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DIPLOMA THESIS

**SOFT SKILLS AND MANAGEMENT:
INSIGHTS FROM THE HOSPITALITY
SECTOR IN GREECE**

NAME: STERGIU GEORGIOS

REGISTRATION NUMBER: 2212017154

SUPERVISOR:

IAKOVAKI ELENI, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

CHIOS
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ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟΥ

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ΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΗ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ

ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΕΣ ΔΕΞΙΟΤΗΤΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΗ: ΟΠΤΙΚΕΣ ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΞΕΝΟΔΟΧΕΙΑΚΟ ΚΛΑΔΟ ΣΤΗΝ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ

ΟΝΟΜ/ΜΟ: ΣΤΕΡΓΙΟΥ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ

ΑΡΙΘΜΟΣ ΜΗΤΡΩΟΥ: 2212017154

ΕΠΙΒΛΕΠΟΥΣΑ ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΡΙΑ:

ΙΑΚΩΒΑΚΗ ΕΛΕΝΗ, ΕΠΙΚΟΥΡΗ ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΡΙΑ

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To my family

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ABSTRACT

The current paper deals with the ever-increasing importance of soft skills in managing not only a business, but also the personalities of the individuals who comprise it, ultimately giving an extra emphasis to a specific work environment. Since this is an issue that affects business on a massive scale, it was deemed necessary to analyze these skills and find ways to best integrate them into corporate interactions. More specifically:

- In the first chapter, the basic concepts regarding soft skills are analyzed (such as their origin, meaning and types), so that, through their understanding, the terms that will be recorded later become easier to understand.
- Following this, the next chapter introduces management within a business environment into the equation, where the ways in which social skills enhance the whole process are presented.
- The third chapter shifts the focus to the hospitality sector, as there is an investigation of the prevailing conditions in relation to the central concepts analyzed above, while expanding the field of soft skills to include the handling of diversity.
- In the next two chapters, the research uses the Greek hotel industry as an example to determine the degree of application of the suitable soft skills in interpersonal relationships within businesses, first via a case study on the general situation and then with the use of a survey.
- Finally, the conclusions obtained from the above research are recorded and put up for discussion.

The sources that contributed to the completion of this work are listed at the end of the paper, in the bibliography section.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η παρούσα εργασία καταπιάνεται με την ολόενα αυξανόμενη σημασία των προσωπικών και κοινωνικών δεξιοτήτων στο κομμάτι της διαχείρισης μιας επιχείρησης, αλλά και των προσωπικοτήτων των ατόμων που την αποτελούν, δίνοντας μια επιπλέον έμφαση σε ένα συγκεκριμένο εργασιακό περιβάλλον. Δεδομένου ότι πρόκειται για ένα ζήτημα που επηρεάζει το επιχειρησιακό γίνεσθαι σε τεράστια κλίμακα, κρίθηκε απαραίτητη η ανάλυση αυτών των δεξιοτήτων και η εύρεση τρόπων για τη βέλτιστη ενσωμάτωσή τους στις εταιρικές αλληλεπιδράσεις. Πιο συγκεκριμένα:

- Στο πρώτο κεφάλαιο αναλύονται οι βασικές έννοιες αναφορικά με τις προσωπικές και κοινωνικές δεξιότητες (όπως π.χ. η προέλευση, η σημασία και οι τύποι τους), έτσι ώστε, μέσω της κατανόησής τους, να καταστούν ευκολότερα αντιληπτά αυτά που θα καταγραφούν στη συνέχεια.
- Κατόπιν αυτού, στο επόμενο κεφάλαιο εισέρχεται στην εξίσωση και η διαχείριση εντός ενός επιχειρηματικού περιβάλλοντος, όπου παρουσιάζονται οι τρόποι μέσω των οποίων οι κοινωνικές δεξιότητες ενισχύουν την όλη διαδικασία.
- Το τρίτο κεφάλαιο μεταφέρει το σημείο εστίασης στον ξενοδοχειακό τομέα, καθώς γίνεται μια διερεύνηση των συνθηκών που επικρατούν στον κλάδο αναφορικά με τις κεντρικές έννοιες που αναλύθηκαν παραπάνω, επεκτείνοντας παράλληλα το πεδίο των κοινωνικών / προσωπικών δεξιοτήτων ώστε να περιλαμβάνει και τη διαχείριση της εκάστοτε «διαφορετικότητας».
- Στα επόμενα δύο κεφάλαια η έρευνα χρησιμοποιεί ως παράδειγμα τον ελληνικό ξενοδοχειακό κλάδο για να διαπιστώσει το βαθμό εφαρμογής των κατάλληλων soft skills στις διαπροσωπικές σχέσεις εντός των επιχειρήσεων, διεξάγοντας αρχικά μια μελέτη περίπτωσης για τη γενική κατάσταση που επικρατεί και στη συνέχεια διενεργώντας μια διεγματοληπτική έρευνα.
- Τέλος, καταγράφονται τα συμπεράσματα που προέκυψαν από την παραπάνω έρευνα και τίθενται προς συζήτηση.

Οι πηγές οι οποίες συνετέλεσαν στην ολοκλήρωση της εργασίας αυτής παρατίθενται στο τέλος του πονήματος, στο κομμάτι της βιβλιογραφίας.

METHODOLOGY

BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW: Soft skills, according to UNESCO, are behavioral patterns, personality traits, motivations and attitudes that can be acquired during working life and are associated with social grace, language fluency and personal habits (Pachauri & Aruna, 2014). They are highly transferable and allow effective and harmonious interaction of individuals on an intrapersonal, interpersonal and socio-emotional level. These skills sometimes focus on the person, sometimes on performance, sometimes on interaction and sometimes on the way of thinking. Finally, soft skills work in support and complement all other types of skills (Palaiologou & Karanikola, 2023).

RATIONALE OF PROJECT: The present diploma thesis aims to pick and evaluate the most important out of the many soft skills required to be incorporated in modern managerial practices. There will be references to both the global and the Greek hospitality sectors, in which a certain emphasis will be placed in the handling of diversity issues.

AIMS AND / OR HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH: Through the elaboration of this diploma thesis, some questions arise, which will be answered below for easy reference, and among which are the following:

- Does an updated soft skill portfolio improve the standing of both executives and employees, both in regards to intrapersonal relationships and corporate results?
- Is customer / employee satisfaction tied to more contemporary soft skills requirements like diversity appreciation?
- Does the awareness on such issues extend to the overall life mindset of companies or individuals?

DESIGN: Secondary research based on desktop research and data collection regarding the ways in which soft skills are incorporated in management practices in the hospitality sector.

MATERIALS: Books (physical and e-books), scientific papers and journals, conference proceedings and website articles regarding soft skills, management styles etc.

PROCEDURE: Secondary data retrieved by books, e-books, library archives, articles and Google Scholar.

PROPOSED ANALYSIS OF DATA: There will be a qualitative analysis of secondary data issued by books, e-books, academic journals and other publications relevant to behavioral subjects.

KEYWORDS: soft skills, management, leadership, hospitality sector

INTRODUCTION

The employers' perception of the employee's skills leads to the distinction between "hard" and "soft" skills (RPIC-VIP; Komisja Europejska; Institut für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Kultur, 2011). The original meaning of the word "skill" as a set of technical abilities in the context of a specific job, acquired after training, is closer to the modern meaning of "hard" skills, which are described as skills that are easily observable, measurable, attainable and closely related to knowledge. Examples of such skills are technical knowledge in any field, ICT knowledge, knowledge and application of legislation and regulations, etc. (Giannakidou, 2014).

However, as the structure of economies has changed in recent years, aided in part by the advent of the service sector, the technological development and the organizational restructuring of work, the need arose for skills that are not related to a specific occupation but determine the ability of the employee to function efficiently in the workplace, either alone or with others. These skills are usually referred to as "soft" skills (Lather, Garg, & Vikas, 2008), and are described as difficult to observe and measure, closely linked to behaviors and attitudes (e.g. communication, teamwork, conflict management, time management, public presentation, negotiation and leadership). One of the many existing definitions refers to soft skills (mainly social and interpersonal skills) as the qualifications, abilities and personal characteristics that the individual can use in the vocational environments in which they will be active during their working life (Fraser, 2001). They are characterized as "skills" so that the appropriate emphasis will be given to the fact that they can be learned / developed with the right education initiatives, and can also be used in conjunction in order to achieve complex results.

Researchers and practitioners use a variety of terms to describe these types of skills: soft skills, social-emotional skills, social and emotional skills, character abilities, or personality traits. However, the current literature refers to these as "traits", since traits generally remain unchanged, while skills can be developed (Giannakidou, 2014).

Soft skills do not replace hard skills on the subject of each specific job, but rather work in unison with them, allowing the individual to be able to manifest their personal dynamics and characteristics, as well as support their prospects, both in their professional and personal life (Felekidou, 2017).

Personal and social skills reflect the degree of emotional intelligence of the individual (Carbis, 2008), which makes the development of the former crucial to the promotion and enhancement of the latter. In an analysis carried out by Salovey & Mayer (1990), where the term “emotional intelligence” was introduced, it is emphasized that this is a part of general social intelligence, which refers to the ability of humans to monitor their own emotions, as well as those of their fellow human beings, distinguish and separate their emotions from those of others and act on information received from one’s environment.

Despite the fact that there is still no consensus on how these skills should be called (and which specific skills belong to soft skills), the general characteristics are:

- Differentiated from cognitive skills.
- Beneficial to individuals and society.
- Relatively constant over time in the absence of external forces, but may possibly develop or change.
- Differently expressed in different contexts (Logaras, 2017).

With that in mind, the further clarification of these concepts and their subdivisions will be attempted in the following chapters, so that the appropriate ways of applying them to the management of businesses in general, as well as some of their specific branches, will be found.

CHAPTER 1

THE BROADER MEANING OF SOFT SKILLS

The conceptual definition of soft skills leads to their direct association with the individual's personal development and interpersonal relationships in a social and professional environment, and by extension, includes skills that contribute to communication and general interaction between individuals (Tsolakidou, 2016). Soft skills help employees function effectively in the workplace, both individually and together with others, and are not related to a specific occupation, but rather the qualifications, abilities and personal characteristics that the person can use in a range of work environments (Joshi, 2017). At the same time, as horizontal skills, they are largely considered to be directly related to the employability of (mostly) young people and facilitate the transition from student life to the labor market, while at the same time contributing to the social integration of the individual, their active participation in society as a citizen, as well as their personal development and gratification (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020).

Brewer (2013) emphasizes that different organizations and national authorities in different countries use different terms to describe key soft skills:

- **United Kingdom:** core skills, key skills, common skills.
- **France:** transferable skills, Germany: key qualifications.
- **Australia:** key competencies, employability skills, generic skills.
- **OECD:** key competencies.
- **ILO:** core work skills, core skills for employability etc. (Sotiriou, 2021).

At the same time, the World Health Organization calls them “life skills”, the Institute for the Development of Vocational Training refers to “transversal skills”, the European Union defines them as “key competences for lifelong learning”, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development refers to them as “21st century skills”, and so on (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020).

According to research by Robles (2012), the ten most important soft skills in ascending order that employers want their new employees to possess are integrity, communication, politeness, responsibility, interpersonal skills, professionalism, positive attitude, teamwork, flexibility and work ethic. Tsolakidou (2016) clarifies that communication skills take into account both verbal and non-verbal communication, and additionally refers to problem solving, negotiation skills, leadership, flexibility, innovation, and a knack for planning and achieving goals. Panagiotopoulos & Panagiotopoulos (2005) mention communication skills (verbal, non-verbal communication), assertive behavior, the ability to negotiate solutions and solve problems, self-disclosure, the ability to build a cooperative relationship, to organize groups, to encourage and help its members, to lead, to “socially analyze” (i.e. the ability of individuals to diagnose and sense the feelings, motivations and anxieties of others) etc. as soft skills (Sotiriou, 2021). Kedraka (2008) also categorizes the initial social skills required for a professional career into factors as follows:

- **Independent work skills:** Responsibility, leadership, time management, resistance to pressure, creativity, decision making, problem solving.
- **Interpersonal skills:** Communication, collaboration, flexibility, negotiation skills.
- **Successful personal management skills:** Positive thinking and coping, self-confidence, self-presentation, taking initiatives.
- **Skills of managing technological means and information.**

At the same time, Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou (2020) attempted to gather the horizontal skills required for the labor market of the 21st century, mentioning creativity, innovation, social and intercultural skills, leadership skills, teamwork ability, communication skills, problem solving, critical thinking, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and organization (Sotiriou, 2021). Finally, other researches have additionally highlighted decision-making, time management, positive attitude and enthusiasm, critical thinking, willingness to learn, self-regulation and self-activation, creating presentations and proposals etc. as important soft skills (Majid, Liming, Tong, & Raihana, 2012).

1.1. TYPES OF SOFT SKILLS

1.1.1. COMMUNICATION

Communication can be defined as the process of transmitting messages from the sender to the recipient through specific channels through the process of encoding and decoding, with the goals of being effective and mutual (Koutouzis, 2013). Communication includes verbal (through written or spoken word) and non-verbal (through body language and various symbols) communication, and this skill is generally considered more developed in individuals when they can communicate in a more comprehensive and effective way with those around them in the personal, social and professional environment, while also being directly related to skills such as negotiation, active listening, empathy etc. (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020; Yamboulaki, 2018). It could perhaps be argued that communication is related to and affects most social skills.

Communication skills include knowing how to speak to others in different ways, situations or settings, like, for example, when working with a team on a project, someone may need to communicate when they believe an idea or process is ineffective; in such a case, finding a way to tactfully and skillfully disagree with others at work without creating conflict is an important skill that employers value (Patacsil & Tablatin, 2017). The most important communication skills are as follows:

- ❖ Active listening.
- ❖ Confidence.
- ❖ Conflict resolution.
- ❖ Negotiation.
- ❖ Public speaking.
- ❖ Writing.
- ❖ Non-verbal communication.
- ❖ Empathy.

1.1.2. PROBLEM SOLVING

The ability to solve problems quickly and efficiently is a quality that is highly valued in business. This might include leaning on industry knowledge to fix a problem as soon as it arises, or taking the time to research and consult with colleagues to find a scalable, long-term solution. The related problem-solving skills are as follows:

- ❖ Research.
- ❖ Risk management.
- ❖ Group work.
- ❖ Critical thinking.
- ❖ Analysis.
- ❖ Decision making.
- ❖ Resourcefulness (Sotiriou, 2021).

1.1.3. CREATIVITY

Creativity is the individual's ability to think outside the usual framework, challenge established perceptions and actions, propose new solutions to existing issues and act with originality at work (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020; Kedraka, 2007). Creativity is a broad skill that incorporates many different skill sets, including other soft skills and technical skills. Creative leaders manage to find new ways to perform tasks, improve processes, or even develop new and exciting avenues for a business to explore. Creativity can be used in any role at any level. The relevant creativity skills are as follows:

- ❖ Curiosity.
- ❖ Learning from others.
- ❖ Open-mindedness.
- ❖ Calculated risk-taking.
- ❖ Innovation.
- ❖ Experimentation (Sotiriou, 2021).

1.1.4. ADAPTABILITY

A person's ability to adapt to constant and sudden changes, maneuver in an ever-changing environment bombarded by an ever-increasing influx of new information, and function effectively by utilizing their existing knowledge and experiences in conjunction with the new information they absorb, are the main points of flexibility and adaptability skills (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020).

If one works in a field like hospitality, adaptability is especially important, as changes in processes, tools or the clients one works with are likely to happen quickly. Employees who are able to adapt to new situations and ways of working are valuable in many jobs and industries. The relevant adaptability skills are as follows:

- ❖ Consistency.
- ❖ Organization.
- ❖ Flexibility.
- ❖ Enthusiasm.
- ❖ Collaboration.
- ❖ Patience.
- ❖ Growth mindset (Sotiriou, 2021).

