

# **Hotel Tourists Perception of Service Quality during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Themes in Online Reviews**

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to understand the service quality perceived by tourists during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study data consisted of a total of 1,030 online reviews obtained from the online platform TripAdvisor site. The data of the study were collected from a total of 15 five-star hotels in Antalya. To be able to process the secondary data collected from TripAdvisor, latest version of Leximancer 5.0 was used. The content analyses results' demonstrated presence of eight themes/concepts in hotel tourists' online descriptions of hotel perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic which are; "staff", "hotel", "restaurant", "COVID-19", "room", "pool", "entertainment" and "family". Second objective of this research was to determine whether tourists who scored their hotel experiences as high (i.e. 4 or 5 out of 5 points) or low (i.e. 1 or 2 out of 5 points). The group who rated their experience satisfactory in other words the portion who rated hotel service quality shared narratives among "staff", "room" and the "hotel" theme. In contrast, group who rated their hotel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic low shared narratives on "queue", "lift", "waiting", "guidelines", "social distancing", "restrictions", "hygiene", "cancelled", "restrictions", and "people". Implication as well as future avenues for further research also discussed.

**Keywords:** service quality; user-generated content; COVID-19 pandemic; hotels; Antalya

## ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, COVID-19 pandemisi sırasında tatillerini yapmakta olan turistlerin algılamış oldukları hizmet kalitesini araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Çalışmanın verileri çevrimiçi platform olan TripAdvisor sitesinden elde edilen toplamda 1,030 çevrimiçi incelemeden meydana gelmiştir. Çalışmanın verileri Antalyada bulunan toplamda 15 beş-yıldızlı otellerin sitelerinden toplanmıştır. Toplanan veriler, içerik analizi gerçekleştirmeye uygun olan ve bir yazılım olan Leximancer 5.0 kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. İçerik analizi sonuçlarının, COVID-19 salgını sırasında otelde konaklamış olan turistlerin çevrimiçi incelemelerinde otel hizmet kalitesine ilişkin açıklamalarında sekiz temanın / kavramın varlığı gözler önüne serilmiştir. Bunlar önem sırasına göre: "personel", "otel", "restoran", "COVID-19", "oda", "havuz", "eğlence" ve "aile".

Bulunan bu temaların ardından ikinci bir analiz daha yapılmıştır. Bu analizin amacı yukarıda bulunan temaların hangilerinin yüksek/düşük para değeriyle (value for money) ilişkili olduğunu bulmaktır. Otel deneyimleri esnasında hizmet kalitesi kapsamında, sunulan hizmeti tatmin edici olarak değerlendiren grup, TripAdvisor sitesinde paylaşmış oldukları çevrimiçi içeriklerinde “personel”, “oda” ve “otel” teması arasında anlatıları paylaşmıştır. Buna karşılık, COVID-19 salgını sırasında otel deneyimlerinden memnun olmayan ve sunulan hizmetlere düşük puan veren turistler “kuyruk”, "asansör", "bekleme", "yönergeler", "sosyal mesafe", "kısıtlamalar", "hijyen", "iptaller ", " kısıtlamalar "ve" insanlar " gibi temaları içeriklerinde kullanmışlardır. Araştırmanın kısıtları ve yönetsel çıkarımları çalışmanın devamında mevcuttur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** hizmet kalitesi; kullanıcı tarafından oluşturulan içerik; Kovid-19 pandemisi; oteller; Antalya

**To my lovely family...**

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the author presents the general introduction of thesis laying straight the concepts, rationale, purpose, aim, and the significance of the study. Finally, the chapter ends with the structure of the thesis which gives the reader a roadmap into the whole journey of the thesis.

### 1.1 Rationale of Study

Lodging is one of the major elements of the tourism industry. The ever-increasing rivalry between service providers also portrays the hospitality market (Nunkoo et al., 2020). Tourists advantage from this competition by being offered a range of lodging selections, which has led to increasing expectations (Li and Liu, 2017). To be able to keep their current customers, and attract other consumers, hoteliers generally improve their service quality and, therefore, their tourist satisfaction as a key strategy (Malik, Akhtar, Raziq and Ahmad., 2020). Scholars have revealed a keen interest in the measurement of customer satisfaction among hotel guests (Malik et al., 2020; Liat et al., 2020; Tefera and Govender, 2017; Nunkoo et al., 2020).

Most of the research written about service quality has found that service quality is the antecedent of satisfaction (Alnawas and Hemsley-Brown, 2019; Deng et al., 2013). In addition, service quality provided by hotels is broadly accepted as an antecedence of loyalty, which can eventually cause superior competitive performance (Liat et al., 2017). However, it is extremely difficult to provide satisfaction among guests

especially in service-based industries (Arasli, Saydam and Kilic, 2020). This is valid for the hotel industry, which compromise broad service flow (Ali et al., 2015).

Existing literature has demonstrated that service quality is very important to hotel guests' satisfaction (Malik, Akhtar, Raziq and Ahmad., 2020). Since the service based industry has an enormous competition, an organization who provides accommodation require to find out as well as sought guests' expectations to ensure customer satisfaction (Chen et al., 2013). Scholars have generally conducted questionnaires to establish as well as assess service quality attributes when the point comes to customer satisfaction in the tourism industry (Arasli, Saydam and Kilic, 2020). But, a number of novel research have underlined there are plenty of benefits when the points come using web-originated content from users regarding experiences of customers (Brochado et al., 2019). When the point comes to hospitality sector it can be said that hospitality sector is extremely multifaceted in terms of services provided and supplied to its consumers. In this regard, web-based platforms such as TripAdvisor gives chances to organizations to create interactive relationship with their customers (Dinçer and Alrawadieh, 2017; Moro et al., 2020). In addition, recommending product or services to other users appeared noteworthy since users easily can be influenced from the reviews shared online (Brochado et al., 2019). For example, a recent study conducted in airline industry demonstrated that passengers who gives airline higher rating in web-based platforms, recommend airline to others (Messner, 2017). Despite the arguments as well as debated shared regarding value and service demonstrated to be linked with customers' word of mouth (WOM) intention in an affirmative way, however, number of authors has consensus on existence of studies regarding service quality scarce especially when the point comes to which service attributes sets satisfaction among buyers (Arasli, Saydam and Kilic, 2020; Rajaguru, 2016).

In addition, Yu et al. (2020) stated that future tourism research should examine how COVID-19 pandemic affect the quality and efficiency of services provided by companies in the sector.

Social media has emerged as an important area of crisis communication research (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014). However, only few research has considered social media as a means of communication during crises (Hoque et al., 2020).

Given the above-mentioned voids in the literature, the current research sought to find out the narratives shared online by hotel guests during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research has two important research objectives: (1) to find out the mostly repeated and mentioned theme/concepts that define inclusive thoughts of hotel experiences posted through web-based online platform TripAdvisor during the COVID-19 pandemic; and (2) to find out the concepts/themes most linked with satisfactory/unsatisfactory ratings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **1.2 Significance and Contribution of Study**

The importance of this paper is to investigate on the use of social platform since the growth of social media nowadays in the hospitality industry and how the word of mouth as a marketing tool effects the decision making process of guests regarding different variables when guests want to book online and search for information for their next consumption (Brochado et al., 2019). Tourists pay great attention on online reviews posted by other people to have ideas, shape their choices, decrease bias toward product and services also approve reservation decisions (Lo and Yao, 2019). In addition, tourists pay attention on reviews shared by tourists as more trustworthy and vital than the data given by other sources (Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012). Online

reviews showed their influential power on the reservation intention of customers (Zhao et al., 2015) and business performance (Brochado et al., 2019; Rodrigues et al., 2017). Moreover, Yu et al. (2020) underlined that future tourism research should examine how COVID-19 pandemic affect the quality and efficiency of services provided by companies in the tourism sector.

Social media has emerged as an important area of crisis communication research (Zeng and Gerritsen, 2014). However, only few research has considered social media as a means of communication during crises (Barbe and Pennington-Gray 2018). To the best of our knowledge this is the first research to investigate the main themes shared in online reviews by hotel guests, and which of themes/concepts associated with upper and lesser value for money reviews during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **1.3 Structure of the Study**

The first chapter of this research provided the readers with the rationale and justification for the study. Brief introduction of concepts and the association of the constructs was also given. The second chapter will be discussed literature review comprising characteristics of the services, definition of service quality, service quality models, service quality in the hotel industry, value for money in the hospitality industry, user-generated content regarding customers' perceptions toward products or services as well as, impact of online reviews and hospitality industry as well as COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter third will be presented data collection, data analysis through Leximancer and sampling. Chapter 4 displayed results of the data analysis, general description of hotel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and results of value for money analysis. The last chapter is a conclusion of what has this paper

been talking about, both theoretical and management implications, limitation as well as recommendations for further studies.



## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section the study will focus on the current literature about the service characteristics, service quality models, service quality studies in relation to hotel industry, web reviews in hospitality industry and word of mouse on hotel guests, presenting the difference between both traditional form of word of mouth and electronic word of mouth in its new form. The research took into considerations different variables that may affect the experience of guests when making their expectations, such as brand image. And their positive emotions toward specific experience in a specific hotel or brand.

#### **2.1 Characteristics of the Service**

Service is briefly defined as an action, movement or process. But after this definition, two basic question marks emerge; to whom or what it is aimed at and whether this action is tangible or intangible. This situation is seen to be in four different styles (Lovelock, 1999: 10);

- For people such as medical examination, haircuts or air transport oriented and tangible services,
- Services such as freight transportation, lawn mowing, product or other physical services involving tangible actions towards assets,
- Such as education and training for individuals but with tangible services with non-physical outcomes that contribute to the mental development of people,

- Given in subjects such as insurance, investment or financial consultancy services include intangible products and intangible activities are the services that are covered.

In cases where the concept of service is separated from products, that is, tangible assets, is happening. That is, differences between services and goods are mentioned; goods are objects, items or devices, services are actions, initiatives (labor) or to express performances (Hung, Huang and Chen, 2003).

