"An Empirical Research on the Impact of Holistic Business Approach on Customer Experience in the UAE Luxury Hospitality Industry"

Abstract

The aim of the current empirical research is to investigate the influence of holistic business practices in the luxury sector of the hospitality industry and their impact on customer experience in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). At present, the luxury hospitality industry exhibits an incomplete picture of holistic business practice by mainly focusing on economic profitability and environmental sustainability. The research aims to identify how current business practices in the UAE luxury hospitality industry can be improved using a holistic approach.

Qualitative research methods were selected for data collection and analysis via fifteen (15) semi-structured interviews and field site observations. The findings of the semi-structured interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, namely Theme 1 - Current Holistic Business Practices and Measures Taken for Customer Satisfaction; Theme 2 - Holistic Business Practices Adopted, Relationship Between the Holistic Business Practices; Theme 3 - Sustainability and Employees; and Theme 4 - Gap in the Current Business Practice and Measures to Be Taken for Sustainability.

Primary data findings showed the need to integrate contextual factors with a holistic approach of leadership to shape business operations in line with the four dimensions of sustainability: economic, social, cultural and environmental. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between customer experience and holistic practices, where the latter have significant implications in the form of increased employee productivity and participation in decision-making, increased customer satisfaction, increased profitability and brand image. The study shows that by connecting operational and supporting processes with effective regulatory policy guidelines, businesses can effectively attain the goal of sustainability.

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Declaration

I Declare that the thesis entitled "An Empirical Research on the Impact of Holistic Business Approach on Customer Experience in UAE Luxury Hospitality Industry" is a Bonafede researched carried out by me with the Supervision and Guidance of my supervisor Dr.Paul Reynold's. It contains no materials previously published by another party and it has not formed the basis of the award for any Degree, Fellowship, Diploma or other similar title of recognition.

Signed:  Date: 13.11.2019

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Against the background of progressively challenging interchanges that have occurred within global business practices since the start of third millennium, the modern global hospitality industry has also been responsive to significant business changes (Nicolae et al., 2009; Cowie, 2012). Transmission from an individualistic mindset towards a holistic business approach is one of such ongoing changes. The science and public health researcher, Gro Harlem Brundtland was the first to define the term *'holistic business approach'* in his commission report of 1980 (Mowforth and Munt, 2015; Cowie, 2012). According to the Brundtland report, the holistic business approach refers to the integration of the environment and development in the form of sustainable development. Generally, the holistic approach originates from holism theory, which states that the whole is always better and should be given priority over the sum of the individual parts (Mowforth and Munt, 2015). However, refinement in business managers' understanding of the holistic business practices started to become evident with the emergence of novel business frameworks. Six Sigma is one such popular business performance methodology, which has been adopted by modern organisations to target their customers' satisfaction in line with a focus on three main areas: customer service, product quality and the quality of the decision-making process (Kamar, 2014). The application and implementation of Six Sigma changes the understanding of the holistic business approach in the minds of business managers (Taghizadegan, 2010; Truscott, 2014; Basu & Wright, 2012; Breyfogle, 2003; Furterer, 2016; Basu, 2009). Six Sigma is a policy and a strategy which offers a clarified roadmap for businesses to deliver products and services to their customers according to the latter's needs. This strategy has helped organisations to understand the importance of focusing on the needs of different business stakeholders such as employees, customers and shareholders, in order to achieve the overall business objective. Six Sigma highlights the leadership approach based on the tangible as well as intangible aspects of the business (Lahap et al., 2007).

With the passage of time, almost all business industries and their sub-sectors have started to utilise the concept of the holistic business approach to align their business practices with the holistic approach. The hospitality industry is one among such business industries and has effectively adopted an all-inclusive business development concept (Mowforth and Munt, 2015). Through the implementation of a Six Sigma approach, hospitality organisations have begun to consider

everyone in their collective decision-making stage. Application of Six Sigma strategies and tools have highlighted the need to integrate project management, database decision-making, knowledge discovery, process control planning as well as change management and other critical aspects of hospitality business processes and procedures (Kamar, 2014).

In a related context, numerous researchers have criticised the definition of holistic business practices. According to the arguments raised, definitions and concepts of the holistic business practices are unclear and complicated and thus act as a barrier to organisations' understanding and translation of approaches in the hospitality industry (Mowforth and Munt, 2015).

The luxury sector of the hospitality industry has especially acknowledged the contribution offered by critics in understanding the need to balance luxury products and services with sustainable business practices (Raderbauer, 2011). Analysis of the luxury sector in the hospitality industry reveals differences in customer expectations relative to the regular sector. Utilisation of important business sources, therefore, comes out as a vital factor in order to drive business practices for the ultimate customer satisfaction (Grigorian and Petersen, 2014). Academic researchers mutually agree on the fact that luxury brands are conceptually different and therefore a different approach is required to design and build an effective luxury brand experience for the customers of the luxury industry (Grigorian and Petersen, 2014). The demands of customers are also higher, relative to non-premium brands because customers demand the highest possible level of the brand experience according to their ever-changing needs. It is therefore necessary to understand that customers' interaction with luxury products and services is full of emotional as well as physical needs (Helms-Mills et al., 2008; Zemliansky, 2008; Wellman et al., 2016; Jauhari, 2014). Business organisations offering luxury goods and services are required to integrate their set of business elements for the production of the holistic customers' experience (Lockyer, 2013). Similar to other hospitality organisations, luxury sector businesses are also required to follow a defined series of sequence and target values in order to develop a long-lasting customer experience (Radzi et al., 2014; Eckes, 2002). Among these target values are a reduction in the process cycle time, reduction in pollution, increase in production costs, increase in customer satisfaction, along with the rise in profitable business (see Figure 1). For luxury sector organisations, it is necessary to focus on the quality improvement initiated rather than merely focusing on the quantifiable financial returns.

The involvement of everyone from top to bottom in the organisation is necessary to show the commitment towards the overall holistic business approach.



FIGURE 1: DESCRIPTION OF THE HOLISTIC BUSINESS APPROACH THROUGH THE EXAMPLE OF SIX SIGMA

The luxury sector in the hospitality industry to great extent lacks such significant illustration of the unique customer experience (Grigorian and Petersen, 2014; Mast, 2006; Pearlman and Chacko, 2012; P & A, 1993; Parast, 2011). Since the luxury hospitality sector does not aim to please all customers, their business processes, therefore, are mostly based on personalisation motives. Beyond communicating value to the customer, the luxury hospitality sector also considers myth-telling as a vital feature of their business process by linking their location, products and services as heritage (Grigorian and Petersen, 2014).

This study has been designed as a voluntary initiative for the motivation and encouragement of the players in the luxury sector of the hospitality industry to eliminate the ambiguities related to the implementation of the holistic approach. The study encourages the luxury hospitality industry to identify different methodologies which could direct them towards the perfect implementation of

holistic business practices. The study discusses some of the examples in the form of the methodologies of the Six Sigma approach. Self-interest and moral responsibility are the two driving forces behind undertaking the intended initiative in the current study (Andersson et al., 2006; Patil et al., 2014; Chuan and Chakraborty, 2009). Past researchers have investigated the significance of a holistic business approach in the hospitality sector, but their research has been limited to the environmental sustainability concept. They identified holistic business practices as an alternative to the conventional bureaucratic strategy for the hotel industry (Lockyer and Scholarios, 2004).

However, they did not focus on holistic business principles and the significance of total quality improvement and business development. The current study is intended to bridge this research gap by highlighting the need to optimise all four factors that make up the holistic approach, i.e. environmental, social, cultural, and economic decisions (see Figure 2).

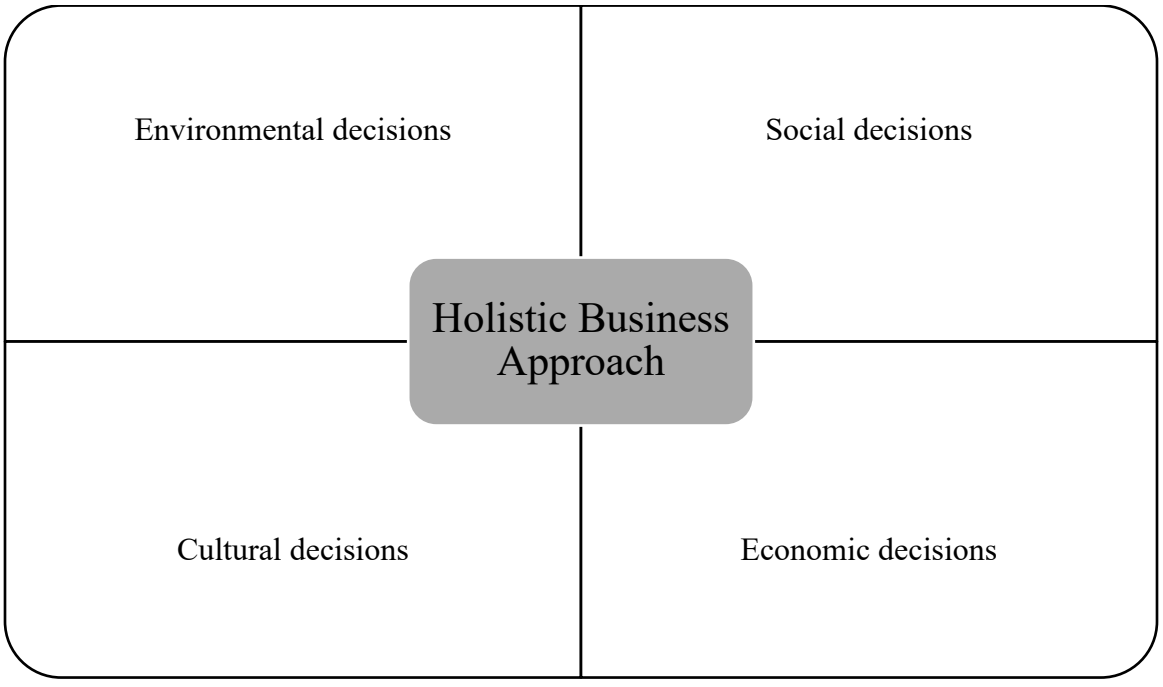


FIGURE 2: HOLISTIC BUSINESS PRACTICE DIMENSIONS

The study aims to show the interdependence of these four factors to each other in order to create a unique 'whole' for luxury sector businesses. This research further targets those business managers of the hospitality industry who do not recognise the need for a holistic approach. The findings of the study are expected to represent an interesting area of study in front of them. Specifically, business managers in the luxury hospitality sector in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are the main study subjects. The focus is placed therefore on business measures and customer experience.