1.1.5. WORK ETHIC

Work ethic refers to the ethical choices and behaviors of individuals at work, and is related to trust, dedication, willingness to work hard and be punctual (Robles, 2012). In other words, it refers to a code of conduct and ethics that may vary depending on the work environment, but is consistent with rules that generally regulate the behavior of individuals. In addition, it paints hard and persistent mental and physical work in a positive light and inactivity, luxury and wasting time in a negative light, while simultaneously being related to work commitment and attachment (Heller & Ruiz-Quintanilla, 1974; bin Salahudin, bin Alwi, binti Baharuddin, & binti Halimat, 2016).

A strong work ethic helps ensure that one develops a positive relationship with one's employer and coworkers, even while one is still developing technical skills in a new job. Many employers would rather work with someone who has a strong work ethic and is willing to learn than a skilled worker who doesn't seem motivated. Here are the relevant work ethic skills:

- ❖ Attention to detail.
- ❖ Integrity.
- ❖ Persistence.
- ❖ Time management.
- ❖ Organization.
- ❖ Reliability.
- ❖ Motivation.
- ❖ Orientation towards results (Sotiriou, 2021).

1.1.6. OTHER

Integrity is related to basic characteristics of a person, such as honesty, straightforwardness and trust. Essentially, it is the connecting link between the humans position themselves with actions throughout their lives in relation to the perceptual ideological value system they have formed (Maxwell, 2009).

The skill of assessing, identifying and predicting potential risks and opportunities that leads to the formulation of ideas, the proposal of solutions and their transformation into actions by taking specific initiatives and responsibilities in order to overcome obstacles and impasses and exploit opportunities, constitutes the content of the term of the skill of developing initiatives (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020).

Stress tolerance refers to the ability of individuals to withstand pressure at work when it is needed, regulate their work with self-control to succeed in stressful situations by “surviving” without disrupting their health (Kedraka, 2007).

Self-activation as a skill is based on a set of independent motivations (such as self-improvement, self-evaluation, self-verification etc.) and refers to the ability of individuals to complete what needs to be done without being influenced by other people or situations, i.e. their internal motivation to achieving goals (Silvia & Duval, 2004). This skill could also be related to the theory of self-acting people who have strong intrinsic motivation in order to achieve goals (Everard & Morris, 1999).

Self-awareness as a skill is divided into two main categories: internal self-awareness, which refers to the degree of perception of values, goals, passions, reactions and effect on others, and the degree to which people fit in with their environment, as well as the external self-awareness, which refers to the perception of how the individual is viewed by others based on previous characteristics (Eurich, 2018).

Self-confidence as a skill includes a person's trust in themselves and their strengths, as well as the belief they he will succeed in any realistic conditions that they have to deal with, while at the same time being characterized by the skill of individuals to defend the positions they support (Kedraka, 2007).

The concept of self-regulation (or self-control / self-management) defines the skill in which a person modifies their behavior in order to achieve a goal; a process directly related to self-observation, self-evaluation and self-reaction, including metacognitive skills related to monitoring the progress of a project and the readjustment of the strategy to achieve the goals (Stringari, 2020). At the same time, it refers to the individual's ability to manage their emotions so as to maintain a balanced psychology that matches their goals, i.e. to the individual's ability to control and redirect their disruptive emotions, as well as exert pressure towards themselves in order to adapt to changing situations.

Negotiation skills refer to a person's natural affinity to working out solutions that lead to the desired outcome, de-escalating disagreements and mediating in order for agreements to be reached by balancing different interests (Kedraka, 2007; Panagiotopoulos & Panagiotopoulos, 2005).

Time management refers to the skill of the individual to organize and manage their time effectively, so that their responsibilities and tasks are carried out efficiently and in a timely manner (Giampoulaki, 2018). This skill is directly related to the prioritization of the important and the urgent and the corresponding distribution and utilization of available time (Everard & Morris, 1999).

Assertive behavior refers to the ability of individuals to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a clear, direct and non-aggressive way; that is, the ability to claim what they want not with passivity and aggression, but with respect, courtesy, directness and honesty (Kalpakoglou, 1996; Papanis, 2013).

Empathy, according to Goleman (1998), defines the ability of individuals to put themselves in the position of other individuals and perceive what they feel and need, to see things from the point of view of others and also handle diversity creatively and understand the dynamics of relationships in groups (Sotiriou, 2021). At the same time, it is the skill of recognizing what the individuals themselves want and mean and at the same time processing their own emotions (Todoulou-Polemi, 2005).

Conflict resolution is the skill of managing and resolving disagreements and situations that bring about conflicts between individuals, in which its practitioner adopts a specific approach and attitude for each case and environment according to the goals of all parties involved, and with the aim of adopting a fair and mutually acceptable (as far as possible) solution that contributes to the achievement of the common goals of a group or business (Everard & Morris, 1999; Papavasileiou-Alexiou, 2005).

The term politeness is mostly used in order to portray respect, concern for others and good manners (including non-linguistic aspects), while at the same time being related to helping others. In other words, it is an abstract concept with a humanitarian and moral dimension that is expressed mainly through acts of solidarity, kindness, and respect and is directly related to honesty (Sifianou, 2015).

Leadership refers to the skill of guiding, directing and influencing the actions of others to ensure their willing and voluntary cooperation in pursuit of the goals set (Patronas &

Pavlakis, 2011). It is a skill that is directly related to the functioning of a team, communication, flexibility, adaptability, decision-making, taking initiative, one's ability to inspire and influence other people and many other skills that can shape the style and the type of leadership (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020).

The reference to the terms positive attitude and behavior as a skill displayed by people refers to their positive disposition towards the people they associate with, as well as towards their environment (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). At the same time, Robles (2012) links this skill with characteristics such as enthusiasm, optimism, joy, encouragement and self-confidence.

Innovation as a skill includes the applied use of an individual's knowledge and creativity to develop improved or new processes, products and services with direct utilitarian and productive application (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020; Primikiri, 2017).

Social analysis is the skill of recognizing, manipulating and regulating the emotions of other people's motivations and anxieties (Panagiotopoulos & Panagiotopoulos, 2005).

Critical thinking as a skill refers to the individual's ability to think clearly, autonomously, persistently, consciously, carefully, energetically and logically in search of validity. Taking that into account, it can be said that it refers to the analysis of the information received and the systematic search for arguments with constant control, review and questioning in order to create substantiated positions, opinions and arguments (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020; Kokkos, 2005; Mezirow, 2007).

Decision-making is a systematic process of deeming some actions suitable to solve problems or direct specific activities, and presupposes the existence of at least two alternatives and the freedom of choice of the individual (Athanasoula-Reppa, Diakopoulou, Koutouzis, Mavrogiorgos, & Chalkiotis, 2008). It refers to the skill of making and implementing decisions when necessary, while also taking responsibility for the results, and furthermore indicates that a person makes good and direct decisions in relation to their purpose (Kedraka, 2007).

The content of the teamwork / cooperation skill refers to the ability of individuals to work in groups by limiting the aggregate elements of their character and cooperate effectively (i.e. interacting with other individuals to achieve a project, goal or result) while prioritizing the goals of the group (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020; Giampoulaki, 2018). The content of the specific skill is directly related to the concepts of group dynamics and processes for the way groups work and should work (Tsimpoukli, 2012).

Organization and planning is the skill of individuals to determine and follow priorities, goals and schedules through the application of appropriate methods and with the correct investment of available resources, in order to achieve these goals and adhere to schedules by achieving the desired results while minimizing the chances of failure due to their own responsibility (Vaiopoulos & Katsilidou, 2020). This is the primary stage of the theory of organization management; making the effort to control the future, determining the goals and the ways to be achieved as well as alternative ways of approaching them, while at the same time having a protective, aggressive and coordinating role (Athanasoula-Reppa, Diakopoulou, Koutouzis, Mavrogiorgos, & Chalkiotis, 2008).

Willingness to learn identifies individuals' willingness to learn new things or improve their existing knowledge, attitudes and skills (Samantray, et al., 2017). In other words, it refers to the positive predisposition of individuals to get involved and participate in learning processes, defining learning, according to Illeris (2016), as any process that contributes to a permanent change in a perception that is not however solely due to biological maturation or aging.

Kedraka (2007) states that the ways in which people present themselves is a self-presentation skill that contributes to the entry and retention of the individual in the labor market and is accompanied by the adoption of a specific strategy in order to arouse interest in inviting the individual to an interview for a job. It also covers resume and cover letter writing skills, as well as job interview skills, while also including the skill of the individual to present the appropriate elements of themselves each time, in order to achieve the goals they have set (Chaudari, 2021).

1.2. SOFT SKILL DETERMINANTS

According to Haselberger, Oberhuemer, Pérez, Cinque & Capasso (2012), soft skills are a dynamic combination of cognitive, meta-cognitive, intellectual, interpersonal and practical skills, as well as ethical values, while Cinque (2012) mentions that *“personal and social skills help individuals develop positive behavior and attitude so that they can cope with the challenges of their professional and personal lives, adapting to environmental conditions”*.

Soft skills refer to behavioral and personality traits, determining a person's strength as a listener, mediator, team member, negotiator and leader. According to Moraru (2013), personal and social skills are a dynamic set of personal qualities, abilities, skills and behaviors that enable individuals to cooperate, perform, achieve goals and function effectively within their environment.

Personal and social skills do not replace 'hard skills', i.e. skills related to cognitive level, academic training and technical skills on the subject of each specific job, but rather work simultaneously with them, allowing the individual to be able to manifest their personal dynamics, characteristics and prospects, both in their professional and personal life (Vasanthakumari, 2019).

Although there is no complete outline of personal and social skills, a number of such skills have been recorded, which mainly fall under five axes:

- ✓ Higher-order thinking skills, which consist of the ability to think critically, identify the problem, obtain information from multiple sources, evaluate options, and make decisions based on critical analysis (Felekidou, 2017).
- ✓ Communication skills, which consist of the individual's ability to accurately express their thoughts and opinions and understand the thoughts and opinions of other individuals.
- ✓ Positive self-image skills.
- ✓ Self-control skills, such as managing pressure and stress (Cha, Cichy, & Kim, 2009).
- ✓ Social skills.

According to Cinque (2013), soft skills fall under three main categories, where each skill category has specific parameters: personal skills, social skills and content-based skills. Of course, there is no complete list of soft skills. After all, there are differences, both in the importance of the skills and in their content, depending on the culture of each people, its cultural characteristics, its history, etc.

In an analysis carried out by Hofstede (2001), six dimensions of culture are noted:

- Power distance, which measures *“the extent to which less powerful members of society expect and accept that power is unequally distributed”* (Hofstede, 2001).
- Uncertainty avoidance, which refers to *“the degree to which members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid them”* (Ting-Toomey, 1999).
- Individualism versus collectivism, which refers to *“the degree of interdependence that a society maintains among its members”* (Harris & McDonald, 2004) and expresses whether the individual makes decisions out of their own free will, based on their own desires and expectations. In a culture of individualism, the focus gets mostly placed on the self, while in a culture of collectivity, individuals belong to groups, where there is mutual protection and decisions are made with the good of the group in mind (Felekidou, 2017).
- Long-term versus short-term orientation, which refers to the degree to which *“a society is oriented towards maintaining ties with its past or is oriented toward facing the challenges of the future, setting different priorities depending on the orientation”* (Chaama, 2017).
- Tolerance versus restraint, which refers to the degree *“to which people try to control their desires and impulses based on how they were raised”* (Lituchy, Galperin, & Punnett, 2017).

1.3. DEVELOPMENT OF SOFT SKILLS

With regard to the development of personal and social skills, specific learning indicators can be identified, being here structured around three main axes:

- ⇒ Indicators of personal and environmental conditions (axis of relationships).
- ⇒ Decision-making and management indicators (productivity / goal achievement axis).
- ⇒ Indicators of learning results (learning axis).

The development of personal and social skills can be achieved through methods that fall into three main categories: explanation / interpretation, guidance and active learning (Sridhar, 2022).

Papadakis & Fragoulis (2005) emphasize that the value of social skills, as well as the contribution of education to their development, cannot always be recognized, as they are often acquired through informal forms of education. Therefore, the assessment of the quality of social skills that people possess can hardly be assessed and recognized by highlighting professional rights related to them (Sotiriou, 2021).

1.4. THE VARIABLE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence / emotional quotient (EQ) can be defined as a combination of social, emotional and intellectual skills to understand and manage one's own emotions and empathize with the emotions of other people.

According to Bar-On (1997), emotional intelligence consists of five parameters:

- ✓ Individual dimension.
- ✓ Interpersonal dimension.
- ✓ Adaptation to the environment.
- ✓ Stress management.
- ✓ Overall mood.

According to Schutte et al. (1998), emotional intelligence can be measured along five axes:

- ✓ The effect that the person thinks they have on other people.
- ✓ The perception of other people's emotions.
- ✓ The perception of the person about their own feelings.
- ✓ The non-verbal formulation and transmission of emotions.
- ✓ The way the person manages their emotions.

According to Mayer & Salovey (1997), emotional intelligence is based on three axes:

- ✓ Accurate understanding of personal feelings of self and other people.
- ✓ Utilization of the knowledge of emotions in order to obtain positive results in any situation that arises.
- ✓ Interconnection and regulation of emotions.

The ability to recognize and effectively manage emotions, combined with the creation of personal motivation, is, according to Goleman (1998), in the forefront of the interpretation of emotional intelligence, and is responsible for up to 80% of the success in the individual's personal life and 60% of the professional success. Thus, the concept of intelligence is removed from its close connection with the cognitive domain and the content dimension of learning according to Illeris (2016), who refers to Goleman's views on the interaction of the rational and emotional mind and the view that the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is no guarantee of success in human life, therefore EQ should be given equal or greater importance.

Goleman (1998) also emphasizes that the two basic types of abilities included in intelligence are of the personal and social variety. Personal competencies consist of self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-activation, while social skills refer to empathy (i.e. the ability to put oneself in the "shoes" of another and understand how they feel and what they need), as well as the understanding of the dynamics in intragroup relationships and the management of diversity. Also, the relationship-building abilities include social skills such as communication, negotiation, teamwork, conflict and disagreement resolution, as well as emotion and relationship management (Sotiriou, 2021).

In regards to professional life, Goleman (1999) emphasizes the key role of social skills and clarifies that they are the skills that make people stand out and succeed at work. At the same time, he singles out communication skills as one of the most necessary vocational competences, but at the same time clarifies that, depending on the work context, different requirements in terms of the necessary skills are found. Finally, the author underlines that emotional skills are not innate but can be acquired and cultivated through learning and education, while also arguing that all people are born with some general emotional intelligence that determines their potential of developing emotional skills (Sotiriou, 2021).

1.5. NEED IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR

The hotel industry is a service industry where everything is determined by the way in which the communication between professionals and customers takes place. The customer / tourist experience has emerged as a central concept, both at the level of academic literature and at the level of business practice. The experience in question is shaped not so much by the place, the natural beauty of the area and the infrastructure (i.e. the material elements of the tourist offer), but rather by the intangible elements, such as the courtesy of the employees, the level of service, the immediate response to visitor requests, as well as by the professionalism and personal interest in the enhancement of the customer experience (Felekidou, 2017).

The above elements form the core of soft skills, which makes it essential for the industry workers to possess them in spades, which is usually a result of education. The development of individual and social skills should be a structural element of training programs, as many government and private tourism agencies have listed the following employability skills (Jameson-Charles, 2015):

- ✓ Basic skills (writing, reading, mathematical operations, computer knowledge etc.).
- ✓ Communication skills.
- ✓ Adaptability skills (problem solving, creative thinking etc.).

- ✓ Developmental skills (self-esteem, self-motivation, goal setting, career planning etc.).
- ✓ Team effectiveness skills (interpersonal skills, teamwork, negotiation).
- ✓ Influencing skills (understanding organizational culture, delegating leadership) (Felekidou, 2017).