The main features that distinguish services from tangible products (Lovelock and Gummesson, 2004);

- The natural structure of the product,
- Participation of the customer in the production process,
- Human existence as an object of the product,
- Quality control problems,
- Difficulty for the consumer / customer to pre-evaluate the product,
- Difficulties in achieving optimum levels of capacity utilization,
- The importance of the time factor,
- Distribution channels that are different from common distribution channels available.

According to Lovelock and Wright (1999: 9-12), the basis between goods and services differences occurs in the following areas;

- Consumers / customers have no ownership,
- Service products consist of intangible (abstract) performances,

- Consumers / users are involved in the production processes of service products,
- Other person / people can become a part of the services,
- Variability in operational inputs / outputs is high,
- Difficulty of standardization
- It is difficult for consumers to evaluate service products,
- There is no inventory in the services,
- The time factor is important,
- In addition to traditional distribution channels, in electronic channels can be used.

Along with these differences, the fundamental difference between services and industrial products. The differences are defined in the literature as follows; intangibility, inseparability, inconsistency, inventory / perishability (Clarke, 2001: 22; Lovelock and Wright, 1999; Zeithaml et al., 1985: 33).

**Intangibility:** It is the most basic feature distinguishing services from goods. As with objects, appealing to sensory organs such as touch, sight, taste as it shows an action or performance rather than acting (Zeithaml et al., 1985). Under this circumstances, it is not possible for the consumers to test services beforehand. Consumption demands for such products experience depends on experience, advice, promotion and advertising (Lovelock and Wright, 1999).

**Inseparability:** Production processes, sales and consumption in industrial products they proceed on a successive path (Zeithaml et al., 1985). Products can be produced, stocked, distributed, purchased and consumed (Grönroos, 1984: 32). However, the

production and consumption of service products are simultaneous (Lovelock and Wright, 1999). Service products based on performance or action. It was stated before that it is a human-based production and consumption. The realization of the service product occurs simultaneously (Lovelock and Gummesson, 2004).

**Inconsistency:** The quality of service, especially the natural situation of the human being as a result, it varies, so it has a heterogeneous structure (Parasuraman, 1985: 48). Consumer / customer receiving service and those service can vary based on person, place and time (Grönroos, 1984: 32). Therefore, standardization of the services in this sense has inconsistency (Parasuraman, 1985: 48).

**Perishability:** Among the main reasons for this feature, action, can be shown to be a process and performance based production process (Lovelock and Gummesson, 2004). Purchasing and consumption decisions in industrial products can be changed or may be postponed, but the same cannot happen with service products. it must be sold and consumed immediately (Lovelock and Wright, 1999). For example, a hotel empty rooms in the business, vacant quotas in educational institutions, empty tables, stocked and later without loss of income like industrial products cannot be sold (Lovelock and Wright, 1999).

In addition to these basic features, different production features such as, indistinguishability, consumer proximity, easy imitation, consumer risk, different distribution channels, timing, differences in presentation, types of features as temporary ownership available in the literature (Grönroos, 1984: 32).

## **2.2 Definition of Service Quality**

Quality, people and systems making mistakes and achieving perfection arose from the request. The concept of quality, according to Japanese philosophy, is perfect and first it is defined as making it complete immediately (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

The word quality is derived from the Latin word "Qualis" and "Qualitas". It has passed into English as "Quality". The first historical emergence of the concept of quality was the industrial revolution. During these periods, Taylor and Fayol investigated on management effectiveness. These studies should be carried out in the field of quality. So it can be seen as the first studies that have been started (Gallear and Ghobadian, 2004). According to Parasuraman (1985: 44), service quality is the measurement of the level of compliance with the expectations of the customer. Providing quality service is consistently conforming to customer expectations.

According to Grönroos, C. (1982: 33), the nature of service quality for consumers seems complicated; Service quality has two components. These are technical quality (having a secure deposit account at a bank, having dinner at a restaurant or having a haircut at a barber etc.), functional quality (concerned more with how the operations are done) and corporate image (what kind of image service businesses have is important).

According to Parasuraman et al., (1985: 42); evaluating service quality from the angle of consumers is much more challenging than evaluating industrial products. Namely; colors, packages, styles, labels of industrial products about the quality of the product offers facilities to make a judgment. However, the quality of service products has

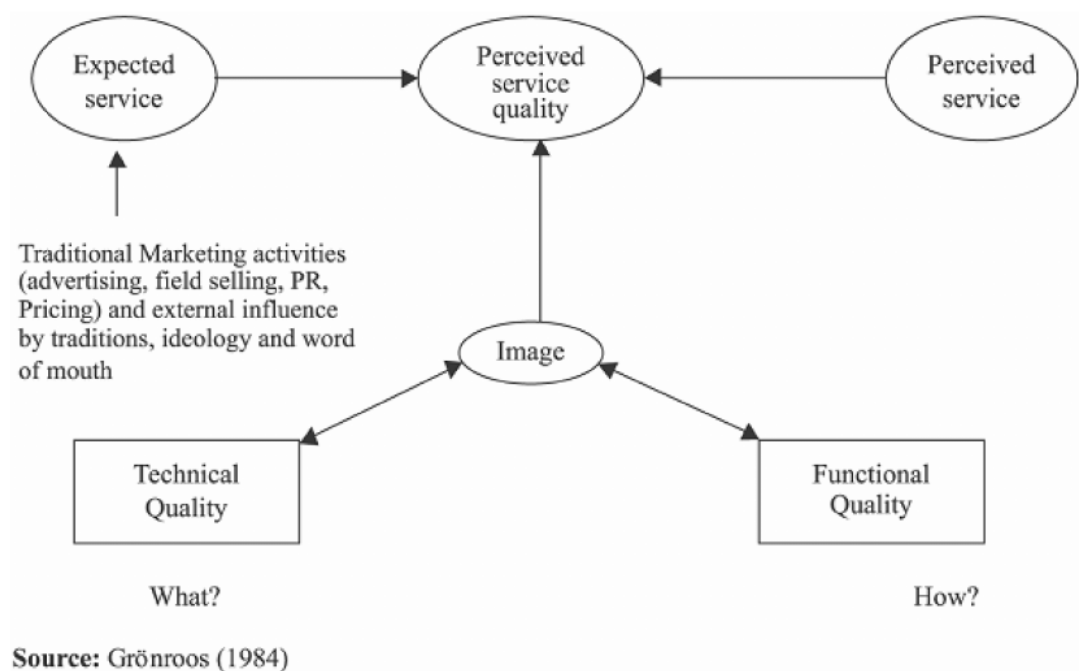
difficulty in reaching a judgment about. Service quality in other words, expressed as a comparison between expectations and the perception.

## 2.3 Service Quality Model

First created in considering service quality in the literature models composed by Parasuraman et al., (1985, 1988) and Grönroos (1984). General acceptance in the literature in this section seen service quality models are described.

### 2.3.1 Service Quality Model of Grönroos (1984)

Technical quality, functional quality in the service quality model of Grönroos, corporate image, expected service, perceived service variables.



Technical quality means that the consumer or customer from the service of the consumer or it is concerned with the question of "what the customer gets from the service". For example, a hotel room renting, buying a ticket on the passenger train or eating in a restaurant these processes are described as technical grade.

Functional quality deals “How” the service processes done. Especially appearance and behavior important in the functional quality. A place of reception employee's dialogue with the customer, the behavior of a plumber can be shown as an example for functional quality.

### **2.3.2 Gap Model and SERVQUAL Service Quality Scale**

The model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985: 44) it is based on the existence of a difference between variables. Studies in banking, credit card services, financial intermediation services and repair and maintenance services.

Gap 1: It is the difference between consumer expectations and management's perception. The managers of the service provider tell consumers what high quality of things services, what kind of services to meet consumer needs performance in order to provide high quality service. It may be difficult to determine in advance what level it should be at. In short the idea that service providers cannot always understand customers' expectations expresses. It is stated that these deficiencies will affect the quality perceptions of consumers.

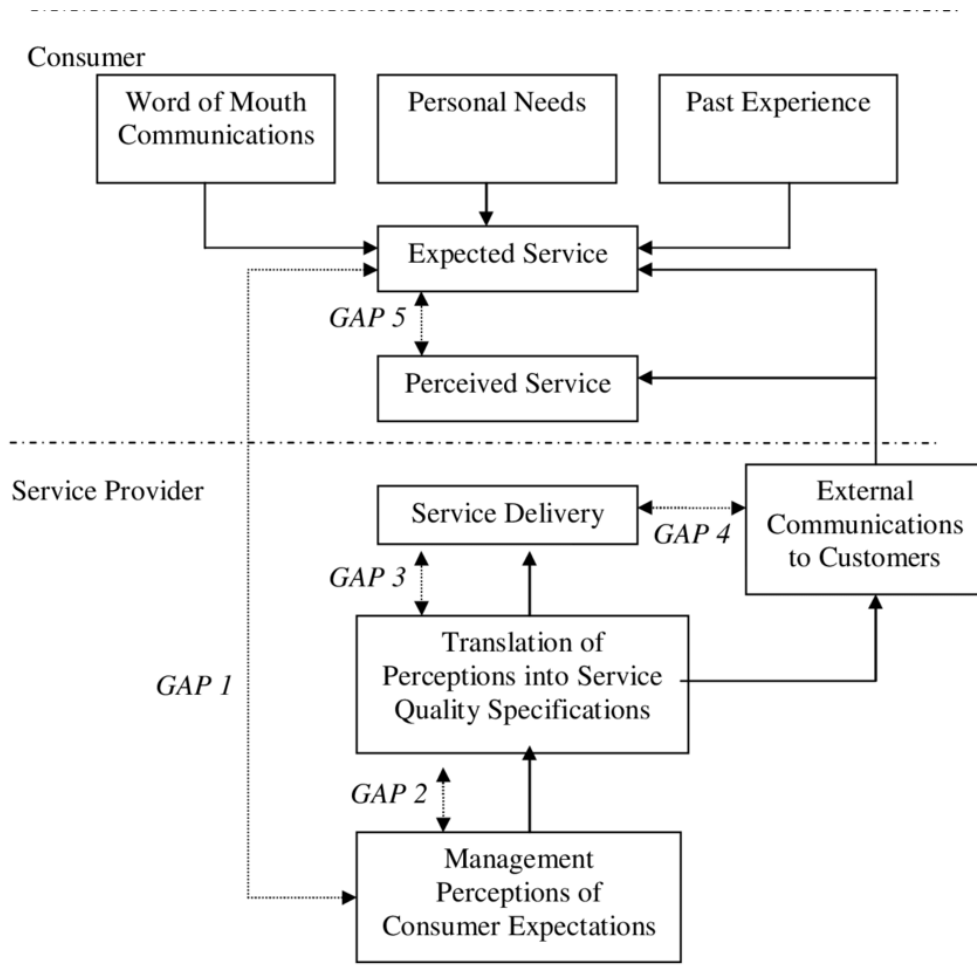
Gap 2: Between the perception of management and the standards of service quality difference. Especially with the managers of companies that offer repair and maintenance services. The difficulties of standardization were emphasized in the interview. Consumers repair fast service, as an important element of service quality. Management, on the other hand, makes it difficult to standardize the lack of trained personnel. In short, various factors (resource constraints, market conditions or managerial differences) even if managers understand consumer expectations may be insufficient to reach service standards (Parasuraman et al., 1985). It in terms of