1.2 Research Rationale

The luxury hospitality industry in the UAE is the main component of this study. The strategic implementation of holistic business practices is addressed with a focus on advantages and barriers to such complications. The already existing theoretical models and initiatives are used to addresses the UAE luxury hospitality industry (Todorova, 2013). Luxury hospitality in the UAE is in its rolling-out stage, where the market is picking up the pace with five-star hotels in different emirates of the country. Sharjah and Dubai are prominent emirates due to the availability of desirable luxurious hospitality facilities. The sector is representative of the plethora of new cultural experiences and facilities reforming their existing infrastructure for the delivery of the unique hospitality sector (Sadaqat, 2017).

Analytics show that the UAE hotel sector is overcrowded with five-star luxury rooms. One of the challenging dilemmas for the UAE hospitality regulatory framework is to understand that prime real estate is filled with luxury brands and there is no capacity for midmarket hospitality organisations. It is expected that by the end of 2020 there will be a rise of 53% in the luxury offerings in the UAE hotel sector, which will not be the satisfactory situation for the hospitality sector in general (Tsetsonis, 2017). The trend highlights the changing face of the UAE hospitality sector. The competition between luxury hospitality organisations will likely be intense in the future, with a rise in occupancy rates. However, luxury sector organisations would be required to compromise their prize measures in order to target their customers. This over-supply is also expected to lead to the rising demands of the domestic as well as the international case. It should be understood that the hospitality sector needs to meet the changing demands of the customers (Stevens, 2017).

The market is too heavy for the luxury end and it has also raised the competitive pressure on the players of the luxury market (Kapferer and Bastien, 2012; Rigaud-Lacresse and Pini, 2017; Ozuem and Azemi, 2017; Kempen, 2012). Organisations have started to pursue new strategies to target their customers without sacrificing their profitability and productivity levels (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012). In order to do so, it would be necessary to make numerous changes to their business practice approach (Andrews, 2009; Ball et al., 2007; Olmedo, 2015; Ivanova et al., 2016; Stavroudi, 2017). A holistic approach is expected to be a good choice for luxury sector organisations in the UAE.

At present, UAE authorities are encouraging the hospitality industry players to adopt an eco-friendly approach focused on the environmental dimension of the holistic business practice. There is a lack of initiatives for the other three-dimensions highlighted in the framework of holistic business practices. Regulatory and business players have restricted the application of the holistic approach to the environmental measures under the green initiatives scheme only (Todorova, 2013). The concept of holistic business approach is new for the UAE industry and therefore it is necessary to evaluate UAE hospitality business practices and its various processes to understand the needs for improvement in all the dimensions of the holistic business practice by involving everyone from top to bottom in the decision-making process. Furthermore, technology-driven transformations in the international hospitality sector have also pressurised economies and their industries to start working by focusing on the interdependencies among stakeholders and to leave the individualistic or shareholders-based approach. The adoption of these technological advances is identified as highly necessary for the transformation of luxury sector in the UAE and to ensure that the players in the industry are able to offer new levels of customer service to their existing customers, as well as a new potential target market (Gulf News, 2017).

Detailed examination of the business processes, sustainability and the social, economic and environment business dimensions of the luxury sector of UAE can assist in understanding the current practices of the UAE luxury hospitality sector, and the need for further improvement. This study is designed to extend the perspectives of UAE stakeholders towards the implementation of holistic business practices.

1.3 Aim

The aim of the current empirical research is to investigate the influence of holistic business practices in the luxury sector of the hospitality industry and its impact on the customer experience in the UAE. The following five research objectives have been defined in order to pursue the investigation on the chosen subject of interest.

1.4 Objectives

These research objectives have been developed to show how the current investigation is planned to progress.

- To draw a conceptual framework linking the key research variables together i.e. holistic business practices and the luxury hospitality sector

In the first stage of the investigation, a critical review of past academic studies is carried out as well as a review of the policies and procedures in the hospitality industry that involves all the people from top to bottom such as management, employees, customers, as well as regulatory aspects in the classification of the holistic business process in the hospitality with the intention of identifying the research gap driving the current research framework. Based on business practices in the hospitality industry, a conceptual framework of business practices is developed. The generalised review is expected to provide insights for understanding the luxury sector in the UAE.

- To identify the current business approach of the UAE luxury hospitality industry

The second stage of the investigation aims to identify the relationship between the existing holistic business practices and the measures taken by the management of the luxury hospitality businesses in the UAE. The focus of this analysis is on the total quality business improvement. The fundamental analysis was expected to identify the gap in the present practices related to the sustainable holistic business practices in the UAE hospitality businesses.

- To access the significance of a holistic approach to customer experience

The subsequent part of the investigation involves an analysis of differences in aspects of the holistic business practices and the standard customer's satisfaction level. These differences would

indicate how a holistic approach requires luxury hospitality players to target the customers' experiences.

In pursuance of this research objective, the researcher has aimed to reveal the significance of the industry characteristics. These characteristics of the luxury hospitality industry can be defined through a range of factors of hospitality industry, such as the business type, ownership, and size of the hotel. This study does not aim to examine the informal association between the variables. Through the accomplishment of this research objective, differences in the customers' experiences of the luxury sector and regular sector are also explained.

- To access the impacts of customer experience on sustainability

In the fourth stage, the study explores the set of diverse benefits related to the implementation of holistic business practices in the UAE industry. Customer experience and its relationship with the holistic strategy in the luxury sector are explained in the context of the four dimensions of the holistic approach, such as business processes and sustainability and the social, economic and environment business dimensions.

- To formulate guidelines to enhance business sustainability in the luxury hospitality sector

The fifth and final stage of the research focuses on recommendations for improving business sustainability by indicating gaps that need to be filled in pursuance of holistic business practices. The objective aims to assist in investigating the main barriers to the implementation of holistic business practices in the UAE hospitality industry. Suggestions for improvements are backed by specific business motives.

1.5 Research Question

A set of three main research questions aims to guide the study, seeking the answers to which will aid the successful accomplishment of the research aim and objectives:

- *Research Question #1:* What are the current business practices in the UAE luxury hospitality industry?

- *Research Question #2:* What is the relation between a holistic business approach and customer experience?

- *Research Question #3:* How can a holistic business framework be recommended for sustainability in the luxury hospitality sector?

1.6 Introduction to Methodology

Qualitative research methods provide the methodological framework for this investigation. Qualitative analysis with interviews and observation methods have been used to provide answers to the research question. With the help of an integrative view of the subjective perspectives in this research via interviews, the researcher intended to address the complicated issues such as impacts of the holistic business practices and comparison of the customers' satisfaction level. Fifteen interviews were conducted and observation methods were used to provide qualitative findings in the form of text, images, observations and subjective enquiries (Charmaz, 2006; Urquhart, 2012; Gibson & Hartman, 2013). The choice of research methodology for the current investigation is informed by past academic studies focusing on the hospitality process. To gather data from the fifteen primary research participants , the interview instrument has been used (Hutter & Bailey, 2010; Morse, 1994; Liamputtong, 2009). Design of the interviews was reliant on the findings of the observations carried out. Interviews and observation will be a major part of the methodology. The types of data the methods will generate are field notes, audio recordings, and transcripts. The interviews and the observation will be conducted in UAE-based luxury hospitality firms.

Observation included participants' observation and covered ethnography and research work in the field. In the observational research design, multiple hospitality study sites were involved. Observational data was integrated as auxiliary or confirmatory research.

Interviews: For this research, 15 hospitality industry professionals from top, middle, and lower staff levels were interviewed. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. In the semi-structured interviews, the respondents must answer pre-set, open- ended questions.

1.7 Theoretical and Practical Significance

The research is expected to create significant theoretical and practical significance. A theoretical review of the existing models and theories regarding the holistic business approach in relation to the luxury hospitality sector would offer a great contribution in bridging the literature gap in the similar context. The study would be unique in providing a fundamental guideline to future researchers planning to investigate the luxury hospitality sector of other countries. These findings would be of great support for future researchers in re-evaluating the UAE luxury hospitality sector after the passage of time, for example after 20 or 50 years. This would help in comparing them with the practices of the business managers in the context of how much they have changed their business practices by the implementation of holistic business practices.