As recorded in the said list, most of the necessary skills are those of personal and social skills. In this context, it should be emphasized that, while these skills are evaluated as absolutely necessary and can be even further specialized (such as, for example, the ability to effectively manage customer complaints), training programs do not put the appropriate emphasis on the development of these skills, which is further exacerbated by the fact that these training programs put the trainee in a passive position (George, 2007).

CHAPTER 2

SOFT SKILLS IN MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

The development of entrepreneurship, especially since the second half of the 20th century, has led to the diversification of the management of economic and business organizations. Initially, the management was carried out by the head of each company, but as the economic and business activity developed, the need to find suitable people to delegate responsibilities was identified. The selection of a person capable of taking over the course of an organization specializing in business plans was placed into the hands of the professional manager, who, at least at the beginning, had no other relationship with the organization-company. Therefore, a manager is considered to be the person to achieve the goals that are set during planning, through the work of other people (Georges, Efthimiadou, & Tsitos, 1998).

In order for the concept of a manager to be defined and for their skills and characteristics to be identified, it is first necessary for the organization or company in which they operate (the hospitality industry in this case) to be clearly outlined. According to the systemic theory of Luhmann (1998), every organization is a complex system of interactions between the people who work in it, which concern social, economic, cultural and other factors. Therefore, for the administrative officers, their field of activity is full of interactions, which can either be internal or come from the external environment. Without good managers, today's organizations would find it difficult to manage complex and chaotic situations (Milios, 2020).

For Mantzaris (2003), each manager has certain tasks, the implementation of which determines the objectives, responsibilities and interpersonal relationships between the members of the organization. At the same time, boundaries must be set between members, who must also be informed and directed towards the achievement of the pre-planned purpose, while at the same time, gaps must be identified and appropriate instructions must be given. The most important of these duties that an executive needs to have are:

- ✓ The full utilization of available resources.

- ✓ The distribution of the project-related tasks.
- ✓ The control of the progress.
- ✓ The promotion of effective ideas.
- ✓ The implementation of strategic planning.
- ✓ The targeting of high expectations.
- ✓ The assumption of business risk.
- ✓ The balancing of the interpersonal relations of the employees (Milios, 2020).

2.1. IMPORTANCE OF SOFT SKILL ACQUISITION

Interest in training and developing the skills of managers is growing widely (Crawford, 2000; Egginton, 2012). Having recognized the need to develop management and embed capabilities in projects, industries have begun to invest significantly in that field (Winter, Smith, Morris, & Cicmil, 2006). However, the failure rate of projects is still high and gaps between expected and actual results still exist (Jergeas & Ruwanpura, 2009; Stanley & Uden, 2012). Wateridge (1999) states that projects often fail because project managers do not pay due attention to interpersonal / soft criteria, while Thomas & Mengel (2008) argued that current management education is not at all adequate to prepare project managers for modern-day issues (e.g. diversity management), and many others (Córdoba & Piki, 2012; Ramazani & Jergeas, 2015) agree.

This inappropriateness of training occurs because, in many cases, management is taught as a set of technical / hard skills, such as setting goals, creating Gantt charts, critical path analyses, work breakdown structures, and so on (Thomas & Mengel, 2008), while the interpersonal / soft, human skills necessary for success are overlooked (Andersen, 2008; Ramazani & Jergeas, 2015). The philosophy of management literature has always focused on technical / hard skills as required for success, relegating interpersonal / soft skills (Pant & Baroudi, 2008), which is probably because the latter are easier to learn compared to the former (Carbone & Gholston, 2004; Yen, Lee, & Koh, 2001). However, this level of education teaches people to think, feel and carry out instructions, but does not prepare people to face unexpected difficulties or unique situations (Siebert, 2005). There is very

little training in developing the emotionally and intellectually intelligent project manager specialist (Mengel & Thomas, 2004) involved in complex and unique projects.

A review of the literature reveals that project management has developed as an essentially purposive, functional activity, aligning with the technical / hard paradigm in terms of tendencies toward positive and realist philosophies, an emphasis on objectivity, and a focus on deductive techniques and control (Jackson, 2000; Morris, Pinto, & Söderlund, 2011). A strong emphasis on the technical / hard paradigm can also be traced to how the tools and techniques commonly associated with project management were developed (Deligianni, 2017).

In contrast, the influence of the interpersonal / soft paradigm in project management is less significant, but it appears that respect for it is growing in the field (Pollack, 2007), as more and more organizations realize that it is the people who undertake the tasks in a project and therefore interpersonal / soft, human skills are also vital to the success of a project (Kliem & Ludin, 1997; Kloppenborg, 2014). It has been concluded that project management effectiveness requires project managers to combine their technical / hard skills with the ability to develop and demonstrate strong interpersonal / soft skills (Gillard, 2009; Kloppenborg, 2014; Ramazani & Jergeas, 2015).

To date, training programs do not provide adequate training in interpersonal / soft skills (Ramazani & Jergeas, 2015); however, it is beginning to emerge and the need for a balance between technical / hard and interpersonal / soft skills in project management education is highlighted (Gillard, 2009; Heckman & Kautz, 2012). The education system must go beyond the provision of technical / hard skills for project managers and reflective abilities must be developed to deal with complex situations (Pant & Baroudi, 2008; Rolstadås, Hetland, Jergeas, & Westney, 2011). Finally, the need for continuous training and development of project managers must be emphasized, as the latter must ensure that they constantly review their strengths and weaknesses and strive to improve throughout their careers (Deligianni, 2017).

2.2. MANAGERS' SOFT SKILL FUNCTIONS

In the modern era, with the increasing electronic and digital progress, the business world has become more complex, and by extension, the same has happened to the role of the manager. According to Drucker (1998), there are five basic functions that a manager must develop in order to operate efficiently and fulfill their goals:

- **Targeting:** A competent manager sets goals (and smaller ones within them) from the very beginning, encouraging their partners and deciding on the ways to implement them; this way, the extent in which managers are effective in their job will become clear. Therefore, an effective manager is the one who achieves the organizational goals via their actions, while the efficient ones complete their work in a short period of time and with the least available resources (Georgakopoulos, 2006).
- **Organization:** This is an important function that the executive needs to possess in order to lead effectively, and one that is usually suggested for groups of people with common goals. Management could draw up an organizational charts, assign tasks to members / groups and select the most suitable, thus creating an organizational structure. At the same time, it seeks the coordination of all individual activities for the realization of the intended purposes (Zavlanos, 2003).
- **Motivation:** Additionally, a manager motivates and pushes team members for greater performance, supports actions beneficial to the company and encourages or criticizes accordingly proposals of its members, acting in the capacity of a leader.
- **Communication:** In addition, a manager should communicate with partners and subordinates on a regular basis and show respect and trust as a professional. At the same time, they should not seek conflicts but also should not accept inconsistency (Andron, 2013).
- **Evaluation:** Finally, the evaluation is the function that yields the fruits of the work. Through it, a manager monitors, compares and determines the measurement criteria that are aimed at improvement and achievement of corporate missions, while also analyzing and informing about the findings and guiding the members of the organization accordingly (Mavrolambadou, 2016).

Mintzberg (2009) also recognizes the importance of the manager as a leadership figure, since they need to assume decision-making roles, while also functioning as an entrepreneur, a disturbance handler, a resource allocator and a negotiator. Thus, as an entrepreneur, the manager looks for opportunities to improve the services and the products, and simultaneously creates and oversees the design of the programs. In the role of a disruption manager, their main objective is prevention, but if a disruption occurs, they can take action in order to deal with the unexpected disruption (such disturbances are conflicts between subordinates, loss of resources etc.). At the same time, they are responsible for finding resources and allocating resources of all kinds, and finally, as a negotiator, the manager must successfully represent the organization in important negotiations (Mavrolambadou, 2016).

In addition, it is the manager who plays an important role in creating the culture in the organization. Specifically, they argue that the executive in charge of an organization has to perform a multitude of roles that are grouped into three categories: informative, decisional and interpersonal (Mintzberg, 2009).

The informative role includes the actions that a manager has as a monitoring and control instrument, as a distributor (disseminator) and as a representative (spokesman), so that they are able to intervene in time by taking appropriate decisions if possible problems are detected. In addition, in the role of distributor, the manager receives information from the external environment and disseminates it appropriately to the members for the effective implementation of the intended goals (Milios, 2020). Finally, in the interpersonal role, the manager is called upon to become a leader, providing vision, inspiring trust and being receptive to listening to the views of their colleagues. In addition, they demonstrate a positive attitude and encourage initiatives, while at the same time performing a liaison role with individuals and groups outside the organization (Western, 2008).

It is therefore concluded that the most effective managers are people with high expectations who plan organization models in a total and transparent way, define achievable goals and review actions while also leaving room for modifying the course of action. At the same time, they set priorities in a hierarchical way and act effectively in situations with a high

degree of uncertainty by taking risks and finding solutions. In addition, in their interpersonal relationships, they create channels of communication with the members of the organization that are characterized by respect and rewards for efforts, which in turn creates upliftment (Naylor, 1999; Kefis, 2005).

2.3. LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

According to Hayes (2008), skill is defined as the degree of ease, accuracy, and speed in which one performs a sequence of complex actions or mental processes to achieve the resolution of difficult issues to a degree that exceeds average performance. It sometimes happens that some people do not perform well in the work they do because of a lack of the required skills; however, the identification of skills is of particular importance for dealing with problems related to the human factor (Milios, 2020). In today's time, the constant changes, the increase in international competition, as well as the rapid technological development, make it necessary for in all organizations, small and large, to be managed by an effective leader (Saitis, 2008).

From the empirical research of several decades, it appears that researchers initially formulated lists with a large number of characteristics that a leader should possess. Bass (1990) mentions some characteristics that a manager needs to have, grouping them into six categories: physical characteristics, social background, intelligence, personality, professional knowledge and social characteristics. Another empirical study of 1.500 managers found that they must be competent, proactive and inspirational for their followers (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). Furthermore, Garden (1989) emphasizes that the elements that characterize an effective leader are intelligence, courage and determination, accountability, motivational prowess, adaptability and trust. For other scholars, achievement, ambition, initiative, motivation for leadership, honesty, self-confidence and cognitive ability play a special role (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

Specifically, researchers argue that leaders have a greater desire to achieve goals and receive satisfaction from completing challenging actions, while also setting high expectations and

seeking more efficient ways to carry out their tasks (Milios, 2020). This is easily understood if one takes into account the fact that managers do a large part of their work in order to perform to the height of their capabilities and constantly strive for self-improvement by working at a non-stop pace. At the same time, they believe that honesty is equally important, since without leadership is undermined in its absence and trust emerges in its presence (Mavrolambadou, 2016).

In addition, energy or physical vitality and vigilance help a manager / leader face stressful situations and maintain a stable productive course. On the other hand though, sometimes these skills can have the opposite effect, as energetic and dynamic managers, in their attempts to accomplish everything themselves, may fail to develop commitment and a sense of responsibility in subordinates (Daft, 2009). Still, other researchers stress sociability and self-confidence in addition to integrity and energy as skills of a leader. A leader very often faces a series of problems that need to be solved, and thus, decision-making is required; at this point, self-confidence plays an important role, since it forces the leader to undertake tasks with a high degree of difficulty, set high goals, take more initiatives and also propose innovations (Hollenbeck & Hall, 2004). At the same time, for a leader / manager to be considered successful in the management of his work, they need to possess emotional stability. Leaders are those who are called upon to resolve differences and conflicts among members of an organization, and this ability helps them not fluctuate in their behavior and mood and balance interpersonal relationships (Yukl, 2010).

The environment in which managers are called upon to operate is characterized by complexity and dynamics. To successfully cope, they need to possess skills that will help them deal with change, as well as develop and implement new programs, innovations and practices (Milios, 2020). Many researchers concluded that the main skills and resources that leaders need to have include cognitive skills, emotional intelligence (emotional skills), social characteristics, technical skills, strategic and business skills and finally interpersonal skills (Raducan & Raducan, 2014; Zaccaro, 2007).

2.4. DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Diversity management is a concept that was introduced in the early 1990s, initially emphasizing the increasing diversity among employees and then the proper management of this diversity under the right social and legal frameworks. Diversity for many has to do with race, ethnicity, and gender, and for some others it extends to issues such as religion, social class, and age (Harvey & Allard, 2002).

The term “diversity management” was the official title used by British companies for practices they wanted to implement and related to equal opportunities or equality policy among their employees. Equality policy has been part of labor policy and standard business policy for big business in Britain since the early 1980s (Rizou, 2017). The key issues of equal opportunities have always been about gender and race discrimination and, by extension, cultural differences. Primarily, they reflected moral concerns for social justice, which meant measures had to be taken in order for social discrimination to be eliminated (Kirton & Greene, 2010).

For the success and efficiency of an organization, working relationships are a very important factor. In the work environment, relationships are developed, through which indirect implications for workplace effectiveness arise, as they form a psychological climate, through which individuals perceive their relationships and their work. Although employee communication can often be overlooked and undervalued, business leaders who invest time in improving it recognize its overall impact on the entire business (Bakotić, 2016).

Therefore, it is understood that knowing that employee communication is important is not enough, and as a result of that, companies must develop a strategy, keeping in mind the specific business needs, goals and points of attention (Allen, Dawson, Wheatley, & White, 2007).

2.4.1. HANDLING OF RELATIONSHIPS

Established theory and research yield conflicting views on the quality of interethnic relationships in work groups. On the one hand, there is reason to believe that workers in different ethnic backgrounds will find it difficult to establish positive relationships with each other; according to the similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, Clore, & Smeaton, 1986), it appears that similarity in attitudes, values, or demographic characteristics increases interpersonal attraction and liking, and considerable research has supported this prediction. On the contrary, dissimilarity and ethnic differentiation can reduce attraction, as it can be perceived as a threat to people's values and norms, and consequently, that might negatively affect them, nudging them to either avoid transnational contact or respond negatively to such interactions, while also dissimilarity can lead to in-group favoritism and out-group deviance (Paschalidou, 2022).

According to the social identity theory devised by Tajfel, Turner, Austin & Worchel (1979), individuals use similarities and differences as a basis for categorizing themselves and others into groups and outcasts; in this context, they evaluate in-group members more positively than the outcasts, in order to maintain a positive self-esteem. Such processes can be expressed in discriminatory acts, which can lead to the deterioration of inter-ethnic relations at work.

In a research that included a sample of 219 employees who were ethnic minorities in their workplace and which took place in the Netherlands, Schaafsma (2008) found that interethnic relations were less harmonious when ethnic differences were considered to affect people's sense of success (e.g. work goals), sense of belonging (e.g. team unity) and sense of equity (e.g. procedural justice). Such problems were most often reported when ethnic differences were linked to other types of diversity, such as information and value diversity. Less harmonious interethnic relations were reported by members of the ethnic majority group and in low-skill settings where actual ethnic differences were large. The findings suggest that ethnic differences per se, do not necessarily affect interethnic relations in a work setting, but only do so when it is meaningful to individuals or within a particular context (Paschalidou, 2022).

2.4.2. CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

A factor that contributes to the effective management of diversity is the formation of a culture that promotes teamwork and participation (Roberson & Park, 2007). Workplace contact can provide members of national minorities, and / or people with other particularities, the opportunity to establish positive relationships with each other; for example, according to the contact hypothesis, contact between ingroup and outgroup members can lead to more positive intergroup attitudes. This is expected to occur in situations in which there are supportive norms of equality and in which people have common goals and equal status, cooperate with each other, have the opportunity to get to know each other and interact (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). The workplace is a setting that is likely to meet many of these conditions, as in such an environment, people from different backgrounds may become more aware of what they have in common and develop a shared identity within the group (Gaertner, Dovidio, & Bachman, 1996). As a result, they may develop more positive feelings toward each other, which can make their interactions easier and more enjoyable.

