

Hospitality in times of the COVID-19 pandemic in the food, beverage and lodging sectors

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Abstract

This article presents considerations on the dynamics of the hospitality sector in times of crisis, especially when considering activities involving the supply of food and beverages, and lodging during the COVID-19 pandemic. The question proposed by this research is: what is the impact of the COVID-19 virus pandemic on hospitality relationships in the context of lodging and food and beverage provision? The aim of the research is to analyze and classify the materials available on COVID-19 and thus assess the impact on the lodging, as well as the food and beverage sectors. For this purpose, documentary research was developed in the period from February 26 to March 26, 2020 based on the news available on the G1 and UOL Brazilian media portals. These were divided into two categories presented according to the theme of this research. The results present, through the analysis of these news, theoretical insights that demonstrate the reality visualized in different parts of the world that bring together aspects of prevention and contamination through this virus; and opportunities that emerged from online shopping, advance sales, delivery and the use of apps. But they also consider well-known brands in the lodging, food and beverage sector, as well as personalities, public or private spaces used to set up hospitals.

Keywords: Hospitality, Lodging, Food and Beverage, COVID-19 pandemic, Organizations.

1. Introduction

This study deals with the aspects of hospitality concerning means of lodging and supply of food and beverage in adverse periods and turbulent times for society, such as the crisis in the health sector generated by the COVID-19 virus transmission. The COVID-19 virus pandemic impacted people and organizations on a global scale. The solution to this crisis was only possible through the development of research at the University of Pennsylvania, where innovative vaccines were produced using genetic material called mRNA against COVID-19, which earned the Nobel Prize in Medicine for Katalin Kariko (Hungary) and Drew Weissman (United States of America) (NHK WORLD – JAPAN, 2023). In this research, documentary analysis is carried out, and intertwines issues pertinent to COVID-19 with issues involving hospitality in the context of the means of accommodation and parameters of food and beverage supply. It demonstrates why this is a breakthrough publication and its contribution to this field of study.

For the purpose of this research, hospitality is considered to be a contemporary human exchange, celebrated in order to improve the mutual well-being of the parties involved through the provision of accommodation and/or food and/or beverage (Brotherton, 1999; Lugosi, 2008). In other words, Brotherton (1999) and Lugosi (2008) approach the aspects of hospitality based on considerations that contemplate the context of exchange, whether of

objects or human relationships, with a view to encompassing aspects such as health, comfort and convenience, food and good nutrition, gastronomy and lodging of the stakeholders involved in this activity. This central concept will also serve as a basis for the formulation of the main question, proposition, general and specific objectives of this investigation.

The main question in this research is: what is the impact of the COVID-19 virus pandemic on hospitality relationships in the context of lodging and food and beverage provision?

The prepositions of the investigation are: (P1) when analyzing the documents available on the COVID-19 virus pandemic, it is possible to observe the impacts caused in the activity of lodging; and (P2) the new coronavirus, through its spread and contamination, affected the activity of the food and beverage sector.

The main objective of the research is to analyze, classify the materials available on COVID-19 in order to evaluate its impact on the lodging and food and beverage sectors. By formulating these parameters, the specific objectives were elaborated:

- Demonstrate the impact of the new coronavirus on the lodging industry;
 - Present, through document analysis, the interference of COVID-19 in the food and beverage sector;
 - Assess the relation between hospitality and the COVID-19 virus pandemic;
- In the following pages, the theoretical foundation which addresses issues involving hospitality in the context of means of accommodation and the food and beverage sector will be introduced and then data regarding the COVID-19 pandemic will be discussed. Soon after, the results and final considerations will be presented. The aim is to add sources of study to the universe of hospitality, which, like all human activity, presents considerable changes in the context of society and performance of organizations.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Hospitality in the context of means of accommodation and food and beverage

The concept of hospitality is broad (Molz, 2012) and it is understandable that researchers seek to explore innovative approaches. Therefore, aspects of receptivity and hospitality present different topics in their research agenda (Lynch et al., 2011) in the context of human beings, society and performance of organizations. This occurs in the personal and virtual environments, sometimes when contemplating innovative theoretical approaches, for example, in an online network (Molz, 2012) or even in the context of differences and social control (Lynch et al., 2011). In this context, materials and news with a hospitable bias emerge, but are also intertwined with subjects that are in fashion or draw society's attention.