In addition, the findings would help business managers to investigate their individual practices and areas in order to show the successful and complete implementation of the holistic business practices. The recommendations would assist UAE managers to improve their business practices according to the rising and constantly changing needs of the contemporary globalised business environment.

In addition to this, this research will further help future researchers in conducting research on the relevant topic in order to bridge the gap that is available in the literature of the hospitality industry. Moreover, this research study will further help in understanding customers' needs and requirements and reflect on enhancing their experiences. The literature review section of this study will help in understanding the importance of the hospitality industry for the economy of the country. In addition to this, this study will also help to enhance the economy of the UAE, as it will explain the significance of hospitality industry for the economy of the UAE. The UAE is an

advanced and materialised country and tourists are attracted to the country in significant numbers because of its advanced technologies and attractive locations. This study will help to explain the importance of tourist locations in order to attract more tourists to the UAE.

Moreover, this research will further help industrialists in the UAE in investing their money in the tourism industry as it will be beneficial for not only the country but also for the investors. Moreover, the findings of this research study will also help to analyse the revenue generated by the hospitality industry, as the tourists spend their money in extravagant hotels, restaurants and other entertainment venues that are available in the UAE. Similarly, from the perspective of practical significance, this study will encourage hospitality institutions to introduce the course of hospitality and how to satisfy customers in their experience of the tourism. In addition to this, it is further expected that this study will also help the business of the other food industries such as restaurant owners to flourish, as tourists do not only benefit the tourism industry itself but also the restaurant industry and the other entertainment industries. This study will not only focus on the hospitality industry but will also focus on the importance of having other entertainment venues for the country in order to attract more tourists.

In terms of the UAE already being a major tourist destination, the main concern of this research will be the enhanced satisfaction level of customers. The study will help in analysing the aspects that provide extreme tourist satisfaction. In addition to this, it will further provide opportunities for small business owners to improve their business strategies in order to strengthen them. Moreover, the research study will further help in analysing the importance of promotion of local brands, as this study will further explain the how the local brands in the UAE can enhance customer satisfaction levels. In addition to this, this study will also allow future researchers to learn from the limitations of this research.

The theoretical significance of this study is that it will help future researchers to explore new and relevant topics related to the hospitality industry, as in many Middle Eastern countries, the concept of a tourism and hospitality industry is still vague, particularly with regard to providing increased and efficient services to customers in order to enhance their satisfaction level. Generally, this is still not considered as an important and significant concept. This research will help in analysing the importance of the hospitality industry and how this industry can improve the economy of the country as well as enhancing the satisfaction level of the customer. In addition to this, this study

will further help in predicting future trends that will be used in the hospitality industry to increase customer satisfaction levels, as this is the main purpose of every industry. Similarly, the research study will further help in recognising the link of the hospitality industry with the holistic approach of the business. In addition to this, this research will help in accessing the significance of the holistic approach to the experiences of the customer, as the previous research has not considered the holistic approach as a significant approach in order to analyse the experience of the customers in the hospitality industry of UAE in particular. This research study will help in the accurate analysis of the importance of using this approach in order to improve and enhance the customer experience. In addition to this, this research will identify the different concepts and the approach that other countries can use in order to improve the tourist experience of their customers.

1.8 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the background context of the research to illustrate the purpose of undertaking the current investigation. The chapter has presented the research aims and objectives and has drawn up research questions based on the research objectives. Preliminary information about the holistic business practices and luxury hospitality sector has helped in gaining understanding of the significance of the current investigation in theoretical as well as practical contexts. The remaining part of the thesis is categorised into chapters as follows:

Chapter 2 - Literature Review: offers a comprehensive and critical review of past research to draw a contextual and conceptual framework for the current investigation. The findings tend to highlight the research gap in the area of the holistic business approach and customer experience in the UAE luxury hospitality industry.

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology: presents the choice of research design, methods and strategy selected for designing the research applicable to the luxury sector in the hospitality sector in the UAE. This chapter includes methodological limitations as well as the pilot study guiding the investigation.

Chapter 4 - Results, Discussion and Analysis: provides qualitative and quantitative research data findings gathered from the research participants and cross-relates the findings of the primary and secondary investigations based on the research objectives.

Chapter 5 - Research Conclusion, Recommendations and Future Research Path: offers a summary of the key insights in order to conclude the research and provides evidence of achieving the research aim.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is designed to provide detailed insight into the contextual and conceptual frameworks of the current investigation. In the contextual framework, the hospitality industry and luxury sector are reviewed from the perspectives of the existing literature. The contextual framework also highlights the business processes of the UAE luxury hospitality industry and the process adopted by it in implementing the holistic business approach. Moreover, the conceptual framework of the study is drawn by integrating the theory and published findings of the scientific literature to understand the differences between the theory of business processes and practices of the UAE luxury hospitality industry. These findings will identify a research gap, which will be bridged via the primary data findings in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

2.2 Holistic Business Practice Theory

Holistic business practices are defined in different ways in the literature (Gunyung et al., 2017; Mohammed Rezaul, 2012; Wilhelm et al., 2013; Kodama, 2017; Pride et al., 2009). According to Marla & Taori (2007),

> "*Holism is simply defined as the whole which has priority over (the summary of) the parts, at which the mere adding up of all parts does not reach the level of the whole.*" (p. 15).

On the other hand, Catizzone & Muchena (1994) describe the holistic approach differently as

> "*...the task of all people concerned with something to direct their interest, not just towards the physical, chemical and biological aspects, but also to those environmental economic, social, legal and technical aspects.*" (p. 215).

Marla & Taori's (2007) definition of the holistic business practices is more comprehensive compared to Catizzone & Muchena (1994), as it indicates that combining the different dimensions of the business is necessary to achieve the aim behind the holistic approach. According to Marla & Taori's (2007) definition, businesses need not focus on their own self-interest of profitability, but rather an integrated approach is needed to meet the interests of all the business elements together. Deriving from the definitions, holism can be understood as interlinking the different

business components with each in order to influence a specific situation. Overall business improvement is the core aim behind the holistic approach. Researchers have stated that the holistic approach adds value to all business activities in a logical manner to direct the business productivity.

It also helps businesses to avoid the drawbacks of compartmentalisation. When dealing with the business elements individually leads towards the waste of business resources, then only a holistic approach supports the coordination of the independent business factors.

Marla and Taori (2007), in their academic investigation, have further highlighted the benefits of holistic business practices as transparency, information flow, communication levels, mutual support, learning from errors, and mutual empowerment (Marla and Taori, 2007; Catizzone and Muchena, 1994). These authors have linked the holistic business approach with systemic thinking while, on the contrary, describing the characteristics of the holistic approach, Lapina et al. (2013) identify the link between the holistic approaches at three different levels such as organisational level, with the system approach. The system approach defines business as a system made up of inter-connected business components, where all these components are equally important. There is a continuous exchange of operations and information among these components, which ultimately leads to business organisations' operability and development. It can be implied from these findings that the holistic approach is quite extensive in identifying and highlighting the role of individual as well as collective components of the business for the overall accomplishment of the long-term goals of businesses. These findings have suggested the critical role of employees, as well as customers, in the decision-making process by eliminating the defects and achieving the total quality of the products and services. Lapina et al. (2013) further refer to the fact the that holistic approach can further be defined according to the level of society and overall business environment. They show that human resources, as well as overall business management in business organisations, could not be accomplished successfully while overlooking the internal and external environmental factors. It is true that each element of the internal and external environments, such as economic, ecologic, social, political and cultural aspects, have significant influence on the business practices. All of these business elements ultimately draw the attention of the research audience towards the importance of holistic approach implementation (Legrand et al., 2013; Pantelidis, 2017; Mankins and Garton, 2017; Cook et al., 2017; Mok et al., 2013).

In a similar context, while talking about the internal environment of the business, Bowler and Kurfess (2011) highlight the four specific domains that drive the business towards a holistic approach. These domains include business systems, stages of the prolonged lifecycle, the level of value formation and sustainability perception.

The discussion indicates that the theory of holistic business practices is not only confined to the environmental sustainability concept. According to these findings, the luxury sector in the hospitality industry needs to be aware of the significance of the effects of business decisions on the larger system, including all the tangible as well as intangible business prospects along with the people at different levels of interaction. Legrand et al. (2013) emphasise that the role of hospitality businesses should be aligned with business operations through the product lifecycle approach. This has stressed that businesses need to consider shifting their moneymaking thinking towards a long-term business improvement mindset.

However, from the above-mentioned findings, it cannot be presumed wrongly that the holistic approach does not support profitability, as it is the approach which better supports the business success, both in terms of profitability as well as business performance. Krishnamurthy (2008) effectively supports this proposition by highlighting that the holistic approach allows business managers to design an effective human capital strategy necessary to motivate their employees in order to pursue a process-based approach for the business. By creating a sustainable strategy for feasible and affordable costs, a holistic approach helps greatly in dealing with the financial business challenges.