standardization of services and to what extent the management it was created to measure its arrival.

Gap 3: Between the standards of service quality and service delivery difference. It has been reported that employee performance has an important role in the formation of this difference. In the last analysis, people's realization of service delivery differentiates. Even if the service quality standards are determined, due to this differentiation there is a gap between service standards and delivery.

Gap 4: The difference between Service Delivery and external communication with customers. Advertising and other communication tools affect the expectations of consumers. Employees have high expectations with the real service offerings of the businesses. They stated that the advertisement and promotion activities that would create could not coincide. Creating a higher perception of service quality than it is. It can produce negative results in evaluating its quality.





Gap 5: Difference between expected service and perceived service. According to the study, managers need to improve the perceived service quality to create a good service quality. They reported that it should be above the expected service. For example, from consumers will occur in the future when a person's belongings cannot be repaired where they go for repair a mechanic explaining how to act to fix the same distress found the service quality very high. Because it's over your expectations He said that a situation occurred. In short, this difference is the quality perceived by the consumer. It quality is the gap between expected service and perceived service. It appears as a function of its size and direction. This situation It appears as the perceived service quality in the literature. Services abstract Due to the fact that the elements are difficult

to evaluate and are difficult to evaluate, "perceived service focus on "quality" (Parasuraman et al., 1985).

Service as a result of the work of Parasuraman et al. (1985) understanding, reliability, assurance, communication, credibility, accessibility, ability, courtesy, physical traits, eagerness and ten dimensions. In the SERVQUAL scale they developed later ten dimensions of service quality have been reduced to five dimensions. What they got from the first run assurance and empathy as well as three dimensions (reliability, physical characteristics, enthusiasm) They also added dimensions (Parasuraman, 1985: 23).

Understanding: Personalized service for customers, their personal needs efforts to understand and learn, such as a disabled ramp and interest are situations such as relevance.

Reliability: Refers to the consistency of the service provided. Taken at first same standards in repetitions of the service. Also account statements and invoices to be kept with accurate records and promises.

Assurance: Containing dangers, doubts and risks. For example, financial security banks money or credit card theft, confidentiality of the business relationship with the company (such as protecting personal data).

Communication: Continuously, as required and with the customers informing the customer in a language and style he can understand, educating the customer, it is related to the degree of effective rest.

**Credibility:** In the interests of staff and customers of the service provider that it serves wholeheartedly in the most appropriate way, acts honestly, the image of the institution and it means to be compatible with what they do.

**Courtesy:** The personnel of the service business expresses. Courtesy refers to the politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact personnel such as receptionists, telephone operators and so on.

**Accessibility (Access):** The proximity of the workplace, telephone, online or other reaching the institution providing service through channels, waiting time to receive service, convenient working hours for customers, easy systems used customers, such as the adequacy of the number of personnel to serve, it refers to making use of it easily.

**Talent:** Professionalism demonstrated by the service business in service delivery, skill describes the degree of dexterity. In short, to perform the service it refers to situations such as the required knowledge, skills and experiences. for example, research and economic information of the brokerage firm to receive financial services levels are an important element for customers.

**Tangibles:** The service environment or service-related equipment. Cleaning of furniture, decorations, equipment, tools and equipment, suitability indicates the appearance and cleanliness of employees' clothes can be shown as tangibles.

**Willingness (Enthusiasm):** Employees' willingness to serve, keeping in constant communication with customers, replacing the service quickly and quickly expressing to act, and not being reluctant to provide service (Parasuraman et al., 1985: 47).

### **2.3.3 Service Performance (SERVPERF) Quality Model**

Cronin and Taylor (1992) two main reasons for the SERVPERF model study they reported that it was done because of. First, the Servqual Quality of Service scale it is due to the idea that it is operationally and conceptually inadequate.

According to Taylor, the Servqual Service Quality scale is the expectations and perceptions of consumer's it is a measurement technique that moves with the thoughts.

### **2.3.4 Restaurant Service Quality (DINESERV) Scale**

For the hospitality and tourism sector, Knutson et al. (1990) composed LODGESERV consistent with the five dimensions of service quality recognized in SERVQUAL, but made up of 26 lodging-specific items. They also acknowledged that customer expectations of service quality are higher for the higher price classification of accommodation (Knutson, et al, 1992). DINESERV was recruited from the instructions learned in increasing and refining LODGESERV (Stevens et al., 1995). For instance, in the literature there are two broad and well accepted scales called SERVQUAL and DINESERV. Both scale can be conducted when the point comes to perceive anticipation of service quality and they have 21 items (Keith and Simmers, 2011). Stevens et al. (1995) mentioned and emphasized the practitioner version of the instrument as DINSERV, for the reason that it uses only the performance measures.

Due to the diversity of food and beverage businesses today, customers it has the opportunity to make more choices. Eating out for many years Consumers engaged in their activities are now specialized in a way. So that more is sensitive and selective. After these processes, an enterprise when customers cannot satisfy their wants and needs, customers can easily it may tend to buy towards the other brand / business. In this case it is normal for the business to lose income. Over time the determinants of

excellent service vary. Thus, restaurants etc. operating in the field of food and beverage. businesses residual status, real ask bosses, that is customers, to determine the quality of service (Stevens et al., 1995: 56).

Tangibility dimension, physical appearance of the restaurant, equipment and staff examines the appearance.

The reliability dimension is to fulfill a promised service accurately and reliably. The dimension of willingness is to help customers who are receiving services and it refers to the willingness to provide a service.

Assurance / Security dimension, employees' capability toward work-related knowledge and experience.

Empathy dimension, examines the personalized interest and interest in customers.

## **2.4 Service Quality in the Hotel Industry**

In the literature there are plenty of research focused on quality of services. The quality of services generally measures perceived quality and is denoted as traveler's perception of overall difference of the services delivered (Bitner, 1991). Previously, researchers have paid enormous attention on the concept of service quality for the reason that its importance impact regarding professional performance, customer satisfaction as well as loyalty among customers (Ali et al., 2017; Giritlioglu et al., 2014). Kandampully (1998) explains service quality as quality during the service processs whereas Ghobadian, Speller and Jones (1994) emphasize it as a suitability to necessities. Overall, afore-mentioned explanations regarding service quality showed that mainly traveler driven (Ali et al., 2017). In addition, although research has been

done as well as dedicated on service quality, it endured as a mysterious notion (McAlexander and Kaldenberg, 1994) since differentiating features of services such as intangibility or inseparability.

An increasing amount of recent investigations has concentrated regarding association among service quality as well as guest fulfillment and their future behavior in the hospitality (Nunkoo et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2016; Liat et al., 2017; Moro et al., 2020; Arasli, Saydam and Kilic, 2020; Sampaio, Hernández-Mogollón and Rodrigues, 2019). Number of research have demonstrated that the ancestor role of service quality in relation to customer satisfaction when the points comes to tourism and hospitality domain (Tefera and Govende, 2017; Malik et al., 2020). In line with the aforementioned information, one study underlined that the more successfully the quality of a service is delivered and the better it is delivered, the more customer satisfaction will be (Amin et al., 2013). Previous studies underlined as well as confirmed that service quality provided by organizations is the key component of satisfaction among guests (Liu and Lee, 2016; Sun and Qu, 2011). In the hotel industry, the quality of the service provided is like a harbinger of whether a customer's relationship with that place will be maintained or not (Malik et al., 2020). Satisfied customers are not just buy or consume services but also spread positive recommendations to their loved ones or friends (Arasli, Saydam and Kilic, 2020; Berezina et al., 2012; Sun and Qu, 2011). In addition to afore-mentioned information, scholars also reported that service quality provided by organizations can lead loyalty among consumers (Nunkoo et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2016; Hapsari et al., 2017). If hotels can fulfill their guests' expectations and exceed expected services, hotel guests bond toward hotel will be amplified and as a result they will have proclivity to recommend hotel to others and they will revisit the hotel (Luo and Qu, 2016; Kasiri et al., 2017).