Based on the above, it is immediately clear why a culture that promotes communication and teamwork in the workplace can contribute positively to the effective management of diversity in the workplace. Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart & Wright (2003), in their analysis of the characteristics that lead to successful diversity integration efforts, note the importance of socialization in the company, through which new employees who represent diversity become effective company executives. Effective socialization includes preparing them to perform effectively on the job, learning about the company, and developing working relationships (Paschalidou, 2022).

Socialization has three stages: advance socialization, familiarization, and adaptation.

- ⇒ Pre-introduction takes place before the individual joins the company, where expectations about the company, the job position, working conditions and interpersonal relationships are developed through interactions with company representatives during selection and recruitment. Potential employees need realistic information about the specific job position and the company, and this may include

brochures, videos, or information from the interviewer during the interview (Paschalidou, 2022).

- ⇒ The familiarization stage takes place when the employee starts a new job. Regardless of the level of realistic information that the person obtained in the previous stage, they face unprecedented situations and surprises upon starting on a new job. It is therefore critical that employees become familiar with job duties, receive appropriate training, and understand company practices and procedures. The quality of the new hires' relationship with their manager has a significant impact on their socialization, as managers can help build good working relationships by helping new recruits understand their roles, providing information about the company and understanding the pressure and issues they may face.
- ⇒ Finally, in the adaptation stage, employees begin to feel comfortable with their work demands and social relationships. They begin to resolve conflicts between work and non-work activities, while in addition they are interested in the evaluation of their performance by the company and are informed about potential prospects for development within it (Paschalidou, 2022).

2.4.3. OTHER PROPOSED PRACTICES

Diversity management is not a simple project; however, there are some key areas that businesses should focus on. More specifically, management should include, among others:

- Identification of the types of discrimination.
- Collaboration with different partners in order to understand their own business case.
- Communication of actions to employees, customers, investors, etc.
- Ensurance that HR understands exactly what discrimination means and how it affects individuals and the business itself.
- Examination of the impact of an equal treatment and opportunities policy.
- Cultivation and strengthening of the trust of people both inside and outside the organization.
- Learning from others and comparing with the best (HR Professional, 2011).

According to the European Union, there are some practices that the best employers and managers can implement to ensure that there will be no discrimination phenomena or how to effectively manage them if they are faced with such behaviors:

- Awareness that discrimination may occur.
- Update on the new regulations.
- Creation of the right environment.
- Development of policies against any form of racism or discrimination.
- Readiness to exercise leadership
- Control of the entire organization.
- Communication of actions.
- Improvement of human resource skills.
- Complaint management.
- Involvement in positive initiatives.
- Involvement of all employees.
- Progress evaluation.
- Connection to the "outside world".
- Seeking of expert help (HR Professional, 2011).

CHAPTER 3

USAGE OF SOFT SKILLS IN HOSPITALITY SECTOR

Globalization has created a myriad of business expansion opportunities in the hospitality sector, but along these lines, the biggest challenge for the relevant professionals is to make the most of this situation and “create” the competent executives of tomorrow. The requirement for those professionals is to disseminate the key competencies that are most sought after in graduates of hospitality educational institutions. This is a relationship that could aid the endeavors of both parties, as the industry is constantly on the lookout for the right mixture of employees, and the trainers try their utmost to instill the suitable competencies in them (Mohanty & Mohanty, 2018).

In this context, the hospitality industry is out to evaluate the competencies and skills required of tomorrow’s aspiring executives in order to reduce turnover and prepare for the grueling process of attraction and retainment of the adequately trained workers (Tesone & Ricci, 2005; Ghiselli, La Lopa, & Bai, 2001). To maintain their competitiveness, hospitality industry executives seek the aforementioned workers from a variety of educational institutions, which places the focus on the methods in which the learning objective is being presented (Tsai, Chen, & Hu, 2004).

Pavesic (1991) suggested that the teaching of tourism-related objectives around the world has undergone a fundamental transformation, following suit after the drasting changes that occurred in sectors like the socio-cultural and technological ones, as well as globalization. The researcher also elaborated by stating that conscious efforts are being made in order to modify the teaching objectives and the required skills of the future hotel staff (Mohanty & Mohanty, 2018).

Nonetheless, the goal of hospitality education is to “create” future professionals who will be ready to be immediately “absorbed” in the industry, and will be more than qualified to deal with daily tasks and problems without hesitation (Enz, Renaghan, & Geller, 1993). From that point of view, the combination of theoretical knowledge with the slow build-up of a skill set that ensures longevity, has become a major point of emphasis in the

universities that have the hospitality sector as their main teaching object (Tesone & Ricci, 2005; Chathoth & Sharma, 2007). The literature review in regards to the soft skills needed in the hospitality sector has stated the following (Kukreti, Upreti, Bala, Kapoor, & Prakash, 2021):

- Zou, Ramirez, Erazo & Encalada (2019) noted the importance of effective communication within a hotel organization, as hotel workers often have to interact with guests. Therefore, one must have adequate oral communication skills (mostly in English), since that would help them comprehend customer needs and initiate and maintain conversations this way.
- Kasetl (2018) stressed the need for language courses, especially for prospective workers, stating that *“it will help improve skills in terms of speaking and effective learning in the hospitality and tourism industry”*.
- Mondkar (2017) pointed out the massive role both hard and soft skills play in the hospitality sector, noting that *“while the individuals need to work on technical skills to get a job, they also need to focus on soft skills for a career”*.
- Nusrat & Naz (2018) state that soft skills are a broad term and should be appropriately grouped into several components: managerial skills, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, entrepreneurial skills, communication skills and problem-solving skills.
- Tang, Mohamed & Kanokorn (2015) examined situations that arise in the growth process of organizational soft skills, which fall into the following main divisions: organizational problem-solving skills, personal skills, and interpersonal skills.
- Kumar & Dash (2011) pointed out that communication is a major factor in influencing the upper management’s decisions on who to hire, and that hospitality sector businesses should strive to improve their communication skills.
- Shukla (2013) suggested that *“organizations and academic institutions should strive to strengthen the soft skills of individuals”*.
- Johanson, Ghiselli, Shea & Roberts (2011) surveyed recent academic publications and deemed soft skills such as communication, customer centricity, people skills and leadership extremely important.

- Wilks & Hemsworth (2011) underlined the skills that are considered crucial for the hotel sector, with soft skills at the forefront.
- Gursoy, Rahman & Swanger (2012) carried out a survey about the skills that are of the highest priority among hotel executives, with leadership gathering the most votes.
- Ineta (2015) discussed the importance of competences like problem solving, teamwork, leadership, effective communication, multilingualism and interpersonal skills in the hiring process, concluding that it is as high as ever (Bathla, Rana, & Singh, 2019).

3.1. DESIRED SOFT SKILLS FOR INDUSTRY SUCCESS

3.1.1. EMPLOYEES

The ability to communicate effectively is essential in the hospitality industry, as the daily tasks are characterized by personal interactions with guests and customers, as well as with employees from other departments. Using appropriate soft skills such as verbal and nonverbal communication to manage one's own emotions, as well as those of others, can help a worker stand out in a job environment like the one that is present in the hotel sector (Prentice, 2019). Communication is widely recognized as the most important soft skill required for entry-level managers in the hospitality industry. This validates the findings extracted by McMurray, Dutton, McQuaid, & Richard (2016) that communication consistently ranks among the most crucial soft skills sought after by aspiring professionals.

In the words of Wesley, Vanessa, & Lee (2017), leadership is *“a soft skill of negotiating with others, participating in team environments, providing service, and resolving conflicts”*, while Oktadiana & Chon (2017) explain that *“leadership skills are one of the key skills in preparing students for managerial positions in industry”*. It should be observed that leadership growth occurs organically via personal experience (White, 2020).

That being said, the reality is that most new graduates are not usually expected to hold managerial positions, but leadership is among the skills and characteristics that graduates

must demonstrate in order to be employed in the hospitality industry (Majid, Eapen, Aung, & Oo, 2019).

In the hotel sector, each department must contribute to the relationship and work together effectively to achieve goals. Given the collaborative nature of the industry, it's no surprise that team spirit is seen as an essential soft skill for a manager's success. Alhelalat (2015) paints teamwork as one of the skills in which leaders believe their followers to be able to outperform their peers from different professional fields. This result is consistent with the McMurray, Dutton, McQuaid, & Richard (2016) analysis, stating that teamwork was the third most desired soft skill among graduates out of 1.000 job advertisements. Another survey of 542 employers carried out by Dhiman (2012) identified teamwork as an important factor in new graduate recruitment. Work experience, such as the type that comes through internships, helps students understand what is expected of them in the industry and builds their competence and confidence in the skills needed. Additionally, students who have a better understanding of what is expected of them tend to stay longer in the industry (White, 2020).

Min, Swanger, & Gursoy (2016) express the viewpoint that communication and adaptability are the topmost important competencies for employment in the hospitality sector. In this research, multiple employers stressed that workers should prove to be adaptable and able to do their job equally effectively even when juggling multiple responsibilities.

Ibrahim, Boerhannoeddin, & Kayode (2017) put an emphasis on the ways in which businesses are progressively acknowledging that soft skill development significantly contributes in the transformation of the organizational culture, leading to improved job performance, while Rahimi & Gunlu (2016) describe organizational culture as *“a process for running a business rather than a set of tools”*, and argue that *“even for candidates with the desired soft skills, culture must be aligned with organizational values”*. Communication, leadership and team spirit are the soft skills hotel professionals pointed out as the most crucial for vocational longevity, while adaptability, emotional intelligence and eagerness to follow this line of work also stood out (White, 2020).

It is clear that soft skills are a strict prerequisite at all levels of the hotel industry, regardless of the degree of workers' involvement with the customers. The key soft skills that manager candidates are expected to specialize in can be broadly grouped into the following categories:

- a. **Customer service:** As part of the service industry, the hotel job description requires both customer interaction and interpersonal skills on every level. Combining caring and responsible behavior with object knowledge can vastly enhance both the customer experience and the employee's standing with the company.
- b. **Networking:** This skill is invaluable for the future prospects of a career in the hotel sector.
- c. **Communication:** Communication skills need to be developed in order to handle the wide range of customer requests on a daily basis. Speaking, writing, and listening are powerful communication disciplines that have an instantaneous effect on a company (Prasad, 2020).
- d. **Organizational skills:** Suitable planning of everyday tasks, adherence to corporate scheduling, and protocol fulfillment are some other important characteristics required of hotel workers.
- e. **Language skills:** Proficiency in multiple languages (especially in global ones like English) is always an advantage for those working in the hotel industry. For visitors and customers with varying backstories, local language helps establish bonds with them and contributes to retention.
- f. **Crisis management:** Crisis management is another crucial component of the hotel industry, as unexpected occurrences would happen every day. Professionals need to actively participate and "take the extra step" in such cases.
- g. **Cultural awareness:** Customers from different ethnicities and cultures beg for the acquisition of the cultural awareness competency. Naturally, customers don't always have common values, beliefs and ideas, which makes it extremely important for cultural barriers to be removed (Prasad, 2020).

3.1.2. MANAGERS

Since the 1980s, studies have been conducted to determine the necessary competencies for hotel managers. Tas (1988) published a list of 36 necessary skills for aspiring hotel executives, which were divided according to their importance as essential, considerable, and moderate. Okeiyi, Finley & Postel (1994) included soft skills among the essential competencies for food and beverage managers, while Mayo & Thomas-Haysbert (2005), in a study identifying skills required for hospitality and tourism graduates, ranked communication skills and the ability to lead and motivate subordinates as two of the most important skills. Also, Gursoy, Rahman & Swanger (2012) noted differences in the academic requirements of hotel employers in the second half of the 2000s, with leadership still scoring the highest in regards to importance in the most recent among the surveys.

Soft skills were also considered significant by Sisson & Adams (2013), who evaluated aspiring hospitality professionals to track down the most crucial skills for entry-level managers. The 33 competencies they included in their research were further categorized into hard, soft and mixed skills, in which 13, 16 and 4 competencies were listed respectively. The authors also investigated differences in the ratings of three groups (food and beverage, lodging, and meeting and event management) of managers. For skills considered to be absolutely required, no significant differences were found between the three groups, unlike the groups of leadership-related skills. In both cases, food and beverage managers considered soft skills to be more crucial than meeting and event managers did (Crawford & Weber, 2016).

Also, the skills that were deemed essential for hotel executives were also stated to be vital for club managers (Perdue, Ninemeier, & Woods, 2002), hotel property-level IT executives (Cobanoglu, Pelin, & Poorani, 2006), and hotel managers of various other hierarchies (Kay & Russette, 2000) in the UK (Baum, 1990), in Spain (Agut, Grau, & Peiro, 2003) and in Australia (Dimmock, Breen, & Walo, 2003).

3.2. HANDLING OF DIVERSITY

The ongoing globalization and wider diversity of the workforce, combined with a lack of diversity handling competencies, are seen as the main causes of lower staying periods and productivity in the hotel sector. With so many people from different cultural backgrounds in the job environment, the leadership requirements have progressively been altered. A multilingual workforce need even more assistance in order to tackle the growing number of diversity-related issues; consequently, the preservation of the competitive characteristics of hotel companies requires their executives to be more aware of cultural differences among people they interact with on a constant basis (Gong, 2008).

Because these leadership qualities are not self-evident, it is necessary for cultural diversity training programs to be implemented in hospitality companies in order for the sector requirements to be satisfied (Lim & Noriega, 2007). Universities and other relevant schools should also include educational objectives in order to train the aspiring professionals and prepare them for the climbing of the corporate ladder.

An apt interpretation for diversity education would be “*a means of fostering respect and sensitivity to all differences between employees and customers*” (Lim & Noriega, 2007), as it raises valid issues for conversation. When workers are more willing and straightforward in discussing their non-common traits, they help create a trusting environment and increase the efficiency of the decision-making process. This type of education appears to be of highest priority in instances where problem solution and crisis aversion competencies are needed, while also making easier for multicultural workers to mingle (Day, 2007).

All in all, there are three objectives in conducting educational initiatives in regards to cultural diversity:

- The first objective of such education is to assist workers in the preliminary stage of knowledge on how to deal with cultural differences in developing awareness of cultural diversity. By learning in multicultural workshops, the future hotel industry professionals develop an awareness of how cultural standards vary and how others

see them in terms of impressions, perceptions and stereotypes. Such an initiative for multicultural education is only the beginning for the acquisition of appropriate sensitivity in such matters (Day, 2007).

- The second objective of this type of education is to assist aspiring professionals in gaining insight of cultural differences, as well as in increasing diversity awareness. By attending these initiatives, trainees learn the intricate details about the places the differences derive from and how they can shape-shift according to each situation (e.g. the ways in which relationships are formed in different civilizations, or the ways in which requirements might change in the workplace depending on one's differentiating traits). Acknowledgement and comprehension of these differences can, according to Gong (2008), "*help build trust, communicate more effectively, avoid misunderstandings, and improve workplace harmony*".
- The third and final aim is the development of diversity-handling competencies. After the added sensitivity and insight on cultural differences, Day (2007) insists that "*trainees need to further develop skills to manage, communicate and negotiate in culturally diverse environments*".

In a nutshell, Baum, Devine & Hearn (2007) refer to the ultimate objective of diversity education as "*preparing individuals to be competent cross-cultural communicators with cultural awareness and sensitivity*".

3.3. CHALLENGES IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The hotel industry requires a unique combination of skills, as hard and technical skills alone cannot always guarantee professional longevity. The industry requires hands-on training in addition to theoretical instructions. However, as the data below shows, there is a large skills gap in this sector:

- 55% of professionals were determined to lack guest treatment competencies, 53% were deemed to possess inadequate organizational skills, while 51% of the workers

showed a deficiency of verbal communication skills, and 44% did not possess the expected team spirit.

- The most pressing personnel-related issues for businesses such as hotels are skill deficits (69%), attraction issues in regards to aspiring employees (51%) and repeat business (36%).
- The turnover rate in the hospitality sector reached a staggering figure of 72,9% in 2016.
- 39% of receptionists and 42% of other essential workers leave within the first three months.
- 35% of managers change companies within a year from their initial hire (Prasad, 2020).