Six Sigma methodology has also helped in identifying the importance of employees as well as consumers in the overall decision-making process so as to ensure a high level of quality and control. Lahap et al. (2007) state that the strategy based on Six Sigma highlights the importance of teamwork, statistical business control as well as a shared vision in driving overall business improvement. Teamwork is identified as one of the vital pillars of the Six Sigma methodology (Lahap et al., 2007). These researchers have variously identified the aspects of holistic business approach indicating that without placing focus on the employees of the organisation and assigning them to different tasks and rules according to their abilities and skills, it is not possible for the business organisation to target the overall improvement within their business processes and procedures. Kamar (2014) has also shown that hospitality organisations focus on the improvement

of teamwork in setting the quality of business systems. Training is also offered to boost employee morale and to maximise guest satisfaction, as well as to optimise long-term profitability (Kamar, 2014).

It can be analysed that the holistic business approves the importance of increasing the employees' ability towards the use of statistical methods for increasing fragmentation and research capabilities of the business system. The use of statistical methods is, on the other hand, associated with the adoption of innovative business technologies. The holistic approach framework also identified the importance of shared vision in driving the performance of the overall system components of the business. Business leadership cannot work alone for the betterment and for quality assurance of the business system. Integration of employee's ability with the goals of the customers' experience as well as financial profitability aligned together to stimulate long lasting organisational performance. Kamar (2014) has identified 'Six-Sigma Business Strategies, Principles, Tools and Techniques' (refer to Figure 3) in order to show a great example for the implementation of holistic business practices in hospitality sector organisations.

Six-Sigma business strategies and principles	Six-Sigma Tools and Techniques
Project Management	Statistical process control
Data-based decision making	Process capability analysis
Knowledge discovery	Measurement system analysis
Process control planning	Design of experiments
Data collection tools and techniques	Robust design
Variability reduction	Quality function deployment
Belt system (Master, Black, Green, Yellow)	Failure mode and effects analysis
DMAIC process	Regression analysis
Change management tools	Analysis of means and variances Root cause analysis and process mapping

FIGURE 3: SIX-SIGMA BUSINESS STRATEGIES, PRINCIPLES, TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES ADAPTED FROM THE STUDY OF (KAMAR, 2014, P. 3)

These definitions confirm the need to view the business from the 'whole' perspective rather than an 'individualistic' perspective. Past studies have also provided evidence of implementation of the holistic business practices in different business areas such as marketing, management, engineering, purchasing, accounting, and other business processes (Krishnamurthy, 2008; Bowler and Kurfess, 2011; Krstic et al., 2015).

Based on such applications of a holistic business approach, it was recognised that businesses following a holistic business approach need to combine all the aforementioned business processes in one unified process, where process teams perform all the necessary activities. Holistic business practices cannot be adopted without considering the business as a process.

Davenport and Short (1990) define the business process as a structured and measurable set of tasks created by business management with the aim of producing some output for a specific customer or market. In line with this definition, it can be stressed that the holistic approach is not significant for the achievement of the business aims and objectives, but a more holistic approach in business is regarded as useful for the problem-solving. In addition, Krishnamurthy (2008) emphasises that in situations when a business organisation is stuck on a problem, the most appropriate step is to move back and analyse the bigger picture. He called the holistic approach to problem solving as a potential groundbreaking approach specifically for business leadership. With the help of this approach, business leadership is not only able to improve business and staff performance but also attain high-level satisfaction.

2.3 Holistic Business Approach in the Hotel Process and Procedures in the Hospitality Industry

Researchers such as Burton et al., (2011) and Stutts and Worton (2006) acknowledge that every business organisation has its business process composed of physical and human resources which are necessary to help them in the accomplishment of the business activities and specific departmental goals. This structure is useful in demonstrating and allocating tasks among various business departments (Burton et al., 2011; Stutts and Worton, 2006). Burton et al. (2011) further highlight that one of the most significant challenges faced by the hotel business is related to the development of the effective organisational design, which is essential and indispensable for the successful goal of customer satisfaction. Other goals driving the organisational design include employee performance, finance and competitive advantage. On the other hand, Stutts and Wortman (2006) define departmentalisation as a vital approach in executing the hospitality business. They explain such departmentalisation as the approach of combining staff capable of performing similar tasks together in similar departments. Work and staff productivity are the main aim behind such hotels' business performances.

It can be examined that in large hotels, an increase in responsibilities leads to an increase in managerial positions within each of the developed departments. Medium and small sized hotels have been structured in a similar manner, whereby the hotel managers are assigned various tasks to perform. Burton et al. (2011) are right to highlight the importance of efficient coordination and monitoring of the various activities in order to pursue and execute the hotel business functions in the form of departments. Hence, the role of hotel management is recognised as significant in the allocation of work to the employees. Management selects the people with similar sets of skills in order to ask them to perform the single and specialised operation efficiently.

Managers therefore create groups of people to ensure that activities are performed with coordination and efficiency. The grouping of people and tasks in the hospitality industry is mainly targeted to help the hotel business management in achieving the strategic target of increased output and productivity. According to Nebel, Rutherford and Schaffer (1994), the best way to describe the functions of the hotel business is watertight cylinders. These cylinders are also comprised of different departments, each of which is associated with the different functions and helps in executing the hospitality business. The role of the different departments can be linked effectively with the channelling of the information among each other. Different departments work in the channelling of information and perform work both downside and upside of the water light cylinders. The information stream or the organisation of the tasks among the cylinders leans towards the exertion and complexity. Nevertheless, the career path within specific departments is contingent upon the quality of tasks, activities and the department's point of view. Occasionally, the points of view of certain departments become biased, whereby the chances for development become more stimulating. However, the functionalities of the different department are also limited by the practical design of the organisations in the hospitality sector (Nebel et al., 1994). Krstic et al.,(2015) also substantiate these differences in relation to the implementation of departmentalisation strategy to pursue the holistic business approach. They mention that contemporary hospitality organisations are vulnerable to the three biggest challenge and without considering these challenges, they are unable to design effective business processes for their hotel businesses. These challenges as highlighted in the academic studies include globalisation, ever-growing technological development and stakeholders' perspectives (Krstic et al., 2015). Other difficulties involved in the business process design include:

- *"The centralised decision making,*
- *The challenges in the cross functionally activities and coordination in which there is a requirement of the cooperation of another hotel departments that lead to producing major challenges in the hotel organisation.*
- *The stifled method of innovation due to the centralised decision-making creates a bureaucracy that emphasizes the power in the single hands or to the people of the top hotel management.*
- *The indistinct responsibilities of the entire hotel performance*
- *Lack of opportunities for the management training"* (Krstic et al., 2015, p. 24)

2.3.1 Centralised Decision Making in the Hotel Industry

The research of Ahmad and Daghfous (2010) shows that decision making is all about authority and the main question of whether the authority of an employee must rest with the senior management at the centre of the business which is centralised, or all the employees of an organisation must have the power of the decision making which is located away from the centre and is known as the decentralised decision making. Ponzini (2011) demonstrates that in the hotel industry, it is imperative for the manager and the top management to make decisions for the overall organisation. In addition to this, the research of Rosalind Jenkin and Karanikola (2014) further indicates that the business with a centralised structure gives the decision-making process to the top management only, the directors, the CEO and the top management makes the decision for the organisation. Tajeddin (2009) states that organisations like to implement the centralised decision-making policy in order to ensure that the control is maintained all over the organisation. The research of Akgunduz (2015) illustrates that food outlets, such as McDonald's, also implement a centralised decision-making policy, despite having a large number of outlets all over the world, as it allows them to ensure consistency in terms of customer experience, as well as excellent quality that is to be provided to the customers initially. In addition to this, the research of Padilla-Meléndez and Garrido-Moreno (2014) further shows that the centralised decision-making ensures equality all over the hotel even if the hotel has multiple branches all over the world.

Moreover, according to Ahmad and Daghfous (2010), in the centralised structure the decision is taken by the top management only. Therefore, it ensures that the same level of decision is made for everyone, however in few cases it creates challenges for the organisation. Shallal (2011) explains that the locus and loci of an organisation is regarded by the centralisation and it structures the clear and apparent pattern of the degree of authority as it runs through the different cases of an organisation with the top management holding most of the authority. In the case of the hotel management, it is better for the top management to hold the authority to make decisions, as the implementation of different policies and the practices is easier and simpler. Similarly, it also prevents the other functions of the organisation from performing independently. However, on the other hand, decentralised decision-making in a hotel industry is also essential, as it allows the individual to make immediate and on-the-spot decisions in the case of customer complaints grievances. Nevertheless, the research of Suliman and Al-Sabri (2009) further indicates that the hotel industry, particularly in the UAE, follows the centralised decision-making system because of their culture which is authoritative in nature. Siddiqi (2011) states that the organisations that follow centralised decision-making have employees with the well-defined roles. The research study of Karatepe and Tizabi (2011) shows that in hotel management it is imperative to have well-defined roles for all employees and Siddiqi (2011) further demonstrates that the when employees are aware of their duties and responsibilities, they perform better and are more likely to be productive in the work place. According to the research of Shallal (2011), employee turnover in an organisation is extremely low due to the low motivation of the employees, therefore it is beneficial for the hotel industry in the UAE to implement a centralised decision-making policy. Similarly, according to the research of Akgunduz (2015), the organisational culture of the UAE organisation is mostly authoritative, as Arabs are more in favour of keeping authority in their hands rather than involving the lower level managers and employees in decision-making. In addition to this, centralised decision-making also helps the hotel managers keep control of the overall organisation and only the top-level managers are accountable for the decisions that they make.