## **2.5 Value for Money in the Hospitality Industry**

From the angle of travelers, hotels remain strong if they provide superior quality of product which is higher value for money in compare to their rivalry (Dedeoğlu and Demirer, 2015). Tourists who accommodate in hotels generate superior services, gives elevated level of scores through web-based online platforms (Saleem and Raja, 2014; Liat, Mansori and Huei, 2014). In consistent with the past and present studies dedicated on hospitality, value for money lead decision makers and executives to forecast general consumer fulfillment, devotion toward organization or product (loyalty), positive word-of-mouth and company efficiency (Brochado et al., 2019). One research found that, passenger who gives elevated level of scores (4or5 out of 5), they have proclivity to recommend airline company to others (Messner, 2017). Arasli, Saydam and Kilic (2020) conducted a research from cruises. Cited authors illustrated that study aimed to find out the service quality perception from the angle of cruisers from selected cruise companies. In addition, cruisers who give satisfactory/unsatisfactory score from the crusicritic.com also evaluated. Moreover, one pioneer study done by Arasli, Saydam and Kilic (2020) illustrated that perceived ``value for money`` is vital for cruise industry' capability to accomplish customer happiness/fulfillment as well as trustworthiness.

## **2.6 Role of User-Generated Content and Service Quality Research**

Consistent with past and present studies, investigators have mostly utilized quantitative methods generally which is surveys to understand and see what the main service quality are' components of hotel travelers' perception. One exemption as well as single research conducted by Berezina, Bilgihan, Cobanoglu and Okumus (2016), who operationalized content analysis approach via processing user-generated content as well as invited studies to conduct such studies. The main results of the research

were that: there were no major disconnects in the respective understandings of executives and tourists; but, the two groups utilized various language to explain luxury, service quality and satisfaction; the managers assessed satisfaction in terms of services provided, but the travelers conceptualized satisfaction in terms of value received for the price of accommodation; and luxury, service quality and satisfaction were related in the minds of the manager.

Brochado et al. (2019) analyzed six airlines service quality using the sample of 1,200 reviews from the TripAdvisor online platform using Leximancer.

Pearce and Wu (2016) tried to understand tourists' experiences at a small themed tourist attraction using 167 user-generated content in Australia.

Another novel piece done by Kaosiri et al. (2019), collected data collecting user-generated content sources in web-based platform in order to understand tourist satisfaction.

Martín and Román (2017) measured hotel service quality using online reviews from TripAdvisor.com and data collected from hotels located in Gran Canaria region, Spain.

Another research done by Brochado (2019) targeted to pinpoint nature-based tourists' experiences in tree houses using online reviews shared by tourist's. Brochado and Brochado (2019) studied tourist's glamping experiences by collecting web-based reviews from tourists.

Conventionally hotel managements and scholars use questionnaires when they want to perceive guest's satisfaction toward provided service quality (Berezina et al., 2016).



On the other hand, the rise of the Internet and online reviews shared from different platforms supplies a greater chance for a qualitative approach to service quality (Brochado et al., 2019). With the rise of internet as well as since everybody has smartphones, communication became easy. Under this circumstances, people can spread both negative and positive perceptions toward products and services in the internet (Berezina et al., 2016). As Web 2.0 developed and started to be a common tool among second generation, especially travelers can currently share their views online for third parties effortlessly (Brochado et al., 2019). Generally, user-generated contents or online reviews are believed among travelers as available, trustworthy, and voluntarily available data by both customers and scholars (Lu and Stepchenkova, 2012). For executives, user-generated contents on the online platforms offer economical as well as cost-saving method to gather information to be able to advance and improve their services and goods that they provide (Zhang and Cole, 2016).

Scholars have hitherto unraveled user-generated content to pinpoint the perception of travelers. For example, Brochado et al. (2019) researched service quality perceptions of flyers. Arasli, Saydam and Kilic (2020) studied cruise tourism.

## **2.7 Impact of Online Review**

Currently, there are number of online platforms available where those platforms suggest travelers where to eat, travel or buy (Yi et al., 2018).

Seventy-five percent of travelers believed user-generated content while searching information regarding their vacation (Filieri et al., 2020). Nowadays, the easy entree to the web allows more travelers or individuals to share online reviews (Brochado et al., 2019; Yi, Li and Jai, 2018). In addition, information and communication rapid

advances in technology, online review websites such as TripAdvisor development of almost any product or service enabled users to share information about. In addition, travel and tourism in the past decade social networking sites with content have made substantial regarding traveling as well as the content created by users is an important tool for decision making processes related to tourism (Filieri et al., 2020).

Consumers are at the decision-making stage focusing on attributes such as location, besides the basic features such as kitchen type, photos and search filters; menu, other online information such as reviews, ratings and average price by visitors then they decide whether consume the service/product or not (Ye et al., 2009). Therefore, in recent years, parallel to the rise of the internet and social media as user-generated content has shown a noticeable growth and food, beverage, accommodation and travel, with exponential growth of online reviews started to affect their sectors (Ye et al., 2009). Today, reviews regarding goods and services created by other users are driven by tourists' travel decision.

One study regarding online reviews stated that negative reviews has much more impact than positive reviews when the point comes to decision making about the service or product buying (Smyth et al., 2010).

## **2.8 Hospitality Industry and COVID-19 Pandemic**

The COVID-19 pandemic is a major health crisis threatening people's lives across the world. The hospitality and tourism literature presents several studies on the COVID-19 pandemic. However, most of them are commentary, perspective, conceptual, or review papers. For instance, using secondary data, Nhamo, Dube and Chikodzi (2020) stated that sit-in guests in the restaurant sector dropped to zero in many countries due

to social distancing, lockdowns, and movement restrictions. In addition, Yu, Seo and Hyun (2021) research tried to find out three types of perceived hygiene features via mixed methods. Cited authors found that perceived hygiene attributes raise the cognitive and affective image of hotels. Hao et al. (2020) suggested COVID-19 management to address the anti-pandemic stages, values, and strategies. Jafari, Saydam, Erkanli and Olorunsola studied the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on consumer behavior of Turkish tourists. Altuntas and Gok (2020) found that quarantine decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic directly affect the tourism sector. Aguiar-Quintana et al. (2021) aimed to analyzed the effect of job insecurity on hotel employees' anxiety and depression, employees' self-rated task performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. In another study, Filimonau et al. (2020) conducted a Web-based survey of a sample of senior managers in Spanish hotels. Their research showed the relationships among organizational resilience, organizational response to COVID-19, perceived job security, and organizational commitment. Stergiou and Farmaki (2020) found that front-line hotel employees felt a sense of duty to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Huang et al. (2020) utilized quantitative approach to gauge the effects of interference strategies required by COVID-19 on the tourism labor market in small-medium size enterprises of the United States economy.

Additionally, Zhang, Xie and Morrison (2021) concentrated on effect of corporate social responsibility on employee safety behavior in the time of COVID-19 pandemic. Cited authors found that: corporate social responsibility positively predicted employee safety behavior; corporate social responsibility had positive influences on safety compliance, participation and adaptation; safety compliance among hotel employees. Farmaki et al. (2020) conducted interviews with peer-to-peer accommodation hosts to find out the effect of pandemic on peer-to-peer

accommodation arena. Moreover, Shin and Kang (2020) conducted experimental research using web-based questionnaire samples to find out the impact of expected link and expected cleanliness on perceived health risk and considering hotel reservation intention. In addition, purchasing online food supplies (Cai and Leung, 2020) and elements determining consumers' experience using food delivery applications during the pandemic.

## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Data Collection

The target population for this research was hotel tourists have visited hotels during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study focused on gauging social media platform shared on the TripAdvisor, which is considered the main and the most prominent online travel platform in the world (Brochado, Stoleriu and Lupu, 2019). The sample comprises 1,030 reviews of fifteen hotels from the city of Antalya, Turkey.

Antalya is considered as the most important touristic destination in compare to cities in Turkey (Arslaner and Boylu, 2017; Nart et al., 2019; Okumus, Chaulagaina and Giritlioglu, 2019). Data have been collected from TripAdvisor and information on both quality and popularity of hotels in Antalya, such as ranking, number of reviews, and judgements, have been collected (Ganzaroli et al., 2017). According to the information obtained, certified facilities comprise with 340 out of 685 (TMCT, 2017), therefore, justifying the research range. Moreover, the concentration on 5-stars hotels is because initially they supposedly lead regarding capable and successful administration (Bayighomog and Arasli, 2019). Based on our objectives, we paid attention to collect reviews during COVID-19 period. To be able to collect reviews shared during COVID-19 period, we first entered key words such as the ‘‘COVID-19’’, ‘‘coronavirus’’ and ‘‘pandemic’’.

Table 1: Reviewers Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	Review Numbers	%
Gender	Female	480	46.6
	Male	550	53.4
Region	Europe	120	11.7
	Middle East	180	17.5
	Asia	80	7.7
	United Kingdom	650	63.1

According to the data gathered, 480 reviews were written by females (46.6 %) and 550 by males (53.4 %; see Table 1). Around a third or 63.1% of the reviews were posted by United Kingdom countries, 17.5% by travelers from Middle Eastern countries, 11.7 % by tourists from Europe, 7.7% by tourists from Asia region. A total of 1250 Web reviews were collected.

### 3.2 Data Analysis through Leximancer

The data gathered from TripAdvisor were processed by Leximancer, which is suitable for content analysis and gradually utilized in the field of tourism and hospitality related pieces. Leximancer is a web-based software which process the content of text in electronic format and discovers the mined data using algorithms and provide conceptual map where concepts and maps demonstrated. Leximancer is different from other content analysis software.

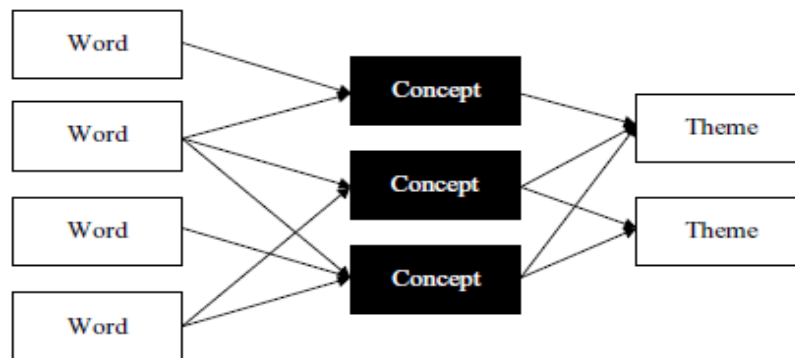


Figure 1: Simple tenet of semantic formation extraction in Leximancer

As it can be seen above, software integrates mathematical processes in line with ``Bayesian statistical theory`` formulation utilizing set of rules and engaging nonlinear diminuendos (Brochado, Rita, Oliveira and Oliveira, 2019).