The reasons for such alarming numbers may be one or both of the following:

- ✓ Lack of behavioral conduct awareness: Universities and other tertiary education institutions that offer hospitality sector classes are more interested in theoretical knowledge transmission, which does not give students enough reps on actual experience, and the internship timeframe is not enough for the aspiring professional to become adequately adept to all facets of their vocational object. On the other hand, the labor market places more emphasis on practical knowledge of functions and processes, but that also means that there is little balance between these two equally important facets of learning, and also a large gap between what people prepare for and what they end up facing.
- ✓ Lack of language proficiency: This is the largest obstacle to progressive skill development, so it's important for workers to familiarize themselves with all-inclusive ways of communication. Businesses should be aware that this can give them a leg up on the competition, as multilingual fluency enables employees to effectively serve guests from all sides of the globe (Prasad, 2020).

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY: THE GREEK HOSPITALITY SECTOR

4.1. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The hotel sector, or the hotel industry, is an important sector of the Greek economy, as it helps promote the country far and wide and presents an overwhelming advantage for its tourism. It offers a variety of products and services that are mainly focused around the hotel services, which include, among other things, all the building facilities that offer the combination of goods and services (whether it be hotels, motels etc.) (Chitiris, 1991).

4.1.1. HOTELS

Hotel units can be distinguished in different ways in different categories, e.g. according to the level of the combination of goods and services they offer, the type of ownership (Greek or foreign interests, chain, group, etc.) or the geographical area in which they operate (Telemes, 2018).

Business operations and their optimization are viewed by management theory as a main component for any strategy that wants to bring about improvements. Thus, when evaluating the hotels, if this factor is not taken into account, there will be limitations on the result and the correct review of the hotels (Anderson & Peterson, 1993).

When it comes to the functions that hotel companies choose whether to do themselves or to outsource, these must be carefully considered in light of the resources available and the capabilities they offer. The strategic value of a function determines its potential to be a source of competitive advantage for any Greek hotel company. Sustainable competitive advantage is a product of processing cumbersome resources that enable product or service differentiation; however, not all resources have the potential to become sources of sustainable competitive advantage. For a function to have this dynamic, four conditions must be met: It must be valuable, rare, non-substitutable and not easily imitated (Barney, 1991).

Hotels must be able to justify the services they outsource by showing an improvement over the results that existed when the operation was run by the hotel business itself. Therefore, outsourcing must stem from the hotel unit's desire to acquire such specific resources that it does not possess at the given time and that can be more efficiently deployed by an external partner (Espino-Rodriguez & Padron-Robaina, 2005).

4.1.2. DEMAND

The demand of the hotel industry is an important factor to be studied because it offers a better understanding of the industry itself, its prospects etc., while its practices and demand analysis is valuable information that significantly affects the industry. It is worth emphasizing that demand has certain characteristics that shape it and play an important role in decision-making (Telemes, 2018). Some of the most basic demand characteristics of the Greek hotel industry will be listed below:

- The change in demand for hotel services is significantly affected both by changes in the prices of these services and by changes in the disposable income of the tourist who consumes them.
- The appearance of new and special types of hotels has led to segmentation of the market with the ultimate goal of better satisfying specific desires and demands of specific groups of consumers.
- Due to the development of technology and applications related to hotels and related services, the industry has entered a phase of internationalization. Now the comparisons and the competition in the industry are carried out on a global level because the information spreads quickly and the distances have decreased in terms of the possibilities for someone to get to know a new hotel unit or service (Telemes, 2018).
- Another characteristic of the hotel industry's demand is the global nature and profile of consumers, since it is one of the industries where the majority of consumers / tourists are citizens of other countries. Businesses in the industry must analyze this in order to use it to their advantage and to improve the hotel product and services,

which in turn means that there must be appropriate training of the staff in languages that are the most frequently spoken in each hotel complex, as well as adaptation to the habits and requests of the majority of customers, which often concern habits and customs from their countries of origin, with the end goal of making their stay more pleasant and easy.

- The quality of the services provided in this sector cannot be judged in advance, but only at the end of the travel experience. The hotel is only one part of this travel experience, so it would be positive for hotel units to also take care of informing their customers about the transportation and entertainment options available to them to make the consumer experience more positive, earning more positive critics in the process (Telemes, 2018).

In addition, it should be mentioned that certain factors have a significant effect on the formation of demand and are important factors of study for those interested in the hotel industry. Some of the most important factors affecting the demand for tourism and hotel services are:

- The economic developments in the countries of origin of the tourists. In other words, it is understood that any negative circumstances in the economy of countries whose citizens are clients of the hotel units will have negative effects on bookings and on the amounts that will be allocated to holidays and hotel services in Greek hotels.
- The economic and political environment in Greece (which are a mirror of the country), as well as the image of the country as projected by the media and advertising campaigns internationally. In the case of a stabilized economic and political environment, tourists perceive it as something positive and demand increases, while in the opposite case or in cases of bad publicity of Greece for any reason, this is an inhibiting factor for attracting tourism, therefore the demand for hotel services decreases (Telemes, 2018).
- The international competitiveness of the Greek tourist product. In a globalized environment, the prices and quality of tourist and hotel services must be able to compete with those of other countries; this means that, if the services in some area

(for example online platforms or hotel applications) lag, this is a negative factor for demand. Accordingly, the high prices that are not accompanied by the corresponding quality are an inhibiting factor to the increase of tourism in the hotel industry.

- Various geopolitical developments and international events happening at any time and affecting the country. An example is the case of conflicts / wars or weather disasters in nearby countries that affect the overall image of the region. Tourists often categorize regions geographically, and the reputation and events of regions spread rapidly, thus affecting either positively or negatively the demand for tourism services (ICAP, 2016).

4.1.3. TOURIST INFLUX

A very important variable which is an indicator for the course and prospects of the Greek hotel sector is the number of tourist arrivals. The reason why this happens is because the majority of customers / consumers of hotel services are foreign citizens, therefore they are the main targeting and clientele of hotel units (Telemes, 2018).

Foreign tourist arrivals in Greece increased by 65% between 2010 and 2016, reaching 25 million in 2016. With 60% of these arriving in hotels, this momentum translated into increased demand for the hotel industry, which fully offset the fall in domestic demand (16% in the period 2010 – 2016). As a result, total tourist arrivals in Greek hotels increased by 12% in the period 2010 – 2016, with foreign tourists at the time covering about two thirds of arrivals in Greek hotels (from 55% in 2010).

The increase in foreign tourist demand appears to have come solely from individual tourists, which doubled between 2008 and 2016. In contrast, agency bookings fell by 20%, with their contribution falling to 25% of arrivals in 2016, down from 43% in 2008. This development looms large, as individual bookings are more profitable, with spend per night to be 8% higher on average over the past decade versus agency bookings, with the difference reaching 20% in 2016 (NBG, 2017).

The increase in tourist traffic demonstrated the resilience of Greek tourism in times of crisis and was mainly attributed to:

1. The increased international competitiveness of the Greek economy at the time, which was strengthened even more by the formation of the exchange rate of the Euro at relatively low levels.
2. The recovery of the economies of the countries of origin of the foreign tourists in Greece, which came largely from the policy of zero or negative interest rates.
3. The consideration of Greece as a safe tourist destination in recent years in which terrorism and the negative effects of major geopolitical disturbances burdened many of the competing countries (Telemes, 2018).
4. The satisfactory development and upgrading of the country's hotel potential, all kinds of accommodation and catering businesses in combination with the gradually improving entrepreneurship in all areas of tourism service provision (ICAP, 2016).

It is worth mentioning that the majority of foreign tourists who visit Greece choose the plane as a means of transport.; in particular, the percentage of foreign tourists who arrived in Greece by air in 2015 constitutes 63.5% of the total arrivals by all means. The most important markets for the hotel industry and Greek tourism in general during the last decade are Germany and Great Britain. Specifically, in 2015, 2,8 million German and 2,4 million British tourists arrived in Greece. These two countries together accounted for approximately 22% of all arrivals in Greece (Telemes, 2018).

The countries of Europe as a whole covered the vast majority of total arrivals in Greece with a rate close to 88%. As far as tourism revenues for 2015 are concerned, they marked an increase of 5.5% compared to 2014 and amounted to €14,1 billion. According to SETE data, the number of international arrivals at the country's main airports in the eight months of 2016 compared to the corresponding period of 2015, recorded a 6,5% increase, while the arrivals (excluding cruises) increased in 2016 compared to 2015 (ICAP, 2016).

4.2. IMPORTANT FACTS

In Greece, according to the latest data from EL.STAT. regarding employment, it appears that from 2008 to 2016, almost all sectors of the Greek economy were significantly affected. In total, during this period approximately 934 thousand jobs were lost in Greece (20.3% reduction in employment). One of the few sectors of the Greek economy that showed significant resilience was the tourism sector; during the eight-year period between 2008 – 2016, it was the only productive sector, in which employment increased by 5.9%, corresponding to 19,000 workers (Panousi, Soklis, & Christidou, 2017).

According to the estimates resulting from the field research carried out by Research Institute For Tourism for Greek hotels, 97.988 people were working in May 2016 and 144.390 in August. The specific sizes result from reducing the sample data to the total number of rooms, while the average employment is weighted by the size of the unit, the class of the hotel and the region where it is located and the rates of change in employment show that the hotel industry acts as a buffer to the further increase in unemployment in the country (ITEP, 2017).

In Greece, according to relevant data from the Hellenic Statistical Authority regarding employment, it appears that from 2008 to 2016, almost all sectors of the Greek economy were significantly affected. In total, during this period approximately 934 thousand jobs were lost in Greece (20.3% reduction in employment) (ELSTAT, 2017).

At the same time, the trend of concentration of tourism employment in the island country continues (61% of total employment in hotels). In absolute terms, the largest number of employed people is recorded in the islands of Nott. Aegean, with the hotels employing almost 35.9 thousand people in August. Crete follows with approximately 32.9 thousand workers. In 2016, Macedonia-Thrace was also included in the regions with a high number of employees, in whose hotels it is estimated that approximately 20,7 thousand people are employed (Panousi, Soklis, & Christidou, 2017).

4.3. PERSONNEL EDUCATION

A study by Christou (1999) on training future hospitality employees / managers found inadequate coverage of IT courses and skill areas due to deficiencies in hardware and education methods. Most respondents (58%) would like to see radical improvements in this area in the future; however, most of the people interviewed said they had already had extensive experience working with computer technology out of personal interest and practiced at home in their own time, so they had no problems after graduation.

According to the same study, when it comes to foreign language knowledge and skills, all graduates agreed that English was not a problem, since because they had a fairly good command of the language even before they started studying. Additionally, some of the hotel management projects completed by respondents were conducted in English. However, more than 65% of them felt that their knowledge of other languages (French, German, Spanish or Italian optional curricula) did not meet the demands of their profession (Christou, 1999).

Most of the aspiring professionals (77%) felt negatively about the course's business subjects, opining that they did not acquire either sufficient theoretical insight or skills in areas like sales and marketing, human resource management, organizational theory and economics. Respondents who held full-time or seasonal jobs in the industry said that "*the situation worsened after being hired, as most of their employers' in-service training focused on hospitality roles rather than managerial positions*" (Christou, 1999). Their main reason was that most of them lacked knowledge of the legal system.

Respondents' development of soft skills during learning was rated as adequate for some of them, but that did not hold true for easily attainable competencies such as customer complaints and relationship building. Most respondents (59%) agreed that they were satisfied with the degree in which their written communication, critical analysis, reasoning, problem solving, and computer skills increased, but there were no positive evaluations in regards to team spirit, presentation, organizational, leadership and motivation competencies; on the contrary, a handful of aspiring hospitality professionals stated a complete absence of many important soft skills, including interpersonal skills such as time

management, formal letter writing, stress management, training, discipline, and interviewing.

An interesting point made by nearly all participants was that, in their opinion, the ability to deal with the internal politics of an organization and the ability of an individual to market themselves are the most important skills that can be inherited; in this respect, they made sure to point out that these competencies too were not addressed at all. Graduates felt they were able to significantly improve their practical skills in the hotel and catering business during their internship (Christou, 1999).

Another area of satisfaction in Greek hotels was the development of the graduates' soft skills, with common areas of improvement being time management, discipline, organizational skills, teamwork. They also wished they had developed skills such as problem solving, leadership and motivation, and interviewing techniques. In other surveys (Brennen & McGeevor, 1988; Leslie, 1991; ELSTAT, 1994), participants stressed that unsatisfactory working conditions combined with lack of training and experience of managers led to low morale and motivation.

Due to the financial globalization and the steady rise of cultural diversity in all fronts, it was deemed necessary for the objectives of relevant education to be more "international" rather than "local" or "national" in their design, implementation and instruction (Valachis, 2005). Valachis, Christou, Sigala, & Maroudas (2009) therefore suggested that the relevant professionals and institutions should consider these trends in the world's economic and cultural environment and make the right decisions regarding hotel management training in Greece.

Additionally, due to the diversity of the hospitality industry, we should also strive to define what skills and competencies may be required in hotel management graduates. As a result, Valachis, Christou, Sigala, & Maroudas (2009) again argued that hotel management programs should arm aspiring professionals with the necessary competencies in order to "survive" in the business; with that in mind, it was proposed that the learning objectives should get more updated with the times.

4.4. MANAGEMENT IN GREEK HOTELS

Each hotel unit relies on the right composition of the human resources that make it up, so as to offer the best and most innovative services to customers, to achieve a high customer satisfaction index. Hotel employees present some peculiarities even in the employment contract they sign with the respective companies; for example, many workers are on fixed-term contracts, which is referred to as “seasonal employment”, meaning they are not employed all year round. As a result of that, unemployment and underemployment are increasing (Laloumis, 2015).

Thus, the human resources executives of the Greek hotel units are constantly alert so that they discover methods and ways to attract new workers for their businesses. Various policies such as recruitment and additional benefits, change of contract and salary or daily wage are some of the issues that often come to face the executives of the units. These issues are not resolved individually per employee but as a whole, taking into account collective agreements and labor legislation, so as to avoid any type of violation of the law. In addition, the decisions are mainly taken by the general managers of the units, because labor costs constitute the largest part of a company's budget. Therefore, after checking and calculations, the general manager and human resources executives determine the labor cost per month, but also annually.

It is worth mentioning that in Greece, many hotels operate under the umbrella of chains, in which additional benefits are provided for their staff, such as additional private hospital and medical care, food, and extra bonuses. Many hotel companies adjust the remuneration of their staff, so that they can meet their needs and, by extension, be happy and satisfied (Paparounas, 2022).

4.4.1. GOALS

In all businesses, as well as in hotel units, the objectives are the same, since the specific departments try to achieve employee satisfaction as well as to ensure the smooth operation of the business through the following objectives (Vagiatis, 2008):

- Initially, it identifies the needs of the unit in human resources to be able to function. In a second phase, it determines the number of employees and the qualifications required as well as demographics such as gender and age.
- The recruitment of staff, which is usually carried out through online advertisements, tourism schools for people who wish to do their internship or stay with the company after its completion, as well as through online channels.
- The right selection of personnel, in which the HR director and the head of the respective department should choose the most suitable and competent candidate, taking the risk of wrong selection, which may result in loss of time (Paparounas, 2022).
- New hires should be informed about their daily responsibilities and trained in the respective departments for which they have been selected.
- People who work for the business are likely to need further training to gain sufficient knowledge in responding to the tasks they will have to perform every day. The responsibility of the department is to identify these needs and make decisions to resolve this matter.
- It is the management's responsibility to properly comply with all the company's obligations, as defined by law.
- Through polls and questionnaires, it will receive the results for the satisfaction of its employees, as well as the effect of the training they have received (Paparounas, 2022).
- The improvement of human resources services will help to improve the corresponding services that the company provides to customers, and thus it will be able to become competitive in the market.
- The most important goal of the business is to achieve the operational goals that it has in place in all its departments.