Moreover, according to Ponzini (2011), practically all levels in the company are affected by the decisions that are made by the top level, but it is imperative for them to be considerable in this case and to make smart decisions that will not have an adverse effect on the lower level employees

of the organisation. Similarly, as the research indicates that the hotel industry of the UAE is facing the significantly high employee turnover, top management must be very considerate in making decisions for their hotel in order to retain their employees. Tajeddini (2009) further indicates that decisions regarding finance, security and legal issues, maintenance and the personal concerns are made by the top level employees as they are directly responsible for them and the middle and lower level employees will not be able to make such significant decisions for the whole organisation. In addition to this, Ahmad and Daghfous (2010) argue that distribution of the responsibility for decision-making and the communication pattern is structured modestly in the hotel industry, which further implies the fair degree of the randomness in the process of the decision-making. Furthermore, Karatepe (2015) shows that the absence of a communication structure implies a lack of the rules and regulations with everybody knowing their responsibilities and their duties. On the other hand, Siddiqi (2011) states that organisations in the hotel industry cannot practice decentralised decision-making as it does not provide accountability of the decision. In the event of crises, nobody takes accountability and therefore the hotel suffers huge losses, whereas in the case of centralised decision-making, the budgets and the other significant areas of the hotel industry are controlled and coordinated from the centre by the top management. In addition to this, Wang, (2016) shows that in order to survive in the current economy of scale, an organisation (particularly the hotel industry) needs strong leadership which is able to make quick and challenging decisions and the centralised decision-making allows leaders to show strong leadership qualities and quick decision making abilities.

These challenges highlighted by Krstic et al. (2015) indicate the need for modern business organisations to leave the functional perspective and adopt the process-based management approach in order to direct the attention of business managers towards the coordinated and managed set of activities (Krstic et al., 2015).

Alignment of the different business activities is only possible with the effective decision-making when the managers adopt value creation through the process-oriented approach. These findings were helpful in gaining insight into how hotel industry processes need to be designed. Therefore, these research findings can be used to understand the UAE luxury hospitality industry with great depth and insight.

2.3.2 Innovation and Centralised Decision-Making

The concept of innovation and creativity is often used indistinctly, according to the research of Karatepe (2011), who states that creativity is a continuous process which results in novelty and that it is accepted as useful, reasonable and satisfying by a group of people. In addition to this, it is further defined as the international introduction of new policies and services and the implementation in the role of the organisation or the group of people and ideas that are relevant to the adoption. In centralised decision-making the innovation capability of employees is restricted, as in most cases the lower and middle level employees are not encouraged to share their ideas and concepts which would lead to the innovation. Similarly, according to the research of Karatepe and Zargar Tizabi (2011), innovation and centralised decision-making are two distinct constructs which cannot intersect. In addition to this, according to Karatepe and Kaviti (2016), innovation in the hospitality industry is still in the starting phase, but with the innovative ideas of services and the development of the product, the hospitality industry in the UAE is growing. The research of Julaimi, Abdul Talib and Suhaimi (2016) shows that the tourism services and the hospitality industry are based significantly on the interactions of human beings and the interpersonal exchanges that significantly involve the emotions and the experiences of the people that cannot be standardised. In addition to this, due to the fact that in centralised decision-making the power is in the hands of the top management only, the innovation capabilities are restricted to the few people only who are involved in the top management, as the lower and middle level employees are not involved in the decision making. Therefore; they are rarely asked about their opinions and suggestions regarding significant issues. In addition, Hussain (2016) shows that the industry of hospitality has grown significantly.

The structure of the organisation is now more flexible, and the co-workers are allowed to be more empowered, therefore the management of hotels are aware of the need of the hotel to adopt the procedures of continuous improvement in order to meet the expectations of their clients. Similarly, Farouk et al., (2016) show that the critical thinking ability of an individual, the skills of communication and interpersonal and the ethical behaviours of the manager are considered as the most important skills that the managers will need to adopt in the future. Moreover, Eid (2015) shows that in order to promote the innovation and the innovative ideas of employees, the

organisation must focus on implementing decentralised decision-making in an organisation, as it does not limit the capability of an individual to share their ideas and innovation. The research of Eid and El-Gohary (2015) further adds that in the hospitality industry particularly, people from all around the world are included, therefore; it is imperative for hotels to introduce new services and new product development in order to attract more customers from all over the world. Tourists and the business travellers from all over are the major customers of the hotel industry and therefore, it is imperative for them to be considered when introducing new policies and practices as the customers of the hotel industry are in most cases are the travellers who have been to different hotels throughout their lives. Similarly, the research of Daghfous and Barkhi (2009) further adds that innovation is a must in all kinds of the industries, however, in order to implement innovation and introduce new and smart ideas, the organisation must not limit the thinking capability of its employees. If the employees are not encouraged to share their ideas and their concepts, their innovative and thinking ability will be restricted. Arif, Gupta and Williams (2013) further indicate that the organisation must focus on making their decision-making systems decentralised as the decentralised decision-making does not limit the thinking capability of an individual, it encourages sharing of new ideas and the implementation of innovative ideas. Similarly, according to Al-Hawari and Mouakket (2010), the hotel industry in the UAE is in desperate need of new and innovative strategies to attract more customers and retain their current customers, due to the fact that the hospitality industry in the UAE is in significant decline. Therefore, the industry needs to implement new strategies and policies to attract new customers.

2.3.3 Indistinct Responsibilities

Akgunduz (2015) shows that it is imperative for hotel managers to display the qualities of critical thinking, communication and interpersonal skills, along with the ethical behaviour of the manager. In addition, Ahmad (2015) states that the role and duties of the manager of the hotel have become more challenging because of new and advanced technology, as well as strong and robust competitors. Aregawi (2015) further indicates that hotel managers must be expert in the operations of hospitality and he or she must have the people management and development skills. Ahmad and Daghfous (2010) argue that the development of employees is eventually a gain for the organisation as well, hence the organisation must further focus on the career development of its

employees. Furthermore, Hope (2009) shows that hotel industry managers are required to assume the activities that are mostly coordination because of the fact that the most hotels still have a structure that is functionally hierarchical and the level of education of most of the employees in the hotel industry is low. According to Nick and Pongrácz (2010), that these constructs require the hotel industry managers to adopt the privileged role of leader in the process of the organisation and they further require the conceptualisation of the leadership construct Patil (2010) further defines the concept of leadership as the interaction between the followers as well as the leaders. Moreover, the indistinct responsibilities of the leader further signify that it is imperative for leaders to motivate their employees to strive for higher and better goals as this will eventually lead to the effectiveness of the organisation. However, Patil (2010) goes on to state that leadership can be further defined as the interaction between the group of people which involves the leader and his/ her followers. Moreover, Jamal and Allam (2011) argue that in the hotel industry, the leader or manager must put themselves in their co-worker's place and then make policies accordingly. Similarly, in the vacation season when the hotel industry has the busiest schedule, it is important for the hotel industry to make policies and rules that are easy for employees as the employees are the main asset for the organisation.

Moreover, the research of Ismail (2010) further signifies that the responsibilities of the employees of the hotel industry further stipulate that they must build their roles according to the expectations, behaviours and the attitudes that are apparent and the relationship between co-workers must also follow a pattern that is top-down and is significantly based on power. Saraiva (2016) further demonstrates that the leader is constructed in the daily conversation, deconstructing the themes that are relevant and when the themes become too common, they formulate new themes and policies. According to Kibwage and Misreave (2011), the relationship of managers with their employees relies significantly on the procedure of social influence that is more horizontal and egalitarian. Similarly, according to Ndivo (2013), leaders do not resolve issues on their own , but foster the actions of the followers. The indistinct responsibilities of the manager of the hotel further include the adequate attention to the process of communication in the group, which further acknowledges the minimum differences and the process of continuous learning (Yin-zhi, 2010). Chaudhuri and Ray (2015) further indicate that in order to be a leader, it is not imperative for them to introduce innovative ideas and concepts, however it is important for them to promote creativity and the innovative ideas of their co-workers and the lower and middle level employees. Kasala

(2014) claims that in order for tourist companies to stay in competition, they must differentiate themselves from the competition that is functioning in the same environment. Similarly, the research of Chavan and Bhola (2014) further indicates that neither the technology, nor he services will differentiate the functions of one organisation from another, but only the personalised actions of the employers and managers and the intimate relationship between the co-workers will give exceptional and unique services to clients. In order to guarantee excellent service and adequate customer satisfaction, managers and co-workers in the hospitality industry should work on the process of the continuous improvement (Zhou, Cai and Tong-jian, 2013). However, the research of Pitoska, (2012) suggests that the attention of the leader must not only be focused on their workers, but they must also focus on the expectations, behaviours and the attitudes of the clients.

