the industry. However, adopting the European Green Deal and Fit for 55 could lead to some negative consequences for European airlines, regional economies, and employment.

One of the primary challenges is the anticipated rise in operational costs for European airlines. Under the new regulations, the aviation sector is subject to an expanded Emissions Trading System (ETS), requiring airlines to purchase more allowances or offsets to account for their emissions. This means airlines will face substantial additional expenses to meet emissions targets, which will likely be passed on to consumers through increased ticket prices. Furthermore, airlines are required under Fit for 55 regulations to use each year more and more Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) in a product fuel. SAF is currently much more expensive than traditional jet fuel, which will make especially for low-cost carriers financially challenging. These rising operational costs could impact profitability and lead to higher costs for

⁵Since 2013, the SES II+ package has been the subject of numerous discussions not only among the Member States themselves, but also among the aviation community, including air carriers and European aviation non-governmental organizations. It was not until 2024 that an agreement was negotiated. The Council approved this project on 26.09.2024. The legislative package is pending approval by the European Parliament (according to information on the date of publication of the article, i.e. 15.11.2024, there is still no relevant decision). See more: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)659421](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2020)659421), access: 15.11.2024.

passengers, which may ultimately reduce demand for air travel.

A direct consequence of the new regulatory order is the potential reduction in the competitiveness of European airlines, particularly on international routes. Contrary to European airlines, non-EU carriers are often subject to less stringent emissions requirements, allowing them to operate with lower compliance costs. This disparity may erode the competitive advantage of European carriers, especially on long-haul routes where they compete with carriers from regions not bound by the same regulations.

Due to the fact, that airlines will face increased operational costs, it will have consequences to consumers, as air travel is likely to become more expensive. This, in turn, could reduce demand for flights, which would have a negative effect on regional connectivity and the broader economy. Many remote or less populated regions in Europe rely mostly on affordable air travel for tourism, business, and access to essential services. Higher ticket prices may impact these regions' economies and potentially causing some airports to lose revenue. Smaller regional airports could face reduced flight frequencies or even loss of services, and face bankruptcy.

One of the challenges of Green policy towards aviation are also significant implications for employment. As airlines face higher costs and possible reductions in demand, job losses in the aviation sector could occur. This would impact pilots, flight attendants, ground-handling staff, and workers in industries closely tied to aviation, such as tourism and airport services. Additionally, transformation to using SAF and electric technologies will necessitate retraining and reskilling of the personnel, which may be challenging, particularly for workers in smaller companies with limited resources.

As it was analyzed above in the paper, adopting green policies for aviation in Europe is a necessary but complex endeavor. While these policies can significantly reduce the sector's environmental impact, there are still many challenges to tackle. Collaborative efforts between governments, industries, and international organizations will be essential to overcoming these challenges and ensuring a sustainable future for European aviation.

Conclusion:

Climate change presents an urgent challenge for the civil aviation industry, which must balance its growth with the need to reduce its environmental impact. International rules

⁶Under Article 24 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, 7 December 1944 (Chicago Convention), states exempted fuel from all fees and duties on the basis of reciprocity.

like CORSIA and the EU ETS, national policies promoting SAF and zero-emission technologies, and industry initiatives toward net-zero emissions are all essential components of a comprehensive strategy. However, continued innovation, stronger regulatory frameworks, and collaborative efforts across governments and industries will be crucial to achieving meaningful reductions in aviation's carbon footprint and ensuring sustainable development in the sector.

To sum up the above analysis, these policy initiatives underscore the EU's commitment to reducing the environmental impact of air transport and achieving its climate objectives. The combination of regulatory measures like the EU ETS, technological advancements from SES-SESAR, and the shift to SAFs under ReFuelEU policy demonstrates a comprehensive approach to tackling aviation emissions. As Europe will pursue its 2050 climate neutrality goal, these initiatives are crucial steps in aligning the aviation industry with a sustainable future.

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A.1.2

Generational Differences In Perceptions Of Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to explore the differences in the perception of sustainable tourism from the perspective of the three generations studied, X, Y and Z. To find out the differences in the perception of sustainable tourism between the generations, we conducted a questionnaire survey on a sample of 166 randomly selected respondents from the general population. There were 50 respondents from Generation X, 56 respondents from Generation Y and 60 respondents from Generation Z. The most significant differences between the generations in terms of perceptions of sustainable tourism are the source of information about this form of tourism. What these generations have in common, however, is a low level of awareness of sustainable tourism and therefore a lack of consideration of economic, environmental and social aspects when planning a holiday. In this sense, the main conclusion is that, in the field of sustainable tourism, it is necessary first to improve the marketing and create the necessary infrastructure before addressing its further perception by travellers.

Keywords: Sustainable tourism. Generation X. Generation Y. Generation Z.

Introduction:

There are currently several studies dealing with the issue of sustainable tourism, but few of them directly address the differences in perceptions of this form of tourism between different age groups of travellers. As the age of the traveller is very closely related to the perception of sustainable/eco-logical services, this topic is worth investigating. In practice, we often find that younger travellers tend to be much more aware of the impact of their holiday than older people, who are also aware of the potential impact of their holiday on the environment, but do not consider this to be as important a factor. This is also related to the purchasing behaviour of younger people, who are more concerned about the material of the product, how the product can be recycled, etc. This

buying behaviour is similar when it comes to buying a holiday. Younger people are now much more consistent in their holiday choices than older people who prefer to buy holiday packages directly from a travel agent or agency. These travellers are comfortable with a third party taking all the hassle out of planning a holiday. Younger travellers, on the other hand, want to know in detail where they are going, what the cultural, historical and natural potential of the destination is, how to get there by transport, what the accommodation and food options are, and so on. At the same time, these travellers often read various discussion forums, blogs or even follow influencers who give their followers advice on how to travel, what to look for when renting a car, etc. At the same time, they often read reviews and take further advice from them, as feedback from other travellers is important to them. They also behave similarly in their perceptions of different types of tourism (e.g. adventure tourism is more attractive to younger travellers than to older ones).

In the case of our research, we have therefore focused on differences in perceptions of sustainable tourism, which is one of the new forms of tourism at present, and assessed these differences in relation to the three main generations (X, Y and Z) that currently make up the largest group of travellers.

Theoretical background of the solved problem:

The concept of sustainable tourism emerged in the early 1990s by combining the ideas and principles of sustainable development with tourism. This new concept was quickly accepted and promoted by many international and national organisations at the time. For example, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the World Conservation Union and the European Federation of National and Nature Parks defined sustainable tourism in 1991 as the development, marketing and management of all types of tourism with consideration for the social and economic environment and the conservation of natural and cultural resources for future generations (Zamfir and Corbos 2015).

Sustainable tourism takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts and addresses the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and host communities. Sustainable tourism should make optimal use of environmental resources, which are a key element of tourism development, preserve essential ecological processes and contribute to the protection of natural heritage and biodiversity; respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, protect their built and living cultural heritage

and traditional values, and contribute to intercultural understanding and tolerance; ensure viable, long-term economic operations that provide socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are equitably shared, including stable employment and income opportunities and social services for host communities, and contribute to poverty alleviation (GSTC 2022).

Sustainable tourism development not only benefits the destination and its stakeholders, but also contributes to global sustainability by reducing the carbon footprint, supporting the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns (Rashid 2023).

When we talk about sustainable tourism, it can take several forms. According to Zelenka and Páskova (2012), it can be different forms of ecotourism, geotourism, cultural tourism and responsible tourism. Závadná (2015) adds to the listed forms green tourism, agrotourism, cottage tourism and holiday home tourism.

As for the definition of a generation, this inevitably provokes heated debate as individuals differ in their social, cultural and economic backgrounds. Some scholars even refuse to accept the concept of generations. In their eyes, it is virtually impossible to apply one definition to all, as it encompasses many different people (Liesem 2017). Bejtkovsky (2016) argues that generations are shaped much more by history than by chronological dates.

Dědová and Vindišová (2020) suggest that the basis of generational theory is a group of people born within twenty years. Huang and Lu (2017) state that this group is 18-22 years old and shares common characteristics and values based on similar historical experiences, socio-economic changes and current technological advances.

Považanová and Lajčiaková (2020) describe a generation as “an identifiable group that shares similar birth years and is linked by the same significant events that occur at critical stages of development. From this perspective, a parallel can be found with the theory of the ontogeny of the individual, as well as the development of the group that individuals at the same ontogenetic stage form”.

Huang and Lu (2017) argue that they attribute the characteristics that define generations to collective memory, rather than to their age. Collective memory is awakened by significant political, economic, cultural and technological events or environmental resources, especially those that were scarce for each generation.

The division of generations by age varies slightly in the literature. Mammadli (2023) and Bravo et al. (2019) report the following divisions in their papers:

- Generation X (born 1965-1980),
- Generation Y (born 1981-1994),
- Generation Z (born 1995-2010).

Michael Dimock (2019) divides the generations by year of birth as follows: Generation X from 1965-1980, Generation Y from 1981-1996, Generation Z from 1997-2012. Gazzola et al (2020) argue that Generation X was born between 1965-1979, Generation Y between 1980-1994 and Generation Z after 1995.

As noted above, some scholars reject the concept of generations. In her article on intergenerational differences, Bach (2022) states that there are no differences because there are no generations. She argues that the social sciences do not have, and are unlikely to have, a methodology that can test the hypothesised influence of a hypothetical generation on the values, attitudes and behaviours of its members. For example, the influence of the times or a particular social experience such as war or crisis does not explain the formation of certain characteristics of a generation. Generations are divided by a range of birth years, but do not correctly assume that the impact of a particular period only affects one age group. A war or a pandemic did not only affect young people, just as it is not only young people who have their mobile phones in their hands all the time. It cannot be assumed that people born within 20 years of each other have the same values and attitudes, like the concept of horoscopes, where people born on the same day are very different.

As an alternative, a lifelong development approach is proposed. This approach recognises that a group of people share the same historical phenomena but focuses more on the development and lifelong journey of people. There are unique events in an individual's life, such as job loss, divorce, serious illness, that the person does not share with others of the same age. However, they have a decisive impact on his or her life that is not related to generational affiliation.

In addition to the three basic generations mentioned above (Generations X, Y and Z), other generations exist and naturally form, e.g. (Generation Alpha and Generation Beta). For the purposes of this study, which focuses only on the three generations mentioned above, we will present below the characteristics of the different generations in terms of their purchasing behaviour or leisure activities, of which tourism is a part.

Generation X:

Generation Xers are between 44 and 59 years old, born between the second half of the 1970s and the end of the 1980s, according to the literature. Having grown up with the advent of computers and the introduction of mobile phones, they are more competent and comfortable with computer-mediated communication but tend to ignore advertising directed at them and reject any form of segmentation and marketing techniques. They generally like to communicate via mobile phones, use online forums, Facebook, etc. (Eger et al. 2021).

In their research, Hysa et al. (2021) investigated the use of social media by different generations in destination marketing from a sustainable tourism perspective, the frequency of social media use by different generations and the extent of its use in travel planning. Gen Xers are not frequent users of blogs and microblogs, with 42% never using them and 43% using them occasionally. However, they do use social media more frequently, with 40% using it several times a day. In addition, 18% of Gen Xers use content communities such as YouTube, Vimeo and Pinterest several times a day and 14% use them once a day. Overall, Gen Xers use social media less than Gen Yers and Gen Zers.

Up to 71% of this generation enjoy discovering new places off the beaten track and looking for local recommendations, while 70% visit museums, historical sites and art and culture. As a result, they often visit their favourite cities where they can find interesting sights or a rich history. When they choose to travel abroad, they tend to look for quiet, relaxing places or interesting cultural sites. Although this generation was born in the analogue era, they have adapted perfectly to the modern digital world and technology and therefore like to use the internet when planning and booking their tourist trips (Hysa et al. 2021).

Generation Y:

Generation Y, also known as 'Millennials', are well-informed, inquisitive, loyal and highly peer influenced. This generation wants to build relationships with the brands they buy, so companies need to create brands that are cool, authentic, unique, make them happy and allow them to identify with the brand. When it comes to technology use, people from this generation witnessed the extensive growth of the internet when they were teenagers and young adults (Bravo et al. 2019).

In their working lives, they differ from the previous generation. Like Generation X, they crave freedom, but they strive for work-life balance rather than leadership. They demand,

and thrive on, challenging working conditions and positions from their bosses. They are more tolerant, more team-oriented and more proactive. They want to be mobile in their work with flexible working hours and use this to add value to the organisation (Sesen and Donkor 2023).

In their study, Mat'ová and Kaputa (2017) aimed to assess the 'green' purchasing preferences of this generation of consumers. The sample consisted of 200 respondents, of which 63% were female and 37% were male. The results of the study are as follows:

- when buying a product, they are most influenced by trust in the manufacturer (84.5%), design (55%) and country of origin (61.5%),
- 58% of respondents prefer a "green" product that is 10% more expensive than a conventional product,
- 47% are concerned about the clarity and credibility of the certificate,
- more than half of respondents do not care about the prestige associated with buying an organic product,
- 80% believe that organic products are good for people and the environment. They consider them to be valuable (57%), trustworthy (47%) and of excellent quality (67.5%).

Members of Generation Y use social networks several times a day, content communities once a day and co-working networks once a week, and occasionally use blogs and microblogs, review sites and travel forums. Hysa et al (2021) in their study "Social Media Use by Different Generations as a Sustainable Tourism Marketing Tool in an Idea 5.0 Society" suggest that Gen Y women are more likely to check social media reviews of places they want to visit and are more likely to be influenced by positive comments and comments in general when deciding to travel.

This generation visits and explores more destinations, spends more when travelling and is hungry for interesting experiences and information. As a group, however, they do not have a preference for one type of holiday. In fact, millennials want variety. Some like adventurous and unique experiences, others want to relax on the beach and sample the local cuisine. They also look for all-inclusive, relaxing and romantic trips. However, they keep an eye on their travel budget (Hysa et al. 2021) and are the most active travellers of all generations (Huang and Lu 2017). They reject mass tourism and instead show social and environmental awareness, interest in green activities, locally produced goods and services. Positive attitudes towards diversity, flexibility and social issues, such as a growing interest in the impact of

travel and a strong desire to experience local culture, are reflected, for example, in Gen Y travellers' interest in volunteer tourism (Pompour et al. 2018). Millennials are the first generation to value the environment and sustainability. They are growing up at a time when climate change and environmental issues are receiving increasing media and public attention (Szalaiová 2023).

UNWTO and WYSE Travel Confederation (2012) highlights the fact that, compared to the past, this segment includes a wider range of the population: people aged 15-30+ rather than 18-24. In terms of behaviour, it highlights the fact that young travellers and students want to discover and get to know different cultures and interact with the local population. These factors provide an opportunity to promote more responsible behaviour and awareness of various aspects of sustainability through this segment of tourism demand. Data from UNTWO and WYSE Travel Confederation (2011) support these findings, describing youth and student travellers as "paving the way for responsible tourism" (Buffa 2015). They have a positive attitude towards sustainable consumption in an approach that reduces the waste of natural resources (Mammadli 2023).

Generation Z:

Also known as GenZ, Post-Millennials or iGeneration (Georgiev 2023), members of this generation were born around 1995-2010 and are currently aged between 14 and 29. They are more committed to helping others and the environment, and more inclined to group action because they are aware of their role in the world and their responsibility to help make it a better place. Perhaps the most defining characteristic of this generation is its ubiquitous use of technology. However, this use of technology has also created an efficient but impatient generation that wants everything quickly. As a result, they prefer to shop in bricks-and-mortar stores, where they can have the full experience of trying on clothes and buying them immediately, rather than waiting 3-5 working days for a package to arrive (Szalaiová, 2023). Members of Generation Z are not afraid of constant change and lack a sense of commitment (Bravo et al., 2019). However, they tend to consume sustainably to reduce pollution and protect the environment.

Kotler et al (2021) report that Gen Z dislikes brands that share images that are too good to be true. They want brands to be able to deliver personalised content, offers and customer experiences and expect brands to give them the ability to control and customise how they consume products or services. They prefer brands that focus on solving social and

environmental problems and believe that their brand choice forces companies to improve their sustainability practices. They share similar views with Millennials, who have similar views on the political situation and are aware of the social issues that need to be addressed. They are becoming more politically engaged and want to spend their money with companies that reflect their values and drive change on social issues. They believe that their individual skills can make a difference, but they also look to companies and governments to help build a better future. They have grown up in an era where climate change is a constant backdrop to their lives. Often described as the most environmentally conscious generation, they have a heightened awareness of the impact of human activity on the planet and are promoting environmental activism and incorporating sustainable practices into their personal and professional lives. In its report, First Insight found that 73% of this generation's customers will pay 10% more for a product that is sustainable. They are familiar with marketing tricks and can spot disingenuous advertising, making them very difficult to fool (Szalaiová, 2023).

Social networking is the primary use of Generation Z, with 90% of respondents using it all the time or several times a day. Content networks (Google, Yahoo) are also very popular, with almost half of Gen Z respondents using them several times a day and around 1/3 using them all the time. These metrics are by far the highest compared to any other generation.

Analysis from Expedia Group Media Solutions (2018) also shows that more than 50% of Generation Z use platforms such as Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube when planning and during travel. Furthermore, 84% of Generation Z believe that social media plays an important role in travel (Hysa et al. 2021).

In his article, Deyan Georgiev (2023) provides some statistics on Generation Z, which are as follows:

- 45% choose environmentally and socially responsible brands,
- 86% prefer to stay in hotels when travelling,
- 44% book their holidays through online travel agencies,
- 57% prefer to shop in bricks and mortar stores,
- 64% of consumers believe that brands should offer a personalised experience,
- for 52.89%, quality is the biggest driver of brand loyalty.

Generations X, Y and Z differ in many ways, including their

values, preferences and the way they communicate and shop. These generations also differ in terms of consumer preferences, travel and use of social media. Gen X prefers traditional media and uses social media less than Gen Y and Gen Z. Gen Y prefers personalised experiences and is willing to pay for quality, while Gen Z prefers speed and efficiency.

Methodology

The aim of this paper is to explore the differences in the perception of sustainable tourism from the perspective of the three generations studied, X, Y and Z. To find out the differences in the perception of sustainable tourism between the different generations, a questionnaire survey was carried out and then analysed. The questionnaire survey was distributed to a sample of 166 randomly selected respondents from the general population and data collection was conducted between the months of January and March 2024.

A total of 98 women (Gen X-30 women; Gen Y-33 women; Gen Z-35 women) and 68 men (Gen X-20 men; Gen Y-23 men; Gen Z-25 men) participated in the survey.

In terms of generations, 50 Gen X respondents (30%), 56 Gen Y respondents (34%) and 60 Gen Z respondents (36%) participated in the questionnaire survey.

In terms of highest level of education, the predominant level of education for each of the generations surveyed was secondary education with a high school diploma.

All results from the survey are presented in the form of six Figures.

Results and Discussion

To find out about the attitudes or perceptions of generational differences towards sustainable tourism, we first asked respondents where they get their information about sustainable tourism. As can be seen in Figure 1, for generations X and Y it is mainly various websites. For Generation Z, social media is the main source of information on sustainable tourism.

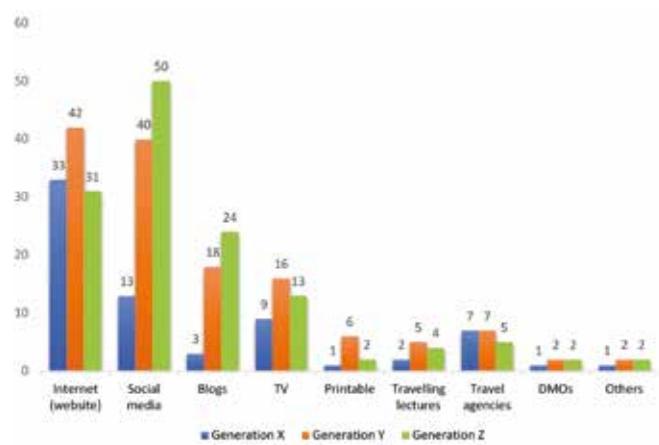


Figure 1 Sources of information on sustainable tourism opportunities according to respondents (Source: own processing)

Even though respondents have knowledge about sustainable tourism from various sources (Figure 1), environmental aspects are only sometimes (52.4%) or to a greater extent never (32.5%) considered by respondents when planning travel activities. Only 3 respondents always take it into account, while no respondent from Generation Z gave this answer, although theoretically we would expect them to choose this answer, as they tend to consume sustainably to reduce pollution and protect the environment. These facts are illustrated in Figure 2.

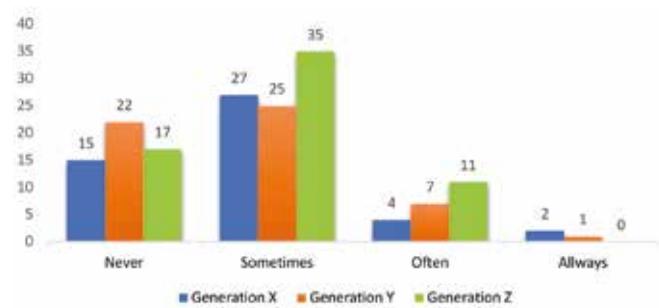


Figure 2 Respondents' consideration of environmental aspects when planning a holiday. (Source: own processing)

The second principle of sustainable tourism is the economic principle (pillar), so we were also interested in its aspects in the case of our respondents.

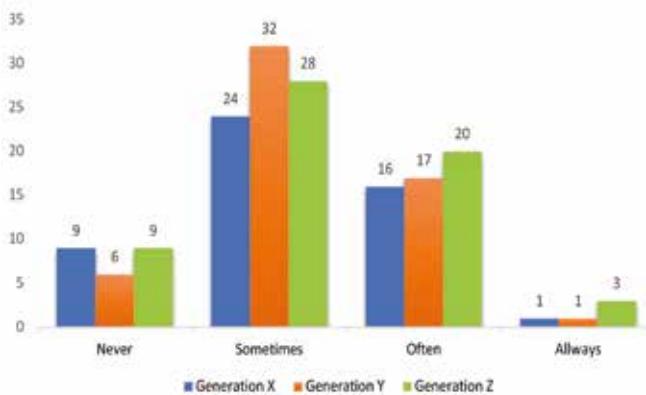


Figure 3 Respondents' consideration of economic aspects when planning a holiday. (Source: own processing)

Figure 3 shows that economic considerations are more important to respondents than environmental considerations when planning travel activities. Generation X sometimes (24 respondents, 14.5%), often (16 respondents, 9.6%) and always (1 respondent, 0.6%) consider supporting local guides, local tour providers or local cuisine. Generation Y was most likely to answer 'sometimes' (32 respondents, 19.3%). The second most common answer was 'often' (17 respondents, 10.2%). As far as Generation Z is concerned, their answers do not differ much from those of the other generations. On a positive note, 30 fewer respondents gave the answer 'never', which is more than half the number shown in Figure 2 above.

We were also interested in respondents' attitudes to the third principle of sustainable development, namely social development (Figure 4). Compared to the environmental and economic aspects, the answer 'sometimes' was more marked for all three generations. "Never" was more common among Generation Y (18 respondents, 10.8%) and "often" among Generation X (10 respondents, 6%) and Generation Z (9 respondents, 5.4%). Only one respondent from Generation Y marked "always". We can therefore conclude that, according to the respondents, economic and social aspects are the most frequently considered of all three aspects.

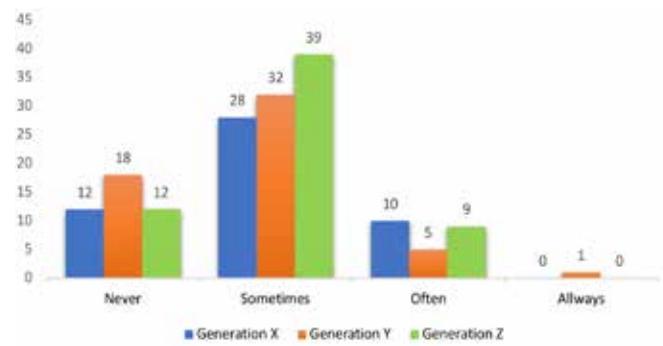


Figure 4 Respondents' consideration of social aspects when planning a holiday (Source: own processing)

As respondents perceive sustainable tourism, it is important to know whether they can support this form of tourism, either financially or in some other way (Figure 5).

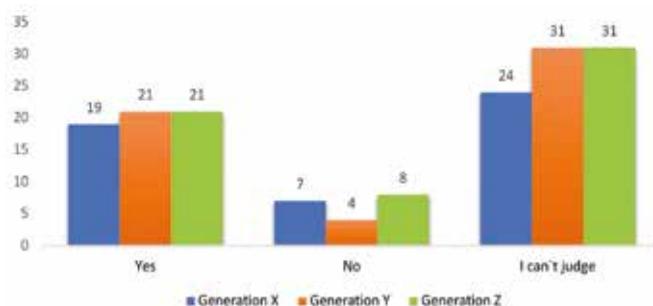


Figure 5 Respondents' willingness to pay more for sustainable services and experiences (Source: own processing)

Whether or not they would be willing to pay more for sustainable services and experiences was not answered by the largest number of respondents (86, 51.8%). This may be due to a lack of information or facilities offering sustainable services, experiences and holidays (Figure 6). Less than half (61 respondents, 36.7%) would pay more, which is not a positive finding, and 19 respondents (11.5%) would definitely not pay more. We can assume that this is also due to a lack of funds, with Generation Z not yet working and Generation X having children and elderly parents to take care of financially.