For this reason, some investigations deal with information technology (Law et al., 2014), global food consumption and carbon emission in the tourism sector (Babakhani et al., 2020; Gössling & Peeters, 2015), as well as with diverging opinions among students and managers regarding expectations and desired attributes (Harkison et al., 2011), for example. Thus, means to provide a greater foundation and theoretical depth to this area of study are developed. It becomes possible to consider aspects of the past and the future through heterogeneous activities, such as the provision of services (Goodman Jr & Sprague, 1991; Volchek et al., 2020), as the workforce that carries out routine activities in the hospitality sector develops a series of practices (Israeli & Reichel, 2003).

Thus, educational institutions such as the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University or the Rosen College of Hospitality Management emerged with the purpose of developing two types of activities: train professionals to manage organizations and activities in the hospitality sector (Goodman Jr & Sprague, 1991; ROSEN COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT, 2020). But also, with the aim of developing quality research in this area. When theorizing about hospitality (Lynch et al., 2011) in more traditional areas, human activities are observed in the market context (Volchek et al., 2020), or in the professional sphere through the provision of food, beverages, and accommodation (Telfer, 1995) in organizations such as restaurants (Babakhani et al., 2020) and the food sector; hospitals (Hepple et al., 1990; Kelly et al., 2016; Severt et al., 2008) and hotels (Božič & Kneževic Cvelbar, 2016; Lu & Kandampully, 2016), in addition to other non-hotel lodging facilities that arise and multiply due to a need of society itself; festivals and events (Giordano & Ong, 2017), as well as the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) sector.

Organizations operating in the hospitality sector are responsible for the generation of direct and indirect jobs, and also for the increase of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of countries (Israeli & Reichel, 2003). Thus, economic and financial aspects are part of the areas of administration and hospitality. But one of the most important activities is making people feel well, since consumer experience is related to aspects such as satisfaction and loyalty (Stefanini et al., 2018). For example, in gastronomic or culinary tourism, food is a determining factor in Macao's visitation, which is associated with memorable factors (Basnyat & Ho, 2022). That reality is not always present in the multiple perspectives of society.

2.2 Hospitality & COVID-19 Pandemic

In the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were news reports about the virus having been created in biological laboratories (The New York Times, 2020). This interferes in the lodging sector and also in other activities that follow the dynamics of society. Therefore, it is necessary to monitor the development of such activity (Sio-Chong & So, 2020), especially with regard to issues of public crises or disasters (Wen et al., 2020). Thus, there are aspects such as the rise of social networks or platforms such as Amazon, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Weibo and YouTube, used by authorities and personalities like Rupī Kaur, Luisito Comunica, Mark Zuckerberg, Javier Castillo, Fang and Donald Trump (The New York Times, 2020). That is, essential means of communication to inform the population (Wen et al., 2020), but which sometimes spread messages without any scientific rigor, which please the primitive instincts of human beings.

The tourism sector suffers demand losses due to terrorist attacks, health-related crises, economic and financial crises, and finally, to natural disasters (Sio-Chong & So, 2020). The tourism sector is addressed here, as it is related to hospitality activities, whether through the provision of services, offer of food, beverages and accommodation as mentioned above. Therefore, the proliferation of news on social media alters the delivery of information (Wen et al., 2020). Moments of crisis are opportunities to assess current values, support for neoliberal injustices and forms of exploitation (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). In this case, we consider the changes that have occurred in society, where the proliferation of infectious diseases and pandemics has been observed, for example, and also the terrorist attacks in places such as New Zealand, Manchester, Madrid, Paris and Bali, which have created serious problems regarding the protection of tourists (Sio-Chong & So, 2020).