In addition to this, the indistinct responsibilities of the managers further include that they are responsible for motivating their employees for bringing innovation to their services. However, research shows that the centralised decision making often restricts the capability of an individual to be innovative and efficient. Similarly, the research of Nega (2018) further indicates that innovation is related to the continuous improvement in the services of the hotel industry. With regards to the satisfaction of the customers, organisations and managers must focus on fulfilling the demands of customers and anticipating their future needs and requirements. Jauhari et al. (2009) further demonstrate that if the organisation, particularly in the hotel industry, manages to anticipate the needs of the customers first, they are more likely to achieve competitive advantage and be the market leader. Haitao and Lei (2012) indicates that decision-making and the planning of the activity along with maintaining a healthy relationship with co-workers are significant characteristics of the organisation which need constant attention of managers and leaders. Similarly, Hope (2009) suggests that the human beings are considered to the most challenging and difficult species to manage. Hope (2009) goes on to state that the most indistinct responsibility of the manager is to develop the career of their employees and help them grow in their career which will eventually be beneficial for the hotel as well. However, according to the research of Ismail (2010), the relationship between customers and managers or the relationship between mangers and co-workers help in developing the low power distance. Similarly, Saraiva (2016) further shows that the more innovative the manager is, the more they establish close and friendly relationships

with customers. Moreover, the research of Pitoska (2012) further shows that the managers' innovation further insists on the significance of empowering the fellow employees. Nega (2018) argues that in the hotel industry, employers must focus on developing a close relationship with customers, but most importantly they must focus on developing a close relationship with their fellow employees, as the employees are most significant part of the organisation, and the whole organisation depends on the functionality of the employees. The more efficient the employers, the better the performance will be.

2.3.4 Challenges in the Hotel Industry

Jauhari et al. (2009) show that in the cross-functional employee groups, the hotel industry faces millions of challenges such as the challenge of understaffing, the harassment of employees, the employees' theft and the poor training of the employees. Haitao, Bo and Lei (2012) state that the even though the employees of the hotel industry are given proper training and skills to deal with customers in order to enhance their satisfaction, the poor behaviour of the workers with the customer is the major reason why the customers prefer the competitors. In addition to this, the research of Nick and Pongrácz (2010) further indicates that the mangers of the hotel industry are often reluctant in investing in the training as the employees often leave as soon as they receive the trainings. The research of Ismail (2010) further indicates that the employee theft is another challenge that the mangers are facing in the cross functional teams, as the people from different departments are working together however, due to the employee theft the organisations suffer the most. Particularly in the hotel industry the research of Saraiva (2016) shows that, the employee theft further leads to the increased prices of the products as well as the profits and the wages of the employees. Moreover, according to the research of Haitao, Bo and Lei (2012), the employee theft is also related to the staff turnover if the control over the employees is poor. In addition to this, according to the research of the Pitoska (2012) the poor hygiene of the food is also another major challenge that the hotel owners face, as the unhygienic food can further lead the customer to his/ her death, and it can be the major threat for the any hotel industry. Moreover, in cross functional teams the hotel managers often find it difficult to allocate the resources as well as the duties to the employees as the employees often feel that they do not deserve the designation that they are provided. However on the other hand, according to the research of Hope (2009), sexual harassment

is also strongly linked with the work of hospitality, the research further shows that according to their survey when the employees at work particularly in the hotel industry were asked about the highest form of bullying they have experiences in their work life 85% of the employees said the unwanted sexual advancement from the customers as well as the fellow employees. In addition to this, the research study of Patil (2010) further adds that the cross-functional teams are efficient and more effective, but it requires additional efforts to maintain and control them. However, the main challenge that they come across in the management of the cross functional team is the allocation of the adequate resources.

On the other hand, the research of Ismail, (2010) adds that the students of hospitality in work experience are especially vulnerable to harassment and that harassment is one of the major challenges that the hotel industry faces. According to the research of Saraiva (2016), in the cross functional teams as the employees from different teams are joined together to work for the same cause there are more chances of being sexually harassed.

2.3.5 Management Training

Training is considered to be a part of HR development alongside other activities such as the selection, recruitment and compensation. The HR department role is to enhance the effectiveness of the organisation by providing employees with various training opportunities in order to enhance the knowledge and skills that would eventually increase their performance and the productivity of the organisation. Due to lack of training and development programs, the hospitality industry of the UAE could face several complications, as training is considered to be an important part of a company's operational strategy. It was determined from the study of Hope (2009) that training professionals should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the employees and the organisation in order to create suitable development program to fulfil the requirements of the hotel management. It was considered that apart from effectiveness of training, the measurement of productivity could be done through the suitability of training models. It was determined that training plays a crucial role in the stability and success of the hotel industry throughout the world. It allows the employees to increase their knowledge and skills, as per the requirements of the

company, in order to increase the overall performance of both the management as well as the organisation itself.

Patil (2010) argues that competency in the employees and quality of employees could be viewed as few of the most important aspects as far as the hospitality industry of the United Arab Emirates is concerned. It was analysed that quality of service is directly proportional to the quality and productivity of the employees and such qualities include knowledge, awareness, and skills that could prove to be beneficial in the survival as well as the development of hotels in the hospitality industry.

Hence, the hotel staff of the United Arab Emirates should undergo such training programs in order to provide efficient services to their customers. The hotels of the UAE are considered to be some of the most luxurious in the world. Therefore, it is considered necessary for the human resource departments to develop such training programs that could aid the development of skills in their employees, as it would allow them to provide quality services to their customers that would help the organisation to enhance their brand identity. In addition, it was determined that training programs influence and motivates the workers by providing them with all the necessary information related to their duties and making them aware of the skills that could provide them with good growth as far as their career in the hospitality industry is concerned. Training and development could be viewed as the primary instrument for implementing the practices of HR management and the strategies developed by the management teams. According to various studies it was determined that the analysis of successful hotels depicted that training is an important element in their operational strategies. Lack of training opportunities for the employees could create numerous complications for the luxury hotels of the United Arab Emirates in the longer term, as the hospitality industry of the UAE is famous for its premium services. Therefore, if in any case the services provided by the employees are considered to be lacking in quality, it could affect the overall image of the UAE hospitality industry.

According to the study of Jauhari et al, (2009), it was determined that due to technological development the employees of various companies require training of their skill in order to acquire enhance skills that could prove to be advantageous in coping with the future complications as well as the barriers. The need for global competition has also changed the way organisations operate and includes training in quality management and customer service to further improve customer

prospects. In addition, it is recommended that the role of the facilitator is to promote a culture of lifelong learning in a highly competitive environment. In addition, the company provides training to help employees achieve their goals. They also want to improve employee performance, increase productivity and prepare for future technological or technological changes. Management has now strengthened the role of training to improve employee engagement and quality movement (the concept of human resource management). These human resource management concepts require careful planning and greater emphasis on employee development and long-term education.

Training is now an important human resource management tool for managing the employment rate as it helps to motivate employees, achieve their professional and personal goals and increase job satisfaction. Training can therefore be used to develop a range of skills and includes several courses. Training tasks are one of the most important aspects of employee training, including the principles of work, knowledge and skills needed to implement these key elements. Therefore, it was considered necessary for the hospitality industry of the UAE to develop strategies and policies in order to fulfil the gaps that have been created due to lack of such training programs. It was viewed that poor training could bring out high turnover of employees and substandard products as well as services that are delivered to the customers. Staff training could not only fulfil the requirements of the luxury hotels but could also effectively combat technological and globalisations concerns.

According Nega (2018), training is a primary element of HR policies. The chief benefits of development programs for employees include individual as well as team training. It was determined that due to lack of training, globalisation concerns could provide an adverse impact on the hospitality industry of the UAE as its hotels are visited by foreigners from around the world. Foreigners belonging to various backgrounds and regions have individual needs and desires that need to be catered to by the workers. Hence, it is necessary to provide awareness to staff about different cultures and provide them with different training programs to develop their interaction and communication skills in order to provide efficient services to customers that would help to fulfil the gap created due to poor training or lack of skills. Increased awareness could contribute towards the enhanced performance of a certain jobs, eventually increasing the productivity of the respective department. It was determined that due to lack of training opportunities, the quality and quantity of the services provided by luxury hotels in the UAE could suffer in the longer term.

Therefore, it was considered necessary to establish such development programs supervised by a training professional in order to provide the employees with much needed skills to tackle the globalisation concerns effectively and to increase the productivity of individuals as well as the organisation in an efficient manner. Well-trained workers can use materials and equipment economically and efficiently to prevent waste. In addition, machines and equipment have the lowest accident and damage rates because they know how to use them.

Consequently, it helps the economy and directs it towards the predefined objectives of the luxury hotels. Training helps employees differently. Employees acquire the professional knowledge and skills needed to build confidence and useful skills have increased their value for employers and their income. Training can also qualify them for promotion and help them to be responsible for their work. Training can also improve the skills, knowledge and talent of employees that would eventually provide individual benefits to the workers as per their career growth and would increase the probability of survival for the hospitality company. Therefore, it was considered necessary for the UAE luxury hotels to develop strategies in order to provide the employees with the necessary platform and opportunities for training and development of their skills that would eventually enhance the productivity of the hotels.

2.4 The Classification of the Holistic Business Process in the Hospitality Industry

Besides placing light on the challenges and importance of the business process approach for the hospitality industry, the literature has also concentrated on the various components that make up the overall business process for the hospitality industry (Raderbauer, 2011; Stutts and Worton, 2006). Historically, Keen (1997) has described the appropriateness of the business process through its contribution in the environmental sustainability of the business operations. In contrary to this older description, 21st century researchers have described effectiveness of the business process in a different and more comprehensive manner through total quality management and business improvement frameworks. Krstic et al. (2015) measure the significance of the business process through the performance of all the business activities that are capable of adding value to the business. Therefore, it is necessary to create a line of distinction among the high-value creating activities, low-value creating activities, and the activities that do not add any value to the business process. In a similar context, Krstic et al., (2015) have developed a process classification for the

hospitality sector to show that three key processes drive the process: operating processes, supporting processes, and managerial processes. In relation to this classification, Mohapatra, (2009) has highlighted the operating business processes as the core business processes. Mohaptara mentions that the interaction between all three processes of the hospitality industry is extremely important in order to convert the guest requests into guest satisfaction (see Figure 4).