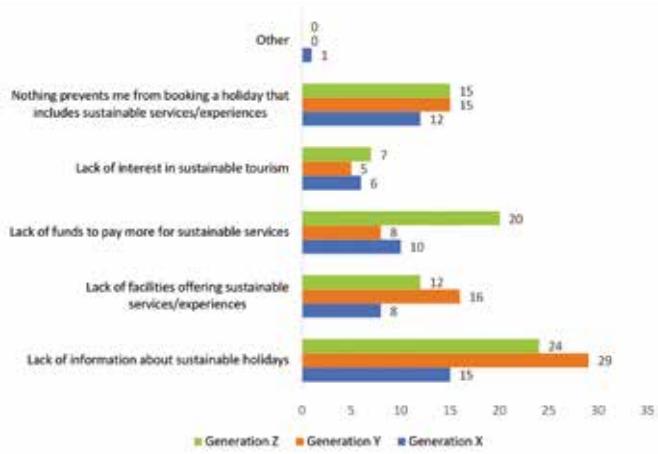


Figure 6 Barriers to booking a holiday that includes sustainable services or experiences according to respondents
(Source: own processing)

For Generation X, the most common barriers to booking a sustainable holiday are a lack of information about what is available (15 respondents, 9%), a lack of money (10 respondents, 6%) and an insufficient number of establishments offering sustainable services and experiences (8 respondents, 4.8%). For Generation Y respondents, the lack of data (26 respondents, 17.5%) and the small number of businesses offering sustainable services/experiences (16 respondents, 9.6%) are barriers. For Generation Z, it is also a lack of awareness of the possibilities of sustainable holidays (24 respondents, 14.5%) and a greater lack of finances (18 respondents, 12%).

A lack of interest in sustainable tourism was only mentioned by a small number of respondents (18 respondents, 10.8%). Under the option 'other', one respondent from Generation X expressed his opinion, saying that in his opinion the term sustainable equals more expensive.

Conclusion

The results of the survey show several conclusions, which we present for each of the generations surveyed. Generation X is the most likely to use the Internet (especially websites) to find out about sustainable tourism. When it comes to considering the three principles of sustainable tourism, Gen Xers only sometimes take social, environmental and economic aspects into account when planning their holidays. On the one hand, this generation is willing to pay more for sustainable products, services or experiences, but at the same time they cannot evaluate them, perhaps because they do not know what sustainable tourism is. At the same time, this

generation cited lack of information about sustainable tourism as the biggest obstacle preventing them from 'buying' sustainable services or experiences during their holidays.

Generation Y or Millennials use the internet to search for information about sustainable tourism, similar to Generation X, but they also use social networks quite often. As with Generation X, environmental, social and economic considerations are only sometimes taken into account when planning a holiday. This generation has to pay more for sustainable products, services or experiences, but at the same time they cannot value them, which is similar to Generation X. The main obstacle for this generation to have such attitudes is related to the fact that they do not have enough necessary information about this form of tourism.

Generation Z gets information about sustainable tourism from social networks and blogs. Like the previous two generations, this generation only sometimes considers environmental, social and economic aspects when planning a holiday. This generation is willing to pay more for sustainable products, services or experiences, but is also unable to evaluate this fact. Like Gen X and Gen Y, this generation cites lack of awareness of sustainable tourism as the biggest barrier to not paying attention to the issue.

From the above in our case none of the generations is sensitive to sustainable tourism. However, this may be largely because each of the generations surveyed cited the lack of awareness of sustainable tourism as the main obstacle preventing them from taking sustainable principles into account when planning their holidays. For this reason, it is important to improve the marketing of this type of tourism, targeting all three generations. The second major problem and obstacle that prevents them from paying attention to this issue, even though they would like to, is that there are currently very few facilities that offer such sustainable services and experiences. From the above, it can be concluded that this form of tourism is currently under-promoted and at the same time there is a lack of the necessary infrastructure that would facilitate the transition of a sustainable product, service or experience from the seller to the buyer.

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A.1.3

Quality Management And Sustainable Initiatives In Tourism Development

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Abstract:

The aim of the study is to analyze the impact of quality management and sustainable initiatives on visitor satisfaction and repeat visits in Slovak tourism. The study examines how high-quality services and ecological practices enhance destination competitiveness. A quantitative survey was conducted, involving questions on service quality, perception of sustainable initiatives, and their effect on visitor decision-making. Data analysis utilized regression and t-tests. Results indicated that improving service quality boosts visitor satisfaction and the likelihood of repeat visits. Sustainable initiatives, such as reducing plastic waste and protecting nature, contributed to a positive perception of destinations and increased satisfaction among environmentally conscious visitors. Visitors who considered sustainability a key factor reported higher satisfaction with service quality. The study focused on Slovak tourists, limiting the generalization of results to a global level. The research was also confined to visits in the past year, potentially affecting respondent views. Future studies should consider international samples and explore long-term trends in tourism behavior. Tourism businesses should combine sustainable initiatives with high service quality to attract environmentally aware visitors and foster loyalty. Effective communication of these efforts to visitors is essential. This study offers new insights into the relationship between quality management and sustainability in tourism, highlighting its positive effect on visitor satisfaction and loyalty, and presenting an innovative approach to sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: *Quality management. Sustainable initiatives. Tourism. Visitor satisfaction. Repeat visits.*

Introduction:

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global economy and a significant contributor to the economic growth of many countries, including Slovakia (Weaver & Lawton, 2010). However, this sector faces several challenges related to the need to provide high-quality services, meet increasing visitor demands, and address current global envi-

ronmental issues (Butler, 1999). Increasing customer satisfaction and ensuring the long-term sustainability of destinations have thus become key goals of tourism management. Quality management in tourism involves the implementation of systems and strategies that ensure a high level of service provision (Kotler et al., 2006). These systems are essential for meeting visitor expectations and maintaining the competitive advantage of a destination. Quality services are a crucial factor directly influencing visitor satisfaction and their decision to make repeat visits. Repeat visits not only contribute to the economic growth of a destination but also help create a positive image through visitor recommendations and reviews (Middleton & Hawkins, 1998). Alongside service quality, sustainable initiatives are becoming increasingly important. Environmental and societal challenges, such as climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss, require destinations to take measures to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). Sustainable tourism, which considers economic, ecological, and social aspects, is seen as a tool for achieving a balance between the needs of visitors, the industry, and nature conservation (UNWTO, 1999). For this reason, sustainability is becoming a key aspect of tourist decision-making and a competitive advantage for destinations.

Theoretical background:

Service Quality in Tourism

Tourism, as a dynamic industry, faces numerous challenges, including not only ensuring high-quality services but also integrating sustainable initiatives that respond to global environmental and social issues (Swarbrooke, 1999). The connection between service quality, customer satisfaction, and the long-term attractiveness of destinations has become a key factor in competitiveness in contemporary tourism. The definition of service quality often relates to a destination's ability to meet or exceed visitor expectations. According to Parasuraman's SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988), service quality is measured across several dimensions, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. These factors are critical for assessing visitor satisfaction and influencing their loyalty, manifesting in repeat visits and positive recommendations (Šenková et. al., 2022).

In tourism management, service quality is a key tool for enhancing customer satisfaction. Quality management encompasses strategic measures and standards implemented to ensure a consistent level of service provision. These measures can include quality certifications (e.g., ISO 9001), employee training, and continuous process improvement (Grönroos,

2007).

Visitor satisfaction is an essential indicator of service quality, with studies indicating that satisfied customers are more motivated to make repeat visits (Weaver & Lawton, 2010). Research findings also suggest that higher customer satisfaction positively influences their willingness to recommend a destination to others, an important tool for sustainable tourism growth.

Sustainability in Tourism

Sustainability has become one of the most significant trends in tourism. Sustainable tourism encompasses environmental, social, and economic aspects, working together to minimize the negative impacts of tourism and maximize benefits for local communities and nature (UNWTO, 1999). According to the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism “takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities” (UNWTO, 1999).

Sustainable initiatives in tourist destinations can include measures to reduce carbon footprints, recycling programs, biodiversity protection, support for local communities, and the use of renewable energy sources. These initiatives increase the attractiveness of destinations among eco-conscious visitors, which is crucial for maintaining long-term competitiveness (Bramwell & Lane, 1993). Research shows that sustainable initiatives can significantly enhance the perceived quality of a destination (Matušíková & Šaffová, 2023). Visitors who are aware of the environmental and social impacts of their travel decisions are often willing to pay more for services that actively support sustainable practices. This fosters the growth of eco-tourism, focusing on minimizing tourism's negative impacts and supporting environmental protection (Swarbrooke, 1999).

The Link Between Service Quality and Sustainability

Service quality and sustainability are closely linked factors that influence the overall attractiveness of tourist destinations. While service quality directly affects visitor satisfaction and their willingness to return, sustainable initiatives contribute to a positive long-term perception of the destination. Tourists who are sensitive to environmental and social issues increasingly seek destinations that, in addition to offering high-quality services, also demonstrate environmentally responsible approaches. Therefore, sustainability and service quality are becoming key pillars of successful tourism management (Butler, 1999).

Tourism businesses that integrate sustainable practices into their quality management observe not only higher customer satisfaction but also an improved reputation in the market. Customers appreciate the efforts of destinations and service providers to contribute to environmental protection, reduce carbon footprints, and support local communities. These factors not only increase visitor satisfaction but also contribute to customer loyalty and create a positive image of the destination, which can lead to long-term competitiveness in the global market. Today's tourists are much more sensitive to ecological aspects, meaning that destinations ignoring these trends risk losing visitors.

Innovative forms of quality management include not only improving services through technology and modern processes but also integrating ecological and sustainable principles. The implementation of sustainability certifications, such as ISO 14001 or various eco-tourism certifications, is becoming a standard in modern tourism management. ISO 14001, an internationally recognized standard for environmental management, helps businesses systematically manage their ecological impacts and continually improve their environmental performance (ISO, 2004).

Methodology:

The research was conducted through a survey aimed at analyzing the impact of quality management and sustainable initiatives on visitor satisfaction and decision-making in tourism. The questionnaire included questions focused on assessing service quality, visitor satisfaction, and perceptions of sustainable initiatives in the destinations visited. The sample consisted of 391 respondents from Slovakia who had traveled within the past year. Respondents were categorized by age, gender, education, and income, as shown in the fol-

Table 1 Characteristics of the respondent sample

	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Age		
18-25 years old	39	10%
26-35 years old	156	40%
36-45 years old	117	30%
46-55	59	15%
56 and more years old	20	5%
Sex		
Female	207	53%
Male	176	45%
Other	8	2%
Education level		
Primary	39	10%
Secondary	195	50%
Higher	156	40%
Household income		
Income above 3 000 €	39	10%
Income 2 001 – 3 000 €	78	20%
Income 1 001 – 2 000 €	176	45%
Under 1 000 €	98	25%

Source: Own elaboration based on collected empirical data

lowing table.

The collected data were analyzed using regression analysis and t-tests. Regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between satisfaction with service quality and the motivation to revisit the destination. The t-test was employed to compare average satisfaction between groups that considered sustainable initiatives crucial and those that did not. Statistical analyses were conducted using R software, and the results were interpreted based on statistical significance (p -value < 0.05). To evaluate the relationship between quality management, sustainable initiatives, and their impact on tourist satisfaction, repeat visits, and overall destination competitiveness, we established the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The implementation of quality management within sustainable tourism initiatives leads to higher visitor satisfaction and increases the likelihood of repeat visits. To examine the relationship between two quantitative variables—satisfaction with service quality (independent variable) and motivation to return (dependent variable)—we chose linear regression analysis. The regression model not only determines whether a relationship exists between these two variables but also quantifies the strength of this rela-

tionship. Linear regression is ideal when the relationship between variables is assumed to be linear (meaning that each increase in one variable causes a proportional increase in the other).

The regression equation took the form:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \epsilon$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y represents the motivation for repeat visits,
- X is satisfaction with service quality,
- β_0 is the constant (intercept),
- β_1 is the coefficient expressing the impact of satisfaction on motivation,
- ϵ is the random error.

The results of this analysis provided insights into whether improving service quality leads to an increased motivation to revisit the destination.

Hypothesis 2: Sustainable initiatives enhance the competitiveness of destinations and contribute to their long-term attractiveness. To examine the differences in satisfaction between two groups of respondents—those who consider sustainable initiatives crucial and those who do not consider them as important—we chose the T-test method, which is designed for comparing the means of two groups. The hypothesis assumes that visitor satisfaction is higher among those who consider sustainable initiatives crucial. The T-test helps us determine whether the difference between these two groups is statistically significant. The T-test is suitable for comparing two independent groups, yielding a t -value and a p -value, which indicate whether the means between the groups are statistically different.

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

Where:

- \bar{X}_1 and \bar{X}_2 are the means of the two groups (respondents who consider sustainable initiatives crucial vs. those who do not),
- s_1 and s_2 are the standard deviations in these groups,
- n_1 and n_2 are the sample sizes of respondents in each group.

Results and Discussion

To verify the hypotheses we established, we used responses from the survey. For Hypothesis 1, The implementation of quality management within sustainable tourism initiatives

leads to higher visitor satisfaction and increases the likelihood of repeat visits, we evaluated questions that we analyzed in the following graphs.

How would you rate the quality of services in the destinations you visited in Slovakia?

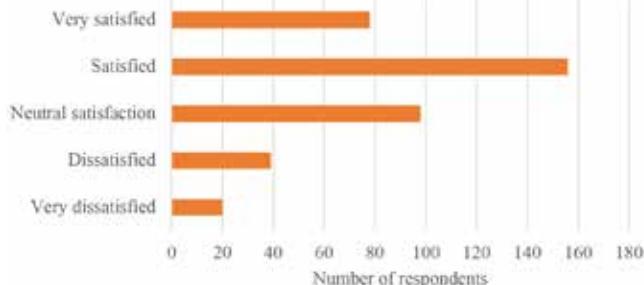


Chart 1 Rating of Service Quality in Tourist Destinations in Slovakia
Source: Own processing

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of services in Slovak destinations. The responses show a distribution across satisfaction levels, with many indicating high satisfaction.

To what extent does the quality of services motivate you to return to the same destination?

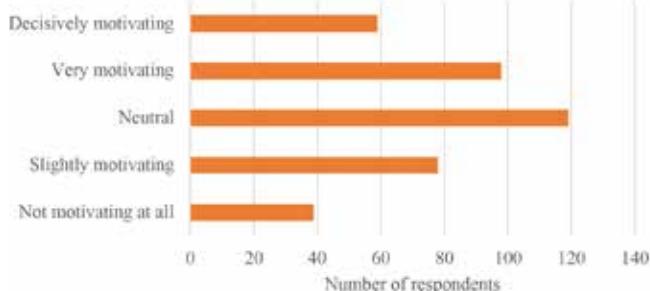


Chart 2 Extent of Motivation to Return to the Same Destination
Based on Service Quality Source: Own processing

The graph illustrates how service quality motivates visitors to return to the same destination. A significant number find quality service to be very or decisively motivating, emphasizing its role in encouraging repeat visits. However, neutral and low motivation levels indicate that other factors may also play a role in return decisions.

How often do you revisit the same destination?

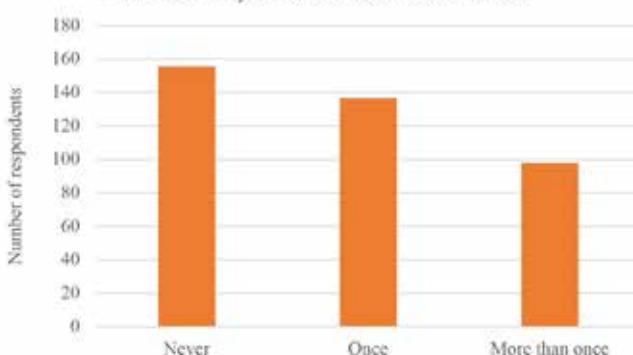


Chart 3 Frequency of Revisiting the Same Destination

Source: Own processing

With 156 respondents never revisiting, it's clear that a large portion prefers exploring new locations. Yet, 235 respondents are inclined to return, with 137 visiting once and 98 more than once, indicating a loyalty segment.

Reaction to personalized advertising

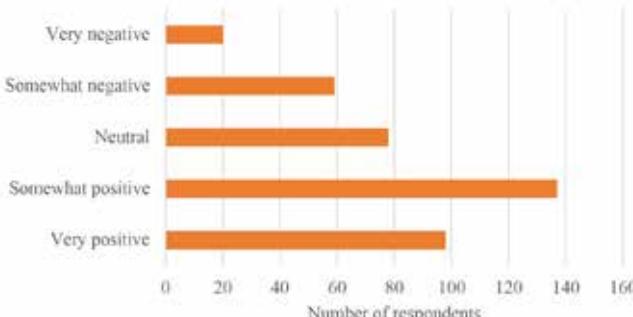


Chart 4 Response to Personalized Advertising

Source: Own processing

Respondents' reactions to personalized advertising show a largely positive response. Most respondents react favorably, showing that personalized ads generally enhance the appeal of revisiting or selecting destinations. However, the neutral and negative responses from a smaller segment suggest mixed views on this marketing approach.

Does personalized advertising increase the likelihood that you will visit the same destination again?

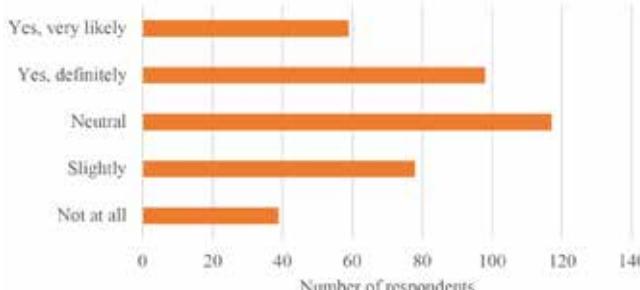


Chart 5 Impact of Personalized Advertising on Destination Revisit Likelihood

Source: Own processing

This graph assesses whether personalized advertising influences the likelihood of revisiting a destination. With 157 respondents (98 definitely, 59 very likely) positively influenced, personalized ads seem effective for many. Yet, the 117 neutral and 39 not motivated respondents suggest personalized ads may not universally impact revisit likelihood.

These findings provide insight into how service quality and targeted advertising affect visitor loyalty and the likelihood of repeated visits to Slovak destinations.

For Hypothesis 2, Sustainable initiatives enhance the competitiveness of destinations and contribute to their long-term attractiveness, we evaluated questions that we analyzed in the following graphs.

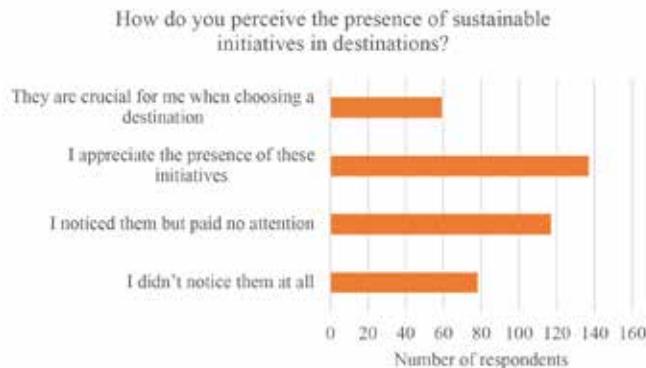


Chart 6 Perception of Sustainable Initiatives in Destinations
Source: Own processing

When asked about their willingness to pay extra for services in destinations that support sustainable initiatives. These numbers suggest a varied willingness among respondents, with 195 showing some level of willingness to pay more, while 117 remain neutral or unwilling. Respondents were asked about their awareness of sustainable initiatives in the destinations they visited. The responses show various levels of awareness: some did not notice these initiatives at all, while others acknowledged them but did not pay much attention. A significant number of respondents appreciated the presence of these initiatives, and a smaller, yet noteworthy group found them crucial when choosing a destination. This indicates that although awareness of sustainability varies, it influences destination choice for a certain segment of visitors.

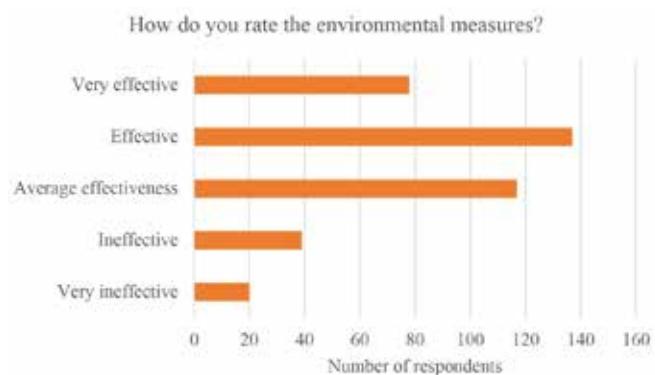


Chart 7 Rating of Environmental Measures
Source: Own processing

Respondents rated the effectiveness of environmental measures in destinations. A small group found them very ineffective or ineffective, while a larger portion rated them as averagely effective. However, the majority of respondents rated the measures as effective or very effective, suggesting general satisfaction with environmental actions in destinations. This positive feedback could encourage destinations to continue or strengthen these measures.

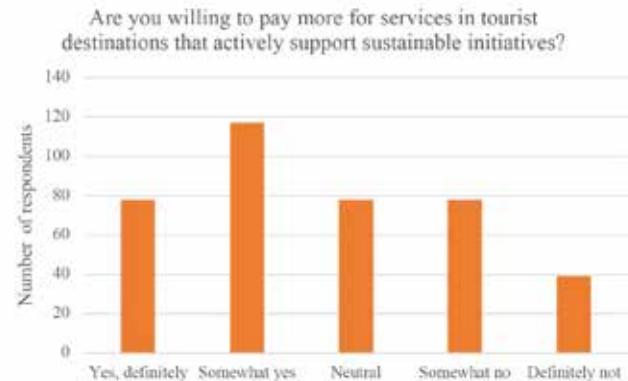


Chart 8 Willingness to Pay More for Sustainable Tourism Services
Source: Own processing

The graph illustrating the willingness to pay more for services in destinations supporting sustainable initiatives shows varied responses. Most respondents expressed a willingness to pay more, with a significant portion responding positively (either definitely or somewhat willing). Others, however, remain neutral or unwilling. This variety suggests that while there is substantial support for sustainability-driven pricing, a segment of visitors still prioritizes cost over environmental considerations.

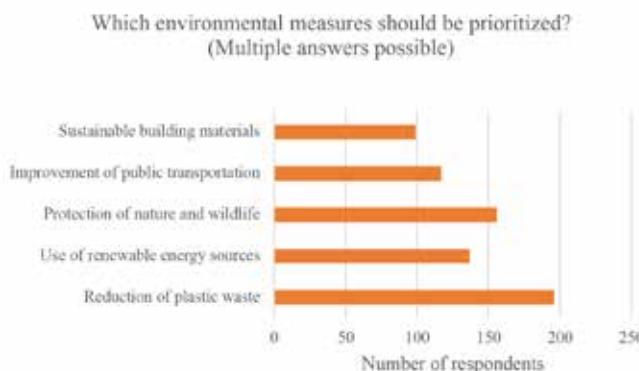


Chart 9 Priority Environmental Measures

(Multiple Answers Possible)

Source: Own processing

Respondents indicated which environmental actions should be prioritized, with multiple responses allowed. The most popular response was the reduction of plastic waste, followed by wildlife protection and renewable energy use. Improvements in public transportation and the use of sustainable building materials were also valued, though to a lesser degree. This result reflects a strong preference for visible, impactful actions that can directly reduce waste and support ecological conservation.

These analyses show that sustainability is an important factor for many visitors, especially when initiatives are visible and impactful, like reducing plastic waste or protecting nature. Although the willingness to pay more for sustainability varies, destinations focused on these areas may gain greater visitor support and loyalty.

Based on the collected data, we evaluated our hypotheses using appropriate statistical methods.

H1: The implementation of quality management within sustainable tourism initiatives leads to higher visitor satisfaction and increases the likelihood of repeat visits.

- Data Collection: For each respondent, we recorded satisfaction with service quality (scale from 1 to 5) and motivation to return (also on a scale from 1 to 5).
- Estimation of Regression Coefficients: The Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method is used to estimate the regression coefficients. The coefficients β_0 and β_1 are estimated by minimizing the sum of squared deviations between actual values and predicted values.
- Testing Statistical Significance: From the regression analysis, we obtain p-values, which indicate whether the relationship between satisfaction and motivation is statistically significant. If the p-value is less than 0.05, we consider the relationship to be statistically significant.

We obtained the following model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X = 1.2 + 0.8X$$

where $\beta_0 = 1.2$ and $\beta_1 = 0.8$. This means that each increase in satisfaction by 1 point raises the motivation to return by 0.8 points.

Regression Analysis Result:

- The regression model showed a positive relationship between satisfaction with service quality and the motivation to return. The coefficient $\beta_1 = 0.8$ indicates that each 1-point increase in satisfaction raises the motivation to return by 0.8 points.
- The p-value from the regression was less than 0.05, indicating that this relationship is statistically significant.

Conclusion: We can accept Hypothesis 1. The implementation of quality management leads to higher visitor satisfaction and increases the likelihood of repeat visits.

H2: Sustainable initiatives enhance the competitiveness of destinations and contribute to their long-term attractiveness.

1. Division of Respondents: We divided respondents into two groups: those who consider sustainable initiatives crucial (Group 1) and those who do not (Group 2).
2. Calculation of Means and Standard Deviations: We calculated the average satisfaction in both groups, as well as the standard deviations.
3. Calculation of t-value: Using the t-test formula, we calculated the t-value and obtained the p-value, which indicates whether the difference between the groups is statistically significant.

- Average satisfaction for Group 1 (crucial initiatives): $X\bar{1}=4.2$
- Average satisfaction for Group 2 (not crucial): $X\bar{2}=3.8$
- Standard deviations: $s_1=0.5$, $s_2=0.6$
- Number of respondents: $n_1=59$, $n_2=332$

We calculated the t-value:

$$t = \frac{4.2 - 3.8}{\sqrt{\frac{0.5^2}{59} + \frac{0.6^2}{332}}} = 3.57$$

The p-value was less than 0.05, indicating that the difference between these groups is statistically significant.

T-test Result:

- The average satisfaction of visitors who consider sustainable initiatives crucial was higher (4.2) compared to those who do not consider them as important (3.8).
- The resulting t-value = 3.57 and a p-value less than 0.05 show that this difference is statistically significant.

Conclusion: We **can accept** Hypothesis 2. Sustainable initiatives enhance the competitiveness of destinations and contribute to their long-term attractiveness.

Both hypotheses were statistically confirmed. Quality management and sustainable initiatives positively impact visitor satisfaction and increase motivation for repeat visits. These factors also contribute to the higher competitiveness of tourist destinations.