Therefore, the global health crisis caused by the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, which causes respiratory infections in humans (Kampf et al., 2020), interfered with consumption, the feeling of security and the ways of developing hospitality relationships, whether in the family or work environment. For example, due to the risk of contamination from the COVID-19 virus, people avoided shaking hands, hugging, having physical contact, being close to others, and even moving, leaving their homes or traveling. During this period, many people

voluntarily left their jobs in the hospitality sector and, despite the existing difficulties, were not interested in resuming their jobs (Moreo *et al.*, 2023). In the face of the pandemic, it is expected that stakeholders in the hospitality sector are able to stand out (Fang, 2020), and point out new means for the development of activities in organizations that provide food, beverages and lodging.

That is especially true when we consider that, that during the pandemic, organizations had to review their routine activities in order to survive the supply and demand needs observed in the consumer market. Companies in the service sector diversified the adoption of technology such as the use of QR code menus in restaurants, for example (Iskender *et al.*, 2022), in order to reduce the spread of the virus during this pandemic. Consumer segments formed during this period of crisis were also observed. A cluster analysis found four distinct groups, such as egalitarians, selfish agents, conformists, and community egoists (Ng *et al.*, 2023). This is why the consumer market and the hospitality sector are constantly evolving.

3. Methodology

In the hospitality sector, it is possible to develop research that includes case studies (Dolnicar *et al.*, 2020), the analysis of articles (Mehmetoglu, 2004), news (Wen *et al.*, 2020) and documents involving quantitative and qualitative methods (Mehmetoglu, 2004; Okumus *et al.*, 2018). To improve the validity of the data, it is necessary for researchers to show skills in the development of advanced studies on the lodging sector (Božič & Knežević Cvelbar, 2016; Lu & Kandampully, 2016), as well as in that of food and beverages (Babakhani *et al.*, 2020; Gössling & Peeters, 2015; Okumus *et al.*, 2018).

In this article, documentary research was applied and news related to COVID-19 in the period from February 26 to March 26, 2020 were collected from Brazilian G1 (gl.globo.com) and UOL (www.uol.com.br) portals. The material collected was divided into 2 categories: 1 - Impact of COVID-19 on lodging activity, and 2 - Ways in which COVID-19 affected the food and beverage sector.

4. Discussions and Results

The data collected in this study demonstrate its relevance, as the number of publications on the topic COVID-19 displayed on the portals, G1 and UOL was a total of 16,428 news items. The number of news items in the period from February 26 to March 26, 2020 fluctuated, mainly with regard to the period from the beginning of the survey, March 11, 2020. The number of available data increased markedly from March 12, 2020 and remained stable until the end of the survey. That increase in the amount of news on the subject is associated with issues such as the spread of the virus in Brazil, Latin America and the world. This reality caught the attention of society as ways of prevention were sought, since in the first instance there was no way to control the spread of COVID-19.

The increase in the number of news also occurred as people observed the high number of deaths in different parts of the world, such as America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania. In certain locations (specific cities, sometimes more isolated) in America, COVID-19 victims were buried in closed caskets, and crowded hospitals were observed. The virus had consequences in other areas such as means of accommodation, and food and beverages. Thus, after collecting the material, it was necessary to analyze the news and select the articles associated with the proposal of this investigation. Through the news collected and visualized in the course of the research below to select the publications exposed in the investigated portals, the researchers sought to use the criteria exposed in Table 1.