4.4.2. TASKS

The management of a business is one of the most important within it because it deals with all the employees employed within the organization. The main objective of the department is to carry out the appropriate and most correct actions so that all employees are always happy and satisfied. Despite the particularities presented by hotels, there is no significant difference in the responsibilities of the human resources department of a business in the hotel industry in relation to a business of another type. Therefore, the main responsibilities and functions of the department in a hotel are the following (Bourantas, 2002):

- Human resources planning: An investigation is carried out on labor market conditions and through this the department tries to anticipate the needs of the business to be able to achieve its long-term goals. It evaluates and identifies the knowledge of its human resources in order to be able to utilize it in the most ideal way in respective departments. Finally, he should be aware of the relevant labor legislation and the collective agreements defined by law.
- Personnel selection and recruitment: The human resources department carries out a series of necessary actions and tries to staff the company with the most ideal, most competent and qualified personnel. Therefore, it conducts searches for new personnel from sources to man the open jobs based on the required knowledge and qualifications for each specialty separately. After the selection of the right candidate, some procedures are necessary to hire him correctly and in accordance with the labor law (Paparounas, 2022).
- Staff development, transfers, promotions and termination of cooperation: After the recruitment process, the staff of the company is evaluated by the head of their department, many times also by the human resources manager and they decide if they can stay in the existing position, if they have the skills and knowledge to get a promotion, or even be transferred to another part of the unit that might be more efficient. Many times, however, the choice of the employee is not correct because he cannot meet the requested needs of the company, then the company is forced to terminate the cooperation.

- Evaluation and remuneration policy: In cooperation with the managers of the other departments, the manner and criteria on the basis of which the employees of each department are judged are defined. The goal is to determine the value of each employee's work. After collecting the data that determine the performance of the employees, a plan must be drawn up based on which the remuneration policy of the company will be implemented. It is important that remuneration includes incentives for employees and is in line with the general economic climate in the market (Paparounas, 2022).
- Communication: It is important that the company communicates to its employees its goals and the requirements it has from them, so that they too have a complete picture of their position and the results they must have through their work. At the same time, the interaction with the employees is useful in order to find out if there are problems that concern them, if there are situations within the company that can be improved, so that by dealing with them, there is greater commitment to the object of their work and to achieve the maximum possible productivity.
- Disciplinary code: Like all businesses, hotels operate by rules. Violation of these rules can have various consequences for employees or even for senior management. Therefore, the responsibility of the human resources department is to draw up the company's regulation, to check the employees' compliance with it and to intervene with the appropriate actions (e.g. recommendation, fine, dismissal) when this is deemed appropriate (Paparounas, 2022).

4.5. DIVERSITY / MULTICULTURALISM

The hotel sector has one of the most diverse groups of workers and customers, thus providing unique chances for members of both groups to gain new cultural experiences. As said by Kapiki (2012), *“understanding and respecting different cultures is important for staff in order to better interact with tourists of different cultures, religions, races, colors, ages, genders and sexual orientations”*. For the sake of that, companies operating in this business should strive to educate their staff to respect and embrace people of diverse

backgrounds around the world. Diversity therefore not only makes a variety of cultural, social and economic perspectives easier to comprehend, but also boosts the experience of service provision (Merchant, 2011).

Diversity in the hotel business is reinforced by ideas that put equal employment opportunities in the forefront in order to provide the optimal service experience. By employing people of diverse backgrounds, the industry learns about the socio-cultural and economic differences of the world. Greek companies in this industry therefore need to further establish organizational policies that not only prevent discrimination, but also promote cross-cultural activities such as cultural training curricula, while also adopting organizational structures that include people of different geographies and nationalities, and distribute important missions to adequately experienced employees from all walks of life (Kapiki, 2012).

The modern Greek hotel environment is characterized by increasing internationalization and globalization; evidently, the past decade has seen a huge growth in the hospitality industry as people now travel a lot around the world. This continuous globalization of the hospitality industry, but also the increasing number of foreign workers in the hotel units, forced those in charge to thoroughly concern themselves with the concepts of diversity / multiculturalism (Nanu, 2019). Specifically, the reasons are as follows:

- ❖ Contact with different cultures has always been a primary motivation for travelers. Over the decades, Greek tourism has experienced continuous growth, as it is now one of the fastest growing economic sectors worldwide. This development results in the interaction of travelers with hotel workers. Therefore, in order to serve customers better and more efficiently, their different cultural backgrounds should be understood (Papakonstantinou, 2018).
- ❖ Many Greek hotel chains are looking for expansion opportunities in other markets. This implies that some employees may be forced to work in a different country from their country of origin, depending on the needs of the business and therefore, they will have to adapt to the new data, where the rest of the employees may not

share the same language and come from from different cultural backgrounds (Papakonstantinou, 2018).

- ❖ The continuous globalization of the hotel industry has led to a diverse / multicultural workforce. This results in many employees coming from different cultures having to work together and communicate on a daily basis. If they fail, it will have an impact on the quality of their work, leading to customer dissatisfaction.
- ❖ The number of economic migrants, as well as workers belonging to minority groups, entering the hotel industry, is constantly increasing, not only in Greece but also in general (Gong, 2008).
- ❖ The hotel industry is characterized as a labor-intensive industry, which means that the people are the key to its success. According to various authors, 80% of Greek hospitality managers' working time is spent exclusively on communicating with customers, colleagues, superiors and subordinates. However, their failure to understand workforce differences leads to misunderstandings and wrong practices in motivating, rewarding and managing this diverse workforce (Gobelna, 2015).

4.5.1. POSITIVE INFLUENCES

The diversity / multiculturalism of human resources has been combined with the success of Greek hotel businesses, as it contributes to the following:

- ⇒ Teamwork and development of interpersonal relationships have increased, as working with people from different cultures contributes to understanding different points of view, broadening their perceptions. This interaction of different cultures is a unique opportunity, both for employees and customers.
- ⇒ Innovation and creativity have also increased, as workers coming from different cultures and civilizations offer more new ideas and perspectives to solve common problems (Stasinic, 2013), especially in customer service, but also in the creation of new products.
- ⇒ Teams made up of people from different cultural backgrounds achieve and cooperate better than homogenous teams (Nanu, 2019), thus increasing

- productivity in complex tasks. Of course, team productivity depends on many factors, such as the work itself, the abilities and personalities of the members, and so on.
- ⇒ Better relations between employees and managers have been established, as the latter know which employee can best cope with difficult situations.
 - ⇒ By implementing diversity / multiculturalism management programs, contact and familiarity with different cultures is achieved. The working environment is freed from local prejudices and restrictions and an international business climate is cultivated (Papakonstantinou, 2018).
 - ⇒ Offering a wider range of foreign languages spoken by hotel workers can attract a greater number of international tourists, but the workers themselves also gain by expanding their knowledge by learning foreign languages.
 - ⇒ Increasing the credibility of the business, as the employment of employees from different environments, can be a pole of attraction for potential customers, but also potential employees. This happens because the diversity / multiculturalism of the existing staff proves that in the specific work environment there is no room for any form of discrimination.
 - ⇒ As the workforce is characterized by diversity / multiculturalism and businesses are forced to become more flexible in all their processes, the flexibility in working conditions has increased, and even more so in the hotel units where the working conditions are characterized as particularly difficult with the endless working hours and the seasonality of tourism (Panousi, Soklis, & Christidou, 2017).
 - ⇒ According to many researches that have been conducted, businesses with heterogeneous staff achieve better financial results than businesses with homogeneous staff (Emma, 2010).

4.5.2. CHALLENGES

Any diversity and multiculturalism in the Greek hotel sector entails the following problems that must be resolved:

- ⇒ Most people tend to believe that the majority of the problems arise due to the fact that not everyone speaks the same language, which in turn causes a lack of understanding. The workers who come from different cultures, with different visions and beliefs, may unconsciously create communication problems, which will automatically lead to dissatisfied customers, reduced productivity and therefore, a threat to the operation of the business itself (Nanu, 2019).
- ⇒ According to Johnson (2011), the Greek hospitality industry relies on multicultural customers, but also on multicultural employees. However, misunderstandings and disputes may arise between them due to their cultural differences. The consequences are dissatisfied customers, frustrated employees, and ultimately job losses (Grobelna, 2015).
- ⇒ The fact that hotel customers differ from each other means that what pleases and satisfies customers from one country with a particular culture may not satisfy some other customers from another cultural background. This reality leads to more personalized services, adapted to different preferences, but this situation can cause additional issues for employees.
- ⇒ After all that, there is still discrimination in the workplace, as there is no shortage of instances where people from diverse backgrounds were hired, but were not provided with equal opportunities for career advancement and remained on the lower rungs of the hierarchy and the salary class (Baumann, 2016). This has an impact on the overall productivity of these workers, who, feeling wronged, reduce their productivity (Papakonstantinou, 2018).
- ⇒ Although diversity / multiculturalism contributes positively to business, there are often employees who react negatively to the coming changes. This is because employees feel loyalty to their initial perceptions and not to a business made up of many small diverse / multicultural teams. This situation can often cause intense stress and lead to conflicts and disagreements among staff members (Wroblewski, 2011).
- ⇒ With the increase in diversity / multiculturalism in the human resources, the need for the corresponding training intensifies at the same time. However, this imperative of training can cause negative feelings in some employees.

- ⇒ Often, the diversity/multiculturalism of human resources also entails high financial costs for the company itself (Mayhew, 2011).
- ⇒ In addition, the diversity / multiculturalism of the human resources can complicate the decision-making process. It is not easy to find solutions and make final decisions in work dilemmas when the majority of employees have different values and beliefs (Tziora, Giovanis, & Papacharalabous, 2016).

CHAPTER 5

QUESTIONNAIRE

The method used to better understand perceptions of diversity in the restaurant's workplace was a three-part questionnaire: the first part recorded respondents' demographics, while the next two parts asked some questions based on the Likert scale (1 to 5 depending on the level of agreement), one open-ended question, and one more question with Yes / No answers.

Part A

The control subject were divided into various teams based on the following criteria:

- **Gender:**
 - **Female:** 19 out of 50 (38%)
 - **Male:** 31 out of 50 (62%)
- **Age:**
 - **19 – 24:** 4 out of 50 (8%)
 - **25 – 34:** 15 out of 50 (30%)
 - **35 – 44:** 17 out of 50 (36%)
 - **45 – 54:** 11 out of 50 (22%)
 - **55 – 64:** 3 out of 50 (6%)
- **Education:**
 - **Standard:** 19 out of 50 (38%)
 - **University degree:** 25 out of 50 (50%)
 - **Postgraduate degree:** 4 out of 50 (8%)
 - **Master's degree:** 2 out of 50 (4%)
- **Nationality:**
 - **Asian:** 7 out of 50 (14%)
 - **European:** 36 out of 50 (72%)
 - **Middle Eastern:** 4 out of 50 (8%)
 - **North American:** 3 out of 50 (4%)

- **Marital status:**
 - **Married:** 26 out of 50 (**52%**)
 - **Divorced:** 3 out of 50 (**6%**)
 - **Single:** 19 out of 50 (**38%**)
 - **Would rather not answer:** 2 out of 50 (**4%**)
- **Religious beliefs:**
 - **Christian orthodox:** 30 out of 50 (**60%**)
 - **Muslim:** 9 out of 50 (**18%**)
 - **Christian catholic:** 4 out of 50 (**8%**)
 - **No religion:** 7 out of 50 (**14%**)
- **Working position:**
 - **Manager:** 5 out of 50 (**10%**)
 - **Reservation clerk:** 6 out of 50 (**12%**)
 - **Receptionist:** 8 out of 50 (**16%**)
 - **Waiter/Waitress:** 11 out of 50 (**22%**)
 - **Cleaner:** 4 out of 50 (**8%**)
 - **Chef:** 6 out of 50 (**12%**)
 - **Barista:** 5 out of 50 (**10%**)
 - **Dishwasher:** 5 out of 50 (**10%**)
- **Working experience in company:**
 - **Less than one year:** 3 out of 50 (**6%**)
 - **1 – 2 years:** 7 out of 50 (**14%**)
 - **2 – 5 years:** 21 out of 50 (**42%**)
 - **5 – 10 years:** 13 out of 50 (**26%**)
 - **10+ years:** 6 out of 50 (**12%**)
- **Working experience in sector:**
 - **Less than one year:** 2 out of 50 (**4%**)
 - **1 – 2 years:** 5 out of 50 (**10%**)
 - **2 – 5 years:** 9 out of 50 (**18%**)
 - **5 – 10 years:** 14 out of 50 (**28%**)
 - **10+ years:** 20 out of 50 (**40%**)

Parts B / C

QUESTION	RESULTS	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION
(1 = Completely disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Completely agree)			
PART B			
1. My colleagues understand the importance of customer diversity.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 8 (16%), Neutral: 21 (42%), Agree: 17 (34%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,26	0,88
2. My colleagues understand the importance of a different customer profile.	Disagree: 3 (6%), Neutral: 16 (32%), Agree: 25 (50%), Completely agree: 6 (12%)	3,68	0,77
3. I meet customers from various different backgrounds on a daily basis.	Neutral: 3 (6%), Agree: 23 (46%), Completely agree: 24 (48%)	4,42	0,61
4. I have heard colleagues in the hotel use offensive remarks towards customers.	Completely disagree: 8 (16%), Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 12 (24%), Agree: 9 (18%), Completely agree: 4 (8%)	2,68	1,19
5. I feel secure to express my diversity towards customers.	Completely disagree: 3 (6%), Disagree: 13 (26%), Neutral: 18 (36%), Agree: 12 (24%), Completely agree: 4 (8%)	3,02	1,04
6. I'm careful who I interact with when I'm working in the hotel, because customers might not know of my culture.	Completely disagree: 6 (12%), Disagree: 18 (36%), Neutral: 17 (34%), Agree: 8 (16%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	2,6	0,97

7. I'm open to hearing my colleague's opinions regarding customer diversity.	Completely disagree: 2 (4%), Disagree: 9 (18%), Neutral: 15 (30%), Agree: 20 (40%), Completely agree: 4 (8%)	3,3	0,99
8. I deal with the customers' cultural diversity on a daily basis.	Completely disagree: 3 (6%), Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 15 (30%), Agree: 21 (42%), Completely agree: 4 (8%)	3,32	1,02
9. I believe diversity helps my colleagues better understand customer needs.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 8 (16%), Neutral: 15 (30%), Agree: 22 (44%), Completely agree: 4 (8%)	3,4	0,93
10. I have witnessed incidents where customer diversity was not met with respect with my colleagues'	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 4 (8%), Neutral: 14 (42%), Agree: 25 (34%), Completely agree: 6 (6%)	3,62	0,88
11. I treat everyone the same way when I offer my services in the hotel.	Disagree: 3 (6%), Neutral: 9 (18%), Agree: 25 (50%), Completely agree: 13 (26%)	3,96	0,83
12. I understand the different views of my colleagues towards customers.	Completely disagree: 2 (4%), Disagree: 14 (28%), Neutral: 20 (40%), Agree: 12 (24%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	2,96	0,92
13. I believe my employer would intervene if a colleague did not respect a customer's diversity.	Completely disagree: 3 (6%), Disagree: 10 (20%), Neutral: 26 (52%), Agree: 9 (18%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	2,94	0,89