The results of this study confirm the significant impact of quality management and sustainable initiatives on tourism visitor satisfaction and their willingness to revisit destinations. Regression analysis revealed a positive relationship between service quality satisfaction and motivation for repeat visits, suggesting that improving service quality can be an effective tool for increasing visitor loyalty. These findings align with previous research, which highlights that satisfied visitors are more motivated to return and recommend the destination to others. The importance of quality tourism management is thus undeniable, as it directly influences visitor satisfaction and encourages repeat visits, which are essential for the long-term sustainability of destinations. Moreover, the T-test results showed that sustainable initiatives, such as reducing plastic waste, using renewable energy sources, and protecting nature, contribute to a positive perception of destinations and increase satisfaction among visitors who consider these initiatives crucial. This indicates that destinations actively supporting sustainable practices can gain a competitive advantage and attract environmentally conscious visitors who are willing to pay more for eco-sustainable services. On the other hand, approximately 30% of respondents noticed the presence of these initiatives but paid little attention to them, indicating a need for better communication and promotion of the benefits of sustainable practices to raise visitor awareness.

Tourism organizations and community associations play a significant role in supporting sustainable initiatives by ac-

tively implementing and promoting eco-friendly measures within destinations. Tourism organizations, such as tourist centers and agencies, act as intermediaries between visitors and local communities, fostering ecological awareness and providing educational programs focused on sustainability. Their activities can greatly influence the perception of a destination as sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Similarly, community associations contribute to the preservation of natural resources and the support of the local economy through sustainable projects. Collaboration between these organizations and local communities creates a synergistic effect that enhances the attractiveness of destinations for eco-conscious tourists. Tourists who observe the activities of these organizations report higher satisfaction with services and a greater likelihood of returning to the destination.

The findings indicate that linking quality management with sustainable initiatives is essential for the long-term attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations. Businesses and destinations that integrate sustainable practices can not only increase visitor satisfaction but also contribute to the development of environmentally-friendly tourism, leading to the long-term sustainability of the industry.

Conclusion:

The research demonstrated that high-quality service management and the integration of sustainable initiatives are key factors for increasing visitor satisfaction and their willingness to revisit destinations. The results showed that improving service quality directly enhances visitors' motivation to return, while sustainable initiatives positively influence the perceived quality of destinations. From this perspective, destinations that implement sustainable practices and provide quality services can achieve higher customer satisfaction, greater loyalty, and increased competitiveness. The practical implications of the research suggest that tourism businesses should actively integrate sustainable initiatives while ensuring a high level of service quality to attract environmentally conscious visitors. Additionally, it is essential for these activities to be effectively communicated to visitors, raising their awareness and appreciation of the destination's environmental efforts. In the future, it would be interesting to explore how specific aspects of sustainable initiatives (e.g., recycling, eco-friendly accommodation, biodiversity conservation) influence visitor decision-making. Research could also focus on the impact of these initiatives on various demographic groups of tourists, to better understand

how to personalize marketing strategies within sustainable tourism. This research provides valuable insights that can be used to improve service quality and support sustainability in tourism, thereby ensuring the long-term development and sustainability of the industry.

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A. Academics' Contributions

A.2 CTL Academics' Contributions

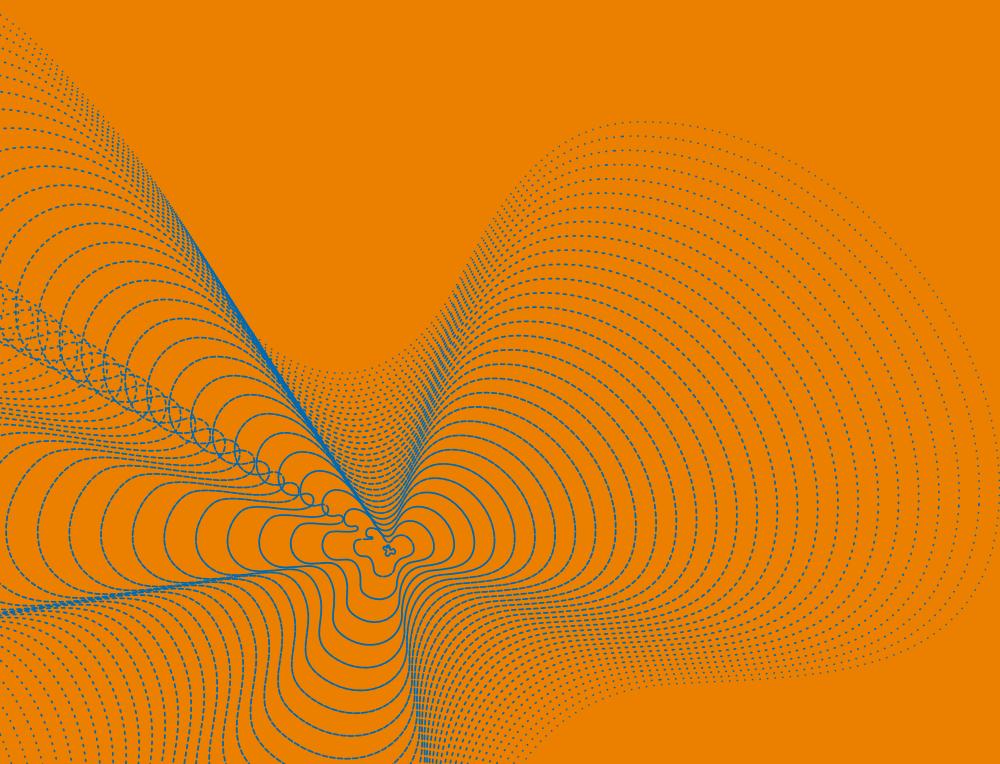
A.2.1 Exploring Motivational Factors for Women to Engage in Active Leisure.

A Focus Group Analysis of the industry's professionals

Dr. Elena Malkawi, PhD, Dr. George Antoniades, PhD

A.2.2 Interfamily Dynamics in Heritage Tourism: Fostering Next-Generation Learning and Engagement

Dr. Maria Hadjielia Drotarova, PhD



A.2.1

Exploring Motivational Factors for Women to Engage in Active Leisure. A Focus Group Analysis of the industry's professionals

Authors:

Dr. Elena Malkawi, PhD

Dr. George Antoniades, PhD

Abstract:

This study explores the motivating factors that influence women with underage children (under 18 years old) to engage in active leisure activities. Using a qualitative approach based on a grounded theory framework, and following thematic analysis principles (Braun & Clarke, 2006), insights were collected through a focus group of eight (8) active leisure industry professionals. Participants' reflections were thoughtfully analyzed and grouped into three central themes: Relaxation, Stress Relief, and Body Awakening. These themes offer meaningful insights for leisure service providers seeking to design programs that genuinely respond to the needs of women who are juggling caregiving duties with their own self-care. By tailoring services to the real motivations uncovered in this study, practitioners can not only boost participation but also make a real contribution to women's overall wellbeing.

Keywords: *Active, Leisure activities, Motivation, women with children.*

Introduction:

In present-day society, the role of active leisure in supporting mental and physical wellbeing is gaining prominence, particularly among women who alter multiple responsibilities. Despite this, there is limited focused research into what specifically motivates women to pursue such activities. The present study seeks to fill this gap through a focus group analysis that aims to distinguish common themes of motivation among female participants in the leisure industry. One of the main reasons that call in the understanding of what makes this group under study participating in active leisure is to better form the industry in serving these needs. (Henderson & Bialeschki, 2005; Markula, 2003).

For women with caregiving responsibilities for underage children, active leisure represents more than a simple form

of entertainment; it plays a crucial role in enhancing their overall life satisfaction. Although women's societal roles have evolved and improved compared to previous generations, their maternal responsibilities remain substantial. Furthermore, as social and cultural contexts continue to evolve, so do women's needs and expectations regarding active leisure. In this context, understanding the shifting motivations and barriers that influence women's participation in leisure activities is essential for industry professionals seeking to enhance their services and profitability. This study aims to identify these motivations and barriers among women with young children.

While previous research has examined women's involvement in leisure, it frequently overlooks the specific challenges faced by mothers of young children (Wittels & Mansfield, 2022). This study addresses that gap by focusing on this demographic, offering new insights into how active leisure can serve as more than just a recreational outlet—it can be a vital space for rest, self-renewal, and physical reconnection (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Markula, 2003).

Literature review

For women that have the responsibilities of underage children, active leisure is something more than a form of entertainment. It is of high importance in creating a higher sense of life satisfaction. For example, the study of Zabriske and McCormick demonstrates how active participation in leisure strongly correlates with higher life satisfaction: "Findings indicated that family leisure involvement was the strongest multivariate predictor of family satisfaction from the parent perspective ... participation in family leisure activities was one of the most significant factors contributing to a high quality of family life." (Zabriske, 2003). Even though women's role in society is believed to be improved as oppose to previous times, their responsibilities as mothers are still in high level. "Although women's participation in the paid workforce has increased dramatically, women still perform the majority of domestic and child care responsibilities—what is often termed the 'second shift.'" (Hochschild, 2012).

In addition as times evolve so are their needs in active leisure. Mixed-methods study of Fernandez Lasas (Fernandez Lasas, 2024) illustrates that women of reproductive age engaged in active leisure driven by their physical well-being and social connection needs. Another research reinforces that women's active leisure needs extend well beyond physical activity, but enclose mental health, social fulfilment, and support, while being constrained by common barriers:

“Common motives for physical activity and sport [include] health benefits, well being, enjoyment, social interaction, and social support; common barriers as time restrictions, fatigue and lack of energy...” (Pedersen, 2021) In this sense one can say that examining and understanding changes is really critical for industry professionals that want to improve their business and profitability.

This paper is trying to identify motivations and/or barriers that women find in participating in these activities. While past research has explored women’s involvement in leisure, it often overlooks the unique challenges faced by mothers of young children (Wittels & Mansfield, 2022). This study focuses on that very group, aiming to bring fresh understanding to how active leisure can become more than just fun—it can be a way to unwind, recharge, and reconnect with one’s body (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Markula, 2003).

There’s still a significant gap in our understanding of what motivates these women. Many existing studies don’t fully explore how caregiving duties, the need for self-care, and the desire for personal growth come together to shape their decisions. “Women are significantly more likely than men to bear organizational responsibility for domestic tasks... report higher emotional fatigue... The perceived responsibility for managing family activities is more strongly associated with within couple gaps in time use...” (Barigozzi, 2025). This study addresses that gap by applying a qualitative method grounded in the real experiences of women. Through this lens, it explores the deeper emotional, physical, and social motivations behind their participation in active leisure.

The following research questions were developed to address the aim:

- RQ1: How do women with underage children perceive the role of active leisure in enhancing their well-being?
- RQ2: Why do women with underage children choose to participate in active leisure activities despite challenges?

Methodology and Theoretical Framework:

This study uses a qualitative approach, drawing on established principles outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). A qualitative method was chosen because the purpose of this study is to explore, rather than test, predetermined ideas. Specifically, the study aims to understand the deeper, often personal motivations that motivate women with young children to engage in outdoor activities (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Rather than starting with a fixed theory, the study builds its understanding from the ground up, allowing patterns and

themes to emerge naturally from what participants share. A grounded theory design was used to guide this process. This approach is particularly useful when the goal is to develop theories based on people’s real-life experiences (Charmaz, 2006). It fits well with the research question by allowing for an in-depth, thoughtful exploration of how women’s everyday realities shape their participation in leisure activities.

The study focused on professionals working in the active leisure industry—people who regularly interact with women balancing childcare and personal time. These professionals were purposefully selected for their potential to offer meaningful insights into the motivations and challenges faced by this group. In total, eight professionals took part in focus group discussions. While the group was small, it was large enough to reach thematic saturation, meaning that key themes began repeating and no new insights were emerging—an established benchmark in qualitative research (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Professional Role
Participant 1	35	Female	Fitness Instructor
Participant 2	42	Male	Gym manager
Participant 3	30	Female	Yoga Instructor
Participant 4	37	Female	Swimming Instructor
Participant 5	45	Male	Fitness Instructor
Participant 6	42	Female	Pilates Coach
Participant 7	40	Female	Health Club Director
Participant 8	33	Female	Outdoor Adventure Facilitator

Data were collected through a structured focus group discussion, defined as a carefully planned conversation guided by a moderator to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest (Krueger, 2014). Focus groups were selected for their ability to stimulate rich discussions and capture diverse perspectives through participant interaction. One focus group session lasting approximately 90 minutes was conducted. Discussions were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Participants were encouraged to discuss specific instances and observations regarding women’s participation in leisure programs. Next, thematic analysis was used to interpret the collected data, following the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006). The method was chosen for its flexibility and its capacity to identify and interpret patterns within qualitative datasets. To maintain inter-coder reliability, coding was done separately by two researchers, and any disagreements were settled through discussion. All participants signed a consent

form outlining the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights, including voluntary participation and withdrawal at any time. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants to ensure confidentiality while preserving contextual richness in the reporting of findings.

Research Findings:

Based on the thematic analysis of the focus group data, three overarching themes emerged that capture the core motivational drivers for women with underage children engaging in active leisure activities. These themes—Relaxation, Stress Relief, and Body Awakening—reflect the complex interplay of emotional, psychological, and physical needs. The following sections present each theme in detail, supported by direct participant quotations to illustrate and validate the findings.

Theme 1: Relaxation

Many participants emphasized the critical role of leisure in promoting relaxation.

Participant 1 (Fitness Instructor) explained, “To unwind themselves. To escape from everyday stress.”

Another professional, Participant 4 (Swimming Instructor), stated, “Leisure time is the only moment I have just for myself without demands from others.”

This supports literature that positions leisure as a coping mechanism (Henderson & Bialeschki, 2005). For many women, especially those with caregiving responsibilities, leisure represents one of the few avenues for self-care and mental decompression.

Furthermore, relaxation is often perceived not just as a passive state, but as an active choice to invest in one's well-being. Activities such as spa treatments, gentle yoga, or quiet walks in nature provide women with a reprieve from overstimulation and noise. This aligns with the concept of “therapeutic landscapes,” where environments are intentionally designed to promote relaxation and emotional healing (Gesler, 1992).

Theme 2: Stress Relief

Stress relief also emerged as a significant motivational driver.

Participant 5 (Fitness Instructor) observed, “Because she is tired of listening to kids complain all the time.”

Additionally, Participant 3 (Yoga Instructor) shared, “Sometimes I join a class just to breathe — otherwise I feel like I am drowning in daily pressure.”

Leisure, in this context, becomes a form of therapeutic intervention. According to Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993), leisure activities can serve as an escape from stress, providing a space for psychological restoration.

Stress relief also encompasses social aspects. Group-based activities can offer emotional support and shared understanding among participants. These activities help build social capital, reduce feelings of isolation, and improve overall mental health outcomes. Social leisure experiences that are structured yet flexible can provide the right balance of engagement and autonomy for stress reduction.

Theme 3: Body Awakening

Several responses reflected a strong desire for physical reactivation after periods of sedentary living.

Participant 2 (Gym manager) noted, “They have been staying home for a long time and need to do something physical.”

Similarly, Participant 7 (Health Club Director) remarked, “They often say they feel like their body is waking up again after being stuck in one place for so long.”

This is consistent with other research that associates movement with heightened body awareness and empowerment amongst women (Markula, 2003).

Body awakening is linked to experiences following childbirth, transitions during midlife, or healing from health issues. Such life stages frequently encourage a reassessment of one's physical identity and health focus. When physical leisure is created with care and flexibility, it can serve as an empowering avenue to regain control over one's body. Initiatives like dance therapy, aqua fitness, and introductory cardio sessions can help facilitate this reconnection.

The blending of mental, emotional, and physical needs reflected in the participants' feedback creates a comprehensive understanding of women's motivation in active leisure. These findings underscore the necessity of developing leisure spaces that are not just physically stimulating but also provide emotional and mental support. The themes identified imply that leisure specialists should embrace a multifac-

eted strategy when creating activities and programs.

For instance, a yoga session focused on mindfulness and movement could effectively cater to all three aspects: relaxation, stress alleviation, and bodily awareness. Likewise, group-oriented outdoor pursuits can offer both physical engagement and social interaction, which in turn diminishes stress and promotes relaxation.

Moreover, the focus group insights highlight the importance of taking life stages into account when developing programs. Women who have recently become mothers might have different leisure preferences than single women or those who are retired. Customized options, like fitness classes for mothers and babies or wellness retreats exclusively for women, could be particularly impactful. The results also suggest a need for improved sensitivity in marketing efforts. The messaging should connect with the genuine challenges that women encounter and present leisure activities as a means of empowerment and rejuvenation. Incorporating storytelling, personal testimonials, and relatable visuals in promotional campaigns can help remove obstacles to participation.

Conclusion:

The focus group findings offer valuable insights into what motivates women to participate in active leisure. By categorizing these motivations into themes of relaxation, stress relief, and body awakening, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the emotional and physical drivers behind women's engagement in leisure activities. Leisure industry professionals are encouraged to integrate these insights into program development to better serve their female clientele (Henderson & Bialeschki, 2005; Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993).

By bridging participants live experiences and relevant academic literature, this research presents a more nuanced view of how active leisure contributes to women's broader sense of wellbeing. It also outlines actionable strategies for practice, including the development of flexible and inclusive programs tailored to the varying needs of women across different life stages.

Significantly, the study highlights a demographic often underrepresented in leisure research: women with young children. By focusing on this group, the study contributes to the expanding field of gender-responsive leisure research and underscores the importance of designing programs that re-

flect women's diverse realities.

Research Limitations and Future Directions:

This study did not explore the full range of cultural, economic, or geographic differences among the women whose needs were being discussed. Yet we know that such factors can significantly shape what motivates women—or holds them back—from participating in active leisure. To truly understand and support this group, future research should aim to include voices from a broader range of backgrounds and life circumstances.

It's also important to recognize that this study offers a glimpse into a particular moment in time. As social roles, technology use, and public health concerns—especially in the wake of the pandemic—continue to shift, so too might women's leisure habits and needs. These findings are a helpful starting point, but ongoing research will be essential to keep pace with the changing realities women face in balancing caregiving and self-care.

Future research should consider expanding the demographic scope of the study to include women from different cultural backgrounds, socio-economic statuses, and life stages. Moreover, longitudinal studies can provide a clearer picture of how motivations evolve over time and in response to changing life circumstances.

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A.2.2

Interfamily Dynamics in Heritage Tourism: Fostering Next-Generation Learning and Engagement

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Abstract:

This research delves into the pivotal role of families in facilitating intergenerational learning within heritage tourism through qualitative in-depth interviews with 42 Cypriot families. The findings reveal the significance of familial relationships in shaping individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards heritage tourism activities. The research highlights the reciprocal nature of intergenerational learning, wherein both younger and older generations engage in mutual knowledge exchange through shared experiences and interactions. By elucidating the complex role of families in heritage tourism, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of intergenerational learning dynamics and informs strategies for sustainable tourism management and heritage preservation.

Keywords: *Heritage, Family, Tourism, Next Generation, Learning*

Theoretical Background :

Special interest tourism, particularly heritage tourism (Israfilova & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019; Kerr & Price, 2016; Prince, 2022), has increasingly become a focal point for research due to its unique role in transmitting cultural heritage and facilitating intergenerational learning (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001) experiences within families. Generally speaking, heritage tourism, defined as the exploration of areas with natural, cultural, or urban significance, has been recognized as an ideal setting for family engagement and intergenerational learning (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014; Yang & Lau, 2019). Studies on tourist motivations have identified several factors driving visitors to heritage sites, including a desire for cultural enrichment, nostalgia, personal identity exploration, and educational experiences (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Cultural heritage tourism offers visitors opportunities to connect with their ancestral roots, learn about historical events, and appreciate diverse cultural traditions (McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

Additionally, heritage tourism appeals to individuals seeking authentic and meaningful travel experiences that transcend superficial attractions (Richards, 2019). Agreeably, families are drawn to heritage sites as they offer opportunities for shared experiences and the transmission of cultural knowledge from one generation to another (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999; Yang & Lau, 2019). These experiences contribute to the preservation and appreciation of cultural heritage while fostering familial bonds and learning opportunities (Kidron, 2013; Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015; Prince, 2022).

Understanding how families behave and interact within the context of heritage tourism is crucial for elucidating the mechanisms through which intergenerational learning occurs. Research by Yang and Lau (2019) suggests that family dynamics play a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards heritage tourism activities. Family members may have varying motives and preferences for engaging in heritage tourism, influenced by factors such as cultural background, socio-economic status, and generational differences (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999). Furthermore, family interactions and decision-making processes during heritage tourism experiences contribute to the formation of shared memories and the transfer of cultural knowledge within the familial unit.

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2001), thus, emphasize the reciprocal nature of learning within familial relationships, where both younger and older generations engage in mutual knowledge exchange through shared experiences and interactions. Amenable, senior family members play a crucial role in facilitating the learning of the next generation by providing guidance, mentorship, and opportunities for exploration within heritage tourism settings (Yang & Lau, 2019). Additionally, sibling interactions and indirect learning approaches contribute to the holistic learning experiences of younger family members in heritage tourism contexts (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999).

This research study's theoretical foundation is based on a synthesis of key concepts with the goal of clarifying the complex role that families play in supporting intergenerational learning (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001) in the context of special interest tourism, with a specific emphasis on heritage tourism (Israfilova & Khoo-Lattimore, 2019; Kerr & Price, 2016; Prince, 2022). This theoretical framework underscores the significance of familial relationships

in facilitating learning experiences across different generations. Intergenerational learning (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001) highlights the reciprocal nature of knowledge exchange within familial contexts, where both younger and older generations engage in mutual learning processes through shared experiences and interactions (Benson et al., 2004; Benson, 2007). In the context of heritage tourism, intergenerational learning manifests as a dynamic process wherein family members impart historical knowledge, cultural insights, and personal narratives, while simultaneously learning from each other's perspectives and experiences.

Methodology:

The main aim of this research study is to shed light on the role and functions of family in facilitating the learning of next generation in special interest tourism, with particular emphasis on heritage tourism. Heritage tourism is a specialized form of tourism which involves visiting or experiencing heritage areas of natural, cultural or urban significance (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014). Heritage tourism is suited for family tourism and intergenerational learning (Yang & Lau, 2019). Families utilize this tourism form as a means to provide learning benefits for the next generation (Boekaerts & Minnaert, 1999; Yang & Lau, 2019). In context of this overarching aim, the research study pursues fulfilment of the following objectives:

1. Identifying how families behave and interact in heritage tourism? Initially, the study pursues understanding on family behavior and interactions in the context of heritage tourism. To understand how intergenerational learning occurs, first we need to comprehend how families behave, i.e. their drivers/ motives to engage in heritage tourism, the logics that they employ to pursue visits to heritage sites, the way they perceive heritage tourism and its benefits for the family, and the way they interact as a family in the context of this type of tourism. Regarding the latter, it would be interesting to understand the roles and contributions of different family members in planning and engaging in heritage tourism, including the benefits that different family members see from the engagement of family in this tourism form.

2. Comprehending how families nurture the next generation in heritage tourism? The second objective is to comprehend family influences and behaviors in the nurturing of next generation family members. The focus is not the individual and the learning outcomes for the individual, but the family processes and dynamics which set the structures for the learning of the next generation (which may be repre-

sented by more than one family member). In the course of this objective, data were sought on the approaches and tools used by senior family members in facilitating directly the learning of next generation in heritage tourism. Questions were also asked in order to understand other learning influences on the next generation which may stem from siblings or indirect learning approaches that senior family members may employ.

The research study draws on 42 qualitative in-depth interviews to provide answers to its research questions. Qualitative studies are suited to the exploration of social, collective, and intergenerational phenomena occurring within families (Gilgun, 1992) and the tourism context (Schänzel, 2010; Schänzel, and Yeoman, 2014). The study draw on gioia methodology (Gioia, Corley and Hamilton, 2013), imposing an enforced ignorance of the literature during the initial stages of the investigation and flexibly adjusting interview protocol based on informants' responses (Gioia et al., 2013). Under this methodology, an inductive approach is initially used (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Corbin and Strauss, 1990). Eventually, it transitions to abductive during the data analysis, since it prescribes a comparison of existing theory and literature to develop new concepts and build new theory (Gioia et al., 2013). The research study adopts the family as a unit of analysis to obtain insights on intergenerational dynamics, and specifically the way families influence the learning of the next generation in heritage tourism. Focus was, therefore, placed on families in tourism, with the intention to carry out interviews with multiple generations (Gilgun, 1992; Schänzel, 2010; Schänzel, and Yeoman, 2014) that participate in heritage tourism.

Results and Discussion:

Cyprus offers a rich selection of monuments, sites, and customs linked to heritage (MFA, 2024). The country has a strong religious heritage, linked to early Christianity and some of the oldest churches and finest collections of Byzantine art in the world (MFA, 2024). The country is also rich in archaeological heritage dating back to 9000 BC and the Neolithic age, and featuring several important archaeological sites and monuments which are listed in the UNESCO catalogue of World Cultural Heritage sites (Agapiou et al., 2015; Andreou et al., 2019). Indeed, in almost every village of the country there is a wealth of traditions and customs, which have been preserved across generations and are manifested in Cypriot dances, the Lefkaritika embroidery, the ancient techniques of pottery and basket weaving, and the preparation of sweet delicacies, amongst other (UNESCO, 2020).

The results show that families travel to various historical sites throughout Cyprus with their kids in order to educate them. Traveling becomes a way for the next generation to “experience heritage,” according to parents who feel that it is a “parent’s responsibility” to teach their kids about their heritage. The parents say that using digital tools (like websites, platforms, and applications) to read up on information online or watch a documentary about a particular historical site before visiting can help families get ready for a trip to that visit. Parents have expressed that the lack of official school heritage visits is causing a “heritage learning gap” in the next generation as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the current digital era. The results show that parents are aware of this gap and are making extra efforts to close it by taking their kids on more heritage tours in Cyprus.

The research study demonstrates the impact of the “country’s history and troubled past”—that is, the Turkish invasion of 1974—on family outings to historical sites and the subsequent education of the next generation about heritage. When discussing the nation’s troubled past with their children, parents prefer heritage sites that are friendlier (like museums) and less ominous. As a result, they stay away from dark tourism destinations (like cemeteries and battlefields), which make children feel worse and hinder intergenerational heritage learning. This study highlights how important it is for parents and grandparents to raise the next generation of heritage tourists. Furthermore, a thorough explanation of the actions and behaviors of the families at various historical sites is provided.