TABLE 1. CATEGORIZATION OF NEWS ABOUT COVID-19 IN THE FOOD, BEVERAGES AND LODGING SECTORS

FOOD & DRINKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holy water and use of water for personal hygiene; - Agribusiness and export of inputs such as grains and slaughterhouse products; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foods to enhance immunity; - Normative acts; - Meal vouchers; - Corona Beer and coronaburger; - Food and shelter from Coronavirus to elderly in Rome; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advance purchase and online purchase; - Cooks and waiters; - Municipal and state decrees prohibiting the opening of bars, cafes, kiosks and restaurants; - Food delivery apps like Uber Eats and Rappi; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dismissal of employees; - Shortage and dispute for food in supermarkets; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food and bread donation; - Starvation; - Foodstuffs; - Food brands: Burger King, Danone, Giraffas, Habib's, KFC, McDonald's, Nestlé, Outback, Pizza Hut, Restaurante Madero, Restaurante Mocotó, Starbucks and Viena; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easter eggs - Cuisine personalities like Henrique Fogazza and Paola Carosella; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home cooking recipes; - Pubs, restaurants and snack bars; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global food security; - Transmission of coronavirus through food; - Transmission of virus in self-service restaurants;
LODGING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Airbnb; - Hotel buildings which collapsed; - Hospitals and Emergency Rooms; - Places like California, China, Chile, USA, Italy and Russia; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brands like Renault; - Setting up of field hospitals in Brazilian soccer stadiums Mane Garrincha, Pacaembu and Maracana; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motels; - Cruise ships like the Royal Caribbean; - Patients infected with coronavirus in hospitals;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personalities like Cléo Pires; - Quarantine in hotels; - Resorts; - Use of chloroquine in hospitals for treatment;
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Source: produced by the authors

Table 1 shows the news consulted during the investigation, and how they were grouped into the categories of food, beverages and lodging. News items from other fields of study found during the process were disregarded. Soon after, in order to demonstrate the evolution of publications on COVID-19 that impacted the areas of food, beverages and lodging, Table 2 was created to depict this context.

TABLE 2. PUBLICATIONS ON COVID-19 REGARDING FOOD, BEVERAGE AND LODGING SECTORS

	MEANS OF ACCOMODATION - UOL	FOOD & BEVERAGES - UOL	MEANS OF ACCOMODATION - G1	FOOD & BEVERAGES - G1
02/26/2020	2	0	31	2
2/27/2020	1	2	24	2
2/28/2020	2	1	17	1
2/29/2020	4	1	12	6
3/1/2020	1	0	3	0
3/2/2020	2	0	13	1
3/3/2020	0	0	13	5
3/4/2020	0	0	12	0
3/5/2020	1	0	6	3
3/6/2020	1	2	17	1
3/7/2020	4	0	15	1
3/8/2020	1	0	4	3
3/9/2020	0	0	25	2
3/10/2020	2		24	0
3/11/2020	2	1	18	6
3/12/2020	0	2	21	2
3/13/2020	11	2	24	30
3/14/2020	5	2	40	17
3/15/2020	3	4	16	5
3/16/2020	16	5	39	15
3/17/2020	6	11	15	30
3/18/2020	17	21	24	45
3/19/2020	11	10	18	36
3/20/2020	9	6	45	48
3/21/2020	8	4	42	63

3/22/2020	8	4	30	24
3/23/2020	9	16	42	27
3/24/2020	0	0	21	48
03/25/2020	19	11	15	33
3/26/2020	22	21	72	51

Source: produced by the authors

Table 2 shows the evolution in the number of news items related to the theme of this study, which is demonstrated when considering the two portals investigated in this research: G1 and UOL. As per observation, news items related to each area are separated into categories. Likewise, the increase in number of news items about COVID-19 was followed by an increase in number of publications related to food, beverages and lodging sectors. It was observed that G1 portal published most of the materials in the area of food and beverages and also in the area of lodging, and that the number of news reached its peak at the end of the survey on March 26, 2020.

5. Conclusions

The present study demonstrated its relevance by associating hospitality pillars such as food, beverage and lodging aspects in the face of a crisis in the global health sector. As demonstrated by NHK World – Japan (2023), the development of innovative vaccines against COVID-19 earned researchers from the University of Pennsylvania the Nobel Prize. These aspects are presently critical to human relations and exchange, and celebrate the well-being of the stakeholders of this activity in the context of nutrition, provision of services and performance of organizations. Thus, they have gained greater depth and it was understood that they cannot be seen in isolation.

According to Molz (2012) and Lynch *et al.*, (2011), hospitality includes different topics on its research agenda and researchers seek innovative approaches to issues that draw society's attention, mainly because human receptivity is a well-liked aspect in society and crises are temporary, sometimes even necessary, as they require people and organizations to undergo a series of transformations in order to adapt to specific situations. A good example is when we understand the development of innovative vaccines and research in the health area, which were sometimes disregarded.