Unlike NVivo and ATLAS.ti, Leximancer does not apply word frequency, or coding of terms (Tseng et al., 2015, Arasli, Saydam and Kilic, 2020). Leximancer, working with its own procedures, is used for gauging the meanings within ways of text by mining the key concepts and philosophies. It conducts a quantitative approach to conduct qualitative approach by using number of algorithms for stages (Indulska, Hovorka and Recker, 2011) and is generally utilized to research psychology (Cretchley et al., 2010), qualitative health study (Cretchley et al., 2010), and literature reviews for essential various concepts (Tseng et al., 2015). There are number of features that Leximancer can perform. First, the software can process large sizes of content as effective way. In addition, related software can rapidly classify the phases and words in a fact-finding method. Moreover, Leximancer can provide themes as well as concepts in relation to content and find relationship among themes. While doing this, it is degreasing the chance of bias since scholar can't intervene the process. Fourth, because of the least manual interference from the scholar, the results from the software might, thus, give various set of ways of viewing at the document provided to be processed by scholars (Chiu, Bae and Won, 2017; Sotiriadou, Brouwers, and Le, 2014). As mentioned above, Leximancer software can be an alternative remedy for the analysis where subjective coding, uncertain inter-coder consistency and uncertain interpretations stands as a big barrier in front of researchers.

In this study software user which called "Leximancer" analysis is in theory has been conducted, and it is believed to be an approach which can be acknowledged as a form

of text mining (Chiu, Bae and Won, 2017). In addition, Leximancer software assists scholars to be able to get effective and efficient results by using individuals' natural language. Also, software clusters the themes considering relevancy level based on how frequently they arise together in the block of text (Sotiriadou, Brouwers, and Le, 2014). Aforementioned figure 1 illustrates that semantic pattern extraction and the link considering lyrics, notions, and themes gotten from software.

### **3.3 Sampling**

The data for the recent research was collected from online platform, TripAdvisor, which is broadly known as the world's major online travel community and a high-traffic platform (Brochado, Rodrigues and Troilo, 2019; Brochado, Oliveira, and Rita, 2019). Collected data includes reviews of hotel chains in Antalya, focusing on English-written reviews of tourists during the COVID-19 pandemic. TripAdvisor allows travelers to post their experiences and recommendations in various types of services in tourism sector, such as hotels, restaurants and destinations. People rate their reviews and recommendations according to their experiences for instance, (5) excellent, (4) very good, (3) average, (2) poor, and (1) terrible (Cassar et al., 2020). A web-based online platform which has been used in this study "TripAdvisor" is considered as the most useful and popular site (Filiari et al., 2020).



## Chapter 4

### RESULTS OF STUDY

#### 4.1 Results

This research targeted to ascertain the main themes shared in online reviews by tourists in relation to service perception during the COVID-19 pandemic in the hotels of Antalya. In addition, second objective of our current research was to pinpoint how hotel guests with different overall ratings (4 or 5 out of 5 scores / 1 or 2 out of 5) rated to the perceived hotel quality based on TripAdvisor ratings. The outcomes of the analysis demonstrate that cruise travelers who gave a cruise a 4 (“Very good”) or 5 (“Excellent”) rating.

The content analyses demonstrated presence of eight themes/concepts in hotel tourists’ online descriptions of hotel perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2): “staff”, “hotel”, “restaurant”, “COVID-19”, “room”, “pool”, “entertainment” and “family”.

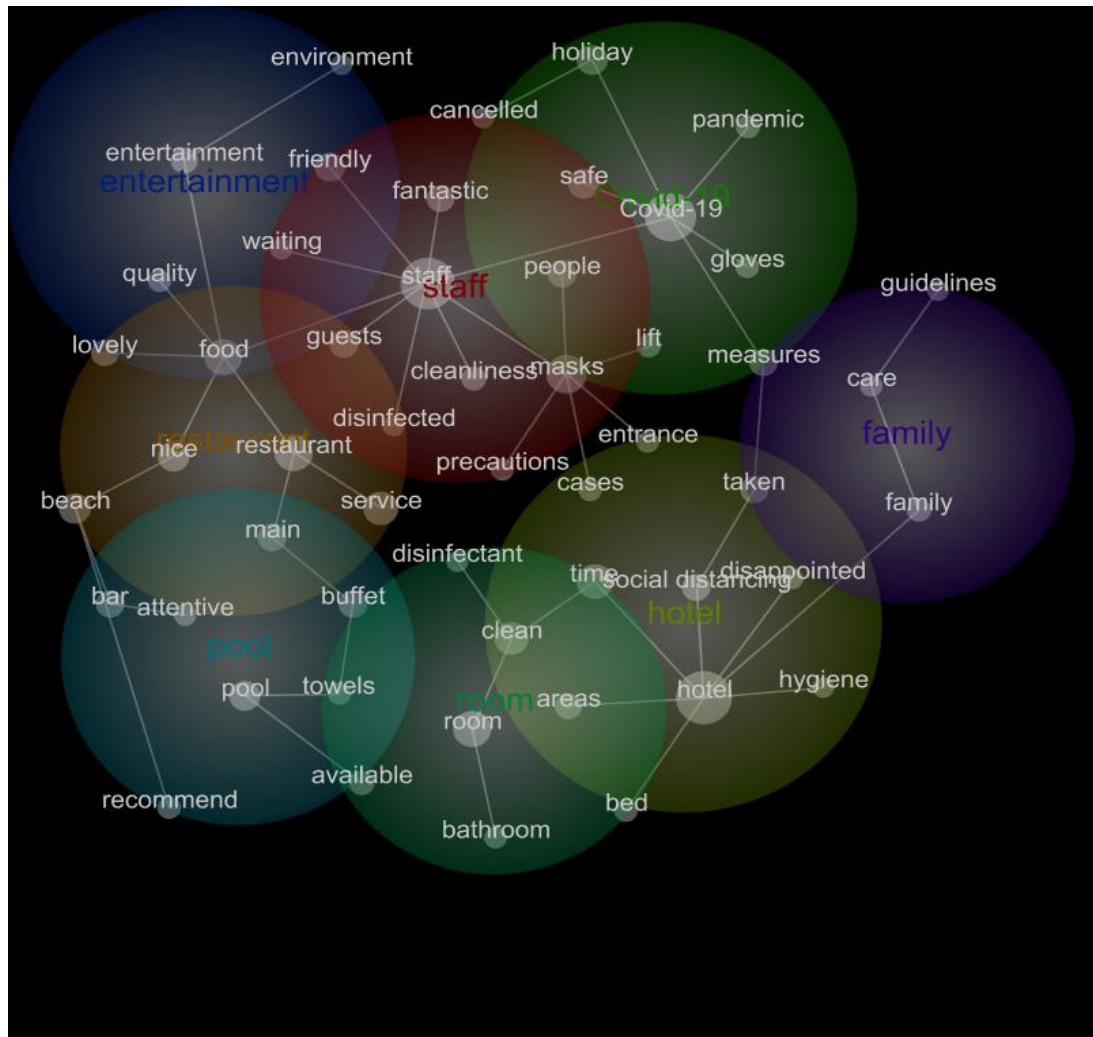


Figure 2: Conceptual Map

## 4.2 General Description of Hotel Experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Staff: As it can be seen in figure 3, the concept of staff contains phrases such as “staff” (count = 1,864; relevancy percentage = 100 %), “friendly” (220, 72 %), “masks” (315, 58 %), “precautions” (47, 28 %), “disinfectant” (16, 50 %), “cleanliness” (52, 48 %), “guests” (111, 42 %), “people” (112, 44 %), “fantastic” (108, 49 %) and “waiting” (32, 67 %).