14. Ever since I joined my company, I've gained a better understanding of cultural differences among our customers.	Disagree: 2 (4%), Neutral: 16 (32%), Agree: 27 (54%), Completely agree: 5 (10%)	3,7	0,71
15. The staff tends to react positively towards customers with racial profiles different from theirs.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 14 (28%), Neutral: 25 (50%), Agree: 9 (18%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	2,9	0,79
16. I find it easy to understand the racial / ethnic background of customers I've never met before.	Completely disagree: 2 (4%), Disagree: 4 (8%), Neutral: 15 (30%), Agree: 21 (42%), Completely agree: 8 (16%)	3,58	0,99
17. The staff discourages discrimination against customers.	Completely disagree: 2 (4%), Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 24 (48%), Agree: 15 (30%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	3,16	0,87
18. It's easier for employees with different backgrounds to treat customers the right way.	Disagree: 3 (6%), Neutral: 11 (22%), Agree: 27 (54%), Completely agree: 9 (18%)	3,84	0,79
19. Newer employees find it easier to appreciate customer diversity.	Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 22 (44%), Agree: 17 (34%), Completely agree: 4 (8%)	3,36	0,83
20. Sometimes, ethnic / racial stereotypes are inevitable in our line of work.	Disagree: 3 (6%), Neutral: 13 (26%), Agree: 26 (52%), Completely agree: 8 (16%)	3,78	0,79

21. In my workplace, I find it easier to interact with the following groups of people:			
Women (in general).	Disagree: 3 (6%), Neutral: 16 (32%), Agree: 23 (46%), Completely agree: 8 (16%)	3,72	0,81
Mothers with family obligations.	Disagree: 3 (6%), Neutral: 14 (28%), Agree: 24 (48%), Completely agree: 9 (18%)	3,78	0,82
Customers of different ethnicity.	Completely disagree: 2 (4%), Disagree: 11 (22%), Neutral: 14 (28%), Agree: 20 (40%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,22	1
Customers with different religious beliefs.	Completely disagree: 7 (14%), Disagree: 10 (20%), Neutral: 21 (42%), Agree: 10 (20%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	2,8	1,05
Customers with different sexual orientation.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 8 (16%), Neutral: 19 (38%), Agree: 19 (38%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,3	0,89
Customers with any kind of disability.	Disagree: 5 (10%), Neutral: 15 (30%), Agree: 27 (54%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,56	0,76
Customers aged between 18 – 25.	Disagree: 3 (6%), Neutral: 8 (16%), Agree: 27 (54%), Completely agree: 12 (24%)	3,96	0,81

Customers over 50 years old.	Disagree: 8 (16%), Neutral: 19 (38%), Agree: 19 (38%), Completely agree: 4 (8%)	3,38	0,85
Customers who speak different languages.	Completely disagree: 4 (8%), Disagree: 8 (16%), Neutral: 13 (26%), Agree: 19 (38%), Completely agree: 6 (12%)	3,3	1,13
PART C			
1. Leaders encourage diversity inside the company.	Disagree: 11 (22%), Neutral: 17 (34%), Agree: 19 (38%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,28	0,88
2. The term “diversity” is an integral part of our staff’s orientation.	Disagree: 5 (10%), Neutral: 26 (52%), Agree: 16 (32%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,34	0,75
3. Management shows the importance of diversity through various actions.	Completely disagree: 2 (4%), Disagree: 15 (30%), Neutral: 23 (46%), Agree: 9 (18%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	2,84	0,84
4. The company is clearly committed to diversity.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 13 (26%), Neutral: 21 (42%), Agree: 14 (28%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	3,02	0,84
5. The company respects all people and appreciates the differences between them.	Disagree: 10 (20%), Neutral: 28 (56%), Agree: 11 (22%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	3,06	0,71

6. The company shows progress through diversity-related initiatives.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 27 (54%), Agree: 17 (34%)	3,22	0,65
7. I view my company as a place that offers equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their ethnic background.	Disagree: 8 (16%), Neutral: 23 (46%), Agree: 19 (38%)	3,22	0,71
8. The company treats all employees that divert from the majority equally.	Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 23 (46%), Agree: 20 (40%)	3,26	0,69
9. The native employees react positively towards employees from different races.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 25 (50%), Agree: 19 (38%)	3,26	0,66
10. A working candidate can perceive the cultural diversities among people on their first visit to the company.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 26 (52%), Agree: 18 (36%)	3,24	0,66
11. The policies established by the hotel's human resources management encourage diversity.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 27 (54%), Agree: 17 (34%)	3,22	0,65
12. Employees from various backgrounds are encouraged to apply for higher positions.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 26 (52%), Agree: 18 (36%)	3,24	0,66

13. There are development opportunities for everyone in the company.	Disagree: 5 (10%), Neutral: 28 (56%), Agree: 16 (32%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	3,26	0,66
14. The hotel community understands the importance of hiring people with different profiles (ethnic, racial, sexual etc.).	Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 26 (52%), Agree: 17 (34%)	3,2	0,67
15. The company offers an environment where ideas, beliefs and opinions are freely expressed.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 26 (52%), Agree: 18 (36%)	3,24	0,66
16. I personally understand the importance of diversity in the hotel environment.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 32 (64%), Agree: 12 (24%)	3,12	0,59
17. I feel secure to express my diversity among colleagues.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 26 (52%), Agree: 18 (36%)	3,24	0,66
18. Ever since I joined the company, the experience I've acquired helped increase my understanding of the different forms of diversity.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 8 (16%), Neutral: 21 (42%), Agree: 17 (34%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,38	0,85
19. Getting to know people with different backgrounds is easier in my workplace.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 24 (48%), Agree: 18 (36%)	3,18	0,75
20. I understand the value that employees from different age groups bring into the company.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 23 (46%), Agree: 19 (38%)	3,2	0,76

21. Ever since I joined, I've gained a better understanding of the cultural differences between my colleagues.	Disagree: 11 (22%), Neutral: 14 (28%), Agree: 23 (46%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	3,32	0,87
22. My hotel colleagues come from various cultural environments.	Disagree: 2 (4%), Neutral: 21 (42%), Agree: 22 (44%), Completely agree: 5 (10%)	3,6	0,73
23. Company policies and processes encourage diversity.	Completely disagree: 3 (6%), Disagree: 12 (24%), Neutral: 21 (42%), Agree: 13 (26%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	2,94	0,91
24. I believe the company will take suitable measures to combat incidents of mishandling diversity.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 24 (48%), Agree: 18 (36%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	3,32	0,74
25. Employees from different backgrounds interact well inside the company.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 19 (38%), Agree: 20 (40%), Completely agree: 5 (10%)	3,48	0,84
26. The management my employer uses shows that they want to fulfill the needs of employers with different backgrounds.	Completely disagree: 2 (4%), Disagree: 15 (30%), Neutral: 20 (40%), Agree: 13 (26%)	2,88	0,85
27. Workers from different age groups bring equal value.	Disagree: 10 (20%), Neutral: 23 (46%), Agree: 16 (32%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	3,16	0,77
28. Gender / race jokes are not tolerated from my employer.	Completely disagree: 3 (6%), Disagree: 16 (32%), Neutral: 21 (42%), Agree: 7 (14%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	2,82	0,96

29. Diversity education will enhance the company's profitability.	Disagree: 5 (10%), Neutral: 15 (30%), Agree: 26 (52%), Completely agree: 4 (8%)	3,58	0,78
30. The company offers education programs that promote multicultural understanding.	Disagree: 10 (20%), Neutral: 24 (48%), Agree: 14 (28%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	3,16	0,79
31. The company I work for has invested in education programs and seminars that have helped me better understand diversity in the hotel.	Completely disagree: 5 (10%), Disagree: 21 (42%), Neutral: 18 (36%), Agree: 5 (10%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	2,52	0,89
32. The company offers education programs that promote and understand the benefits of diversity.	Disagree: 13 (26%), Neutral: 29 (58%), Agree: 8 (16%)	2,9	0,65
33. My direct superior supports diversity in the work environment.	Completely disagree: 2 (4%), Disagree: 13 (26%), Neutral: 18 (36%), Agree: 14 (28%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,06	0,98
34. My direct superior handles diversity-related matters in a satisfying way.	Disagree: 15 (30%), Neutral: 19 (38%), Agree: 15 (30%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	3,04	0,83
35. Managing / leading equals commitment to the application of a supportive way of handling a diversified work environment.	Disagree: 6 (12%), Neutral: 18 (36%), Agree: 21 (42%), Completely agree: 5 (10%)	3,5	0,84

36. Our hotel's leading figures encourage us to study diversity.	Completely disagree: 3 (6%), Disagree: 15 (30%), Neutral: 24 (48%), Agree: 6 (12%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	2,78	0,89
37. Our leaders are informed and sensitized in regards to diversity.	Disagree: 10 (20%), Neutral: 18 (36%), Agree: 19 (38%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,3	0,86
38. Among the following, which one could your company focus on?			
Communication.	Disagree: 5 (10%), Neutral: 20 (40%), Agree: 20 (40%), Completely agree: 5 (10%)	3,5	0,81
Improvement of processes around diversity / Staff education.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 9 (18%), Neutral: 18 (36%), Agree: 21 (42%), Completely agree: 1 (2%)	3,24	0,85
More awareness regarding diversity / Manager education on the matter.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 14 (28%), Neutral: 19 (38%), Agree: 11 (22%), Completely agree: 5 (10%)	3,1	0,99
Promotion of the value of diversity inside a business.	Completely disagree: 1 (2%), Disagree: 12 (24%), Neutral: 19 (38%), Agree: 16 (32%), Completely agree: 2 (4%)	3,12	0,9
Customer information on diversity.	Disagree: 7 (14%), Neutral: 28 (56%), Agree: 12 (24%), Completely agree: 3 (6%)	3,22	0,76

SUMMARY

AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aim of this paper was to make a collective reference to the existing research on the importance and effectiveness of the most crucial soft skills a manager can employ in their ways of handling social and interpersonal issues among both employees and customers, as well as to highlight the impact of the usage of these methods in the grand scheme of things, i.e. the development of diversity-related initiatives that promote equality and respect in the working environment of the Greek hospitality sector.

METHOD

The method used is the research the relevant Greek and international literature in relevant databases (ScienceDirect, Academia, ResearchGate, Google Scholar, DeepDyve etc.) with the keywords mentioned in the text of the methodology (soft skills, management, leadership, hospitality sector) in both English and Greek, as well as synonymous words and combinations. The search led to the initial selection of 244 books, articles, studies and dissertations, 49 of which were rejected after reading either the summary or the chapter that was originally considered to contain information useful for this research. The remaining 195 papers were selected for further evaluation of the full text of the publication, after which 59 of them were subsequently rejected because they did not meet the predefined entry criteria. After that, there were 136 studies, articles and dissertations left that met the entry criteria, to the total of which 68 studies that emerged after the study of the bibliographic references of the retrieved articles were added. Therefore, a total of 204 information sources were included in the research proposal.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The limitations that had to be abided by in order cover the scope of this research are the following:

- Utilization (as much as possible) of only the most up-to-date articles, studies and dissertations, so that there is as clear a picture as possible of the current situation regarding the application of soft skill competences in managerial practices, the general hospitality sector and the Greek one.
- Narrowing the research down to certain aspects of the required soft skills, so that they would all be mentioned.
- Generalization of results without showing particular differences between the differentiating factors the control subjects (responses of females compared to males, of family members compared to friends etc.).
- Restrictions in regards to the spectrum of actions and sectors soft skills could be applied to, due to the specificity of the thesis' project.

CONCLUSIONS

In today's globalized society, after a long period of economic crisis, businesses operate in an environment that is constantly changing, mainly due to the continuous development of technology; these conditions have a decisive role in increasing competition, which constantly generates new needs. The human resources of a company are an important capital for its development. In the context of this research, an attempt was made to provide answers regarding the way soft skills affect management styles in an important branch of the Greek economy, such as the hospitality industry.

The management department has certain tools in the effort to achieve its goals. More specifically, its main responsibilities are the planning of human resources, its attraction and selection, its training, its evaluation and the drawing up of a plan for its remuneration, while the formation of a pleasant working environment, with the goal of employees working free from possible problems, is also viewed as extremely important. In terms of the interpersonal skills needed, diversity inclusion and management has soared as an extremely crucial competence in recent years, aided by a large increase of visibility of human / worker rights' breaches and malpractices (which, admittedly, are far easier to come to light nowadays due to the much larger exposure via social media etc.), which in turn made them harder to overlook even for the most willing ones. The practices followed by the members that make up the specific department usually contribute to the mobilization and ultimate satisfaction of the staff. Doing so surely leads to improved performance, which brings greater benefits to the business.

The application of soft skills in the managerial practices in companies of the hotel sector presents several peculiarities, since these are companies whose objective is the provision of services. Therefore, due to the direct contact of hotel staff with customers, the former must be able to serve as best as possible, otherwise customers could be dissatisfied and not choose the hotel again.

Therefore, for a hotel to remain high in the list of preferences of customers / tourists, the human resources management department must pay special attention to its staff. By

understanding the psychology of employees and supporting them in their work, apart from customer satisfaction and the given benefit that the business will have from this, additional positive characteristics can emerge. Such characteristics are usually the gratification with the hotel, the increased motivation of the employees to contribute as much as they can and their increased loyalty.

This opinion was reinforced by the above survey in which hotel workers participated, and which showed that respect for diversity has now emerged as a major issue, to the demands of which businesses must comply at least to some extent, either because of genuine beliefs or due to fear of negative publicity.

Taking into account the answers to the questionnaire, in the majority of which the opinions and actions for the acceptance of diversity are quite mixed, it appears that coexistence between many different cultures, values, beliefs etc. in Greek hotels and in Greek culture in general, can be achieved, but internally, diversity is still viewed with suspicion by a large part of the workers and the population in general. The culture that has been formed in some modern hotel units, such as e.g. the new W Costa Navarino (Pantazopoulos, 2022), promotes the importance of some key functions of soft skills in management, such as training and evaluation, attention to both the staff and the customer, diversity etc., but does not do so enough to drastically change the overall picture.

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APPENDIX



ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΑΙΓΑΙΟΥ
ΣΧΟΛΗ ΤΩΝ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΩΝ ΤΗΣ ΔΙΟΙΚΗΣΗΣ

ΤΜΗΜΑ ΝΑΥΤΙΛΙΑΣ ΚΙ ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΜΑΤΙΚΩΝ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΩΝ
ΕΡΕΥΝΑ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ ΔΙΑΦΟΡΕΤΙΚΟΤΗΤΑ ΣΤΟΝ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑΚΟ ΧΩΡΟ

Αριθμός Ερωτηματολογίου	
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Όνομα Υπεύθυνου για την συλλογή Ερωτηματολογίων	ΣΤΕΡΓΙΟΥ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΣ
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Οι σκέψεις σας θα βοηθήσουν σε έρευνά σχετικά με την διαφορετικότητα που υπάρχει μέσα στο ξενοδοχείο τόσο ανάμεσα σε συναδέλφους όσο και απέναντι στους πελάτες.