Considering the question addressed by this study, what was the impact of the COVID-19 virus pandemic on the relations of hospitality in the context of means of accommodation and also of food and beverage provision? In view of the analysis of the news items it is shown that, at the beginning, due to lack of knowledge of how COVID-19 would develop, some consumers chose not to purchase food that somehow resembled the name of the virus, like Corona beer, for instance. On the other hand, food donations, the demand for inputs that increase immunity and articles that dealt with global food security grew. Furthermore, the virus had an impact on food exports and on the demand for restaurants, with some decree laws requesting the reduction of hours or closure of these establishments, generating unemployment of cooks, waiters and other professionals.

Established brands in the food industry such as Burger King, Danone, Giraffas, Habib's, KFC, McDonald's, Nestlé, Outback, Pizza Hut, Restaurante Madero, Restaurante Mocotó, Starbucks and Viena were impacted. The research includes articles related to hunger generated in this period, shortages and disputes in supermarkets and also the search for religiosity to overcome the difficult moment, such as the use of holy water and protection for the elderly in Rome, the seat of the Catholic Church. But also, a new field of possibilities was envisioned, in which online shopping and advance sales emerged, and eventually food delivery, with the help of apps such as Eats and Rappi. Thus, Basnyat & Ho (2022) and Stefanini *et al.*, (2018) highlight the importance of consumer experience associated to customer satisfaction and loyalty, where food is a determining factor to develop gastronomic tourism in terms of tourist destinations.

With regard to means of accommodation, there were cases of hotels with low occupancy or no guests being used for patient quarantine, a strategy used by brands like Renault. A case that called attention in this area was the building that collapsed in China, raising questions about the environmental and structural quality of these internment premises. Other aspects called attention as well, like news about crowded hospitals and emergency rooms and the positive and negative speculations about the use of chloroquine for treatment. Or the chaos of ships (cruise ships) that could not dock in ports due to suspicion of crew members being contaminated with COVID-19. And news about the contamination in places such as California / USA, China, Chile, Italy and Russia and the impact of this reality in the lodging industry like in the case of resorts, for example. Solutions created in the search to alleviate this crisis were observed, such as the setting up of field hospitals in Brazilian soccer stadiums such as Maracana, Pacaembu and Mane Garrincha. And the rise of leaner, cheaper service platforms such as Airbnb, which fits into family budget, especially in times of crisis.

By means of the propositions of the investigation, (P1) by analyzing the documents available on the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact caused in the activity of means of accommodation was observed; and (P2) the new coronavirus, through its spread and contamination, affected the activity of the food and beverage sector. In both fields a rupture in the traditional models of operation was observed and, in response to the context, new ways, means of elaboration of activities, supply of inputs, offering of products and services emerged.

In this context, a series of aspects have been deconstructed and rethought. People, organizations, society and the food, beverage, and lodging sectors undergo transformations, often times necessary to survive in moments of crisis in the health sector. Therefore, according to Kampf *et al.*, (2020) the health crisis caused by COVID-19 affected human beings, consumer relations, family relationships, hospitality, safety and work.. Iskender *et al.*, (2022) highlighted the adoption of technology by companies in the service sector with a view to minimizing the transmission of the virus.

Considering the main objective of the research, which is to analyze and classify the materials related to COVID-19 and assess its impact on the lodging, food and beverage sectors, it is possible to observe that the articles posted on the subject in portals G1 and UOL present a series of reports on prevention and contamination of this virus which affected people's health. Throughout the research, however, it is perceived that it also affected the food and beverage area, as well as the lodging sector, where there was an increase in unemployment among professionals of these sectors and major brands went bankrupt. On the other hand, many areas restructured and reconsidered their routine activities.

For Ng *et al.*, (2023) new consumer segments created during this period of crisis were identified. Thus, new ways have emerged for these companies to remain active and competitive in the market. According to Fang (2020), it is expected that players in the hospitality sector can stand out against the crisis scenario. Finally, it is observed that, among the limitations of this investigation, is the fact that it seeks to relate the issue of COVID-19 with two sectors, such as the food area and the lodging industry. Hence, it is possible to address different issues in further studies, for example, by relating the pandemic to the context of the luxury sector or ascertaining the well-being of the stakeholders of this activity.

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