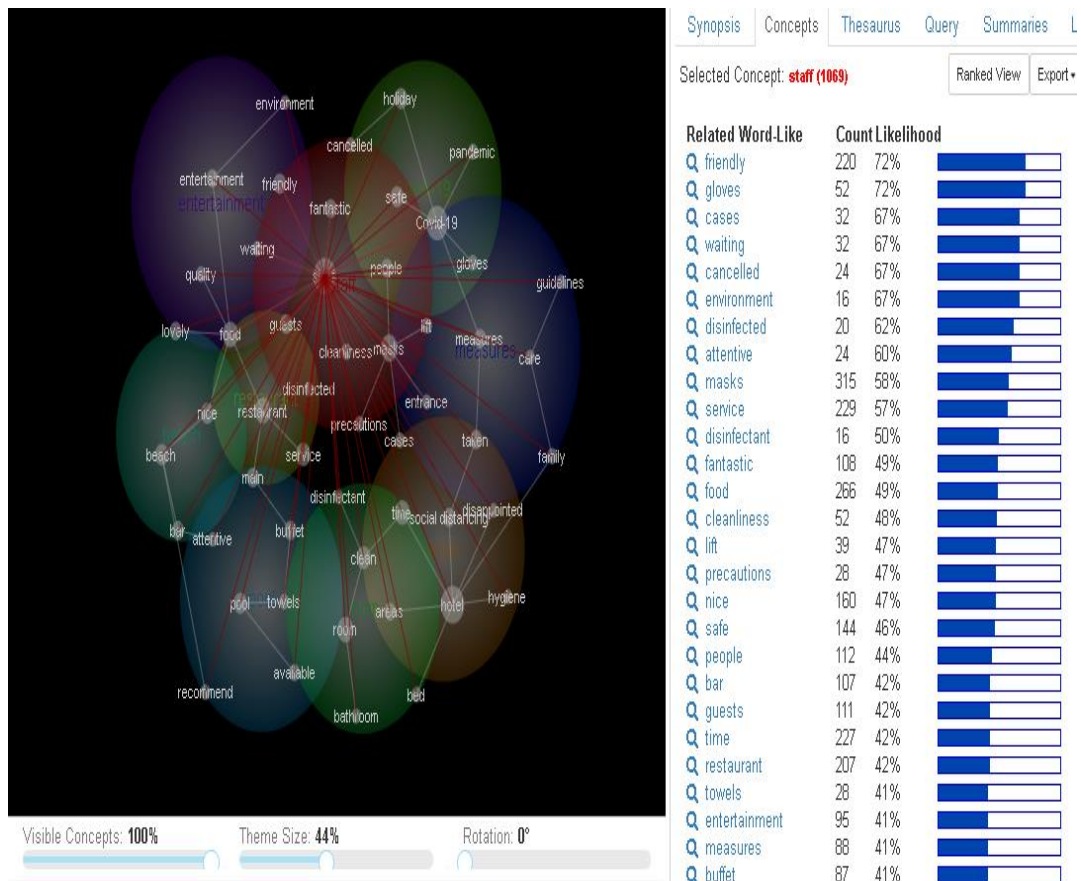


Figure 3: Staff as a most important theme

A typical review reads, ‘*the staff are fantastic and nothing is too much. They are very aware of what they need to do to ensure everyone's safety during this time without spoiling the experience.*’ (Female tourist, UK). Another guest shared, “*I would say that the hotel is very COVID- 19 aware and controlled. All staff wear face masks and there is hand disinfectant everywhere and plenty of signage to remind you of social distancing. We felt safe which was the main thing. All of the staff were very professional and friendly also took all the precautions*” (Male tourist, Germany). A third tourist added, “*Leo animation team was lovely, friendly approachable, helpful. All staff wearing masks and following Covid19 guidance*” (Male tourist, Ireland).

One guest added, ‘*COVID-19 measures in place are very good with staff regularly disinfecting sun loungers, cleaning up the rubbish*’ (female tourist, Romania).

Hotel: The concept of hotel includes the concepts of “hotel” (sum = 1,477, relevancy percentage = 75 %), “social distancing” (403, 17 %), “hygiene” (204, 12 %), “disappointed” (98, 11 %) and “cases” (76, 09 %). A tourist posted through TripAdvisor: *“Hotel itself, was extremely clean and prepped to COVID-19 standards (hand sanitizer, limited number in lifts, mask etc.). Hotel is huge and the grounds are quite spread out. Majority of staff friendly and approachable”* (female tourist).

A review reads, *“Nightly entertainment, indoor pool, gym and so much more. I could go on and will be going back. Also nice shops 5-minute walk from hotel. Please note due to corona virus we had to come back early but all staff made us feel very safe and quickly put all safety precautions in place”* (male tourist).

One reviewer added that, *“COVID-19 measures taken by the hotel were sufficient, but the guests do not pay attention to social distance and masks”* (male tourist).

Another tourist shared, *“The measures taken for hygiene in the hotel are applied at a high level and without compromise. Common areas are designed with the social distance principle. You can feel cleanliness everywhere”* (female tourist).

Restaurant: The concept of restaurant comprises “restaurant” (count = 812, relevance = 41 %), “food” (645, 31 %), “service” (550, 21 %), “lovely” (198, 10 %) as well as “beach” (170, 10 %). One tourist wrote, *“Hotel nice and clean and felt very safe during COVID-19. I visited the Asian and Italian a la Carte restaurants which were unreal especially the Italian as the food was gorgeous”* (male tourist).

Another tourist added, *“The main buffet restaurant was nice and big, all staff wearing mask and so were the guests. The food was okay”* (female tourist).

One review reads, *“The staff are amazing and nothing is too much. They are very aware of what they need to do to ensure everyone's safety during this time without spoiling the experience. Temperatures are taken before you enter the restaurant and masks are required until you are seated.”* (female tourist).

One tourist stated, *“The hotel has vast grounds and a varied dining concept so social distancing was never a problem. Occupancy increased during our stay which seemed to make it slightly challenging, but it was never out of control. Always enough sunbeds at the beach, not much challenge to find seats at the restaurant or bars”* (male tourist).

COVID-19: As it can be seen in figure 4, the concept of COVID-19 comprises “COVID-19” (count = 410, relevance = 31 %), “safe” (274, 15 %), “gloves” (232, 14 %), “pandemic” (171, 11 %), “measures” (136, 11 %) and “lift” (51, 09 %), “holiday” (120, 08 %) and “cancelled” (51, 07 %). Some tourists shared reviews based on the COVID-19 pandemic, *“We booked this hotel last minute as our original holiday to Jamaica was cancelled due to COVID-19. We booked for 10 nights all inclusive. I cannot fault the hotel itself one bit”* (male tourist).

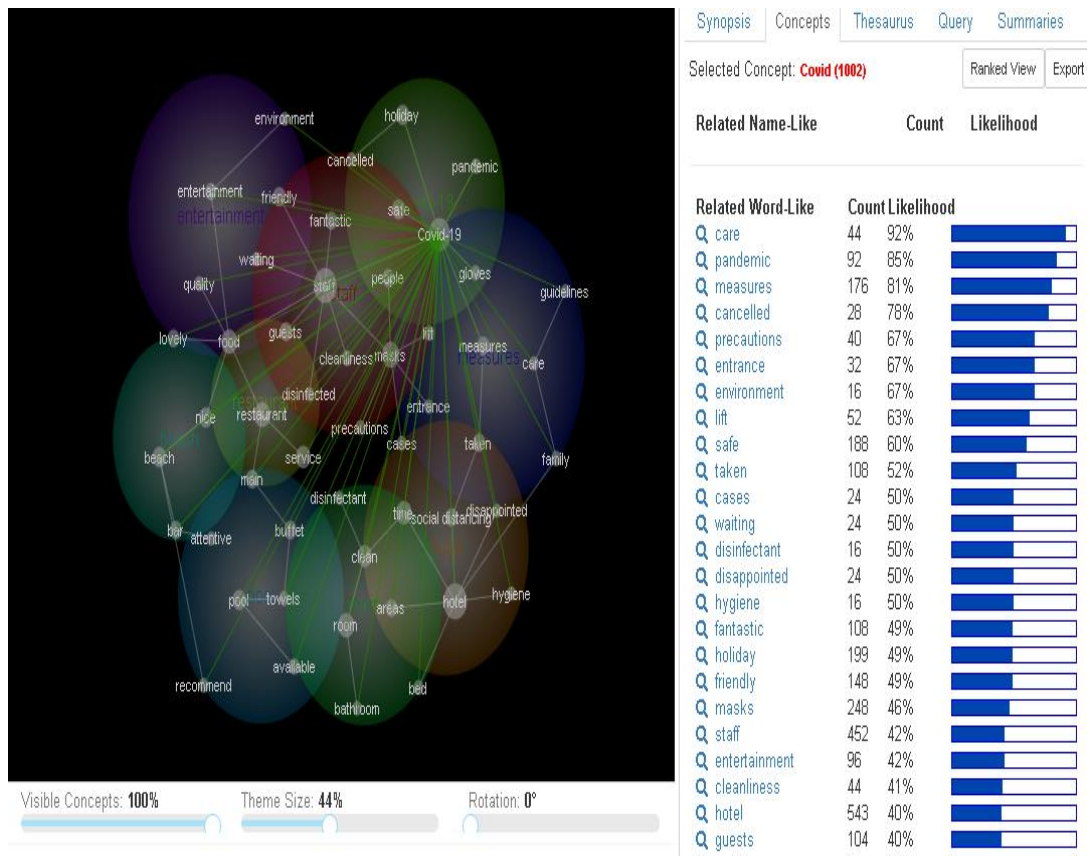


Figure 4: Conceptual Map of COVID-19 and relation with other concepts

One tourist shared a review stating, “...every member of staff was brilliant! The new COVID-19 measures are everywhere and pretty much everyone abides by them. We are already looking to come back next year!” (female tourist).

One tourist added, “The entertainment is on the next level- not your usual cheesy hotel stuff. It is really amazing- theatre shows/live singers- parties. all done so tastefully taking COVID-19 measures seriously! So I will start from the beginning- check in was easy & quick” (male tourist).

Another tourist shared, “If you are concerned about COVID-19 measures, we felt that the hotel management takes it very seriously and does all they could to prevent

*coronavirus outbreak. We felt very safe at all times. Cleaning constantly, even after every equipment use at the gym!” (male tourist).*

**Room:** The theme of room includes the concepts of “room” (450, 22 %), “clean” (254, 13 %), “bathroom” (70, 12 %), “disinfectant” (32, 10 %) and “bed” (120, 09). A typical review reads, *“There are a couple of things maybe need updating for example the hairdryer in the bathroom (we were just in a basic room) was a bit rubbish I wished I had taken my own from home but the courtesy room had a much better hair dryer so little things like this would make a difference” (male tourist).*

One tourist stated that, *“we stayed in the superior double room with sea view. The room is very nice and spacious, with a big space for clothing and storage, bathroom is large with a waterfall shower and steam setting. Room was cleaned every day after we left and the fridge was also filled” (male tourist).*

Another tourist posted, *“COVID-19 controls- this is something that pleasantly surprised me. On arrival, our room had a safe touch sticker across the door which indicated that the room had been cleaned and was safe to enter. I liked this and it made me feel safe” (female tourist).*

Another review shared, *“The housekeeping at this hotel leaves much to be desired. When we checked in we were told that the room would only be cleaned every five days due to COVID-19. But when we arrived in our room it was patently clear that it had not been cleaned at all” (male tourist).*

One tourist added, *“Have to say it was amazing room/stay. The hotel was always clean and tidy! friendly welcoming atmosphere. They are self-serving food and drinks due to the COVID-19, and cutlery is put in packets with disinfectant wipes”* (male tourist).