Unfortunately, there are very few studies in heritage tourism about the significance of family interactions in processes of heritage resonance (Prince, 2022). The contributions of this research study and, therefore, its novelty rest on new research perspective, which examines learning within heritage tourism (Nguyen & Cheung, 2014; Yang & Lau, 2019) through intergenerational learning (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2001). The family has not so far examined for its virtues in facilitating learning in heritage tourism and the tourism literature, in general.

Additionally, while studies focusing on learning in tourism have largely drawn on the level of the individual tourist, our study draws on the family as a unit of analysis. The research study focuses on the level of the family to examine family behaviors and dynamics which are important in the nurturing of next generation family members. A focus on

the family shifts beyond the individual as it allows placing attention at the intergenerational level to understand how different generations interact to facilitate the learning of the next generation in heritage tourism.

Last, this research study offers contextualized theorization, given the focus on heritage tourism and the family institution and its logics. Last, this research study comprehends how families are engaged in and facilitate the learning of younger generation members in heritage tourism. This is a key in the sustainability of special interest tourism, and in providing long-term socio-economic benefits for destinations.

Limitations:

This research study only involved families from Cyprus, excluding other types of tourists such as solo travelers and international tourists. Consequently, insights into how these different tourist demographics perceive family dynamics and intergenerational learning in heritage tourism remain unexplored. Future research endeavors could incorporate diverse tourist groups to provide a comprehensive understanding of their experiences and perspectives. Indeed, subsequent research studies could adopt a phenomenological approach to delve deeper into the individual experiences of various tourist demographics, shedding light on the nuanced aspects of their interactions with heritage tourism sites and family dynamics.

Furthermore, an autoethnographic study could offer valuable insights into the role and functions of families in facilitating intergenerational learning within the context of heritage tourism. By narrating personal experiences and reflections, such a research study could elucidate the intricate connections between family dynamics and the transmission of heritage knowledge to future generations. Additionally, future research could employ quantitative methods to analyze the relationship between intergenerational learning and family engagement in heritage tourism, providing empirical evidence to support theoretical frameworks and hypotheses in this domain.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, heritage tourism serves as a platform for families to explore and engage with historical sites and monuments. Within these familial interactions lies an intergenerational dynamic, providing a unique opportunity for knowledge transfer from older to younger generations. However, the phenomenon of reversed learning, where the younger

generation becomes the source of new knowledge, remains understudied in the context of heritage family tourism.

This research study underscores the significance of investigating intergenerational learning dynamics within heritage tourism settings. Understanding how heritage tourism facilitates learning across generations is pivotal for ensuring the long-term sustainability of heritage tourism destinations. By examining family behaviors, interactions, and nurturing mechanisms, this study deepens our comprehension of the pivotal role families play in transmitting cultural heritage and shaping the learning experiences of future generations within heritage tourism contexts.

These research findings carry implications for tourism management strategies, heritage conservation efforts, and the design of family-centric tourism initiatives aimed at fostering cultural appreciation and strengthening familial bonds within heritage tourism destinations. By recognizing the multifaceted role of families in heritage tourism, stakeholders can develop more effective strategies to enhance visitor experiences and promote the preservation of cultural heritage for generations to come.

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B. CTL Students' Contributions

B.1 Digital technologies and sustainability:

The Case of Cyprus

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Supervisor: Dr Maria Hadjielia Drotarova, PhD

B.2 Expectation Vs. Reality Tourism Experience

**Author: Ashok Singjali, Hotel Management, Bachelor's Degree Graduate,
currently an MBA Student**

Supervisor: Dr Maria Hadjielia Drotarova, PhD

B.3 Experience of employees in the hospitality sector:

Cross-cultural working environment in Cyprus

**Author: Niraj Dhimal, Hotel Management, Bachelor's Degree Graduate,
currently an MBA Student**

Supervisor: Dr Maria Hadjielia Drotarova, PhD

B.4 Overcoming Communication Barries on Diverse Team

**Author: Lynda Noubissie, Business Administration Bachelor's Degree Graduate,
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B.1

Digital technologies and sustainability: The Case of Cyprus

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Abstract:

The hospitality industry, particularly in regions like Limassol, Cyprus, faces the challenge of balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability. This project explores the application of sustainable technologies within hotels in Limassol, Cyprus, aiming to mitigate the environmental impact of tourism while enhancing economic viability. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the study evaluates various sustainable technologies suitable for implementation in hotel operations, considering factors such as energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, and guest experience enhancement. The project includes case studies, feasibility analyses, and recommendations for the adoption and integration of sustainable technologies in Limassol's hotel industry, aiming to promote environmental responsibility and long-term competitiveness.

Introduction:

Digital technology and sustainability have come together to become a major global industry emphasis, especially for the travel and hospitality sectors. Countries like Cyprus are increasingly looking into how digital innovation may assist sustainable development as environmental concerns and technological breakthroughs continue to transform the global economy. Cyprus, a country well-known for its booming tourism industry, mainly depends on its natural riches, rich cultural legacy, and pleasant temperature to draw millions of tourists to every year. However, there are a number of serious issues brought on by the tourism industry's explosive growth, such as resource overuse and environmental deterioration. According to Buhalis and Leung (2018), the hospitality industry may adopt more sustainable practices and improve operational efficiency and customer happiness by integrating digital technologies. This is a viable solution to these challenges.

Artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, and big data analytics are just a few of the developments that fall under the umbrella of digital technology and are starting to change the way businesses function in Cyprus. These technologies help the hospitality industry manage energy more intelligently, analyse data in real time, and provide individualised guest experiences, all of which lower operating costs and promote sustainability (Mariani et al., 2019). For example, IoT-enabled devices are being used more and more by hotels in Cyprus to optimise water usage, control lighting and heating, and monitor energy consumption. Sustainability is now a top priority for both the environment and the economy thanks to these developments, which also help to lessen the negative effects of hotel operations on the environment.

In order to preserve the island's natural beauty and resources while keeping it a popular tourist destination, the hospitality sector in Cyprus is adopting sustainable practices. With government programs supporting eco-friendly practices and green tourism throughout the industry, Cyprus has achieved great progress towards sustainability (Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative, 2020). In order to deploy energy-efficient solutions, cut waste, and encourage sustainable resource use, hotels and other hospitality enterprises need to embrace digital technologies. Furthermore, since more and more travellers are looking for environmentally friendly travel options, digital platforms enable improved transparency and connection with them. Cyprus's appeal as an environmentally conscious travel destination is strengthened by this combination of sustainability and digitalisation.

Within this framework, the Cyprus instance provides a crucial illustration of how digital technology can be utilised to promote sustainability within the travel and hospitality sector. The purpose of this study is to shed light on the benefits and problems associated with implementing digital technologies for sustainability by investigating how hotels and other tourism-related enterprises are incorporating these innovations. The study will provide important insights for other tourism-dependent economies to the larger conversation about how the hospitality sector can manage environmental stewardship and economic growth. In the end, the Cyprus story emphasises how digital transformation may promote sustainable development even in the face of mounting economic and environmental challenges.

Literature Review:

Electronic tools, systems, resources, and equipment that cre-

ate, store, or process data are referred to as digital technologies. These technologies include big data analytics, cloud computing, Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI). Digital technologies are frequently utilized in the hotel sector to optimize resource management, improve customer experiences, and increase operational efficiency (Buhalis & Leung, 2018). Hotels in Cyprus, for instance, use digital platforms for energy management systems, online booking, and automated customer service. By implementing these technologies, companies can lower expenses, improve operational efficiency, and satisfy consumer desire for seamless, tech-enabled experiences.

On the other hand, sustainability is a wide notion that includes social, economic, and environmental aspects. According to the Brundtland Commission (1987), it is centred on addressing current demands without compromising the capacity of future generations to address their own needs. According to Jones et al. (2016), sustainability in the hospitality industry refers to using methods that have the least negative effects on the environment. These methods include cutting back on energy use, properly handling garbage, and supporting regional economies and cultures. Sustainability is essential for Cyprus, a nation that depends greatly on tourism, to protect its natural resources and cultural legacy while fostering economic progress. Using sustainable techniques in the hospitality industry not only helps the island become known as an eco-friendly travel destination, but it also fits in with worldwide environmental aims.

In Cyprus, the combination of digital technologies and sustainability offers a singular chance to tackle the issues brought on by the swift expansion of the tourism industry. Digital technologies can help with sustainability projects by lowering carbon footprints, increasing energy efficiency, and facilitating more intelligent resource management. For example, hotels may monitor and control energy use in real-time with IoT-based energy management systems, which results in significant consumption savings (Sustainability Management School, 2020). In a similar vein, supply chains can benefit from increased openness thanks to blockchain technology, which guarantees the application of sustainable sourcing techniques. Digital technology integration into sustainability initiatives will be crucial for maintaining long-term environmental stewardship and economic resilience in the hospitality sector, as Cyprus continues to draw millions of tourists each year.

Global Overview of the Performance Impact of Digitalization Technologies and Sustainability on Hotels

The worldwide hotel sector has seen a substantial transformation with the incorporation of digitalisation technology, leading to improved operational efficiency, customised guest experiences, and more sustainable practices. Artificial intelligence (AI), cloud-based property management systems, and the Internet of Things (IoT) are reducing human error and freeing up staff for more intricate guest interactions by automating repetitive tasks like room service, check-ins, and customer enquiries. AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants, for instance, can offer round-the-clock customer support, increasing visitor satisfaction and reducing the requirement for ongoing human supervision (Mariani et al., 2019). Better data analytics is another benefit of digitalisation for hotels. This allows them to estimate demand, optimise pricing strategies, and customise services to match the tastes of individual customers—all of which enhance financial success.

Globally, hotels have noticed advantages in sustainability programs that are powered by digital technologies and a growing environmental consciousness. Hotels may lower their operational expenses, lessen their environmental impact, and attract more environmentally concerned guests by implementing sustainable practices. Hotels can monitor and cut energy consumption in real-time with smart energy management systems powered by IoT devices, which considerably lowers electricity expenditures (Jones et al., 2016). Additional digital solutions that assist hotels in reducing waste and resource utilisation include waste management programs and water-saving devices. Sustainability is becoming an essential component of contemporary hotel operations, since these initiatives not only offer long-term financial benefits but also aid in environmental preservation.

When combined digitalisation and sustainability have a significant impact on hotel profitability because they increase brand recognition, create customer loyalty, and provide hotels a competitive edge. Hotels that prioritise sustainability and provide modern amenities are becoming more and more popular with visitors. This change is evident in the rising demand for eco-labels and green certifications, which are becoming important differentiators in the hotel sector (Font & McCabe, 2017). In addition, hotels that effectively incorporate digital and sustainable practices are in a better position to keep up with regulations, improve their CSR (corporate social responsibility) reputations, and realise long-term financial success. In the end, sustainability and

digitalisation are working together to transform the hospitality industry globally and help hotels prosper in a time when environmental responsibility and technology advancement are essential for success.

Key Digital Technologies in the Hospitality Industry: Enhancing Efficiency and Customer Experience

Digital technologies are now essential in the ever-changing hotel sector, greatly improving overall operations, customer service, and efficiency. Property Management Systems (PMS), which centralise essential operations including booking, check-in/check-out procedures, room assignments, and guest information management, are among the fundamental technologies. Protel, Cloudbeds, and Opera are a few notable examples. According to Buhalis and Leung (2018), these solutions increase operational efficiency and visitor pleasure by streamlining administrative duties and ensuring smooth operations.

Systems for tracking and analysing customer interactions and data are essential for managing the customer lifecycle. These systems are known as Customer Relationship Management, or CRM systems. CRM platforms like Salesforce and HubSpot improve guest retention and satisfaction by tailoring guest experiences and effectively managing loyalty programs (Sigala, 2018). Furthermore, by enabling visitors to utilise their smartphones for these procedures—thereby cutting down on wait times and boosting convenience—Mobile Check-In and Check-Out solutions have completely changed the visitor experience.

The hospitality industry's digital evolution is further demonstrated by the integration of Point of Sale (POS) Systems in bars, restaurants, and other service areas within hotels. According to Zach and Gal-Tzur (2018), systems like as Toast, Square, and Lightspeed help with inventory control, order management, and payments. This streamlines operations and improves the eating experience for customers. Additionally, the use of mobile phones by visitors to access hotel rooms and services is made possible via Digital Key Cards and Mobile Access technologies, which enhance security and convenience.

Guest service platforms, such Zingle and ALICE, enable visitors to use their mobile devices to book appointments, request services, and interact with hotel personnel, all of which improve the overall visitor experience (Tussyadiah, 2020). To provide guests with a personalised and comfort-

able stay, Smart Room Technology automatically integrates IoT devices to manage lighting, heating, air conditioning, and entertainment systems through voice commands or smartphone apps (Morosan & DeFranco, 2016).

Duetto and IDeas are two examples of Revenue Management Systems (RMS) that use data analytics to estimate demand, optimise pricing, and manage inventory to help hotels reach their full revenue potential (Talluri & van Ryzin, 2006). Simplified, contactless payment options are provided by digital payment solutions like Apple Pay and Google Wallet, which are becoming more and more popular among visitors due to their security and ease.

In addition, the integration of Virtual and Augmented Reality technology offers guests fully immersive and virtual tours of hotel properties, improving their decision-making abilities and level of involvement (Jung et al., 2015). AI-powered customer service systems, such as Ivy and Booking.com's chatbot, efficiently handle client enquiries and bookings by providing prompt, personalised responses (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019).

Last but not least, Workforce Management Software like Deputy and HotSchedules makes payroll processing, performance monitoring, and staff scheduling easier, improving human resource management in the hospitality sector (Baum, 2018). Together, these digital technologies promote operational excellence and improved guest experiences by creating a more effective, responsive, and customised hospitality environment.

Research Methodology:

The research used in this study is qualitative in nature (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Gaining insight into the significance and experience elements of people's lives and social environments is the goal of qualitative research. Successful qualitative research must be able to shed insight on the participants' subjective meanings and social context (Fossey et al., 2002).

Understanding human experiences, behaviours, and the meanings people give to them is the goal of qualitative research. It is frequently used in the social sciences as well as in industries including digital technologies, health, and education. Developing a greater understanding of certain occurrences is the aim rather than extrapolating results to a wider audience. Qualitative research frequently uses techniques including focus groups, interviews, and case studies.

Usually, the method is inductive, which means that instead of testing an established hypothesis, researchers derive hypotheses and insights from the data.

In qualitative research, inductive reasoning involves deriving themes, categories, and patterns from the data. I start with observations and work my way up to more comprehensive theories or generalisations. Inductive thinking permits the creation of new ideas and hypotheses straight from the evidence, as opposed to deductive reasoning, which involves testing a hypothesis (Thomas, 2006). This approach is especially helpful in areas where knowledge of context and experiences is essential, such as sustainability and digital technologies, where phenomena are changing quickly.

For example, qualitative research can assist uncover underlying motives, challenges, and impacts that quantitative methods can miss when examining how people and organisations adopt sustainable digital technology. In order to create theories about technology adoption and environmental impact, I might have to investigate how sustainability is viewed and prioritised in various digital environments.

In study, the term “ontology” relates to the nature of reality or what is deemed real. Ontological presumptions in qualitative research typically conform to a relativist perspective, which holds that reality is subjective and created by human interactions and experiences (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). This viewpoint is in opposition to the positivist one found in quantitative research, which holds that reality is quantifiable and objective.

A qualitative researcher may see reality as shaped by human-technology interaction in the context of digital technologies and sustainability. For example, people’s perceptions of the sustainability of digital practices can differ greatly based on individual, social, and cultural aspects. Consequently, qualitative research would place more of an emphasis on comprehending these diverse realities than on attempting to assess them impartially.

In research, epistemology is the study of knowledge and how it is obtained. Epistemological beliefs in qualitative research frequently correspond to constructivist paradigms. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), this indicates that knowledge is viewed as co-constructed by the researcher and the participants, highlighting the significance of context and the meaning people attribute to their experiences.

A constructivist epistemology would encourage researchers to investigate how various stakeholders (such as customers,

and developers) perceive and comprehend the role that digital technologies play in advancing sustainability. Such research is thought to produce information that is subjective and context-dependent, reflecting the complexity of technological interactions and human experiences.

Digital technologies have a significant effect on sustainability that can be both positive and negative. Digital tools have the potential to improve resource efficiency, lower emissions through the use of smarter systems (such as smart grids and IoT-enabled energy management), and support the development of more sustainable business models (GeSI, 2019). However, the development and use of digital technology may also be a factor in e-waste, energy use, and environmental deterioration (Hilty & Aebischer, 2015).

Studying the relationship between digital technology and sustainability using a qualitative method might provide insights into how various stakeholders view and handle these dual consequences. For instance, qualitative research could investigate how consumers choose energy-efficient devices, for instance, or how companies incorporate sustainability into their digital transformation plans. Because qualitative research is inductive, it can be used to investigate new patterns and create fresh hypotheses about how sustainability and digital innovation interact.

A research methodology ensures that the study is carried out properly and efficiently by employing a methodical approach to accomplish a particular aim. This chapter describes the methods used in this study on digitalisation in the hospitality industry, with an emphasis on choosing the best course of action from the available choices. In order to find the most appropriate method for examining the function and effects of digitalisation in hotels, restaurants, and other hospitality-related enterprises, it looks at a variety of research techniques and designs.

The particular procedures, tools, and methodologies utilised in this study’s data collecting will also be covered in this chapter. Professionals from the hospitality sector who work in hotels that have effectively incorporated digital technologies have been interviewed for these. In addition, the study will make use of digital tools and software for qualitative analysis, data collecting, and analysis in order to investigate how digitisation affects sustainability and efficiency in the hotel industry. By going over these techniques, the chapter shows how the data is collected in a methodical manner and examined to guarantee that the study’s conclusions are solid and add to the expanding volume of information regarding digital transformation in the hospitality industry.

Data Collection:

Written documentation and in-depth, open-ended interviews are part of the analysis of qualitative research data. Naturalistic inquiry is a tool used by qualitative researchers to create case studies and detailed narrative accounts of actual situations. Qualitative research generates its output, patterns, and ideas through inductive examination across instances. Patterson (2005)

The research method for studying the application of digital and sustainable technologies in Limassol hotels has already employed a qualitative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), focusing on two primary data collection techniques: 17 interviews (see table 1) by employees and managers working in the hospitality industry for multiple years, where they experienced the transition of using digital technologies, and online data research (plethora of websites regarding sustainable and digital technologies for the hospitality sector). This method aims to gather comprehensive insights into the practical implementation, challenges, and benefits of sustainable technologies from the perspectives of various stakeholders (people and organizations that can impact and be impacted by the hospitality industry. For example, employees, customers, the government etc.). Semi-structured interviews (see table 2), will be conducted with hotel managers, and staff to capture detailed, firsthand accounts of their experiences with digitalization and sustainable practices. These interviews will explore topics such as the decision-making process for adopting sustainable technologies, the operational changes required, the perceived economic and environmental benefits, and any obstacles encountered during implementation. The research will find rich, complex information that quantitative tools might miss by interacting directly with persons concerned.

To complement and explain the results, online data research will be used in addition to interviews. Analysing secondary data sources including industry publications, sustainability guidelines, other hotels' case studies, and related scholarly literature would be necessary for this. A more comprehensive understanding of the trends, best practices, and technology developments in the hospitality industry's sustainability initiatives can be obtained through online data research. It will also assist in locating standards and benchmarks that are applicable to the Limassol setting. By combining these two approaches, the study will provide an in-depth understanding of how sustainable technologies might be applied in Limassol hotels. In order to ensure that the study findings are both thorough and detailed, interviews will provide

depth and detail, while web data research will offer range and context (Yin, 2018).

Research Background:

Cyprus is a well-known “sea, sun, and sand” destination that draws tourists with its gorgeous Mediterranean coastline, interesting cultural background, and agreeable climate. Cyprus is a well-liked tourist destination because of its extensive collection of historical structures and landmarks, many of which date back to the island's rich ancient past. The hospitality industry plays a significant role in the island's GDP, with approximately 3,320 restaurants, 12 theme parks, and over 820 hotels meeting the needs of both year-round residents and the millions of tourists that visit (Cyprus Tourism Organisation, 2023). Major seaside city Limassol, which is well-known for its exciting nightlife and luxurious accommodation, has emerged as the island's tourism hub because of its combination of cutting-edge recreational opportunities and cultural experiences. The daily availability of around 80 jobs in the hospitality sector highlights the industry's significance to the Cypriot economy.

Over 4 million tourists visited Cyprus in 2023, significantly increasing the country's GDP, tourism alone making up almost 20% of the nation's total economic output (Statistical Service of Cyprus, 2023). The industry is placing a higher priority on digitalization and sustainability as a result of the greater awareness of the negative effects that mass tourism has on the environment brought about by the increase in travel. The study focusses on the employment of sustainable and digital technology in Limassol hotels, investigating how these businesses are addressing environmental issues while drawing guests.

Target Group and Sampling Process:

In this study, purposive sampling was used, and a standardized interview was developed. An interview aimed at obtaining the interviewee's life environment descriptions and feelings, in order to understand the relevance of the events they disclosed (Kvale, 1983). In order to give hospitality staff members, the impression that they had few options for providing precise replies, the majority of the questions were left open-ended. In order to give them a comfortable environment in which to respond, interviews were conducted both in-person and virtually. In addition, the interviews were condensed. Within thirty minutes, the majority of the interviews were completed. The research participants' details are provided below.

Name	Location	Position	Working Place
Lara Da Silva	Cyprus	Receptionist	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Lara Fonseca	Cyprus	Receptionist	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Mohammed Imbrahim	Cyprus	Receptionist	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Ricardo Moreira	Cyprus	Receptionist	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Islam Hassan	Cyprus	N/receptionist	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Vana	Cyprus	Receptionist	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Christina Ermolaou	Cyprus	Reservations	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Froso Apota	Cyprus	Reservations	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Nikolas Constantinou	Cyprus	Events	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Evdokia Pimenova	Cyprus	Guest Experience	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Nikoleta Vaggelis	Cyprus	Housekeeping	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Constantina Evripidou	Cyprus	Chief Engineering	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Christophoros	Cyprus	Receptionist	Royal Apollonia Hotel
Krisellen Demetriou	Cyprus	Ass Chief Enginee.	St. Rafael Hotel
Charis	Cyprus	Cook	Amathus Hotel
Andreas Demetriou	Cyprus	Chief Engineering	Amathus Hotel
		Front Office Mngr.	Royal Apollonia Hotel

Table 1: Research Participants

Tools and Interview Questions:

These are the questions used during the interviews to figure out whether the employees are for or against the use of Digitalization within their work environment and if sustainable technology is easily implemented in their everyday work and how accepted it has been.

Question 1 How has the adoption of digital technologies impacted your daily responsibilities and workflow in the hospitality industry?

Question 2 What types of training or support have you received to help you adapt to new digital technologies in your workplace? Do you feel adequately prepared to use these technologies?

Question 3 From your perspective, what are the main benefits and challenges of integrating digital technologies into the hospitality industry?

Question 4 How do you think digital technologies have affected the customer experience in the hospitality industry? Can you provide specific examples?

Question 5 What emerging digital technologies or trends do you believe will have the most significant impact on the hospitality industry in the next few years? How do you feel about these changes?

Question 6 What feedback would you give to your management regarding the implementation of digital technologies? Are there specific areas where you think improvements could be made?

Table 2: Interview Questions

These are the questions asked during these open-ended interview sessions. The answers received by the employees were very helpful to understand their experience and their emotions behind the implementation in their day-to-day work.

Data Analysis:

In qualitative data analysis, the focus is on exploring and interpreting the rich, contextualized data obtained through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. The process typically involves several interconnected steps aimed at uncovering patterns, themes, and insights within the data. Firstly, in order to fully comprehend the content of the data, researchers must immerse themselves in it by repeatedly reading and observing the raw material. After that, data segments are methodically categorised and labelled using coding in accordance with recurrent themes, concepts, or ideas. During this initial coding, pre-existing frameworks may be used to direct the analysis or open coding may be used to create categories directly from the data. Axial coding, then groups codes into more general themes or patterns, making it possible to interpret the data in a more

structured manner. Codes can be improved and themes can be linked together with the help of the continuous comparison approach, which compares and contrasts data segments with one another continuously. The last step in the process is thematic synthesis, which combines the themes that have been found into a cohesive story that divides the main ideas from the data and offers significant new insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Ethical Consideration:

In order to guarantee the authenticity and integrity of the study findings, this research gave ethical and moral considerations, first priority. Respecting the values of authenticity, the data gathered for this study was subjected to strict verification procedures, which included examination through reliable sources like Google Scholar, academic libraries, and trustworthy websites. Furthermore, it was crucial to follow the Data Protection Act of 2018 to guarantee that participants gave their voluntary agreement for the study to be carried out, protecting their confidentiality and privacy. Furthermore, the research design allowed for a thorough investigation of participant experiences while honouring their autonomy, and data storage procedures agreed with ethical standards to guarantee the safe and responsible management of information. After the designated period, data stored electronically will be promptly removed, maintaining the integrity of the research process and honoring ethical obligations to participants (Neuman, 2014). A consent form has been approved by the participants. Every secondary data source (articles, research studies, etc.) is cited and referenced.

Research Findings:

Interview have been conducted in order to answer the questions established in this study. In the following chapter we will discuss the findings of the various interviews. A summary of the findings of the study will be presented in this chapter, as well as an interpretation of the findings. In the results section, a simple summary of the findings should be provided as well as a pointer to the discussion section an addition to an interpretation or evaluation of the findings. The writer's report presents the results of the analysis in the next section. When writing the analysis section, you should know the type of analysis that has been conducted, but this does not mean you need to include data. It is already done when you write the results section. A study based on the digitalization and sustainability technology in Cyprus hotels is discussed in this chapter as to how hotels in Cyprus have successfully implemented it and how do they foresee the future of technology in Cyprus' hotels.

Training and Familiarization of the new technologies.

Based on the interviews that I conducted, I got a variety of feelings and they are mostly aged separated. For instance, the younger participants were more eager to use the new technologies and digitalization. Since we leave in two different worlds, in this day and age, it is much easier for them to accept the new technology and start implementing it to their every day life. They know that technology is used to reduce the amount of hand work we do every day, and that is why they are more excited to start using it. Especially the younger participants (Lara Da Silva, Lara Fonseca, Ricardo, Vana and Evdokia) which are around the age of 20 years old, they are always excited and full of energy, whenever they have the chance to learn an easier way of doing things. Being young, they don't have the patience of doing things the old way, hand written and manually added to the books. They want to press a button and everything to be done in an instant. So, whatever shortens the time that they have to spend on one task, makes them ecstatic and anxious about what new technology will show up to make their spending time even shorter.