Προς τους εργαζόμενους

Το ερωτηματολόγιο που έχετε στα χέρια σας είναι κομμάτι μιας ευρύτερης έρευνας που αφορά στην διαφορετικότητα στον εργασιακό χώρο και που διεξάγεται εν μέρει από το Πανεπιστήμιο Αιγαίου, Τμήμα Ναυτιλίας κι Επιχειρηματικών Υπηρεσιών. Το παρόν σκέλος της έρευνας αναλύει τον ξενοδοχειακό κλάδο και τα αποτελέσματα του θα συνδυαστούν με αυτά που έχουν συλλεχθεί από άλλους τομείς (αερομεταφορές, επιβατηγός ναυτιλία μικρών αποστάσεων) για μια διατομεακή έρευνα, την πρώτη στο είδος της απ' όσο οι ερευνητές είναι σε θέση να γνωρίζουν. Θα σας ζητηθεί να απαντήσετε σε ερωτήσεις σχετικά με την διαφορετικότητα, κάποιες από τις απαντήσεις των οποίων είναι πολλαπλής επιλογής, αλλά οι περισσότερες θα βαθμολογούνται σύμφωνα με την εξής κλίμακα: **Διαφωνώ Έντονα/Διαφωνώ /Συμφωνώ Ουδέτερα/Συμφωνώ Έντονα. Μια ιδέα των κατηγοριών που καλύπτει η έννοια της «διαφορετικότητας» για μας βρίσκεται στην ερώτηση 22 του Β Μέρους, αλλά δεν περιορίζεται μόνο σε αυτές. Θα θέλαμε να προσθέσετε τις δικές σας εκτιμήσεις.**

Το ερωτηματολόγιο χωρίζεται σε τρία μέρη. Το πρώτο μέρος αφορά το προφίλ αυτού που απαντάει και παρέχει μια γενική εικόνα του εργασιακού του/της περιβάλλοντος. Το δεύτερο μέρος αναφέρεται στην διαφορετικότητα όπως αυτή διαπιστώνεται μεταξύ συναδέλφων αλλά και ως προς τους πελάτες και το τρίτο και τελευταίο μέρος αφορά την δική σας άποψη για τις ευθύνες, τις πρωτοβουλίες, την εκπαίδευση των εργαζομένων και την κατανόηση όλων ως μέλη της διαφορετικότητας. Οι απαντήσεις θα πάρουν 10-15 λεπτά από τον χρόνο σας και είναι καθοριστικής σημασίας για τον προσδιορισμό της διαχείρισης της διαφορετικότητας τόσο μεταξύ συναδέλφων όσο κι ως προς το κοινό. Συγκρίνοντας τα αποτελέσματα διαφορετικών κλάδων ελπίζουμε να βγάλουμε συμπεράσματα που θα μας επιτρέψουν στο μέλλον να προσαρμόσουμε καλύτερα την εκπαίδευση των μελλοντικών κι ίσως και τωρινών εργαζομένων στις ολοένα μεταβαλλόμενες ανάγκες του κλάδου. Εξυπακούεται πως, όπως σε όλες τις περιπτώσεις πανεπιστημιακής

έρευνας, τα ερωτηματολόγια και οι απαντήσεις είναι και θα παραμείνουν αυστηρά ανώνυμες και θα χρησιμοποιηθούν μόνο για τους καθαρά επιστημονικούς σκοπούς της παρούσας έρευνας. Ωστόσο, αν επιθυμείτε να πληροφορηθείτε κάποια στατιστικά στοιχεία, ή αν έχετε σχόλια για εμάς που δεν θέλετε να μοιραστείτε μέσω της παρακάτω φόρμας, παρακαλώ επικοινωνήστε με την e.iakovaki@aegean.gr. Σας ευχαριστούμε εκ των προτέρων για τον χρόνο που μας αφιερώνετε!

Μέρος Α΄:

<p>1.Φύλο:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Θηλυκό <input type="checkbox"/> Άρσενικό <input type="checkbox"/> Προτιμώ να μην απαντήσω</p> <p>2. Ηλικία</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 19-24</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 25-34</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 35-44</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 45-54</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 55-64</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 65+</p> <p>3.Εκπαίδευση</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Βασική εκπαίδευση <input type="checkbox"/> Τριτοβάθμια εκπαίδευση <input type="checkbox"/> Πτυχίο Master</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Διδακτορικό</p> <p>4.Υπηκοότητα/Εθνική Καταγωγή:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Αυστραλιανή</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ασιατική</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Αφρικανική</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ευρωπαϊκή</p>	<p>6.Θρησκευτικές Πεποιθήσεις</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Χριστιανός/η Ορθόδοξο/ης</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Μουσουλμάνος/ας</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ινδουιστής/ρια</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Χριστιανός/η Καθολικός/η</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Βουδιστής/ρια</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Εβραίος/α</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Σιχ</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Καμία θρησκεία</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Άλλο (παρακαλώ διευκρινίστε)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Προτιμώ να μην απαντήσω</p> <p>7.Ειδικότητα</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Μάνατζερ</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Υπάλληλος κρατήσεων</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Υπάλληλος υποδοχής</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Καθαριστής/ρια</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Καμαρότος/Καμαριέρα</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Σερβιτόρος</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Βοηθός σερβιτόρου</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Μάγειρας</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Βοηθός μάγειρα</p>
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<p>Ινδική</p> <p>Μέσο-ανατολική</p> <p>Νεοζηλανδική</p> <p>Βόρειο-αμερικάνικη</p> <p>Νοτιο-αμερικανική</p> <p>άλλο (προσδιορίστε) _____</p>	<p>Λαντζέρης</p> <p>Barista</p> <p>Sommelier</p> <p>Τεχνική υποστήριξη</p> <p>Άλλο</p>
<p>5.Οικογενειακή κατάσταση</p> <p>Παντρεμένος/η</p> <p>Χωρισμένος/η</p> <p>Ελεύθερος/η</p> <p>Σε διάσταση</p> <p>Προτιμώ να μην απαντήσω</p>	<p>8.Πόσο καιρό βρίσκεστε στην εταιρεία;</p> <p>Λιγότερο από 1 χρόνο</p> <p>1 με 2 χρόνια</p> <p>2 με 5 χρόνια</p> <p>5 με 10 χρόνια</p> <p>10 χρόνια και άνω</p> <p>9 .Συνολική εμπειρία σε ξενοδοχειακές εταιρείες</p> <p>Λιγότερο από 1 χρόνο</p> <p>1 με 2 χρόνια</p> <p>2 με 5 χρόνια</p> <p>5 με 10 χρόνια</p> <p>10 χρόνια και άνω</p>

Μέρος Β'.

1. Οι συνάδελφοί μου γνωρίζουν τη σημασία τη ύπαρξης της διαφορετικότητας των πελατών.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ Κάθετα
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2. Οι συνάδελφοί μου κατανοούν την αξία ενός διαφορετικού προφίλ πελατών.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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3. Σε καθημερινή βάση συναντώ διαφορετικούς πελάτες με διαφορετικό υπόβαθρο.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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4. Έχω ακούσει συναδέλφους στο ξενοδοχείο να κάνουν ακατάλληλα, προσβλητικά σχόλια για τους πελάτες.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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5. Αισθάνομαι ανοικτός/ή στο να εκφράζω την διαφορετικότητα μου προς τους πελάτες.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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6. Είμαι προσεκτικός/ή με ποιον επιλέγω να μιλήσω όταν εργάζομαι στο ξενοδοχείο, καθώς οι πελάτες ίσως να μην γνωρίζουν τον πολιτισμό μου.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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7. Είμαι ανοικτός/ή στο να ακούσω την γνώμη των συναδέλφων μου όσον αφορά την διαφορετικότητα των πελατών.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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11. Φέρομαι σε όλους με το ίδιο τρόπο όταν προσφέρω τις υπηρεσίες μου στο εστιατόριο.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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12. Κατανοώ τις διαφορετικές αντιλήψεις των συναδέλφων μου προς τους πελάτες μας.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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13. Πιστεύω ότι ο εργοδότης μου θα έπαιρνε τα κατάλληλα μέτρα σε περίπτωση που γινόταν αντιληπτό ότι ένας συνάδελφος μου δεν σεβόταν την διαφορετικότητα ενός πελάτη.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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14. Από τότε που εντάχθηκα στην εταιρεία, κατανόησα περισσότερο την πολιτιστική διαφορά μεταξύ των πελατών μου.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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15. Το προσωπικό τείνει να αντιδρά θετικά όταν πελάτες έχουν φυλετικά προφίλ τα οποία δεν ταιριάζουν με τα δικά τους.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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16. Είναι εύκολο να κατανοήσω το φυλετικό / εθνικό υπόβαθρο των πελατών που δεν έχω συναντήσει ποτέ.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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17. Το πλήρωμα αποθαρρύνει τις διακρίσεις έναντι των πελατών.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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8. Ασχολούμαι με την πολιτιστική διαφορετικότητα των πελατών σε καθημερινή βάση.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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9. Πιστεύω ότι η διαφορετικότητα βοηθά τους συναδέλφους μου να κατανοήσουν τις ανάγκες των πελατών.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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10. Έχω γίνει μάρτυρας περιστατικών στα οποία η διαφορετικότητα δεν έγινε σεβαστή με εμπλοκή συναδέλφων μου.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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21. Στο χώρο εργασίας, άνετα αλληλεπιδρώ με τις ακόλουθες ομάδες επιβατών:

Γυναίκες (γενικά)				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

Μητέρες με οικογενειακές υποχρεώσεις				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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Πελάτες με διαφορετική εθνικότητα				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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Πελάτες με διαφορετική θρησκεία ή πεποιθήσεις				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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Πελάτες με διαφορετικές σεξουαλικές προτιμήσεις				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

18. Είναι πιο εύκολο για τους υπαλλήλους που έχουν διαφορετικά υπόβαθρα να αντιμετωπίσουν σωστά τους πελάτες.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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19. Οι καινούριοι εργαζόμενοι εκτιμούν την ποικιλομορφία των πελατών πιο εύκολα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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20. Μερικές φορές τα στερεότυπα σε συνάρτηση με την εθνικότητα των πελατών είναι αναπόφευκτα στη δουλειά μας.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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Μέρος Γ

1. Οι ηγέτες μέσα στην εταιρεία ενθαρρύνουν την διαφορετικότητα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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2. Ο όρος διαφορετικότητα αποτελεί σημαντικό μέρος του προσανατολισμού του προσωπικού μας.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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3. Η διοίκηση δείχνει πόσο σημαντική είναι η διαφορετικότητα με συγκεκριμένες δράσεις.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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4. Η εταιρεία έχει καθαρή δέσμευση για την διαφορετικότητα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
Πελάτες με οποιουδήποτε είδους αναπηρίας				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
Πελάτες με ηλικία 18-25 ετών				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
Πελάτες πάνω από 50 ετών				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
Πελάτες που μιλάνε διαφορετική γλώσσα				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
Άλλο (παρακαλώ προσδιορίστε).....				
Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα

5. Η εταιρεία σέβεται τα άτομα και εκτιμά τις διαφορές τους.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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6. Η εταιρεία σημειώνει πρόοδο με τις πρωτοβουλίες που παίρνει για την διαφορετικότητα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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7. Βλέπω την εταιρεία μου ως ένα χώρο εργασίας που προσφέρει ίσες ευκαιρίες για όλους, ανεξάρτητα από τη φυλή τους.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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8. Η εταιρεία συμπεριφέρεται με ισότιμο τρόπο σε εργαζομένους που διαφέρουν από την πλειοψηφία.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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9. Οι εργαζόμενοι αντιδρούν θετικά σε εκείνους που έχουν διαφορετική φυλή / εθνικότητα από την δική τους.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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10. Ένας υποψήφιος θα δει με την πρώτη του επίσκεψη στην εταιρεία ότι υπάρχει πολιτιστική διαφορετικότητα μεταξύ των ανθρώπων.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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11. Οι πολιτικές που ακολουθεί η διοίκηση ανθρώπινου δυναμικού του ξενοδοχείου ενθαρρύνουν την διαφορετικότητα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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**12. Εργαζόμενοι με ποικίλα υπόβαθρα
ενθαρρύνονται να υποβάλλουν αίτηση για
υψηλότερες θέσεις.**

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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13. Υπάρχουν ευκαιρίες επαγγελματικής εξέλιξης για όλους στην εταιρεία.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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14. Η κοινότητά του ξενοδοχείου κατανοεί τη σημασία της πρόσληψης διαφορετικών ανθρώπων με διαφορετικά προφίλ (εθνικότητα, φύλο, σεξουαλικότητα κλπ.).

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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15. Η εταιρεία παρέχει ένα περιβάλλον ελεύθερης και ανοιχτής έκφρασης ιδεών, απόψεων και πεποιθήσεων.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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16. Προσωπικά, κατανοώ τον όρο της διαφορετικότητας όσον αφορά στην κοινότητα του ξενοδοχείου.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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17. Αισθάνομαι ανοιχτός/ή να εκφράσω την διαφορετικότητά μου με τους συναδέλφους.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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18. Από την στιγμή ένταξής μου στην εταιρεία, η εμπειρία που έχω αποκτήσει μου προσέδωσε αυξημένη κατανόηση των ποικίλων μορφών της διαφορετικότητας που υπάρχουν.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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19. Στον εργασιακό μου χώρο η γνωριμία ανθρώπων με διαφορετικό υπόβαθρο είναι εύκολη.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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20. Κατανοώ την αξία που μπορούν να φέρουν οι εργαζόμενοι διαφορετικών ηλικιών στην εργασία.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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21. Από τότε που εντάχθηκα στην εταιρεία, κατανόησα περισσότερο την πολιτιστική διαφορά μεταξύ των συναδέλφων μου.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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22. Οι συνάδελφοί μου στο ξενοδοχείο προέρχονται από πολλά διαφορετικά πολιτισμικά περιβάλλοντα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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23. Οι πολιτικές και οι διαδικασίες της εταιρείας ενθαρρύνουν την διαφορετικότητα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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24. Πιστεύω ότι η εταιρεία θα λάβει τα κατάλληλα μέτρα για την αντιμετώπιση συμβάντων λόγω κακής διαχείρισης της διαφορετικότητας.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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25. Οι εργαζόμενοι με διαφορετικά υπόβαθρα αλληλοεπιδρούν καλά μεταξύ τους στην εταιρεία.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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26. Η διαχείριση που κάνει ο εργοδότης μου δείχνει ότι θέλει να ανταποκριθεί στις ανάγκες των εργαζομένων με διαφορετικό υπόβαθρο.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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27. Οι εργαζόμενοι διαφορετικών ηλικιών έχουν ισότιμη αξία.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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28. Τα αστεία φυλετικής καταγωγής και φύλου δεν γίνονται ανεκτά από τον εργοδότη.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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29. Η εκπαίδευση για την διαφορετικότητα θα ενισχύσει την κερδοφορία της εταιρείας.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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30. Η εταιρεία παρέχει ήδη προγράμματα εκπαίδευσης που προωθούν την πολυπολιτισμική κατανόηση.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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31. Η εταιρεία στην οποία εργάζομαι έχει επενδύσει σε προγράμματα εκπαίδευσης / σεμινάρια που με βοηθούν να βελτιώσω την κατανόηση της διαφορετικότητας πάνω στο πλίοι.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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33. Ο άμεσα ανώτερος μου υποστηρίζει την διαφορετικότητα στο περιβάλλον εργασίας μας.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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34. Ο ανώτερος μου χειρίζεται ικανοποιητικά τα θέματα που έχουν να κάνουν με την διαφορετικότητα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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35. Ασκώ διοίκηση, είμαι ηγετική φιγούρα σημαίνει είμαι δεσμευμένος στην εφαρμογή μιας υποστηρικτικής διαχείρισης ενός διαφορετικού εργασιακού περιβάλλοντος.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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36. Οι ηγετικές φιγούρες στο εστιατόριό μας, μας ενθαρρύνουν να διερευνήσουμε την διαφορετικότητα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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37. Οι ηγέτες είναι ενήμεροι και ευαισθητοποιημένοι σχετικά με την διαφορετικότητα.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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38. Τι βελτιώσεις μπορεί να κάνει ο εργοδότης σας για να βελτιώσει το επίπεδο της διαφορετικότητας της εταιρείας;

Επικοινωνία

Βελτίωση της εργασίας γύρω από την διαφορετικότητα / την κατάλληλη εκπαίδευση του προσωπικού

Περισσότερη επίγνωση σχετικά με τη διαφορετικότητα και εκπαίδευση των διευθυντών σχετικά με αυτό

Προώθηση της αξίας της διαφορετικότητας στην επιχείρηση

32. Η εταιρεία έχει παράσχει ένα εκπαιδευτικό πρόγραμμα που προωθεί / κατανοεί τα οφέλη της διαφορετικότητας.

Διαφωνώ κάθετα	Διαφωνώ	Ουδέτερος	Συμφωνώ	Συμφωνώ απόλυτα
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Ενημέρωση των επιβατών για την διαφορετικότητα

Άλλο (διευκρινίστε) _____

Το ερωτηματολόγιο αυτό ήταν χρήσιμο

ΝΑΙ

ΟΧΙ