Pool: Concept of pool contains “pool” (264, 21 %), “bar” (280, 14 %) “buffet” (152, 12 %), “recommend” (170, 12 %), “towels” (82, 10 %) and “attentive” (40, 08). An example reviews given about the pool is, *“The pool was ok, but in the afternoon, you can see that the water is dirty, as there are many disgusting things floating in the water. No lifeguard in the pool, I have seen only one in the aqua park but he has not been very interested of what is happening in the water”* (male tourist).

Another tourist posted, *“Towels for pool/beach are cleanly wrapped and always well stocked for you to help yourself by the pool and beach”* (female tourist).

One tourist still reads, *“Recently came back from a family holiday, was really impressed with how the resort was set up to minimize COVID-19 risks, there are hand sanitizing stations all throughout and staff wore masks at all times. Rooms were nice and spacious with great facilities and the resort was beautiful! Great pool area and fantastic spa with access to the traditional Turkish Hammam”* (male tourist).

Entertainment: Word of entertainment contains following “entertainment” (205, 11 %), “quality” (48, 9 %) and “environment” (32, 8 %). A tourist included: *“Had a lovely holiday, staff during COVID 19 were very good... Lots of sanitizer and clean environment. Kids enjoyed the entertainment and slides”* (female tourist).



One tourist added, *“The entertainment team is not as big as it usually is, no lunchtime games ... COVID-19 again”* (male tourist).

Another review reads, *“Entertainment wasn’t up to much, not sure if limited as hotel not at full capacity and due to COVID-19 restrictions”* (female tourist).

Another tourist stated, *“Everything is cleaned regularly especially with the COVID-19 pandemic, I felt safe and ever uneased. Finally, the entertainment team are absolutely fantastic and really make you feel welcome and always up for a laugh”* (female tourist).

Family: The concept of entertainment includes (205, 11 %), “quality” (48, 9 %) and “environment” (32, 8 %). A tourist included: *“The hotel is very family oriented and staff will do everything to make your stay as comfortable as possible with kids”* (male tourist) (male tourist).

One review added, *“The rooms are amazing check in service really quick full of information guest relations manager is so helpful and friendly.... Fahri and Kamil entertainment team friendly and helpful with all guest due to this experience I will return in May with girlfriend and July with family this hotel is suitable for families couples and singles xxx best holiday ever”* (female tourist).

Another tourist stated, *“Everything you could ask for a family holiday away in the sun. The hotel was beautifully clean and the COVID-19 procedures that were put in place made you feel so much more relaxed and safe”* (female tourist).

One tourist posted, *“We went as a couple but it was also great for families with small children as they have an indoor kids club that children can attend, they also have a shaded pool to protect little ones from the heat during the day”* (male tourist).

### **4.3 Results of Value for Money Analysis**

The current research second objective was to determine whether tourists who scored their hotel experiences as high (i.e. 4 or 5 out of 5 points) or low (i.e. 1 or 2 out of 5 points) value for money comprising different reviews about tourists’ hotel experiences and, therefore, post different content in Web reviews during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The group who rated their experience satisfactory in other words the portion who rated hotel service quality higher (4 or 5 out of 5) shared narratives among “staff” theme and the “hotel” theme. An assessment of the concept relationships for this group appeared that their highest-connected concepts are as follows: COVID-19 (86% likelihood of co-occurrence), measures (78%), restaurant (76%), masks (68%), safe (63%), holiday (62%), entrance (61%), fantastic (60%), pandemic (59%), regulations (58%), cleanliness (58%), food (58%), entertainment (56%), disinfectant (55%), areas (55%), family (55%). On the whole, afore-mentioned concepts shared from the tourists who were satisfied the service provided by hotels. Some satisfactory reviews shared by tourists:

*“COVID -19 measures and restrictions were good with your cases sanitized before they were brought into hotel and taken to your room, temperature checked upon arrival and every time you entered a restaurant. Face masks were also given out upon arrival at the hotel and in your room. Face masks were also provided upon entering the buffet restaurant which were to be worn when walking around the restaurant and all indoor public areas in the hotel including lifts etc. but quite a number of holiday*

*makers seemed to ignore all COVID-19 measures and restrictions, not wearing masks and certainly not social distancing and certainly did not like queuing in the restaurant, they seemed to be oblivious that we were in a Pandemic which made me feel a little uncomfortable at times. There were lots of hotel colleagues around the hotel and restaurants but no one seemed to be enforcing the wearing of masks or social distancing” (male tourist).*

*Another satisfied tourist shared, “The staff were amazing, the food was good and the entertainment was excellent. Fahri, one of the entertainment team members was always speaking to us to let us know what was going on through the day and night and always made good conversation. He made the holiday very good! Entertainment on a night was also very good! Something for everyone. With COVID-19, the hotel was very safe, plenty hand sanitizer and social distancing. Would defiantly go back “(female tourist).*

*One tourist added, “Hotel did not disappoint even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Scrupulously clean as usual with the added safety measures of spraying cases on arrival, plenty of wall mounted hand sanitizers, even bottles of gel in our rooms. The staff all wore masks and adhered to social distance. We even had our temperature taken every evening before dinner. We had a great time and have booked our 12th visit next year” (male tourist).*

*Another tourist shared a review, “The food at this hotel is exceptional no matter which restaurant you eat in the buffet is so well organized and safe, well done to all the chefs and servers. To the waiters you also do a great job keeping everyone safe at*

*their tables well done. There was so much choice in the buffet and very well presented”*  
 (male tourist).

Another satisfied tourist stated, *“We had a wonderful stay at this hotel during COVID-19. The hotel is beautiful and in a wonderful setting. Food and drinks all delicious and so much choice. The management and staff have done a wonderful job ensuring guest safety and have taken so many extra precautions, cutlery and beach towels in sealed packages and sunbeds were disinfected as soon as they were vacated - we felt so safe”*  
 (female tourist).

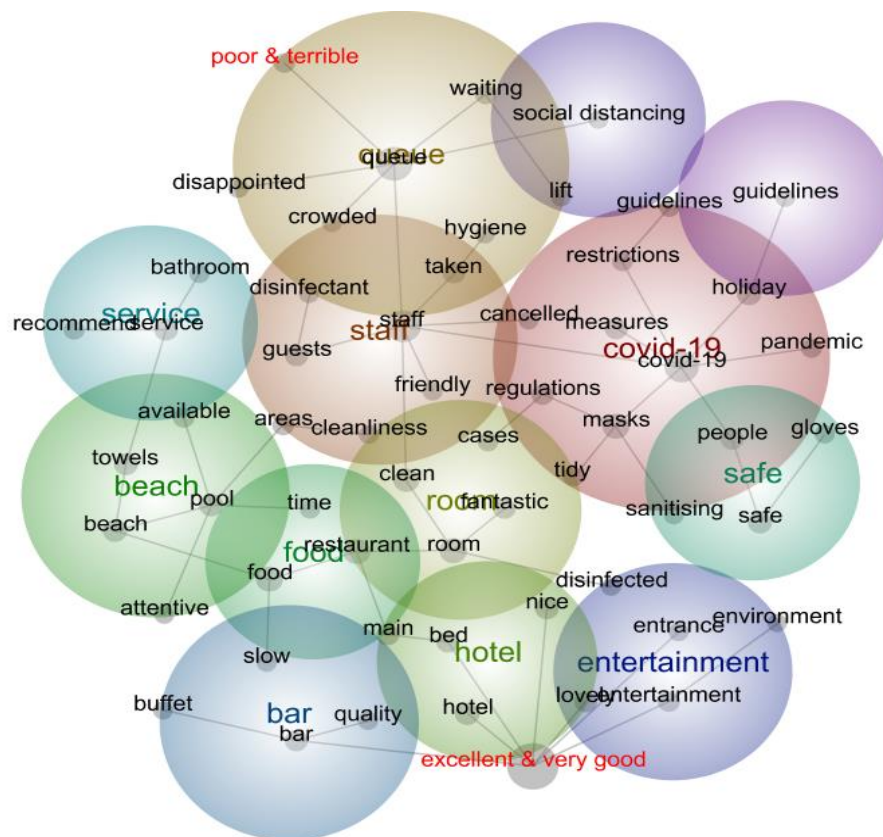


Figure 5: Different satisfaction groups' evaluation of Hotel experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In contrast, group who rated their hotel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic as unsatisfactory respectively were clustered quite closely in Figure 4. An evaluation of the concepts associated to this group's narratives revealed that the most frequently mentioned concepts are queue (37 %), lift (35 %), waiting (30 %), guidelines (24 %), social distancing (24 %), restrictions (23 %), hygiene (22 %), cancelled (22 %), restrictions (21 %) and people (26 %) (Figure 4). A traveler from United Kingdom shared his thoughts, "*I would also note that the hotel is full despite of COVID-19. The situation in the restaurant is horrible and there are many people in groups waiting in line for food and none of them had a mask because the hotel does not require wearing the same*".

One dissatisfied tourist shared, "*The queue for the showers were ridiculous as all guests had the same idea but only 2 showers were available, again not COVID-19 friendly. Overall it was a fantastic holiday, but the COVID-19 measures need to be stricter*" (male tourist).

One tourist shared, "*We thought that, for a hotel of this size, there needed to be more lifts. We seemed to spend ages every day, waiting for one*" (female tourist).

An additional tourist wrote, "*It is like COVID19 doesn't exist in this hotel. Having been travelling extensively for the last few months, this is the first hotel I genuinely felt concerned about the complete lack of disregard for socially responsible rules. Scary!*" (male tourist).