On the other hand, we have the older generations which have learned a certain way of doing things and if you try to change it the slightest, their first reaction is to find its flaws. They always start with 'This will never work' and 'have you ever worked in a position like this to understand that this is impossible to do because we do not have enough time'. What they lack to understand is that this will free some time from their already overloaded schedule and will help them to enjoy their work life much easier. For example, people like Nicoletta, Vangelis and Froso were the ones that their first reaction to the question: 'What types of training or support have you received to help you adapt to new digital technologies in your workplace?' was 'We don't have the time to actually sit with a trainer for 8 hours for multiple sessions to learn how to use these new technologies. We have a lot of things to do and by dropping everything just to sit in a conference room for a whole day listening to someone talk about things we don't even understand is just a waste of time. Precious time, which I cannot afford to lose.' Even by reading the answers you get the feeling of frustration and stressfulness from them. As the interviews carried on, I tried to make them understand that technologies are meant to relieve you from stress and to make you feel less frustrated, not to add to them. While we kept talking their main issue is that it takes them a lot of time actually learning the new technology and implementing it to their every day life and not just presenting it to them.

When they told me this the first thing that came to mind is to find easier ways of passing the knowledge to them. So, I asked them what, in their opinion, is the best way to actually be trained to use anything new. The response was unanimous. "ON THE JOB TRAINING!" by teaching them while they are working and showing them how they can use the new tools to make their work life flow better, is to actually do while they are working. Most of the people are convinced only if they experience it so by demonstrating it while there are busy would be the best way to actually start using it.

Advanced communication with different ethnicities and cultures.

Working in the hospitality sector one of the greatest disadvantages is communicating with different ethnicities. Cyprus being a sea-sand-sun destination, receives people from all over the world, with different languages and different cultures. Something that is normal to you might be insulting in other cultures, which makes it a very thin line to walk on.

Luckily, nowadays with digitalization we have the opportunity to avoid this 'mistakes' by using the technology to actually learn about other cultural differences and avoid these mishaps. For example, Jewish shabbat is something very important to their religion which effects their daily life. In case you are not aware of what the Jewish Shabbat is, they are not allowed to use any form of technology from Friday night until Saturday night. Most of the normal daily functions are not allowed like cooking, washing and many many more. Someone who is unaware of this detail will find it ridiculous and might probably think that they are trying to deceive them. Using digitalization and technology you can confirm that what they are saying is actually accurate and you can find ways to help the guests and make their stay as memorable and enjoyable as possible.

Another way of using digitalization technology is for communication. Recently we have been receiving people from Asia. Even with their schools being so advanced there are a lot of people that do not know how to speak in English. This is where technology takes place. We often use translate programs to communicate with them and the response we receive is pure excitement. When they see that you are trying to communicate with them, they feel safe and wanted. This gives them the opportunity to enjoy their vacation and even make plans for their return. We recently had a family from China where we made the entire check in using translating programs, and even spoke with their child who was only 8

years old. We asked the parents if we are allowed to offer the child a lollipop and they agreed, so once we gave him the lollipop his excitement was unmeasurable. We could have done that without the parent's approval and we could have gotten the parent's approval without the technology that allowed us to communicate with them.

We can't talk about technological communication without mentioning the most important aspect of it: The communication between the hotels departments. Technology has made communication within departments very easy and reduced mistakes to minimum. At the beginning of my career, 13 years ago, the only way to communicate with another department was through a walkie talkie or actually running around the hotel to find the person you wanted to talk to and tell them. Physically finding them was time wasting and tiring, and calling them through the walkie talkie often gave negative results due to miscommunication, or lack of signal or even intruders on our frequency.

Nowadays, most of the hotels have their personal application which you can use and to communicate with each other. You can report anything to certain departments and they get a notification. Once they solve the report, they can mark it as complete. This way you have a report of all the things that needed attention daily, weekly, monthly even yearly. You can also identify things that occur multiple times and find the source of the issue and fix it once and for all. Other than reports, you can add notes to specific room arrivals, for example, they have anniversary or birthday and the house-keeping can decorate the room. The process of adding the note/report/issue does not take over 2 minutes of your time. This way we have reduced the time waste and it allowed us to spend more time on more important matter like assisting customers and make their experience the best one they ever had.

Payment and revenue stress-free management

The most dramatic role that digitalization played is for the night shift. During the night shift, the night auditor was responsible to calculate manually the income of the entire hotel, calculate the expenses of the entire hotel and create a report with all the information gathered. Twenty years ago, this was done on long pieces of paper with a pen and a calculator. Then it advanced to cassettes where they had to do it on the computer manually and save it on cassettes where they showed to the accounts department. Islam, who is our night auditor, considers himself lucky because he is too young to experience anything like this. Now, all you have to do is

print the report from the software and all the information is already there. No calculations need to be done and you can find all the information no matter the time or day. We can now find the reports of previous years and compare them to today. This made the night auditing a more approachable work position and is way less intimidating.

Indications for promotions/ Career opportunities and CV updates.

Leaving in the digital era everything is kept as records. Whatever anyone does has been saved and a record is being kept. As a manager this allows me to check the progress of my department and the progress of each individual colleague. It makes it easier to identify the next candidate for promotion based on the upgrades achieved, revenue increase and reviews received. It used to be mostly based on the years of experience someone has, but now it is based on the quality of someone's work.

It also opens new doors to people that want a change in their life and want to work to another hotel. Using these reports, they can update their CV's and send them to the new potential employer. The knowledge of digital technology is something that every hotel is looking for, so if a candidate has the experience has a better opportunity to find a better job. The most impressive aspect of the hotel industry is that, it is worldwide. You can apply for a job in a hotel anywhere in the world and digitalization and technology will allow you to advance whether you know the language or not. I have people working at the reception from all over the world, Egyptians, Portuguese, Greek and many more around the hotel. So, it really does open doors, especially for people that want to travel to new countries for job opportunities.

Sustainable Technology:

After conducting the interviews in different hotels, I realized that all the hotels are aiming for the same goal. They vary in presenting their technology to their visitors. Some hotels are using Sustainable technology behind closed doors and other make sure that the guest know about it. For instance, Amathus hotel has the water desalination it is hidden from plain site. No matter what happens the hotel always has clean water that they process from sea water but the guest of the hotel never take notice unless they ask about it. Although a huge accomplishment from Amathus hotel it is not being presented to the sustainable guests. St. Raphael on the other hand does not own a water distillery machine as Amathus hotel does but they wanted to do something that even when they take the majority of the expenses, they give the guest some-

thing that will stay with them forever. They have partnered with a company that make bottles from sugar cane with the logo of the hotel. These bottles are offered to the guest upon check in and they have placed water faucets all around the hotel for guests to refill their bottles without any additional charge. This implementation has guests taking pictures with the bottles advertising the hotels sustainable practices which is greatly beneficiary to the hotel. Studies have indicated that consumers switch to hotel services that embrace purpose and sustainability asserted that green branding (promoting the hotels' environmentally friendly practices) actually helped Ecotels differentiate themselves from the competition, thereby gaining consumers' trust. (Han et al., 2018; Han & Yoon, 2015; Lee et al., 2016). Earlier, Montoro Rios et al. (2006).

Other hotels like Nyx hotel in Limassol indulge sustainability by being non-paper in a place well known for the use of papers. The reception of Nyx hotels has been instructed to avoid using paper for any reason. The use of online pre-check in procedure has enabled them to achieve that. In addition, instead of printing the invoice for every guest they proceed to send it by email. These practices helped keep the paper usage close to non.

Marketing of Sustainable Technologies in Limassol's hotels.

As stated above some hotels go all out in promoting their sustainability imprint to the world. The government has a program called 'Promotion of Circular Economy in Hotels and Tourist Accommodations' which hotels can participate by presenting their sustainable practices and technologies and the government gives them a deadline on when they have to improve them in order to receive a fund. The measure is funded by the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facilities, within the Cyprus Recovery and Resilience Plan for the period 2021-2026. By entering the above program your hotel is presented in the list of hotels throughout the European union which a lot of sustainable customers find their next destination.

In addition, all the online websites like Booking.com, Expedia, HotelBeds etc. make various checks on the sustainable hotels and then filter them in the sustainable sector of their website. Being on the receiving end of the check as a Front Office Manager in a hotel in Limassol, I have to say that their approach on Sustainability is vast and the forms and proofs that they need are doubled and tripled checked before promoting the hotel as sustainable. After various discussions

with them I have been informed that they are planning to start sending survey forms on how sustainable was their experience in the hotel. This will also be a way to check whether the hotels are implementing sustainable practices or just greenwashing.

The availability of purchasing sustainable technologies for Cyprus hotels.

Hotels in Cyprus who are interested in purchasing sustainable technology can choose from a wide range of solutions and vendors that can meet their unique requirements. Many businesses focus on giving sustainable solutions that are specifically designed for the hospitality industry. They provide a variety of goods and services that are intended to improve waste management, water conservation, energy efficiency, and environmental performance. Hotels may now produce clean electricity on-site and reduce their dependency on traditional energy sources, thanks to companies like “Green Energy Cyprus” and “Sustainable Energy Ltd.” that provide renewable energy solutions like solar panels and wind turbines. Additionally, eco-friendly products including water-saving fixtures, energy-efficient lighting, and smart building automation systems are supplied by providers like EcoCyp and GreenCyprus, which assist hotels maximise resource utilisation and reduce environmental effect.

Additionally, hotels in Cyprus can investigate and buy sustainable technology solutions from both domestic and foreign vendors by utilising online platforms and marketplaces. With their extensive directories of suppliers, consultants, and contractors who specialise in sustainable technology solutions, websites such as Sustainable Cyprus and Cyprus Green Hotels are useful tools for hotels looking for sustainable goods and services. These platforms enable informed purchasing decisions by giving hotels access to a wide selection of sustainable technology solutions and providing them with information on product details, pricing, and customer feedback. In order to promote environmental responsibility and long-term sustainability, hotels in Cyprus can successfully incorporate eco-friendly solutions into their operations by utilising the availability of sustainable technology suppliers and online platforms.

Sustainable technologies: BMS system

After my interviews with 3 different hotels every hotel strives for the same outcome. They want to become as sustainable as possible without compromising the experience of their guests. All the interviewees have the guests as top priority, which leads the in ways that will benefit both the hotel

and their guests. For example, all hotels have implemented a central system called Building Management System (BMS) which regulates the usage of electricity provided to various machinery such as the chillers. The BMS can identify the need of how many generators must be used based on the occupancy of the hotel and shut down the ones that are unnecessarily used. This way it reduces the electricity by using the minimum number of generators needed for the rooms that are occupied. The BMS system can also use the heat that these generators emit and increase the temperature of the water in order to reduce the amount of time the boilers need to work to take the water up to the necessary temperature that is required.

The use of air-conditioning in the common areas are being monitored as well by the BMS system, which reads the temperature of the area and adjusts the air-condition's temperature to keep it at a certain level all the time. It also does the same thing in conference rooms where somedays they are full with people which makes the temperature rise and it regulates it to be at the same degrees as it was programmed to be. When it detects that none is in the room and the temperature is kept stable for a certain amount of time it shut down because it means that there is no longer anyone in the conference room. This system takes the accessibility to the temperature of the air condition from the guests and gives it entirely to the chief engineer of the hotel, so it can not be overused by the guest.

Composting:

Many hotels want to reduce the wastage imprint the produce and one of the best ways to do so is by starting composting various things. St Raphael has wonderful gardens that need trimming and taking care of daily. All the leaves and branched that are being cut they have plans of purchasing a composting machine and start composting them into fertilizer to use in their gardens. Basically, it is a full circle from the environment and after the composting goes back to the environment. One hotel that already has this technology is Amathus hotel which has a composting machine but they use it to compost food in to a form that lasts much longer than when it does at their original state. They compost fruits that use them for cakes and pastries. The food wastage is minimized a close to zero.

Online Pre-Check in and Email Invoice:

Taking in consideration other departments of hotels such as the reception I have taken interviews from Front Office Managers (FOM) from Nyx hotel and I will speak from

experience since I am the Front Office Manager of Royal Apollonia. Talking with the FOM of Nyx hotel I noticed that the reception of a hotel has limited ways of being more sustainable so they rely on technologies to minimize the imprint they leave on the environment. One of the most common uses of technology is the Online Pre-Check In that the guests receive an online form that they can fill before their arrival and they can then submit it online. This way we cut back the use of paper and the time the guests spend at the reception for their check in. In addition, upon check out the guest can check their bill with the use of the hotels mobile application and either pay online with their mobile device and receive the invoice via email. Nyx hotel has stopped receiving payment in cash to avoid the transfer to the bank and back. This drastically reduces the use of a car which adds emissions to the environment.

Conclusion:

The combination of environmental programs and digital technologies is causing a major transformation in Cyprus's tourist and hospitality sectors. Cyprus, a nation heavily dependent on tourism, has a difficult time striking a balance between environmental protection and economic growth. The hospitality industry has been able to improve visitor experiences, cut down on resource use, and become more efficient through the implementation of digital advancements like IoT, AI, and data analytics. In addition to simplifying operations, these technologies enable hotels and other enterprises to adopt eco-friendly practices that lessen their influence on the environment and support long-term ecological preservation (Buhalis & Leung, 2018).

With the help of digitalisation, Cyprus has been able to achieve its sustainability targets. Green practices that are good for the economy and the environment are being encouraged by business leaders and government legislation. In response to the increasing demand for environmentally conscious travel, the hospitality industry has implemented digital technologies that maximise energy efficiency, control waste, and encourage sustainable sourcing. These initiatives have improved Cyprus' standing as an eco-friendly vacation destination, drawing travellers who value sustainability above all else (Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative, 2020). Cyprus's adept incorporation of digital technologies into sustainability tactics provides an example for other tourism-driven countries aiming to strike a balance between growth and environmental conservation.

In conclusion, the example of Cyprus demonstrates how digital technology may revolutionise the travel and hotel industry and promote sustainable growth. The hospitality sector in Cyprus has addressed the issues of environmental degradation while retaining its competitiveness in the international market by utilising digital advancements. The take-aways from Cyprus' experience emphasise how crucial it is to keep funding sustainability and digitalisation as essential pillars of future expansion. Cyprus is positioned as a leader in the shift towards a greener, more sustainable tourism industry as a result of its proactive approach to combining digital technology with sustainability programs, which is in line with the growing global demand for sustainable travel.

Recommendations:

A multifaceted strategy is necessary to improve the integration of digital technology and sustainability in Cyprus's hospitality industry. First, in order to streamline operations and lessen their environmental impact, companies should give top priority to using cutting-edge digital technologies like AI-powered customer support platforms, smart energy management systems, and Internet of Things-based resource monitoring. By putting money into these technologies, hotels can provide individualised visitor experiences while cutting down on waste, energy use, and operational inefficiencies. Establishing a cooperative atmosphere among technology vendors, lodging establishments, and the government is imperative in order to foster digital innovation that is in line with the island's sustainability objectives. Government incentives could further hasten this transition to a more sustainable hospitality sector by providing tax exemptions or subsidies to businesses that adopt green technologies (Buhalis & Leung, 2018)

Furthermore, for these changes to be implemented successfully, stakeholder education and involvement are essential. Hotels should provide their employees with extensive training so they are prepared to handle and maintain digital technologies that support sustainability. Moreover, educating visitors about the value of environmentally responsible activities while visiting helps promote a sustainable culture. It is possible to share these ideals with visitors using digital platforms and apps, motivating them to take part in eco-friendly activities like waste reduction or energy conservation. Cyprus can improve its standing as an environmentally responsible travel destination by integrating sustainability into the digital experience, which would ultimately help the country's economy and ecology (Cyprus Sustainable Tourism Initiative, 2020).

Limitations:

Digital technologies have a lot of promise to improve sustainability in Cyprus' hotel industry, but there are a few issues that need to be resolved. The high initial cost of adopting digital technologies is one of the main drawbacks. The implementation of intelligent energy management systems, AI-powered platforms, and sophisticated waste management technologies necessitate a substantial financial outlay, which may be unaffordable for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), which are the main players in the hospitality sector in Cyprus. Despite the potential long-term benefits, smaller hotels are frequently discouraged from implementing these innovations due to the upfront expenses associated with hardware, software, and the required infrastructure changes (Mariani et al., 2019). Furthermore, the absence of reasonably priced and sophisticated technical solutions in Cyprus's rural areas may worsen the country's digital divide by causing some areas to lag behind in attempts to become more sustainable and digital.

The lack of knowledge and expertise needed to manage and deploy digital technologies that support sustainability is another barrier. It's possible that many hotel employees and operators in Cyprus lack the technological know-how required to make the most of these cutting-edge devices. Even the most sophisticated digital solutions may not have the desired sustainability impact if they are not properly trained for and supported. The quick speed of technological advancement exacerbates this skills gap and necessitates constant learning and adjustment (Buhalis & Leung, 2018). Furthermore, even though digital tools might improve efficiency and resource management, they might not be able to adequately address more general sustainability issues like overtourism and the strain it puts on natural resources. Thus, digitalisation ought to be viewed as a part of a wider plan that also entails community involvement, regulatory changes, and environmental preservation initiatives.

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B.2

Expectation Vs. Reality Tourism Experience

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Abstract:

Cyprus's rich cultural legacy, stunning beaches, and Mediterranean climate draw millions of tourists each year, making tourism a vital part of the island's economy. However, total pleasure is often impacted by differences between expectations and reality for tourists. This project compares the reality that travelers meet with the elements that shape their expectations, such as marketing, social media, and word-of-mouth Kozak, M. (2001). Cyprus is promoted as a sunny, dreamy place with clean beaches and historic ruins, but visitors usually find that the places are crowded, the environment is unfriendly, and the prices are greater than they expected. Additionally, the experience may be impacted by cultural variations and differing degrees of hospitality Chen, C. C., & Tsai, D. (2007) and Cyprus Tourism Organization. (2023). The article examines these discrepancies using empirical data from surveys and reviews, and it makes the case that greater correspondence between marketing collateral and real experiences may enhance tourist happiness and sustain tourism growth over the long run Gursoy, D., & McCleary, K. W. (2004).

Keywords: *Tourist Expectations, Tourism Satisfaction, Cyprus Tourism, Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory, Tourist Experience*

Introduction:

Cyprus's economy greatly receives help from tourism, which brings in millions of tourists annually. The nation is marketed throughout the world for its rich cultural history, historical sites, immaculate beaches, and Mediterranean climate. But even though Cyprus presents an alluring image in advertising and the media, there are often differences between what visitors expect and what they really experience. This discrepancy between expectations and reality may influence travelers' happiness, choices, and likelihood of returning Kozak, M. (2001). This qualitative study aims

to investigate these disparities and offer a more thorough comprehension of the elements affecting visitors' experiences in Cyprus. The study will use a qualitative methodology to characterise and understand how visitors' expectations which are influenced by outside factors like advertising and peer recommendations align or diverge with their actual island experiences Chen, C. C., & Tsai, D. (2007).

In addition to demonstrating how elements like crowding, service standards, and environmental concerns might impact overall visitor happiness, this study attempts to investigate the causes of any discrepancies between expectations and reality. To do this, the project will use in-depth interviews with travellers who have been to Cyprus, providing a thorough grasp of their individual experiences. This study's main research question is: How do visitors' expectations of Cyprus differ from their actual experiences, and what causes lead to such discrepancies? By analysing these variations, the study aims to determine how these elements affect visitors' opinions and satisfaction levels, offering important insights into Cyprus' tourism dynamics Cyprus Tourism Organization (2023).

By concentrating on people's subjective feelings and perceptions, the qualitative approach enables a more thorough and in-depth examination of visitor behaviour. In-depth comprehension of these experiences is crucial since they frequently offer insights that quantitative approaches would miss (Kozak, 2001). This study will advance knowledge of the Cyprus tourism experience and provide useful suggestions for enhancing the island's tourism sector by examining these qualitative findings Gursoy, D., & McCleary, K. W (2004).

Theoretical Background:

Cyprus, a Mediterranean island, has long been a well-liked travel destination because of its fascinating history, gorgeous beaches, and varied cultural heritage. But, as with many places, a major problem in tourism management is the discrepancy between visitors' expectations and their actual experiences. The elements affecting travellers' expectations, the actuality of Cyprus tourism, and the effects of the expectation-reality gap are all examined in this review of the literature. It also outlines tactics that tourism stakeholders can use to successfully close these gaps (Cyprus Tourism Organization, 2023).

Hospitality:

With a GDP contribution of about 15%, Cyprus's tourism

and hospitality sector is one of the biggest economic sectors. Cyprus has continued to attract top investment groups and hotel chains looking to increase their presence and make investments due to its reputation as a dependable and well-established travel destination. Cyprus is a hypnotic location that draws tourists from all over the world. This island nation's charm goes far beyond its immaculate beaches and historical landmarks; it creates a story of love and adoration that is often expressed by the hordes of visitors who are drawn in by its distinct charm. In the travel industry, Cyprus has set up a unique reputation as a destination where warm feelings and compliments permeate all aspect of the experience for guests Cyprus Tourism Organization (2023).

A key component of Cyprus' tourism sector, hospitality embodies the island's rich cultural legacy and the friendly, hospitable disposition of its citizens. In Cyprus, hospitality is defined as an experience marked by true friendliness and a strong dedication to client happiness, going beyond simple service. Cyprus is a popular travel destination for travellers looking for adventure and leisure because of this cultural characteristic World Travel & Tourism Council (2023).

Cyprus's hospitality typology can be divided into a number of important categories. There is a wide variety of lodging options, from affordable guesthouses and private villas to upscale hotels and boutique resorts. These businesses provide guests options that meet their demands by accommodating a range of tastes and price ranges (Karakosta & Papatheodorou, 2019). Services related to food and drink are essential to the hotel industry. Many of the island's tavernas and restaurants serve traditional Cypriot food, which is known for its flavours and freshness. In addition to sating hunger, dishes like meze, souvlaki, and halloumi provide a glimpse of the native way of life. The friendly hospitality of the local workers frequently enhances the eating experience and the overall pleasure of the meal (Koutoulas, 2017). Recreation and amusement are important components of hospitality in Cyprus, in addition to lodging and dining. Water sports, cultural events, and guided tours of historical places are just a few of the activities available to visitors, all of which help make their stay unforgettable. Local organisations that offer tour services give planned outings that let tourists see the island's breathtaking scenery and rich history.

Cyprus has high expectations for hospitality, but the actual experience frequently exceeds them. The real warmth and friendliness of Cypriots is often praised by tourists, who say that their encounters are not only delightful but unforgettable. Cyprus's standing as a top travel destination is cemented by this exceptional fusion of cultural diversity and individualised attention.

To sum up, Cyprus's hotel sector is a prime example of striking a balance between expectations and realities. Its varied lodging, dining, and entertainment options create a warm atmosphere that enthrals guests and produces enduring memories. World Heritage Sites in Cyprus (2023).

Tourism:

Cyprus's economy depends heavily on tourism, which boosts both GDP and job creation. A broad range of experiences are included in tourism, which is defined as the actions of people visiting and remaining in locations outside of their normal surroundings for pleasure, business, or other reasons. In Cyprus, this entails both foreign tourists and locals taking use of the island's varied attractions. Cyprus is renowned for its rich history, stunning scenery, and temperate climate. It is well situated in the eastern Mediterranean. Because of these qualities, it is a desirable location for a variety of tourism activities that fall under several headings. Tourism management journals Li, L. (2008).

In Cyprus, leisure travel is arguably the most popular type of travel. Every year, millions of tourists flock to the island because of its breathtaking beaches, exciting nightlife, and all-inclusive resorts. With their sun-drenched beaches and abundance of recreational opportunities, places like Ayia Napa and Protaras are especially well-liked. In addition to strengthening the local economy, this kind of tourism positions the island as a top travel destination (Cyprus Tourism Organisation, 2021). Another crucial component of Cyprus's tourism scene is cultural tourism. The island's historic museums, Byzantine churches, and ancient ruins all showcase its rich past. To see the ruins of Roman villas with elaborate mosaics, tourists frequently go to locations like the Paphos Archaeological Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Those interested in the tales that create Cyprus are drawn to this kind of tourism, which promotes a greater awareness of the island's history and cultural variety (Sharpley, 2020). In recent years, ecotourism has grown in popularity as more tourists look for ethical and sustainable ways to experience the outdoors. From the Troodos Mountains to the Akamas Peninsula, Cyprus's varied ecosystems offer a wealth of chances for hiking, wildlife observation, and environmental preservation. In addition to drawing eco-aware tourists, this kind of travel encourages environmental preservation and awareness (Mason, 2021). In recent years, ecotourism has grown in popularity as more tourists look for ethical

and sustainable ways to experience the outdoors. From the Troodos Mountains to the Akamas Peninsula, Cyprus's varied ecosystems offer a wealth of chances for hiking, wildlife observation, and environmental preservation. In addition to drawing eco-aware tourists, this kind of travel encourages environmental preservation and awareness (Mason, 2021). Health and Wellbeing Cyprus's tourism industry is growing. By providing holistic therapies, spa services, and medical treatments, the island has established itself as a destination for health and wellbeing. The island is becoming more and more popular among tourists because of its cutting-edge medical facilities and natural healing resources, like mineral springs and therapeutic climates (Apostolopoulos & Sönmez, 2021).

Last but not least, religious tourism adds to Cyprus's tourism diversity. Many cathedrals, monasteries, and pilgrimage sites may be found on the island, drawing tourists who are interested in spirituality and religious history. The importance of faith-based tourism for many tourists is highlighted by occasions like the yearly pilgrimage to the Kykkos Monastery (Kafka, 2023).