It is necessary to adopt an integrated approach by connecting the employees' work, statistical and quantitative methods, as well as the shared vision in order to achieve efficiency in the processes and procedures described below within hospitality sector organisations.

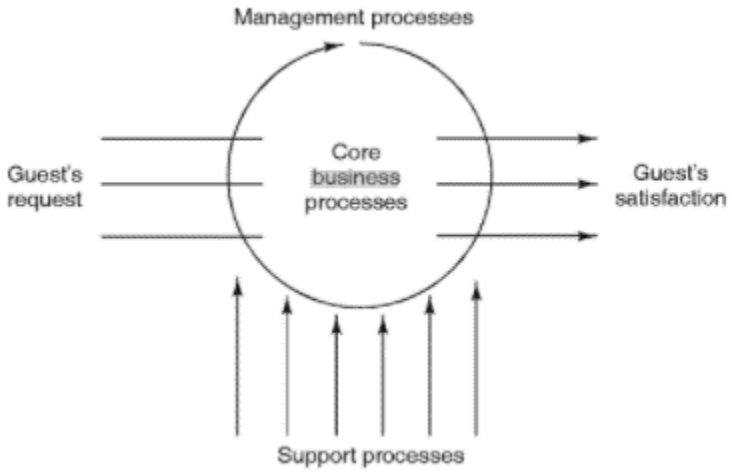


FIGURE 4: BUSINESS PROCESSES IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

(MOHAPATRA, 2009, P. 172)

Operating Process: Krstic et al. (2015) define operating processes as the ones that develop and deliver the products and services as specified by the customers of the hospitality organisation (Cerović, 2010; Krstic et al., 2015). Cerović (2010) describes them as the everyday operational activities conducted by different departments. From the term 'everyday' as defined by Cerović (2010), operational processes can be understood as the standard actions and routine procedures necessary to continue the business.

Supporting Process: On the other hand, Cerović (2010) defines supporting processes as the ones which are necessary for helping the direct processes involved in the production of the outcomes. Krstic, et al. (2015), incontrast, highlight supporting processes by indicating that these processes

do not play a direct role in the performance of the business system, rather they are acting as indirect forces for the creation of effective outcomes. Based on the Krstic, et al. (2015) perspective, supporting processes can be categorised into the understanding of the markets and services, development of vision and strategy, designing of hotel products and services, and marketing and sales.

Managerial Process: The third set of processes in the hospitality industry system are managerial processes, which are essential for performance management of the hotel industry (Cerović, 2010). Krstic et al., (2015) present a clearer definition of managerial processes by highlighting that these are the processes in which management carries out a sequence of activities to direct the staff and business procedures in transformation of inputs and outputs. It can be perceived that managerial processes are the core ones in the context of administrative as well as technical support and employees.

It can be examined that both supporting and operating business processes share vital characteristics, as both are comprised of the group of interconnected activities which convert inputs into outputs. The perspective of Krstic et al. (2015) is much broader and explains that unlike the managerial processes, these two processes have identifiable openings as well as endings. For this reason, it is easier to identify the appropriate boundaries of the processes with great precision and minimal connection. Both of these processes also have users, which can be internal and external to the business. The role of the third business process is of a bridge or channel to connect the operating and supporting business processes to ensure that these processes are contributing vitally towards the value creation for the business (Mok et al., 2013; Legrand et al., 2012; Bowie, et al. 2016; Kotler et al., 1999). Managerial processes help in setting the direction, coordination, integration, and controlling of the operating and supporting business processes (Camillo, 2015; Woodside, 2008; Ivanova et al., 2016; Kempen, 2012). It would be more appropriate to refer the managerial processes as the decision-making activities as business managers are responsible for looking after all the people and activities in the business enterprise (Krstic et al., 2015).

In Figure 5, it can be seen that Krstic et al., (2015) subdivide the operating process into the processes of hotel housekeeping, supplying necessary inputs, guest arrivals and departures, and producing and serving food and beverages. They further categorise the supporting processes into one core sub-component of understanding markets and customers. Likewise, managerial processes

are sub-divided into four key components: development and management of human resources, management of information technology (IT), management of financial and physical resources, and management of reputation, quality and change (Krstic et al., 2015).

These four components can be viewed through the lens of the Six Sigma approach in relation to the hospitality industry (Lahap et al., 2007). According to Lahap et al. (2007), in a service industry such as the hospitality sector, human behaviour is one of the most important elements in describing the system as inter-operability independence. These authors have suggested that while taking account of other business aspects such as IT and financial as well as non-financial aspects, the influence of human behaviour cannot be undermined, for instance friendliness, and honesty. The differential perspective of Lahap et al. (2007) can be used to understand the improvements needed at all levels of decisions and processes in order to improve the service delivery time.

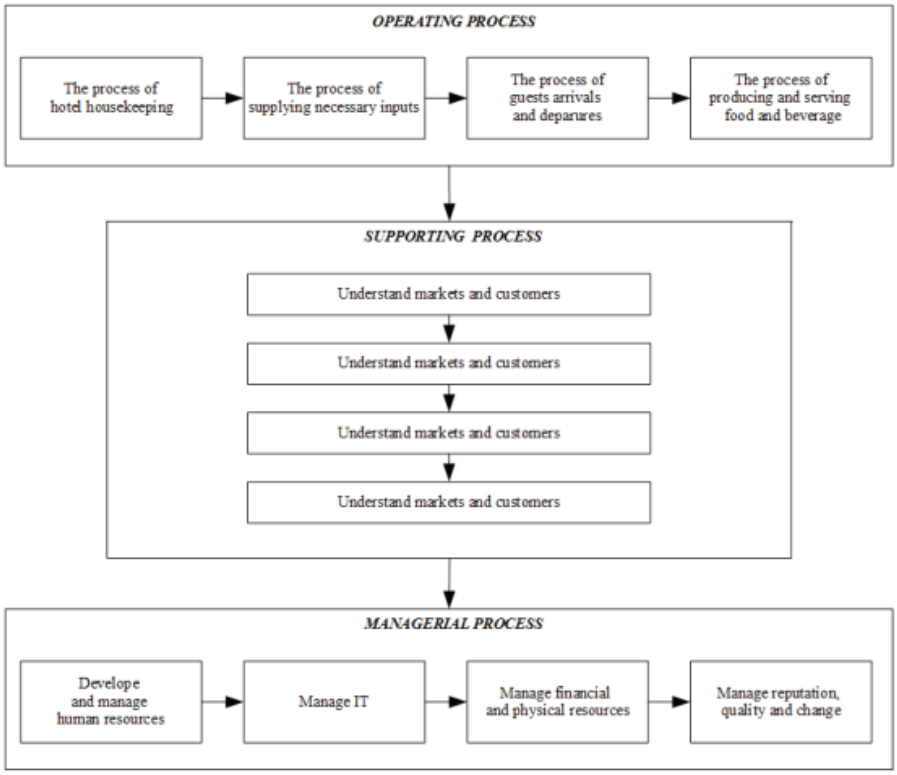


FIGURE 5: PROCESS CLASSIFICATION IN HOSPITALITY (KRSTIC ET AL., 2015, P. 28)

The analysis of process classification in the hospitality sector can further assist in the understanding of the processes of the luxury sector in UAE hospitality business practices.

2.5 The Holistic Business Approach in the Implementation of Operating Processes in the Hospitality Industry

From the three core processes identified in relation to the hospitality industry, this section of the literature has covered the implementation of operating processes in the hospitality industry. The four sub-categories under the operating process as defined above can be further categorised into a set of activities performed to attain a clearer view of the hospitality industry processes. There is consensus in the academic literature that operating processes of the hospitality industry are comprised of both the production as well as service activities. Production activities are more connected to the provision of food and drink while the service activities refer to the actions connected with production activities as well as other activities necessary for meeting the high-level demands of customers.

Operating Sub-Process 1: For Krstic et al. (2015), the housekeeping process is identified as the most important part of the hospitality industry, as this process is directly related to the customer experience. and satisfaction. In a similar context, the Six Sigma approach also identifies housekeeping as essential for hotel guests, as Lahap et al. (2007) give priority to how the hotel management is looking towards their needs to feel comfortable and feel as if they are still at home. The process of housekeeping is extremely important for the health and safety of the guests as well as for the development and maintenance of a pleasant working environment (Figure 6). There is sufficient evidence in the academic literature confirming that a pleasant hotel environment is necessary for enhancing the satisfaction of employees as well as guests (Krstic et al., 2015). The housekeeping process is explained in detail below with its component activities. It can be examined that the housekeeping process is mostly comprised of service activities only.