Still another review reads, "*If you join a socially distanced queue for the bar expect lots of rude people to push in front of you and be served by the bar staff who don't*

*seem to care that you are patiently waiting! So disappointed as booked this trip” (male tourist).*

*One passenger shared, “The buffet restaurant has no social distancing procedures in place they make you wear a mask but it is so busy in the restaurant and no one social distances. There is never any free tables in the buffet restaurant we have had to walk around the restaurant to find a table for so long sometimes we walked out and just didn’t eat” (female tourist).*

*A further unhappy tourist wrote, “lots of trips cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic but we cannot believe this is the case. We believe the hotel is running at 60% occupancy and so there are cost saving measures in place and it’s easy to simply blame COVID-19” (male tourist).*

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The first aim of our current study was to examine web-based reviews shared on TripAdvisor by hotel guests. To be able to find out mostly mentioned themes and concepts, we used Leximancer software. After analysis, software generated concept map as showcased in Figure 1). The content analyses demonstrated presence of eight themes/concepts in hotel tourists' online descriptions of hotel perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2): "staff", "hotel", "restaurant", "COVID-19", "room", "pool", "entertainment" and "family". Second, objective was to find out which one of these themes associated higher/lower value for money ratings. The group who rated their experience satisfactory in other words the portion who rated hotel service quality higher (4 or 5 out of 5) shared narratives among "staff" concept as well as "hotel". According to synopsis analysis where it gives themes with the color-based importance as well the concept relationships for this group appeared as; COVID-19 (86% likelihood of co-occurrence), measures (78%), restaurant (76%), masks (68%), safe (63%), holiday (62%), entrance (61%), fantastic (60%), pandemic (59%), regulations (58%), cleanliness (58%), food (58%), entertainment (56%), disinfectant (55%), areas (55%), family (55%). On the whole, afore-mentioned concepts shared from the tourists who were satisfied the service provided by hotels. In contrast, group who rated their hotel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic as unsatisfactory respectively were clustered quite closely in Figure 4. An evaluation of the concepts associated to this group's narratives revealed that the most frequently mentioned concepts are queue

(37 %), lift (35 %), waiting (30 %), guidelines (24 %), social distancing (24 %), restrictions (23 %), hygiene (22 %), cancelled (22 %), restrictions (21 %) and people (26 %) (Figure 4).

## **5.1 Conclusion and Discussion**

As reported below part, current research targeted to ascertain the prominent concepts/themes posted through TripAdvisor by hotel travelers in relation to service perception during the COVID-19 pandemic in the hotels of Antalya, and which of these themes were associated regarding satisfactory/unsatisfactory scores. Current study utilized Leximancer software to be able to process reviews collected by hotel guests to examine 1,030 user-generated content of fifteen hotels posted via guests through TripAdvisor. The current study demonstrated the existence of eight themes in hotel tourists' online descriptions of hotel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2): "staff", "hotel", "restaurant", "COVID-19", "room", "pool", "entertainment" and "family".

Some of the identified themes as well as concepts have already been found in previous research, such as staff (Chan and Baum, 2007; Brochado et al., 2019), three houses (hotel) (Brochado, 2019), restaurant, room, entertainment and family (Arasli, Saydam and Kilic, 2020). In addition, results and outcomes of this existing research had similar results with research done by Berezina et al. (2016), who found satisfactory/unsatisfactory words in relation to service quality, including place room as well as staff. In addition, cited authors found which concepts were equal to positive and negative reviews. Their findings showed that satisfied customers who are willing to spread positive word of mouth (recommend) for hotel to others generally mentioned the impalpable features of their hotel accommodation, for instance personnel, more frequently in compare to displeased guests which is consistent with our findings. But,



disappointed consumers revealed as well as shared more regularly the palpable features of the hotel, for instance equipping as well as finances where we found mentioned themes were equal to higher value for money rating in our study.

Previous studies also studied higher and lower value for money ratings. For example, one research identified the main themes shared in online reviews by airline travelers through TripAdvisor, as well as found which themes were linked with higher and lower value for money ratings. Based on this objective, the existing research found that tourists who scored their hotel experiences as high satisfactory unsatisfactory reviews containing different reviews about tourists' hotel experiences and, therefore, post different content in Web reviews during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The satisfactory group reviews associated most with the "staff" theme and the "hotel" theme. An assessment of the concept relationships for this group appeared that their highest-connected concepts are as follows: COVID-19, measures (78%), restaurant, masks, safe, holiday, entrance, fantastic, pandemic, regulations, cleanliness, food, entertainment, disinfectant, areas, family. In general, they were the group who used the most expressive terms for their visit. In contrast, travelers scored their service perception regarding hotels via TripAdvisor unsatisfactorily (1 or 2 out of 5) who rated their hotel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic as low frequently mentioned in their reviews concepts such as queue, lift, waiting, guidelines, social distancing, restrictions, hygiene, cancelled, restrictions, and people.

The study showed that hotel management partially succeeded to provide social distancing among tourists, however, in the public spaces of the hotel, some tourist did not paid attention to given procedures. For example, in the narratives shared by the

guests, the crowd of people in the elevator and the carelessness of the people who did not apply COVID-19 instructions were one of the reason for guests who rated value for money low (i.e. 1 or 2 out of 5 points). Another negative reviews clustered on the concept of cancellations (cancelled). In addition, unsatisfied tourists who rated value for money low mainly complained about entertainment programs' changes and tour cancellations due to COVID-19 precautions.

In addition, the current study suggests that, if hotels wants to trigger positive recommendations of tourists, hotel staff ought to ensure quality provision to their guests. The hotel staff play an important part when the point comes to guest fulfillment and hearten tourists toward post affirmative user-generated content (Berezina et al., 2016). It can be stated that tourists' fulfillment might significantly rely on the quality services of hotel staff' especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where hotel tourists' expectations has already changed due to pandemic. The measure aspects of hotels are discussed more repeatedly in the positive tones. However, tourists shared negative narratives about other tourists who some of them were not followed COVID-19 instructions during their vacation. This may be due to the hotel's management mechanism lacking in terms of reminding tourist for being more cautious toward measures taken by hotel management. For this reason, the hotel management should take measures against the COVID-19 pandemic, and actively implement these measures. In addition, tourists shared negative comments about the concept of elevator. This was because during the pandemic the restrictions to be used for elevators were not followed by some of the tourists. Tourists made comments stating their sensitivity on this issue and repeated in their comments that the virus could easily be transmitted to them since elevators restrictions were not taken in serious by some tourists.

Another theme where hotel tourists frequently shared in the negative reviews was queue. Safe distances have been set for guests waiting in queue during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some tourists were dissatisfied because of long waiting hours, so this circumstance created dissatisfaction among tourists during their stay.

## **5.2 Implications for Theory**

This research offers original and valuable understandings into how tourists perceived services provided by hotels located in the city of Antalya based on reviews posted through. Leximancer's software enabled documentation of researcher least involvement regarding investigators about concepts in tourists' perceptions. Furthermore, current research adds to the works written about service quality by pinpointing the main concepts associated with satisfactory/unsatisfactory scores in the hotels of Antalya during the COVID-19 pandemic. Certainly, content analysis demonstrated that satisfaction groups include different narratives and reviews about hotel experiences, so that the narratives posted online by the two different satisfaction groups (satisfied-dissatisfied) include contrasting themes. Low value for money scores founded in this research are group who rated their hotel experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic as unsatisfactory scores frequently mentioned in their reviews concepts such as queue, lift, waiting, guidelines, social distancing, restrictions, hygiene, cancelled, restrictions, and people. As none of the research were vague regarding which attributes triggers superior value for money, this study result contributes into current literature via recognizing themes/concepts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **5.3 Managerial Implications**

This research finding gives valuable awareness to hotel industry' policy makers strategical understandings when the point comes to how travelers perceive hotel

service quality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Understanding online reviews as a manifestation of Tourists' experiences can help hotels to identify the main attributes required to achieve positive post-purchase behaviors and to minimize negative intentions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, hotel tourists' reviews not only give an economical method for hotels to collect feedback from their customers but also an opportunity to comprehend ways to produce positive post-purchase intentions (Brochado et al., 2019).

Tourists have often been observed to complain of slow service in their online review. Therefore, hotels should take necessary measures to reduce the waiting time. At this stage, hotels can increase the number of buffets without ignoring the social distance rules. These attempts can reduce the waiting time. In addition, another source of dissatisfaction among tourists was the crowd in public areas. The crowd, especially observed in elevators, was noticed in online reviews of many tourists.

In this context, hotel management should play an active role in the use of elevators at determined numbers. If necessary, the violations of the rules should be eliminated by having a staff at the points where the elevators are located. Overall, hotels required to find out the user-generated contents which associated with unsatisfactory reviews in order to diminish negative impacts on tourists' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Staff appeared as a most important theme. Second, management should take into consideration the unprecedented difficulties resulting from COVID-19. To do this, management can assist its staff in number of ways. For instance, hotel can provide inexpensive food and beverage items to staff in the time of COVID-19 pandemic. In

addition, hotel can also sign a contract with healthcare providers and help its employees receive affordable medical care in healthcare centers not being used as pandemic hospitals (Karatepe, Saydam and Okumus, 2021). Such a service is important because most of public hospitals serve as pandemic healthcare centers.

Finally, hotels can provide their staff workshops regarding stress management, resilience building in the time of pandemic, and financial support. Hospitality businesses can offer their employees online training opportunities to improve their current skills and re-skill them in new areas. They can either maintain such online training initiatives and workshops by themselves or work with universities and other professional orientation businesses to develop and offer such training opportunities (Karatepe, Saydam and Okumus, 2021).

#### **5.4 Limitations and Avenue for Further Study**

Current research naturally has number of limitations. Initially, fifteen hotels and 1,030 user-generated content derived from TripAdvisor in this research. Other studies may add to a deeper vision of the concepts/themes regarding in hotel tourists' user-generated content by contrasting various kind of accommodation center in compare to five-star hotels (e.g. Airbnb rental houses) and comprising more in samples. Second, the current study only concentrated in one social media platform. Future research could compare online reviews content from different social media (e.g. Facebook or Twitter) to measure similarity with this study results. Another subject that merits more research is to assess whether the main themes of tourists' overall experiences differ in terms of tourists' demographic attributes (e.g. sex, race, luxury vs family class). This might provide more understandings about market division regarding hotel industry for post pandemic strategies.

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