Typology of Tourists:

Understanding the different types of tourists helps to clarify their motivations and behaviours. The typology of tourists can be categorized based on various factors: Leisure tourists: These people go on trips mainly to unwind and have fun. They frequently seek to beach resorts, cultural sites, and adventure parks in search of experiences that let them relax, take in different cultures, and engage in leisure activities (Cohen, 2019). Business tourists: Those who travel for work-related purposes, such going to trade exhibitions, seminars, or meetings. Efficiency and convenience are frequently given top priority by business travellers, who frequently seek services that meet their specific needs (Gibson, 2020). Adventure Tourists: Hiking, scuba diving, and rock climbing are examples of activities that adventure tourists engage in in search of thrill and physical challenges. This kind of travel is popular with thrill-seekers and frequently takes place in places with untamed landscapes and breathtaking scenery (Buckley, 2020). Cultural tourists visit museums, historical sites, and take part in local festivals because they want to learn more about the history, art, and customs of a place. They want to interact more deeply with the local culture wherever they go (Richards, 2018). Eco-Tourists: This demographic place a high value on environmental preservation and sustainability. Natural settings and experiences that foster ecological consciousness attract eco-tourists,

who engage in eco-friendly hiking and wildlife observation (Weaver, 2021).

Medical tourists are a growing market segment that travels for medical care, frequently fusing medical procedures with recreational pursuits. This industry has expanded dramatically because to the need for more affordable, high-quality healthcare. (Sönmez & Apostolopoulos, 2021).

Tourism in Cyprus:

The third-largest island in the Mediterranean, Cyprus is well known for its breathtaking scenery, fascinating history, and lively culture. Cyprus is a popular tourist destination that welcomes millions of tourists each year and provides a wide variety of experiences to suit a wide range of interests. The island is a unique and alluring destination for tourists from all over the world because of its rich cultural heritage and allure as a sun and sea vacation a guide to Cyprus posted on (September 06, 2024).

Cyprus as a Tourist Destination:

Cyprus has become a well-known tourism destination, especially for tourists looking to combine leisure with cultural discovery. The island is a popular destination for both leisure and adventure travellers due to its advantageous position, pleasant climate, and stunning coastline. The importance of tourism to the local economy is demonstrated by the fact that it contributes significantly to the island's GDP, according to the Cyprus Tourism Organisation (2021). The construction of upscale hotels, dining options, and recreational spaces are just a few of the initiatives the Cyprus government has taken to improve the country's tourism infrastructure. While maintaining their ancient appeal, major cities like Paphos, Limassol, and Nicosia are furnished with contemporary conveniences. The island's appeal is further diversified by the recent promotion of speciality tourism industries including eco-tourism and medical tourism, which attract a larger range of tourists (Mason, 2021).

Heritage, Culture, and Tourism Background:

With archaeological sites spanning thousands of years, Cyprus is rich in history. Numerous civilisations, including the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, and Ottomans, have had an impact on the island. Numerous historical sites, such the ancient city of Kourion, the Tombs of the Kings in Paphos, and the churches of the Troodos Mountains that are designated by UNESCO, are examples of this rich cultural heritage (Sharpley, 2020). A key component of Cyprus's tourist strategy is cultural tourism. Through regional celebrations, gastronomic adventures, and traditional crafts, visitors are

encouraged to learn more about the island's history. Visitors can interact personally with Cypriot culture thanks to the thriving cultural sector, which is typified by neighbourhood galleries and craft fairs Tourism Organization (2021).

Visitor Statistics:

Over the years, Cyprus' tourism industry has shown resilient and expanding. About 3.97 million visitors visited Cyprus in 2019, bringing in about €2.7 billion for the country's GDP (Cyprus Statistical Service, 2020). Despite a sharp drop in tourists in 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the island has been gradually rebounding since reopening its borders. With an emphasis on advancing sustainability and safety, recent data shows that visitor visits are increasing. Travellers' faith has been restored because to the island's proactive initiatives, which include improved marketing campaigns and health regulations (Cyprus Tourism Organisation, 2021).

Methodology:

The approach, tactics, and procedures used to carry out the research for this study are described in the research method. Analyzing the gap between visitors' expectations and the realities they meet while in Cyprus is the aim of this study. Finding the elements that affect visitors' experiences and beliefs will be made easier with the use of this investigation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, which employs a comparative descriptive research approach, visitors' expectations and experiences will be contrasted. It gathers and examines data using both qualitative and quantitative research techniques (Creswell, 2013).

Travel is a complex experience that is influenced by individual experiences, expectations, and perceptions. Managing the discrepancy between what visitors anticipate from a place and what they actually experience is one of the biggest problems facing the tourism sector. In order to better understand how marketing, social media, and personal biases shape tourists' impressions and how these perceptions affect their overall pleasure, I am investigating the idea of "Expectation vs. Reality" in tourism for my bachelor's research. Expectations, perceptions, and individual experiences all influence the complex experience of tourism. My research will heavily rely on interviews with both tourists and tourism sector professionals to obtain qualitative insights. This project will describe how interview questions can yield useful information for my research and advance our knowledge of the variables affecting visitors' experiences (Kvale, 2007).

One qualitative research technique that enables a thorough

examination of people's individual experiences, viewpoints, and perceptions is the interview. Interviews can offer valuable insights into how tourists' experiences evolve, how expectations are created, and how differences between the two are resolved in tourism studies. Interview questions' open-ended format enables participants to elaborate on their ideas, revealing subtleties that quantitative approaches would overlook (Kvale, 2007). To have a comprehensive understanding of the "Expectation vs. Reality" phenomena, I will interview both travellers and tourism industry professionals for this project.

Rationale for using in-depth Interview:

Since in-depth interviews offer a great chance to collect rich, narrative data, they were selected as the main study instrument (Creswell, 2013). Interviews are especially useful when a researcher wants to comprehend complicated feelings and experiences, such as how travellers evaluate a place or how their expectations may be influenced by their own ideas and past experiences. The researcher can examine unforeseen discoveries that may surface throughout the talk because of the flexibility of semi-structured interviews (Seidman, 2013).

Interviews are the perfect way to record the unique stories and subjective experiences of visitors, especially since the goal of this study is to examine expectations vs. reality in the context of tourism in Cyprus. They also make it possible to interact with individuals more deeply, which can provide information that more structured approaches, like surveys, frequently overlook.

Additionally, because interviews are customised, the researcher can follow up on intriguing or surprising responses, which reveals more levels of meaning (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). A more thorough grasp of the expectations and experiences of tourists resulted from the researcher's ability to ask follow-up questions based on the responses provided by the semi-structured format.

Ontology and Epistemology of Qualitative Research
The ontology and epistemology are essential to qualitative research because they help researchers comprehend reality and the nature of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) and (Schwandt, 1994).

The nature of reality and the things that exist in the world are referred to be ontological. It has to do with the presumptions scientists have about the characteristics and nature of occur-

rences. This study's constructivist ontology is predicated on the idea that people socially and subjectively create reality via their experiences and perceptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is believed that visitors' experiences in Cyprus are subjective and situational, shaped by their expectations, backgrounds, and interactions with the local way of life.

The philosophy of knowing, or how we learn things, is called epistemology. Interpretivism, which holds that knowledge is obtained by comprehending human experiences and the interpretations people ascribe to them, is frequently the guiding epistemology in qualitative research. This epistemological position recognises that different people will interpret and respond to the same experiences in various ways, and it highlights the significance of subjectivity and context in understanding how tourists view Cyprus (Schwandt, 1994). Instead of evaluating preexisting theories or hypotheses, this study uses an inductive approach to develop theory from the data gathered. The researcher collects information from the interviews, examines it for recurring themes, and formulates hypotheses that contribute to the understanding of visitors' experiences in Cyprus. Without imposing pre-existing frameworks, the goal is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' experiences (Thomas, 2006).

Interview guide questionnaire:

- 1) What motivated you to visit Cyprus?
- 2) How did you first hear about Cyprus as a travel destination?
- 3) Can you describe your overall impression of Cyprus?
- 4) What specific images or associations come to mind when you think of Cyprus?
- 5) How do you perceive the culture and people of Cyprus?
- 6) What aspects of Cyprus do you find most appealing or attractive?
- 7) Were there any surprises or unexpected experiences during your visit to Cyprus?
- 8) How would you describe the hospitality and friendliness of the locals?
- 9) Did your experience in Cyprus meet your expectations? Why or why not?

Sampling process:

The participants in this study are travellers who have been

Pseudonym	Age	Nationality	Gender
Kryiakos	22	Cyprus	Male
Diyanna	28	Portugal	Female
Capil	27	Nepal	Male
Wizy	20	Nigeria	Male
Niraj	28	Nepal	Female
Prothivi	25	Nepal	Male
Panjkar	27	India	Male
Parneet	28	India	Male
Nichol	25	Greece	Female
Rashika	30	Malaysia	Female
Avaya	27	Pakistan	Male
Dipin	29	Nepal	Male

Table 1: Research Participants

to Cyprus. The aim of this study is to investigate how these tourists' experiences differed from their expectations, paying special attention to their reasons, cultural views, and general level of satisfaction. To do this, a sample of twelve tourists participated in in-depth interviews to gather data.

Data analysis:

In qualitative data analysis, the focus is on exploring and interpreting the rich, contextualized data obtained through methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. With a major impact on employment and national income, consumerism is vital to the global economy. Cyprus draws a wide variety of tourists because of its fascinating history, rich cultural diversity, and picturesque scenery. This study examines how visitors' expectations and experiences differ, with a particular emphasis on how they view Cyprus's natural beauty, friendliness, and culture. Twelve respondents were interviewed to investigate how their perceptions of Cyprus differ from their actual experiences. Miles and Huberman's (1994) and Corbin and Strauss's (1990) qualitative analysis principles, which emphasise data triangulation, theme coding, and narrative analysis to capture a thorough knowledge of tourist perspectives, corroborate the research findings.

Twelve visitors who had visited Cyprus participated in qualitative interviews to collect the data. The respondents' varied backgrounds which included professionals, students, and leisure travellers provided a range of viewpoints on Cyprus tourism. Every participant was questioned regarding why they were travelling to Cyprus, their pre-trip expectations, their post-trip impressions, and whether their experiences lived up to their initial expectations. According to Miles

and Huberman (1994), thematic analysis was used in this study, which entailed grouping responses into major topics including hospitality, cultural expectations, natural beauty, and general pleasure.

Data analysis Methods:

The main data analysis technique used in this study was thematic analysis. One popular qualitative research technique is thematic analysis, which entails finding, examining, and summarising patterns (or themes) in data. It enables researchers to appropriately organise and analyse qualitative data like interview responses while capturing the rich, detailed insights that arise from these sources.

Definition of Thematic Analysis: The process of “identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data” is known as thematic analysis. It represents your data set in rich detail and minimally organises it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Because of its adaptable methodology, it can be used to address a variety of research problems. By identifying the underlying themes, this approach aids in deciphering the significance of the data and offers insights into the motives, experiences, and views of the participants (Nowell et al., 2017).

Thematic analysis is generally undertaken in a controlled method through coding, where material is broken down into manageable components, which are then linked together to form bigger themes. Because it permits a thorough examination of participant replies while maintaining their rich intricacies, this method is perfect for examining qualitative data gathered through interviews.

The coding process:

I used an organised method for thematic analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in this study, starting with open coding, moving on to axial coding, and finally combining the axial codes into the final primary themes. Every step made it possible to comprehend the data more thoroughly and guaranteed that the conclusions were firmly based on the experiences of the participants. I carefully read and reread the interview transcripts several times during the open coding process, underlining any words, sentences, or phrases that were significant or that appeared frequently in the data. I then gave these portions “codes” or descriptive labels. These codes were not set in stone and might change as I learnt more about the data during the analysis process.

Research ethics:

A fundamental component of ethical research practices is confidentiality, which guarantees that participant replies, and personal data are safe from unwanted access. Maintaining the highest standards of secrecy is essential in qualitative research since participants frequently reveal sensitive or personal experiences, which helps to preserve integrity and trust throughout the study. This was a major factor in this study, which looked at the experiences of travellers in Cyprus Clerides, S., & Pashourtidou, N. (2007). According to Creswell (2013), confidentiality entails protecting participants’ identities and making sure that no identifiable information about them is shared without their express consent. All participants in this study were given pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. Their true identities were concealed using pseudonyms, guaranteeing the security of their private information. Because they were aware that their answers would not be directly linked to their names, participants were also able to feel at ease and candid during the interviews. To prevent readers from being able to identify specific people, pseudonyms were also employed during the transcription process and while reporting results.

Additionally, all interview materials including transcripts and audio recordings were safely kept. According to Bryman (2012), it is the ethical duty of researchers to guarantee that data is kept private and available to authorised personnel only. Hard copies of the transcriptions were retained in a secured filing cabinet, and all the recordings from this study were kept in a password-protected digital folder. By following these procedures, the researcher made sure that participant data was shielded from any possible confidentiality violations. Participants were also informed by the researcher that their answers would only be utilised for the study and that their identities would not be revealed in any publications or reports. Participants must be assured that their identity will not be disclosed without their agreement and that they are informed about the use of their data, as per ethical research guidelines (Israel & Hay, 2006). The participants and the researcher developed a sense of trust because of the researcher’s openness regarding how data was used.

Discussion:

The conclusions from the interviews with 12 respondents are discussed in detail in this section, which also examines the discrepancy between Cyprus tourism expectations and realities. The participants’ insights highlight several trends and themes that are important to comprehending how vis-

itors view and interact with Cyprus. These results are examined within the body of current literature and backed by theoretical viewpoints on qualitative research, including those put forth by Corbin and Strauss (1990) and Miles and Huberman (1994).

Tourist Motivation and Expectations

Respondents' reasons for travelling to Cyprus ranged greatly, from seeking leisure and natural beauty to pursuing educational and professional opportunities. These incentives are consistent with the research of Corbin and Strauss (1990), who contend that travellers' intrinsic objectives like leisure, cultural discovery, or personal growth are frequently the primary determinants of their travel decisions. For example, Respondent 1 (Mr. Kryiakos) stated that the natural scenery of Cyprus drew him in, but Respondent 5 (Mr. Niraj) was inspired by the educational system. Many participants indicated interest in the island's beaches, mountains, and hiking trails prior to their arrival, so there was a general anticipation that they would experience these natural beauties. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the respondents' explanations highlight how media such as social media, travel blogs, and videos shapes travellers' perceptions. Numerous respondents stated that social media and travel influencers were the first places they learnt about Cyprus. These media outlets contributed to the perception of Cyprus as a serene, beautiful, and culturally diverse travel destination. This is consistent with the media influence hypothesis, which holds that media portrayals greatly affect travellers' expectations and how they view a place before they even arrive (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Cultural Expectations and Realities

Respondents' assessments of their experiences in Cyprus were significantly influenced by cultural perceptions. A lot of visitors thought that Greek and Turkish cultural elements would mingle together in a harmonious way. However, the truth was more nuanced, since numerous respondents (such as Respondent 5-Mr. Niraj) expressed astonishment at the cultural distinction between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Some visitors were taken aback by the island's politically divided culture, despite their expectations of cultural diversity. This finding is consistent with the work of Miles and Huberman (1994), who argue that cultural misunderstandings can occur when tourists are confronted with complexities and hidden realities are not clear in promotional materials. The contrast between expectations of cultural harmony and the reality of a divided cultural landscape reveals an important dimension of tourism experience. Interestingly, several

respondents (e.g., Respondent 11, Mr. Avaya) emphasized how they found Cypriot hospitality and family-oriented traditions to be a unifying factor that mitigated the feeling of cultural division. This highlights the importance of local experiences in shaping a tourist's overall impression (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), as hospitality was often cited as an aspect that exceeded expectations.

Hospitality and Friendliness

A common element in the interview responses was the hospitality of the Cypriot people. Most visitors said that the residents were hospitable, accommodating, and amiable, frequently going above and beyond their expectations. Since Miles and Huberman (1994) stress the significance of local participation in influencing tourists' satisfaction, this research highlights the value of social connection in the tourism experience. For example, Respondent 6 (Mr. Prithivi) talked on how one of the main benefits of his trip to Cyprus the country's strong hospitality heritage was. In a similar vein, Respondent 10 (Miss Rashika) attributed her pleasant experience to the Cypriot people's sense of camaraderie and support. This result is consistent with Corbin and Strauss (1990), who contend that interactions with people, whether favourable or unfavourable, have a significant impact on the experiences and contentment of tourists. Travellers' impressions of a place are greatly influenced by the hospitality they experience, which they often internalise. The idea that the human element in tourism frequently has a greater impact than physical attractions like beaches or historical monuments is supported by the fact that hospitality frequently exceeded expectations.

Expectations vs. Reality of Natural Beauty

Before travelling to Cyprus, many respondents thought the island would mostly be a beach vacation spot with lovely coastal towns and pleasant weather. Many travellers cited the beaches and mountains as the highlights of their trip, so this anticipation was mainly fulfilled (e.g., Respondent 4, Mr. Wizy). The variety of Cyprus's sceneries, notably its mountainous areas and trekking paths, was a frequent surprise discovery, nevertheless, as some visitors had not expected. Respondent 11 (Mr. Avaya), for instance, was taken aback by the diversity of natural settings, which he felt improved his entire experience. This lends credence to the idea that tourist spots frequently include undiscovered treasures that surpass visitors' expectations and enhance the quality of their trip (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, the idea that Cyprus's allure is largely derived from its beaches is called into question by the fact that visitors were taken

aback by the island's hilly regions. This mismatch between expectations and reality raises the possibility that Cyprus would gain from more extensive marketing of its varied landscapes, which are just as important to visitors even though they may not be as well-known as the beaches.

Surprise Elements: Cultural and Political Divisions

The interviewees' amazement at the island's cultural split was a recurring issue. Many visitors do not fully get the unusual situation of cultural duality that Cyprus, which is divided into Greek and Turkish Cypriot districts, offers before their trip. According to Respondents 5 (Mr. Niraj) and 6 (Mr. Prithivi), visitors initially did not realise how politically divided the island was, and they found this to be an unexpected feature of their journey. This is a crucial factor to consider because it implies that to better control visitors' expectations, Cyprus' tourism marketing may downplay the island's political complexity or offer additional background on this separation. Unexpected surprises are an important component of the qualitative research process since they can provide deeper insights into a phenomenon, claim Corbin and Strauss (1990). In this instance, visitors' responses to Cyprus' divided culture highlight how crucial it is to comprehend how historical and political factors can affect the traveller's experience.

Conclusion:

Several important insights into the relationship between expectations and realities in Cyprus tourism are highlighted by the discussion of research findings. Even though the island mostly lived up to the expectations of visitors in terms of natural beauty, cultural diversity, and friendliness, some unexpected elements like the political split and the variety of landscapes became significant determinants of the experiences of visitors. The theoretical stances of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Corbin and Strauss (1990), who stress the value of social and cultural surroundings as well as the role of local interactions in the tourism experience, lend support to these findings. The findings imply that to better control visitor expectations, Cyprus' tourism strategy can profit from boosting the advertising of its varied landscapes and offering further background on its political divide.

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B.3

Experience of employees in the hospitality sector: Cross-cultural working environment in Cyprus

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Abstract:

Cyprus tourism industry stands out by its multicultural workforce, which is supported by the island popularity as a travel destination worldwide. The difficulties and opportunities brought about by cultural variety are the main topics of this study, which investigates the experiences of workers in multicultural environments. The study uses a qualitative methodology that includes surveys and interviews to investigate how cultural differences affect teamwork, communication, job satisfaction, and career advancement in the industry. The results show that, although cultural diversity encourages innovation and creativity, it also presents difficulties like misunderstandings and language obstacles. It is highlighted that establishing a peaceful and effective workplace requires effective management techniques, such as inclusive policies and cultural sensitivity training. The purpose of this study is to advance knowledge of cross-cultural dynamics in the hospitality sector and offer practical advice for improving organizational performance and employee experiences in multicultural environments.

Keywords: *Multicultural workplace, Tourism, Cultural challenges, Employee perceptions, Cyprus hospitality*

Introduction:

Cyprus reputation as a top Mediterranean tourist destination has made the country hospitality sector a crucial part of its economy. The industry is known for having a very varied workforce, with workers from many ethnic and cultural backgrounds working together to provide outstanding visitor experiences. There are advantages as well as disadvantages to this cultural variety. Due to different workplace standards and regulations, it can also result in miscommunication, cultural misunderstandings, and disputes, even as it encourages creativity and innovation (Hofstede, 1997; Baum, 2015).

Improving organizational results and employee experiences in multicultural workplaces requires an understanding of these interactions.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences of workers in the cross-cultural workplace in the hospitality industry in Cyprus. In particular, it aims to show how cultural diversity affects teamwork, communication, and job satisfaction while outlining the difficulties workers encounter when adjusting to cultural differences. Through analyzing employee viewpoints, this research aims to identify the aspects that shape their experiences and offer suggestions for approaches that can improve inclusivity and unity in the workplace.

The primary goal of this research is to highlight how do cultural differences affect workers experiences in Cyprus hospitality industry and providing slight describe on why are good management practices important for overcoming these obstacles. This study hopes to add to the expanding volume of research on cross-cultural workplace dynamics in the hospitality sector and offer helpful suggestions for creating a welcoming and effective work environment (Thomas, 2008; Sönmez et al., 2019). In the end, these findings will assist companies in creating plans to promote diversity, boost worker satisfaction, and create a more peaceful work environment in the multicultural environment of the Cypriot hospitality sector.

Theoretical Background:

The idea of hospitality is broad and centers on treating strangers, guests, and visitors with kindness and generosity. It covers a broad range of services, such as lodging, dining, transport, and entertainment. The Latin word *hopes*, which means host or guest, is where the word hospitality comes from. This emphasizes the inherent bond between the host and the visitor. The hospitality sector is built on this relationship. Fundamentally, there are several ways to define hospitality based on contextual and cultural considerations. Brotherton (1999) claims that hospitality is an experience that fosters a friendly environment and goes beyond simply offering services. Warmth and service are essential elements in creating unforgettable visitor experiences, according to the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), which defines hospitality as the act of being friendly and welcoming to guests.

The typology of hospitality can be divided into a number of different groups, each of which caters to particular re-

quirements and tastes. First, the most well-known type of hospitality is probably commercial, which includes lodging facilities like hotels, restaurants, and bars. This kind aims to make money while offering excellent services. By providing a uniform experience across all locations, major hotel chains like Marriott and Hilton are prime examples of commercial hospitality, guaranteeing that visitors receive the same level of treatment wherever they go (Walker, 2016).

Second, social hospitality focusses on casual get-togethers like family meals or community activities, which is very different from business activities. This type is essential to cultural customs and practices because it prioritizes social interactions and connections over financial transactions. Cultural hospitality, which represents regionally specific customs and traditions, is another significant category. This form includes unique cuisine, customs, and serving methods. For instance, as is common in Cyprus, the Mediterranean hospitality culture frequently emphasizes sharing and group meals (Morrison, 2018).

Environmentally friendly hospitality has become a major trend as sustainability has gained more attention. This kind offers special travel experiences while emphasizing eco-friendly techniques. Ecotourism establishments emphasize responsible tourism as a crucial component of their service offerings with the goal of sustaining regional cultures and ecosystems (Becken, 2017).

Event hospitality includes organizing and carrying out occasions like festivals, weddings, and conferences. This kind highlights the dynamic and diverse nature of the hospitality industry by requiring careful planning and coordination to guarantee a flawless experience for all guests (Silvers, 2012). The field of hospitality is wide and goes beyond simple service delivery. Regardless of the particular kind of hospitality being provided, it involves developing an atmosphere where visitors feel appreciated and accepted. Professionals can better adapt their services to the varied needs of a worldwide customer by being aware of the sector's many typologies as it continues to change (Silvers, J.R 2012).

Hospitality in Cyprus:

For travelers seeking sun, sea, and sand, Cyprus is a top choice because of its breathtaking beaches, clean waters, and lively culture. The island's economy focusses significantly on the hospitality industry, which is highly dependent on seasonal labor to accommodate an increasing number of tourists, especially in the summer. The stunning resorts that

line Cyprus coastline provide a range of lodging options, from luxurious hotels to small guesthouses. Visitors are made to feel at home and welcome by the hospitality sectors unique combination between modern service standards and traditional Cypriot kindness. The experiences high point is the local cuisine, which emphasizes farm-to-table methods and features fresh seafood and Mediterranean flavors (Morrison, 2018).

Cyprus's economy depends heavily on the hospitality sector, which is helped in large part by the country's popularity as a top Mediterranean travel destination. With expectations showing a healthy increasing direction in both visitor arrivals and income, the industry is now recovering well from the COVID-19 pandemic's setbacks. Arrivals of tourists by 2023 almost equaled the record-breaking figures of 2019, when about 4 million people were counted. Arrivals may exceed pre-pandemic levels in 2024, according to projections, demonstrating the sector's adaptability and durability. The industry produced an expected €2.2 billion in 2023, demonstrating its economic significance and wider influence on associated industries like retail and transportation.

Employees in the Hospitality Sector:

A key component of the global service sector, the hospitality industry is focused on offering services associated with lodging, dining, entertainment, and travel. Employee performance has a direct impact on visitor happiness and brand reputation, making them essential to providing high-quality customer experiences. As compared to other industries, the hospitality sector depends heavily on interpersonal connection because staff members must regularly engage with clients in order to meet their expectations. Employees are therefore among the most significant resources in the industry since they immediately affect client loyalty and the company's overall success (Baum, 2007). Depending on their tasks and responsibilities, employees in the hospitality industry can be divided into many types. Frontline employees fall into the first type since they interact directly with clients and serve as the establishments visible representatives. Jobs like bartenders, waiter and receptionists fall under this category. Since frontline staff are in charge of managing a wide variety of customer contacts and making sure that guests have a positive experience, they must possess strong interpersonal skills, cultural awareness, and adaptability (Lashley, 2008).

The second group consists of back-of-house staff, which includes workers that keep the company running smooth-

ly behind the scenes. Maintenance personnel, cleaners, and the kitchen employees are a few examples of back-of-house positions. Despite the fact that they rarely deal with visitors, their work is essential to the general standard and security of the services offered. Back-of-house employees positively impact the visitor experience by making sure that the facilities are kept clean, the food is produced effectively, and maintenance issues are immediately resolved. Management and supervisory positions are another crucial group of employees in the hospitality industry. These workers manage administrative duties like hiring, scheduling, and staff training in addition to supervising daily operations and enforcing quality standards. In order to provide good quality of service to the customers American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA).

The hospitality sector is one of the most significant employers in the world. Over 10% of jobs worldwide are in the hospitality industry, which reflects its significant influence on economic growth, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2023). The industry is especially significant in Cyprus because the nation depends heavily on tourism as a source of income. According to data from the Cyprus Statistical Service (2022), the hotel and allied services sector in Cyprus employed about 40,000 people in 2022, accounting for 15% of all jobs in the nation. The workforce in this industry is also very diverse, according to Eurostat (2023), almost 30% of Cyprus hospitality labor is made up of foreigners, highlighting the cross-cultural setting in which workers function (WTTC, 2023).

Cross-cultural working environment:

When people from different national, ethnic, or cultural origins meet and work together in the same company, it's known as a cross-cultural working environment. Many companies now employ people with diverse cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and customs as globalization continues to change the working environment at work. This diversity has the potential to greatly increase creativity, extend viewpoints, and strengthen problem-solving skills. But there are disadvantages as well, such as the possibility of misunderstandings, poor communication, and disparate working methods (Thomas & Peterson, 2017). The nature and degree of cultural variety inside the company, as well as the kinds of interactions that take place between coworkers, can be used to define cross-cultural work environments. Multicultural workplaces, which includes people from different cultural backgrounds who collaborate with one another, fall under the first style. Employees in these environments frequently maintain close ties to their own cultural standards, and cul-

tural integration may be limited. Although people may work closely together in multicultural settings, the focus is usually on respecting different cultural identities without a high degree of involvement (Cox, 1993).

Intercultural work environment are the second kind, where staff members actively interact with one another and exchange ideas across cultural boundaries. These environments encourage cross-cultural dialogue, education, and knowledge while establishing a welcoming environment that celebrates cultural diversity. As workers acknowledge their various cultures and work towards a shared objective, teamwork becomes more effective in cross-cultural situations (Schneider & Barsoux, 2003).

There are global or transcultural workplaces that extend over traditional boundaries of culture. Instead of maintaining separate national or cultural identities, workers in these environments adjust to a one global culture. Multinational companies that place a high priority on corporate culture and global citizenship frequently have a transcultural environment. Here, workers accept a common set of guidelines and principles, prioritizing cooperation and teamwork over cultural identities (Adler & Gunderson, 2008).

Cross-cultural workplaces are becoming more and more essential to the operations of many businesses, especially those with a large customer or global reach. Managing these kinds of environments well may promote openness, improve teamwork, and make the most of cultural diversity. However, in order to avoid misunderstandings and increase productivity, success in a cross-cultural workplace requires an excellent understanding of cultural differences, efficient communication techniques, and an attachment to mutual respect (Thomas, D. C., & Peterson, M. F, 2017).

Employees Experience:

The idea of employee experience has become an important factor impacting organizational success in the ever-changing and demanding tourist sector. The term employee experience describes a workers general opinions and experiences during their time working for a company. This includes a number of factors, including the workplace culture, professional development possibilities, interpersonal interactions, and work environment (Kahn, 1990). The staff experience is essential to providing outstanding customer service and raising overall guest satisfaction in the hotel industry, where service quality is of the highest priority. The tourism industry is built on an understanding of what a tourist is. A tourist is a person who travels for pleasure, business, or other

reasons away from their normal surroundings, usually for no more than a year. People who travel for entertainment, enjoyment of culture, or new experiences are considered tourists, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020). This broad description includes a variety of traveler kinds, each with its own preferences and motives.

The motivations and behaviors of tourists can be used to classify the typology of tourists. As an example, leisure travelers seek out locations that provide entertainment, cultural experiences, or stunning scenery largely for their own pleasure and relaxation (Cohen, 1972). However, business tourists travel for work-related reasons, such seminars and meetings, and frequently have particular requirements for lodging and facilities (Baker & Cameron, 2008). Furthermore, adventure tourists look for unusual and difficult experiences, frequently that include physical activity or travelling to remote areas (Buckley, 2006). The desire to explore other cultures, customs, and histories drives cultural tourists, who frequently take part in events like museum visits or regional celebrations (McKercher & Du Cros, 2002). Eco-tourists prioritize eco-friendly travel methods that reduce their negative effects on the environment, emphasizing sustainability and nature preservation (Fennell, 2008). The actions and experiences connected to travel for business, pleasure, or other reasons are collectively referred to as tourism, which is a complex phenomenon. It includes all of the infrastructure and services that make travel easier, such as lodging, transportation, attractions, and hospitality. A major worldwide economic driver, the tourism sector supports local development, cultural exchange, and employment creation (UNWTO, 2020).

The tourism typology can be divided into a number of categories, each of which offers unique experiences according to the tastes of various tourists. Large numbers of visitors to well-known locations are known as mass tourism, which frequently results in crowding and environmental issues. Package offers and all-inclusive resorts are usually linked to this kind of travel (Gonzalez & Hsu, 2009). Sustainable tourism, on the other hand, aims to reduce the negative effects of travel on the environment while improving the well-being of nearby communities and conserving cultural assets (Liu, 2003). Adventure tourism attracts to thrill-seekers seeking immersive experiences in nature because it offers opportunity for exploration and physical difficulties (Beedie & Hudson, 2003). While medical tourism is visiting another nation for medical treatments or health services, cultural tourism focusses on experiencing and interacting with a destination's cultural legacy, including its art, music, cuisine, and customs (Connell, 2013).

In the term of tourism, experience refers to the variety of feelings, experiences, and activities that tourists have while travelling. It includes social interactions and cultural exchanges in addition to the enjoyment of sights and locations (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). A visitor's opinion of a place can be greatly influenced by the quality of their experience, which can affect whether or not they return or suggest it to others. Furthermore, the idea of a tourism experience is more expansive, covering the entire process from preparation to post-trip feedback. Several factors influence it, such as the standard of services obtained, the physical surroundings, socialization, and individually meetings with employees and customers. Developing client loyalty and encouraging future business demand an excellent travel experience (Otto & Ritchie, 1996).

Methodology:

The purpose of this research is to investigate the experiences of workers in Cyprus's hospitality industry, with a particular emphasis on the dynamics of a cross-cultural workplace. The workforce of Cyprus, a well-liked travel destination, is diversified and includes people from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Employees have both special opportunities and difficulties in this multicultural workplace with regard to integration, communication, and teamwork. This study aims to document the varied experiences of workers in such a diverse environment and investigate the ways in which cultural differences impact interactions at work, job satisfaction, and general performance. The main goals of the study will be to fully understand how workers from various cultural backgrounds view their workplace, how they deal with language challenges, and how multicultural teams promote inclusivity and respect.

The experiences of workers in Cyprus's hospitality industry are examined in this study, with a particular focus on the cross-cultural workplace. A qualitative research approach is used to investigate the subjective experiences of workers in a multicultural environment since human experiences and relationships are so complicated. Because it enables a thorough examination of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and emotions regarding their workplace, qualitative research is especially well-suited for this study and might provide insights that quantitative approaches may miss (Creswell, 2013). A broad understanding of the potential and difficulties that emerge in a multicultural hospitality industry is provided by the study's use of in-depth interviews as a research tool to gather rich, detailed narratives from the participants.

The methodological approach known as qualitative research places a strong emphasis on using non-numerical data—such as words, pictures, or observations—to better understand human experiences, behaviors, and societal events. The goal of qualitative research is to investigate the significance of people's behaviors and interactions, as opposed to quantitative research, which frequently tries to quantify and analyze factors statistically (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). This method works especially well when researchers want to comprehend the richness and complexity of human experiences, as those of workers in the multicultural hospitality industry. Instead of attempting to generalize, qualitative research aims to give a comprehensive, in-depth description of the phenomenon being studied in order to generate insights that might guide future research, practice, and policy. Since the main goal of this study is to comprehend the lived experiences of employees in a multicultural workplace, qualitative research is thought to be relevant. One of the best examples of such an atmosphere is the hospitality industry in Cyprus, where workers from many cultural backgrounds work together and encounter special possibilities and problems. This study intends to reveal the complicated nature of cross-cultural communication, cultural adaptation, and the influence of multicultural teams on workers' work experiences by using a qualitative research methodology.

Data collection:

In-depth interviews, a qualitative technique that allows the researcher to look deeper into participants' perspectives, are used in this study to collect data. The researcher and participants engage in one-on-one, open-ended discussions during in-depth interviews, enabling the participants to freely express their ideas, emotions, and impressions. Through a greater comprehension of individual experiences and the ability to go deeper than surface-level responses, this method gives the researcher insights into the underlying meanings that influence participants' attitudes and behaviors (Kvale, 1996). In-depth interviews are especially useful in this research because they give workers a chance to talk about their own experiences working in a multicultural workplace where communication styles, cultural differences, and language barriers may affect how they interact with one another. This study aims to investigate employees' subjective experiences, which are difficult to measure via surveys or questionnaires. Participants can explain their experiences in their own words during in-depth interviews, which helps the researcher capture the complexity of working in a multicultural workplace. Additionally, because interviews are flexible, the researcher can go deeper into particular subjects that

come up during the discussion, such difficulties with language obstacles or cultural misconceptions (Bryman, 2016). Because of their versatility, in-depth interviews are a perfect way to research a complex subject like cross-cultural communication in the hotel industry.

In-depth interviews also give participants a chance to think back on their experiences and share perspectives that may not be immediately obvious. Interviews offer a deeper and more thorough understanding than organised surveys or quantitative methodologies may provide because the study's goal is to comprehend how employees interpret and negotiate cultural differences in the workplace (Creswell, 2013). Below you can find the interview guide questionnaire:

- Q1. Where are you from, and how did you find Cyprus's multicultural workplace?
- Q2. In what ways have you communicated with coworkers from various cultural backgrounds? Could you describe any positive or challenging experiences?
- Q3. How frequently do you face into language barriers at work, and how do they affect your ability to perform your job and connect with others?
- Q4. How is equality and inclusiveness supported at your place of employment? Does being a member of a multicultural team make you feel appreciated and respected?
- Q5. What abilities or knowledge have you gained from working in a multicultural environment?
- Q6. What changes could be made to improve the experience of workers in multicultural groups in the hospitality industry, based on your experience?

Ontology and Epistemology:

Ontology and epistemology are important factors in qualitative research because they influence how knowledge is perceived and created. The nature of reality, or what can be understood about the universe and its existence, is referred to as ontology. The ontological position in qualitative research is frequently constructionist, which holds that people's perceptions and experiences shape reality and that it is socially produced (Crotty, 1998). This viewpoint supports the idea that workers' experiences in a multicultural workplace are individualized and subject to change depending on the cultural setting. As a result, the study recognizes that every participant's experience is legitimate and deserving of investigation rather than supposing a single, objective truth. The nature of knowing, or how we know what we know, is the focus of epistemology. An epistemology, which maintains that knowledge is created via social interactions and the interpretations people assign to their experiences, is fre-

quently used in qualitative research (Schwandt, 2000). The goal of this study is to interpret the participants' experiences in a way that represents their subjective meanings, while acknowledging that the participants' experiences are impacted by their distinct cultural backgrounds. According to this method, comprehending the multicultural workplace necessitates not just obtaining information but also analyzing the social and cultural settings in which these experiences take place.

Sampling Process:

Any research project must have a sampling procedure since it establishes the participant group from which data will be gathered. The population of this research study is made up of workers in Cyprus's hospitality industry, particularly those who work in settings with a variety of cultural backgrounds. Examining the perspectives of workers in a multicultural workplace—where people from different cultural backgrounds collaborate—is the goal of this study. Because of the nature of the study, participants who could offer rich, useful, and varied insights into the research issues were chosen using a purposive sampling technique.

Population and the sample:

The participants in this research represent employees in Cyprus's hospitality industry, with a particular focus on those who operate in different cultural environments. An important industry in Cyprus, the hospitality sector employs people from a wide range of cultural and national origins. Cyprus provides a good framework for this study because it is home to several hotels, resorts, restaurants, and other hospitality companies that operate in multicultural environments with employees from both domestic and foreign origins. Employees who operate in such multicultural situations in Cyprus made up the sample for this study. The sample was not selected at random but rather using a deliberate sampling procedure because the objective was to obtain comprehensive, significant insights into the cross-cultural experiences of employees. As a non-probability sampling technique, purposeful sampling also referred to as judgmental sampling selects participants according to particular behaviors that support the study's goals (Palinkas et al., 2015). The participants were chosen in this situation based on their background working in the hotel industry in a multicultural setting. Purposive sampling is used to make sure that participants have relevant experiences to answer the research questions about cross-cultural dynamics and multicultural work environments.

Sample size:

Employees who operate in multicultural hospitality settings in Cyprus made up the study's sample size. Based on the idea of (Guest et al., 2006) data saturation which happens when no new information is coming from further interviews and the data gathered becomes repetitive 12 in-depth interviews were conducted. The objective of qualitative research is to document the complexity and diversity of a chosen group of participant's experiences rather than extrapolating results. 12 participants may offer a wide enough range of viewpoints to enable a thorough investigation of the phenomenon while maintaining a reasonable data gathering method, according to research (Creswell, 2013).

Participant	Age	Gender
Ishar	27	Male
Saloni	23	Female
Manoj	29	Male
Youbraj	28	Male
Vijay	26	Male
Siddartha	27	Male
Amit	26	Male
Ashok	27	Male
Shanti	25	Female
Bhola	28	Male
Sunil	27	Male
Bakbal	29	Male

Table 1: Research Participants

Data Analysis Method:

The main technique used in this study to examine the qualitative information gathered from in-depth interviews with hospitality industry workers was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a popular qualitative research technique that focusses on finding, examining, and summarizing patterns or themes in data. As such, it is ideal for investigating people's experiences and viewpoints in complicated contexts, such as multicultural workplaces.

Thematic Analysis:

Thematic analysis was the primary method employed in this study to analyze the qualitative data acquired from in-depth interviews with employees in the hotel sector. Finding, analyzing, and synthesizing patterns or themes in data is the main goal of the popular qualitative research method known as thematic analysis. Because of this, it is perfect for examining people's perspectives and experiences in complex settings, such multicultural workplaces. Because it can be used with a broad range of data formats, including written texts, focus groups, interviews, and observations, thematic analysis is renowned for its versatility and flexibility. By concen-

trating on the underlying meanings and patterns that may emerge from the data in addition to the participants' explicit responses, the researcher is able to obtain a deeper insight of their perspectives. This makes it the perfect approach for delving into complex subjects like communication difficulties, cultural acculturation, and how ethnic settings affect workplace relations.

Coding Process:

Finding themes is based on the coding process, which is an essential part of thematic analysis. Coding is assigning labels to data segments in order to find trends or concepts that are pertinent to the study question (Saldana, 2016). Usually, there are two phases to the coding process: concentrated coding and early coding. In the first stage of coding, this research study will carefully reviews the interview data and codes important passages. A code that incorporates the substance of each data segment that provides pertinent meaning is assigned. And the research proceeds to focused coding after finishing initial coding, when the codes are combined, and categorized into more general groups. Finding broad themes that represent more significant trends in the data. Verifying the correctness and realness of the codes and themes is the last stage in the coding process. To make sure the interpretation appropriately reflects the data, this study polish the themes, and analysis's depth and dependability are improved.

Research ethics:

To guarantee the safety, privacy, and welfare of each and every participant, ethical issues were given top priority during the research process. Participants felt valued and protected during the whole research procedure since the study complied with accepted ethical standards. The participants' privacy was a key component of this ethical framework. The highest care was taken to ensure that no identifying information was revealed in any of the information provided throughout the interviews. Participants received assurances that the information gathered would be utilized exclusively for this research study and that their answers would be kept confidential. Pseudonyms were used in place of the participants' real names in order to better safeguard their identity. Their identities were kept private by using pseudonyms, which eliminated any chance of response tracing. Confidentiality was preserved, and the informed consent principle was carefully followed to. Every participant received a thorough explanation of the study's goals, purpose, and nature. Details on the collection, storage, and use of the data were included in the material supplied. Participants were in-

formed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that they might leave at any time without incurring any penalties. As a result, participants were guaranteed to comprehend the procedure and be able to decide whether or not to participate. Strict data protection procedures were put in place to safeguard the gathered information. All notes, tapes, and transcripts of interviews were safely kept and only the researcher had access to them. The focus on voluntary involvement was another important ethical principle that was noted during this study. Participants were allowed to freely choose whether or not to take part in the study, guaranteeing that their participation was voluntary.

Additionally, they were told that they were free to leave at any time if it made them uncomfortable and that they were not required to give a reason. The study made sure that participants' rights were upheld, their experiences were valued, and their identities were kept private by following these ethical guidelines. By establishing a respectful and safe study setting, these steps promoted trust between the participants and the researcher.

Research findings:

In this research study, I carried out qualitative data analysis focused on today's globalized world, multicultural workplaces have grown in number, offering workers the chance to develop, learn, and work together across cultural divides. The article covers the points of view of workers in Cyprus's hotel industry, a multicultural environment where people from many nations coexist. Four major themes revealed from an interviews with twelve participants: potential for improvement, cultural awareness and respect, language and communication challenges, and flexibility and personal growth.

Barriers to Communication and Language:

The difficulty of language and communication challenges was a common subject in all of the interviews. Even though English is the most common language used at work, many employees do not speak it as their first language. Participants said that accents, speech patterns, or cultural differences in expression frequently led to misunderstandings. For example, Mr. Vijay Chuhan explained how employees from different countries occasionally had trouble understanding one another, which resulted in unpleasant situations and misunderstandings. In a comparable way, Mr. Youbraj Dhamal clarified that terms with different cultural associations may make discussions more difficult, especially during busy periods when speed and clarity are important. Participants frequently used hand gestures, simplified language,

and translation applications to get around these difficulties. According to Mr. Amit Rana, language-related problems were reduced by repeating instructions and utilizing physical clues. However, participants agreed that in despite of these efforts, communication problems could cause work processes delay especially when instructions are being given or received.

Respect and Cultural Awareness:

The essential role of respect and cultural awareness in creating a peaceful workplace was another important issue. Numerous participants expressed satisfaction for the actions taken by their organizations to promote cultural diversity through events, educational programs, and open conversations. Mr. Siddartha Sherstha, for example, highlighted how the workplace promoted employees' sharing of their cultural origins, which he found delightful and enlightening. In the same way, Mr. Roshan Bakbal observed that training sessions and cultural activities encouraged equality and understanding among team members.

Some participants said there was space for improvement in despite of these satisfying encounters. Personal ties were occasionally hampered by unexpected misunderstandings or a lack of deeper cultural knowledge, even if inclusivity was generally maintained. Miss Shanti Magar made a point that cultural customs sometimes pose little barriers to understanding. It also suggests that although Cyprus workplaces aim to be inclusive, current efforts to increase understanding of culture may improve workers' feelings of being valued even more.

Flexibility and Individual Development:

Significant chances for both professional and personal development were presented by working in a global environment. Many of the participants mentioned how their flexibility, communication abilities, and knowledge of various cultural viewpoints improved as a result of adjusting to shifted teams. Miss Saloni Sharma, for example, described how working with individuals from different backgrounds increased her flexibility and open-mindedness. In the same way, Mr. Roshan Bakbal highlighted how he was able to overcome cultural barriers at work and increase his problem-solving abilities. Employees gained personal benefits from these experiences, but they also improved the team's overall performance. Mr. Sunil Magar thought that interacting with people from different cultural backgrounds and learning some basic Greek phrases improved his ability to communicate with coworkers and visitors. This flexibility

and an ability to accept differences have become essential for succeeding in a multicultural workplace.

Possibilities for Improvement:

Although the multicultural environment was generally liked by the participants, they pointed out a number of areas that needed work. Numerous people proposed that more understanding of culture and language instruction could improve teamwork and assist close communication gaps. For example, Mr. Manoj Sherstha suggested more cultural exchange-focused team-building exercises, which he thought would improve interaction and understanding. In the same way, Mr. Vijay Chuhan pointed out the importance of practicing cultural awareness in order to improve collaboration at work. Other recommendations included giving staff members the chance to learn more about one other's backgrounds. Miss Shanti Magar suggested planning activities that would allow staff members to exchange cultural customs, such festivals or cuisine. The importance of offering language-learning resources was also highlighted by the participants, since this might promote more effective communication and minimize miscommunication.

Employee experiences in Cyprus's multicultural hospitality industry demonstrate the benefits and difficulties of working in a multicultural workplace. Despite being commonplace, language and communication challenges can be minimized with the use of resources, patience, and teamwork. Although there is always space for further in-depth understanding, cultural respect and awareness are essential for promoting diversity. Furthermore, the flexibility and personal development that come from working in a multinational team are priceless, giving staff member's abilities that they may use outside of the office. Last but not least, ongoing funding for team-building exercises, cultural exchange programs, and language instruction will guarantee that multicultural workplaces not only operate efficiently but also grow as examples of cooperation and inclusivity.

Discussion:

Employees in Cyprus's hotel industry face both opportunities and difficulties due to the cross-cultural work environment. As workers engage with coworkers from different cultural backgrounds, the workforce's diversity encourages creativity, innovation, and personal development. But it also brings with it difficulties like a lack of communication, cultural misunderstandings, and the requirement for flexibility, which can cause stress or despair. Navigating these inter-

actions requires effective management, and leaders need to possess emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, and inclusivity-promoting tactics. Employees typically feel appreciated when diversity is welcomed and inclusivity is given top priority, which improves performance and job happiness. On the other hand, a lack of cultural awareness may lead to high turnover rates and unhappiness. Many organizations use training in language proficiency, cultural sensitivity, and inclusive policies while keeping by legal and ethical requirements to address these problems. In the end, the hospitality sector in Cyprus benefits from a cross-cultural workplace, but maintaining a peaceful and effective atmosphere requires intentional efforts.

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B.4

Overcoming Communication Barries on Diverse Team

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Abstract:

This study explores communication barriers in multicultural work environments, focusing on the experiences of individuals in diverse teams. The primary goal of this research was to understand the challenges posed by varying cultural backgrounds and to enhance teamwork and collaboration in increasingly globalized work settings. The objectives included identifying specific communication barriers and recommending effective strategies to overcome them. A qualitative research design was used to conduct the project, which allowed for a thorough examination of the viewpoints of the participants. Seventeen people were chosen who have relevant expertise in multicultural settings in a range of industries. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data, and Zoom was used to suit participants' schedules. Every interview was conducted with informed consent, and the conversations were faithfully recorded for in-depth data analysis. To extract valuable insights from the data, thematic analysis was applied in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2006) principles. This includes steps including open coding, preliminary readings, and classifying codes into more general themes.

Keywords: *Communication, Barriers, Team, Collaboration, Cultural*

Introduction:

Global companies face challenges when they expand their operations to foreign countries with different cultures (Tariquela and Schulerb, 2008; Brodbeck and Frese, 2017; Matveev and Nelson, 2024). The issue of culture has a significant impact on how well employees perform because employee behaviour influences the success of multinational corporations (Hofstede and Minkov, 2024). According to Anand (2024), one way to overcome organizational challenges is

to develop high-performance human resource practices that support the establishment of multicultural teams, but these teams may be exposed to a variety of cultures, standards, attitudes, and behaviours. In the end, these have an impact on how team leaders handle cross-cultural workers. Multinational corporations that create multicultural team building strategies must recognize that team members come from diverse cultural backgrounds and that these cultural differences must be taken into account when choosing team members (Brett, Behar, and Kern, 2016). According to Biradar and Chatpalli (2017), multicultural teams are becoming a significant component of multinational corporations' business strategies since they give the company a clear edge in the cutthroat global marketplace. However, Saga, Kaynaka, and Sezena (2016) caution that there is a high likelihood that team members would disagree and clash due to the employees' cultural diversity.

According to Tariquela and Schulerb (2008), because culture shapes how people interact with and view other cultures, multicultural teams experience more conflict than single-culture teams. Therefore, in order to prevent conflict among team members, the team leader's position becomes crucial when managing cross-cultural teams (Rothacker and Haue, 2014). According to Brain and Lewis (2024), his capacity to lead a multicultural team is contingent upon his leadership skills or readiness to develop them. Furthermore, studies focusing on the perspectives of the manager and other team members must look at the leadership skills necessary to function well in a multicultural setting (Benet-Martinez, Lee, and Leu, 2016).

Understanding culture is challenging, and research shows that there are many different conceptions of the phenomenon. The term that is most frequently used, nevertheless, comes from Hofstede and Minkov (2014), who assert that culture is the collective programming that distinguishes members of one community from members of another. Organizations now use the term "culture" to characterize the work habits of workers from various countries and cultures. Globalization's broad spread has increased multinational firms' awareness of how culture affects their ability to manage foreign workers (Balani and Vreja, 2023).

This study contributes to the existing knowledge by providing valuable insights into the complexities of multicultural communication. According to earlier studies, when managed well, heterogeneous teams can produce creative results; yet, communication hurdles might seriously impede

these potential advantages (Stahl et al., 2020). This study provides a framework for businesses to establish inclusive environments where all views are heard and respected by highlighting workable tactics like the use of organized participation approaches and anonymous feedback platforms. Because it enables a detailed knowledge of participants' lived experiences and viewpoints, the qualitative approach used for this study is especially appropriate for this investigation. Quantitative approaches might miss the nuances of communication problems in diverse teams, but qualitative approaches—like semi-structured interviews—allow for candid discussion that can reveal these issues (Braun & Clarke, 2016). Because of this freedom, participants can truly and fully communicate their views, yielding valuable data for research. The purpose of this study is to identify efficient communication techniques that can be used in multicultural teams to promote cooperation, comprehension, and output. Organizations may enhance cooperation and problem-solving skills and foster a welcoming environment where people from all cultural backgrounds feel encouraged to contribute by emphasizing open and inclusive communication. The study's conclusions will serve as a foundation for future research into particular communication obstacles and best practices, pointing businesses in the direction of a more creative and cooperative future.

Theoretical Background:

The literature used to address the posed research question is provided via the literature review. It looks at culture and other elements that influence team performance. It also looks at ways to prevent conflict that arises from members' poor communication. Due to the complexity of the concept of culture and its impact on multicultural teams, research on multicultural teams in global organizations is extremely complex (Head, Trigger and Mulcock, 2015; Schein, 2020; Martin, 2020). Because culture has multiple facets, researchers are unable to adequately define it. Hofstede (2020), one of the first scholars to study culture, defines it as the way people feel and act that sets them apart from other communities. Understanding different cultures is crucial since businesses are now growing globally, and the global business environment is growing every day (Hofstede and Minkov, 2024). Hofstede's work, which looked at the ideas of organizational and national cultures, is used by researchers who investigate how culture affects transnational organizations. The study's conclusions provided four cultural characteristics that may be used to compare and contrast different country cultures (Triandis, 2024). By offering their own perspectives, other cultural studies by Trompenaars and Hall enhanced and broadened Hofstede's.

Hofstede's dimensions were divided into four categories: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity against femininity, and individualism versus collectivism (Hofstede, 2001). According to the theorist, the dimension of individualism vs collectivism depicts how people want to live, either individually or collectively, and hence explains the disparities between national cultures. According to Hofstede and de Mooij (2021), individualists like working alone and pursue their own goals, including advancement. Conversely, collectivism explains how people like working in teams and how societies are united.

As a result, Hofstede and Minkov (2014) point out that individualistic nations run a market-oriented economy based on supply and demand. The power distance dimension draws attention to the power disparity that occurs in societies and the ways in which the underprivileged tolerate it (Hofstede, 1984). Power distance in the business world explains whether an organization's authority is centralized or dispersed (Hofstede and de Mooij, 2021). According to the study, collectivist cultures likewise have a high power distance. Hofstede (2021) asserts that uncertainty avoidance assesses the degree of uncertainty exhibited by society's members.

While societies with high levels of uncertainty impose a lot of restrictions to ensure their security, societies with low levels of uncertainty avoidance feel safe about their future.

When putting strategies into action, organizations in these societies steer clear of taking chances (Triandis, 2024). The last factor, masculinity against femininity, looks at potential gender imbalance in particular cultures (Hofstede, 2021). Organizations in masculine societies prioritize high performance and achievement, whereas feminine cultures encourage cooperation and teamwork among people. This study looks at how culture affects multinational organizations, and the two theorists built on Hofstede's work by providing seven dimensions (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2020). The first, referred to as particularism vs. universalism, looks at the link between employee relationships and organizational regulations.

Societies that introduce norms to preserve their uncertainty are defined by universalism (French, Zeis, and Scherer, 2021). Nonetheless, these rules are applied in every circumstance and to every member of the community, and their principles are valued above interpersonal connections and personal requirements (Cacciattolo, 2024). Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance and universalism both take into account how similar people are in many facets of life. Particular-

ism, which is related to collectivism in Hofstede's research, characterizes a society that is built on interpersonal ties and members feel obligated to society, claims Hampden-Turner (2020). In this cultural group, interpersonal interactions are valued more highly than adherence to rules (Balani and Vreja, 2023). Trompenaars and Woolliams (2023) state that Hofstede defined the dimension of communitarianism vs. individualism as collectivism vs. individualism, which examines the function of the person within a social group. According to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2020), they are complementary since they look at personal preferences. Diffusion vs. Specificity assesses how people keep their personal and professional lives apart.

Work and daily life are intertwined in certain diffusion cultures (French, Zeis, and Scherer, 2021). Affective vs. neutral, according to French and others, examines how people display and communicate their emotions in public. People in certain cultures associate emotions with logical meanings, but not in others. This diffusion and specificity component looks at how culture affects a team member's standing (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2020). Trompenaars and Woolliams (2023) claim that in cultures that place a high value on accomplishment, each employee's performance and dedication are evaluated. Other members of society assign a status to each individual based on their age, gender, and frequently their educational background. Balani and Vreja (2023) discuss the difference between synchronous and sequential time, which assesses whether people work together or alone. Individuals from sequential cultures dislike unplanned events and want to follow strict schedules. According to Cacciattolo (2024), people's actions are influenced by their prior experiences in synchronous cultures. These cultures favor doing unexpected actions. The last component is called external and internal control, and it gauges how aggressive a person is when trying to reach an agreement with others (French, Zeis, and Scherer, 2021).

According to French and others, affective versus neutral psychology examines how people display and communicate their emotions in public. While people in certain cultures do not associate emotions with rational concepts, others do. This diffusion and specificity component looks at how culture affects a team member's standing (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2020). Trompenaars and Woolliams (2023) claim that in cultures that place a high value on accomplishment, each employee's performance and dedication are evaluated. Other members of society assign a status to each individual based on their age, gender, and frequently their educational background.

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Hall stated that his cultural model is divided into three categories in a subsequent study: time, context, and space (Hall, 2020). According to the time dimension, a person's culture is shaped by how they understand time, which is connected to Trompenaars' synchronous vs. sequential dimension (Cardon, 2018). According to Hall and Hall (2020), certain cultures view time as a valuable and finite organizational resource, which influences how people communicate, which is a quick process. All activities are carefully planned ahead of time and must be completed on time. These are called monochronic cultures as opposed to polychronic civilizations (Kittler, Rygl, and MacKinnon, 2021). Since time is not regarded as being particularly important in this type of civilization, time frameworks are not observed. The dimension of context, according to Hall (2020), is the communication channel between civilizations. In certain cultures, communication is simple and easy to utilize, while in others, it can be challenging. Cardon (2020) asserts that low-context societies ensure that every aspect of an agreement is thoroughly discussed, whereas high-context cultures do the opposite. The boundaries within which people function in society are characterized by space. Employees in collectivist cultures take pleasure in working as a team since teamwork increases productivity (Triandis, 2024). According to this perspective, multicultural teams can give businesses a competitive edge (Stahl et al., 2020).

These groups support the integration of various organizational initiatives. As a result, scholars have created theories on multicultural teams (Chen and Partington, 2024; Anand, 2024; Tariquela and Schulerb, 2018). Multicultural teams can improve performance through intensive problem solving and decision making, according to most research. Multicultural teams are groupings of workers from various cultural backgrounds who collaborate independently to provide the required results for the company, according to Chen and Partington (2014). Prabhakar and Duda (2019) come to the con-

clusion in their study that cultural differences do not always have a detrimental effect on team performance. The primary source of potential conflict is the way team members react to disparate cultural norms and beliefs. According to Matveev and Nelson (2024), these team members are becoming more and more varied in their mindsets in order to adapt to different cultures that exist beyond national boundaries.

The study conducted by Brett, Befhar, and Kern (2016) demonstrates the intricacy of many cultures and the ways in which team members relate to them. Organizational culture thus recognizes the significance of these personal identities. Studies on multicultural teams' outputs have also been conducted, however the results have been equivocal. According to Tariquela and Schulerb (2018), teams that have people from diverse ethnic backgrounds perform better than those with similar cultural backgrounds.

On the other hand, conflict that arises from poor communication is typically avoided by team members with comparable cultures. Diversity is not a major predictor of effective team performance, according to Benet-Martinez, Lee, and Leu (2016), who conducted extensive study on multicultural team diversity. Three categories of diversity are identified in this study as having an impact on the performance of multicultural teams. According to Anand (2024), the first is informational diversity, which assesses various member backgrounds and experiences in the workplace since these factors eventually influence how they interact with corporate operations. According to Anand, value diversity examines the values each team member places in accomplishing their individual objectives, whereas social diversity identifies disparities in team members' gender and ethnicity. According to Chen and Partington (2004), social diversity has less of an impact on team performance than value diversity, which has a greater impact than all other forms of diversity. According to the study's general hypothesis, certain forms of diversity have a greater impact on performance than others. Team dynamics and conflict resolution, however, are significantly influenced by how members of the team handle diversity. Additionally, the team's success is measured by the task activities' level of difficulty and the degree of autonomy granted to team members (Prabhakar and Duda, 2019). Therefore, depending on how the team leader manages the team members, the level of diversity within the group may be either a benefit or a drawback.

In an effort to incorporate teamwork knowledge into organizational operations in the global marketplace, researchers

have looked at models that explain the efficacy of multicultural teams (Biradar and Chatpalli, 2017; Matveev and Milter, 2024). Models include many characteristics that emphasize organizational and social elements, individual team factors, and internal policies of the organization (Lisak and Erez, 2015). Examining the impact of culture and how it influences team member behavior is essential to comprehending how multicultural teams function. Furthermore, it is necessary to look at external elements like the industry's development and the influence of technology. The power granted to team leaders to make their own decisions and the quality of the organization's resources can be used to gauge the team's success. Compensation, team selection standards, and training and growth are further elements that impact team members (Saga, Kaynaka, and Sezena, 2016).

Saga and others contend that team members' ability to make decisions and solve problems is influenced by the organization's structure, whether it be decentralized or centralized. As previously said, the team's composition is influenced by both national and organizational culture, depending on whether the company has an individualist or collectivist culture (Biradar and Chatpalli, 2017). Multicultural teams perform better in an organizational environment with fewer rules for workers, according to a study on the relationship between organizational structure and team effectiveness (Newman and Nollen, 2020). This is true for cultures with low uncertainty avoidance. However, teams from the same country may have diverse compositions due to organizational cultures and subcultures, as cautioned by Rodrigues and Sbragia (2013).

The team's makeup, the format of the tasks to be performed, and demographic characteristics like age and gender are some of the many elements that influence the team's success (Cheng and Price, 2019). The complexity of the project and the team members' access to organizational resources determine how many team members are chosen. According to Reva and Atalla (2022), a team's size affects its likelihood of success. If the team is to succeed, it is also critical that everyone in the team understands the project's goals.

Given that culturally varied teams have distinct expectations, this is even more crucial for them (Roberge and Dick, 2020). In order to help teams achieve the project's goals, it is recommended that they create a procedure that allows them to discuss their individual goals as a group (Prabhakar and Duda, 2019). As a result, the members' commercial experience, diverse cultural backgrounds, and social backgrounds

should all be considered while choosing a team. The member's credentials and character attributes are also part of this viewpoint (Matveev and Nelson, 2024).

Roberge and Dick (2020) assert that communication is a crucial component of the team's approach and how they are able to solve issues and reach choices. In the end, this reduces the likelihood of disagreement between team members and ultimately contributes significantly to the team's effectiveness.

The relationships that form between team members primarily govern the team environment. To prevent conflict, each person must learn to trust his teammates. The viewpoints of trust, cooperation, and team member dedication are factors that reduce conflict and hence boost effectiveness, claim van Emmerik et al. (2011). The decision-making and communication processes will be improved by fostering trust among the participants (Zeng et al., 2010). Evans (2006) says that job happiness and having useful learning experiences are additional criteria that can be utilized to measure success and effectiveness in addition to team performance and productivity gains. Team members can interact more freely without worrying about arguments and conflict when they have a better understanding of other cultures (Biradar and Chatpalli, 2017). Furthermore, Biradar and Chatpalli assert that a multicultural team becomes more effective if team members are happy in their jobs.

The majority of presumptions on the difficulties multicultural teams face imply that issues result from the individuals' disparate communication styles (Lustig and Koester, 2006). Dusan, Krum, and Zorana (2014) state that one of the four factors that might hinder a team's success and cause issues for its members is communication. The authors identify four potential points of contention between the members: the way in which the members communicate, their accents and proficiency in the chosen language of communication, their opinions of the team leader's management style, and the disparate attitudes exhibited during decision-making.

Zwikael, Shimizu, and Globerson (2015) consider indirect and direct styles of communication as two significant communication viewpoints. These two forms of communication can lead to a lot of issues among team members and are influenced by culture (Balani and Vreja, 2023). In certain cultures, instructions are conveyed explicitly and communication is direct. However, communication is indirect and the message's context has hidden meanings in different cultures

(Head, Trigger, and Mulcock, 2015). Eventually, indirect or direct communication mechanisms will influence negotiations. Ineffective communication leads to alterations in priorities and the eventual break down of negotiations and discussions among the team members.

As a result, there is less information sharing among the members and less information dissemination overall (Kittrler, Rygl, and MacKinnon, 2020). Personal conflicts will occur if there is little information, claim Lustig and Koester (2016). The English language is frequently regarded as the most crucial for communication in the globalized world of today. However, according to Dusan, Krum, and Zorana (2024), team members who struggle with fluency and translating crucial information may become frustrated. Team members whose first language is not English get demotivated as a result.

The chosen team leader's job is to bring the many cultures of the team members into harmony.

Team leaders may find that understanding cultural diversity helps them make sure that everyone on the team works together (Rothacker and Haue, 2024). To reduce diversity, the team leader must make sure that everyone on the team understands the project's goals. The leader must inspire team members to adjust to and embrace his workplace culture in order to do this (Makilouko, 2024). He contends that as business structures are evolving and more businesses are depending on teams, it is critical to have a successful leadership style. Ineffective team leadership frequently causes teams to fall short of their project goals (Jager and Raich, 2021). Brett, Behvar, and Kern (2016) assert that for a team to be successful, a good leader must have specific participative traits. In order to focus all of their efforts on fostering amicable relationships with the team members, team leaders should change their employee strategies (Brodbeck and Frese, 2017). Treating staff members as teammates rather than subordinates should be the leader's responsibility. The leader makes sure that some of his responsibilities are shared by giving them the freedom to decide for themselves.

The development of communication skills to achieve overall integration of all team members is one of the challenges of managing varied team members, according to Brain and Lewis (2024). Furthermore, teams frequently guarantee subpar performance because they are unable to agree on a similar culture to employ throughout the project (Siebdrä, Hoegl, and Ernst, 2019). Therefore, team leaders must follow certain rules in order to decrease diversity and increase member integration. The framework suggests that members

should be chosen according to their skills and competencies which they possess and not according to their social backgrounds (Rothacker and Haue, 2024). According to Jager and Raich (2021), culturally intelligent leaders help members develop a cultural awareness because they understand the consequences of cultural differences. By establishing a shared vision for the project with the members, leaders can overcome obstacles that arise because members are unaware of the project's goals (Biradar and Sezena, 2016). In order to facilitate communication, team leaders must understand the effects of cultural diversity. This can be accomplished if the leader inspires an awareness of diversity to all members so that they understand their colleagues better. Leaders encourage team members to contribute innovative ideas to decision-making by sharing authority among them. Saga, Kay-naka, and Sezena (2016) caution that this authority ought to be granted to individuals who contribute their skills to the project's success.

However, if team members are not valued for their contributions, several of these leadership facets might not be successful (Makilouko, 2024). According to Brett, Behvar, and Kern (2016), respect for their coworkers guarantees that cultural stereotyping is minimized and assessments are rendered without taking into account a member's cultural aptitude. Leaders ensure that social bias is eliminated by permitting a status where members are treated equally. Furthermore, according to Brodbeck and Frese (2017), giving members performance comments encourages them to work together more frequently and value variety. In conclusion, multicultural team leaders must possess the abilities required to respect team members from various cultural origins. The global business environment, which demands cross-border communication and cross-cultural learning, is a prerequisite for effective team leaders (Jager and Raich, 2021). This suggests that in order to adjust their leadership styles in response to changing cultural circumstances, effective leaders need to be extremely flexible and adaptive. To improve his cultural sensitivity and competency, training may be required.

Discord arises from disagreements among team members due to their disparate views and behaviors. Disagreements occur in multicultural teams, and while conflict cannot be completely eliminated, it can be reduced (Matveev and Nelson, 2024). Because team members frequently don't know what their responsibilities are, conflict frequently occurs. Accordingly, ensuring that each team member is aware of their responsibilities is a crucial responsibility of the leader

(Adler and Graham, 2019). According to Heinz (2024), there are two kinds of conflict: one stems from the assigned task, and the other is caused by connections among team members. Because it deals with the views, emotions, and cultural values of the employees, the latter is more sentimental. According to Cronin et al. (2021), a multicultural team is more likely to have conflict than a monocultural team due to the cultural values that each team member holds. In order to settle conflicts as soon as possible, team leaders need to be knowledgeable about conflict management procedures (Somech, Desivilya, and Lidogoster, 2019). The primary cause of conflict is cultural differences, which includes a lack of comprehension of a second language used for project communication (de Dreu and van Vianen, 2021).

In some cultures, the way that teamwork is viewed is influenced by the cultural values that each team member holds. Hofstede's (2021) dimension of individuality vs. collectivism highlights how collectivist cultures view power sharing provided by team leaders and how they are better suited to teamwork than individualist cultures. Accordingly, the dimension of power distance influences management activities and control. It implies that in cultures with high power distance, managers are the only ones with authority and staff members do not participate in decision-making or problem-solving (Hofstede and Minkov, 2024). Teamwork may therefore be more successful in cultures with less power distance. The top-down nature of communication in high power distance cultures makes it unsuitable for teamwork exercises.

According to Adler and Graham (2019), communication must be horizontal and bottom-up in order to function successfully and prevent conflicts and conflict. This makes it possible for the manager and staff to exchange information. Matveev and Nelson (2004) claim that disagreements frequently occur as a result of team members' ignorance of the project's goals. According to Hofstede (2020), members can more easily understand project objectives in feminist cultures since communication is less formal than in masculine societies. In addition, the system of awards and appraisals is less formal in feminine civilizations than it is in masculine ones. According to Hofstede, teamwork would therefore be more effective in cultures that are more feminine. According to Head, Trigger, and Mulcock (2015), cultures with high levels of uncertainty avoidance have an impact on how team leaders mentor team members because this cultural dimension is frequently connected to power distance. Team leaders are reluctant to delegate authority to staff members due

to their high level of uncertainty (Hofstede and de Mooij 2021). Conflict in work teams that function in cross-cultural corporate settings results from employees' cultural views of HR procedures and guidelines.

Team leaders should therefore employ several strategies to resolve conflicts (Brett, Befhar, and Kern, 2024). According to Anand (2024), there are numerous methods for settling disputes depending on the viewpoints and attitudes of the leader and his followers. Negotiations are the most popular method of conflict resolution. This presupposes that during discussions, leaders and participants should communicate in a flexible manner (Chen and Partington, 2024). It is necessary to educate team members on the cultures that are employed within the group. Team leaders need to make sure that everyone involved in the talks doesn't stereotype others based on their cultural origins. According to Lisak and Erez (2015), leaders need to create a communication process that all parties can understand during talks. Even though cultural differences might lead to disagreements and conflict, the leader's position can help make sure the project is successful. Organizations can provide effective managerial methods that reduce the chance of conflict by understanding the elements that affect the project's performance. Understanding cultural difference among team members will enable leaders to share authority and let staff members work through issues independently, creating a trusting workplace.

Methodology:

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore communication barriers on a diverse environment. Since qualitative approaches enable an in-depth investigation of participants' ideas, they are particularly appropriate for addressing the challenges of dealing with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Eriksson and Kovalainen, (2021). Participants were limited to those who had experience working in a multicultural setting in order to collect a variety of experiences and perspectives on the subject. Interviews with people from various backgrounds and sectors totalled seventeen meetings. Semi-structured interviews, which offered a flexible framework for participants to talk in-depth about their experiences, were used to collect data. Due to the fact that the majority of them indicated they did not have the time to meet in person, the interviews were all done online via Zoom call. Eriksson and Kovalainen, (2021). Consent was obtained for each interview, and each was verbatim transcribed to guarantee accuracy. The interview data was analysed using thematic analysis in accordance with the structure established by Braun and Clarke (2006). Confidentiality and the freedom to leave the study at any moment were guaranteed to the participants. This framework offers a thorough synopsis of my research approach, and each component below can be further developed with additional information. Eriksson and Kovalainen, (2021)

Research Findings:

Cultural Nexus

The research study illustrates that communication in diverse groups is significantly impacted by language limitations. During the interview the majority of the participants mentioned that language barriers was the most significant issue and how it could affect positively by showing a company's true culture mean while very few argued that using a common language makes it easier for every one to understand each other and work together. A bus driver mentions that "The majority of our staff speaks Greek; however, one Estonian colleague does not speak English and knows very little Greek. We may find it difficult to discuss crucial topics as a result, particularly when it comes to safety regulations or protocols. Because we don't speak the same language, it can be difficult to explain how to perform a safety check on the bus". An artist of the 3D Animation Company said "The main communication issue on our team, which consists of people from several EU nations, is the disparity in our backgrounds and modes of thought expression. In contrast to our German colleague, who is more straightforward and direct, our Italian team utilizes more colourful and impassioned language." A junior financial adviser shared, "One of the main communication issues in a multicultural team like ours is that different people may perceive technical terms and terminology differently. Handling different perspectives and methods of problem-solving is the main communication challenge in a team like ours" On the other hand, despite the fact that the majority of the participants mentioned that language barriers was the most significant issue some other said the contrary. A waiter in the Casino added that "If members of a diverse team speak various languages, understanding one another may be a major challenge.

However, we are fortunate that everyone in our casino speaks English! It can occasionally be difficult for someone who does not speak English effectively to share ideas or seek for assistance" A consultant expert revealed, "Due to the broad diversity of backgrounds, cultural allusions and idioms may not be widely understood. If team members feel ignored or misunderstood, this might cause them to become frustrated and disengaged" A remote worker added that "Misunder-

standings arise because team members belong to diverse cultures and speak different languages. Colleagues may not completely comprehend technical words or English expressions, for instance, which makes it challenging for everyone to collaborate efficiently. Furthermore, without visual signals, communications can be readily misunderstood, making remote communication much more challenging due to the absence of body language and facial emotions. Since it's critical for everyone to ensure that they are in agreement while discussing vital matters, these language variances ultimately lead to misunderstanding and patience."

Civility

This word Civility captures the emphasis on respectful communication and cultural awareness promoted within the team members. Distinct communication styles were valued through proactive efforts such as seminars and online team-building exercises that emphasized the benefits of cultural sensitivity and open communication. Team members were able to voice their thoughts and share knowledge in a polite environment thanks to this strategy. In order to foster understanding and settle disputes, team leaders placed a strong emphasis on patience and politeness. Examples of such is when a Bakery worker points out that "We establish a welcoming environment throughout our meetings to let everyone feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. By asking a straightforward icebreaker at the beginning of sessions, such as "What's your Favoriteg food?" Everyone unwinds and gets to know one another better thanks to this. He continues by saying, "We also urge people to express their opinions without worrying about criticism. Everyone's confidence can be raised by acknowledging even modest accomplishments." A healthcare worker stated that We always begin by inviting everyone to share a fun titbit about themselves in order to make everyone feel comfortable sharing their thoughts. This facilitates conversation and encourages others to speak up. ensuring that everyone is aware of the importance of their opinions. A colleague from catering department adds "We can establish an open and respectful work culture to ensure that everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts".

Inclusive Environment

The responses received from the participants successfully draw attention to the essential elements required to create a productive team atmosphere, highlighting the importance of transparency, anonymity, and clear communication in encouraging open discussion and working together. Their focus

on techniques like debriefing, innovation sessions, and safe emotional spaces shows a thorough understanding of how to improve team relationships and create a culture based on respect and acknowledgment. A Consulting expert says, "It is essential to approach the matter with a mindset focused on resolution rather than conflict when miscommunications occur as a result of cultural differences. The first step is to publicly acknowledge the misunderstanding and provide a welcoming environment where everyone may voice their opinions". A waiter at casino says, "If there is a miscommunication, we should pause and inquire. For instance, if someone is confused by a game's rules, we should go slowly and use straightforward language to clarify". The HRM of a restaurant outlines that, "One strategy may be to establish a "cool-off" period during which team members can consider the circumstances. After that, a planned debriefing session might aid in elucidating goals and fostering comprehension. These circumstances can also be recorded so that a database of lessons learnt can be established".

Building Trust

The comments from the participants demonstrate a thorough comprehension of the subtleties and complexity of team dynamics, especially in multicultural settings, with a focus on the significance of communication, comfort levels, and personal experiences. Effective methods for improving inclusion and collaboration are highlighted by their observations on buddy pairs and active listening, which eventually result in more fruitful client interactions and teamwork. An accountant, "Active listening can result in a deeper comprehension of the financial concepts and activities at hand and shows respect for each person's point of view". The gaming industry Artist commented that, "Active listening allows us to better understand what others are saying by focusing on both verbal and nonverbal clues. This promotes deeper engagement and connections. In the end, this attentive attention might result in more productive teamwork by averting possible misunderstandings". Sushi Restaurant staff member says, "Careful listening is very important because it helps us understand what others are trying to communicate. I risk missing anything if I'm talking to my coworkers and I'm not paying close attention. Listening intently allows us to decipher expressions and body language. When a coworker points to a dish and appears perplexed, I can tell they need assistance and can offer it. Our team is stronger as a result of this respect and trust-building".

Inclusivity collaboration

Along with successfully addressing how cultural differences can affect teamwork during crucial times like financial close, the participant replies offer insightful information about the difficulties and achievements of communication in a remote, multicultural setting. Their emphasis on inclusive communication tactics, like the buddy system and structured participation techniques, shows that they have taken the time to cultivate teamwork and make sure that different viewpoints are taken into account, which will ultimately improve team performance and project results. During the creation of a new online learning tool, our remote team demonstrated excellent collaboration in spite of communication difficulties. Due to differences in language skills and communication preferences, team members found it difficult to articulate their views properly during our first meetings, which caused uncertainty. A remote worker disclose that, "Seeing the gap, I used collaborative tools to set up a series of structured brainstorming sessions where team members could record ideas in real time. This method allowed everyone to participate without the stress of receiving fast, direct feedback. In addition, we created a Slack channel for team conversations where participants may freely explore ideas over time. He continues by saying "We were able to take use of our varied perspectives by combining formal and informal communication, and in the end, we created an extensive resource that our target audience found appealing. The event demonstrated how well our team could adjust and work together, showing that when problems are tackled with an open mind, creative solutions may result". Another remote accountant stated that "An instance that stands out was during the monthly financial closing process when our remote team encountered some communication hurdles stemming from different time zones and cultural approaches to deadlines. Initially, a team member from a culture that valued thorough planning and avoided last-minute modifications felt overpowered by demands for unexpected modifications from more urgent team members. Understanding that this divergence would impact our closing schedule, I set up a virtual conference so we could candidly talk about deadline expectations and the necessity of process flexibility. Through open communication and elucidating individual members' approaches to deadlines, we were able to come to a compromise that satisfied everyone. This cooperation improved our team chemistry as members started to value one another's working approaches more, in addition to enabling us to finish the closing quickly".

Conclusions:

The findings highlight the importance of creating inclusive team environments, especially in culturally diverse and remote settings. Effective communication strategies - such as anonymous feedback systems, buddy programs, and structured discussion formats - help ensure all voices are heard. These approaches build trust, reduce misunderstandings, and improve collaboration, leading to better project outcomes. To strengthen these benefits, teams should prioritize ongoing cultural awareness training and open dialogue about communication challenges. Regular virtual team-building activities can further enhance relationships and transparency. However, the study's limitations - particularly its small qualitative sample of 17 participants - suggest the need for broader research to validate these findings across different contexts.

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