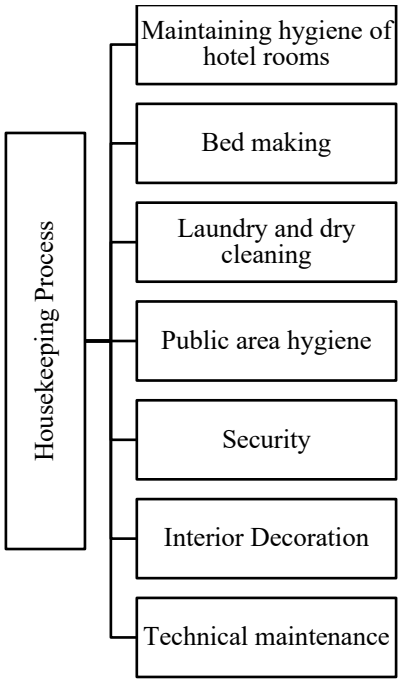


FIGURE 6: HOUSEKEEPING PROCESS ACTIVITIES

Operating Sub-Process 2: Supply of Necessary Inputs

The next process of the hospitality industry is also crucial for the operability of the hotel business, . namely the provision of various kinds of goods and materials for the hotel business as a whole. The type of materials and inputs needed in this operating process is ultimately reliant on the kind and type of the hospitality organisation. For regular and low category hotels, the materials and product requirements are also regular while for the luxury sector in the hospitality industry, demand specifications for the materials are higher. Luxury sector hotels are required to supply the best quality and sufficient quantity of food and beverage. However, it is necessary to understand that supply of products and services in the hospitality industry is not possible without the selection of adequate suppliers. For this reason, the first and foremost activity in this sub-process includes selection and certification of suppliers. Later comes purchasing the desired quantity of materials from the suppliers, receiving the ordered materials, storage of the received materials and resolution of food and beverage issues. Each of these activities in the supply process is identified as crucial relative to others.

Their interrelation further calls for the performance of these activities in sequential order to attain the desired set of business objectives. It is also important to understand the importance of pursuing the supply related processes with the regulatory standards set at the international level as well as at the domestic level. The understanding of this supply process can further assist the current investigation in exploring how UAE luxury hospitality organisations are connecting these services with the aim of increasing customer satisfaction.

Operating Sub-Process 3: Process of Guest Arrivals and Departures

The third operating sub-process as identified in the academic literature is mainly concerned with communication. Numerous researchers have highlighted significantly the importance of communication in the hospitality industry both for the successful internal as well as external business operations. Communication between management and staff ultimately directs how the staff in the hotels will communicate with their guests or customers (Baum, 2006; Krstic et al., 2015; Seyitoglu and Yuzbasioglu, 2015). Baum (2006) explains the significance of communication in attracting a high level of tourism to the country. It is necessary to understand that the role of operational staff is crucial in this context relative to the role of administrative staff, since the operational staff directly communicates with the customers. The frontline staff of the hospitality industry, therefore, has great responsibility on their shoulders. Krstic et al. (2015) also show that the process of guest arrival and departure starts from the booking through to the payment of hotel bills. To deal with guests, the operational level staff are required to prepare themselves for the pre-arrival, arrival, occupancy, departure and post-arrival stages. Guests need to be accommodated for in all their demands at these different stages. The reservation has been identified as the initial stage of the hospitality process. Guests can contact the operational level staff for short-term and long-term reservations. Likewise, for ordering different products and services, the role of communication comes out as vital within the hospitality organisation. Academic researchers have identified different modes of communication as significant for driving the effective communication within the hospitality organisation staff and management. Communication between the guests and operational level staff can be in the form of telephone, internet, and through the desk services. Similarly, as the start of this process is through the reservations, similarly, the end of the process is linked with the guests' departures.

At the departure stage, guest leaves the room and settle their individual accounts with the hotel against the level of services received. The post-departure phase ultimately ends with the feedback of the guests.

Operating Sub-Process 4: Production and Serving of Food and Beverages

The fourth sub-process of the operational business processes of the hospitality industry is related to the main and primary function of the hospitality industry, i.e. production of food and serving it to the guests based on their specific demands. Stutts and Worton (2006) believe that this process is unique due to the diversity in the activities carried out under this process. Such diversity on the other side calls for the variety of staff skills necessary to perform the activities. The key responsibility associated with this process is related to the serving and provision of food and beverages in the hotel. Food and beverages can also be categorised into product and services. Production activities are connected with the kitchen area while the service activities are connected with the delivery of the food items prepared in the kitchen after going through the production stage. Kitchen activities are also linked with the preparation, cooking, hygiene and finishing of the production of food. It can be examined that without safe and effective pre-treatment of food, the hospitality industry is unable to move towards the serving, which leads to high-level of customers' experience. However, it is important to understand the significance of producing the food according to the requirement of guests. Such a thorough level of analysis can further help in identifying for the UAE luxury sector in the hospitality industry that each of the processes is divided into sub-processes, sub-processes into activities and activities into multiple tasks and supporting actions. The multiple processes and procedures cannot be accomplished easily without holistic business practices.

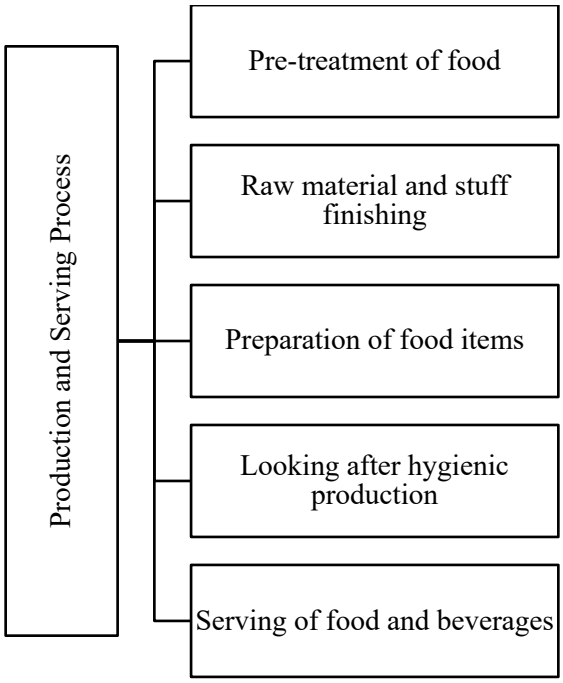


FIGURE 7: PRODUCTION AND SERVICES PROCESS ACTIVITIES

After critically viewing the hospitality industry processes and procedures in line with the findings available in the existing literature, the next section indicates the holistic business approach to the innovation and emerging trends in the hospitality industry.

2.6 The Holistic Business Approach in the Innovation and Emerging Trends in the Hospitality Industry

Baggio et al. (2011) illustrate that the holistic approach in the hospitality industry is not about the connectivity of the business processes into only one unified whole or system, rather the holistic approach also includes staying responsive to the innovation (Baggio et al., 2011). In a similar context, Six Sigma has also identified the importance of being relentless in pursuit of processes to deliver continuous improvements and breakthroughs based on the ongoing changes in the internal and external business environments (Lahap et al., 2007). As in every industry, technological innovation has been one of the most significant innovations in the hospitality industry. However, the hospitality industry is recognised as the first industry that has pursued the implementation of technology and hotels practices.

The main aim behind the adoption of technological innovation was the upgrade to the business practices of hotels and the improvement of the association with the hotel guests. Previously, the use of technology in the hospitality industry was very limited and business managers were focused on using technology for maximising its benefits. However, as time passed, the hospitality industry started to realise the problems and challenges of the technology for the hospitality sector organisation. According to Baggio et al. (2011), hospitality sector organisations use technology mainly for cost reduction and revenue generation purposes. Technology has a great role in supporting the business organisations to increase their marketing value. With the advent of new technologies, it has become easier for business organisations managers to be more efficient and effective in marketing themselves to the users of their business. Increased marketing is helpful for the business organisations in the appropriate segmentation of their hotel's customers. Other benefits of the technological innovation for the hospitality sector business include the increase in customer satisfaction, as with the help of new technology, companies are able to provide customers with significant and momentous customer knowledge and relatively fast reaction times. Businesses are able to identify and track recent trends in the customers' approach and link it with their processes and activities to show their service levels. The analysis of the literature has also shown that where technology is an influential factor within the business organisation, it is important to understand that the decision of implementing technology is also reliant on the changes in the hotel organisations and the leading changes in the business environments of these hospitality organisations. Only a motivated environment is able to direct effective adoption and implementation of the innovative technologies.

Bilgihan and Nejad (2015) confirm Baggio et al.'s (2011) understanding and reveal that innovation in the hospitality and tourism industries is largely associated with the simplification of business processes, as well as making dynamic and interactive business processes. With the help of innovative technologies, it has now become convenient for business organisations to innovate and redesign the services. The service industry, due to modern and innovative technologies, has started realising the importance of innovating and redesigning their services.

A holistic approach cannot be achieved without responding to these emerging technologies. The results have showed that customer relationships in the hospitality industry are entirely based on

how the staff takes the requests and accommodate their information, product and service needs. The correct use of appropriate technology can assist in the effective accomplishment of this key business goal. Technology has been helpful in providing support to the business organisations in the development of effective relationships with their stakeholders. Bilgihan & Nejad (2015) claim that innovative technologies and business models have transformed the hospitality and tourism industries. Some of the examples highlighted by the two researchers within their study include

> "*...phone-as-key-cards, mobile self-check-in, mobile booking, self-service check-in kiosks, lobby media panels, electronic luggage tags, bring your own device, bring your own content platforms, smartphone boarding passes, hotel service optimization systems, and guest device connectivity tools*" (p. 45).

Many hotels are using voice-over-internet-protocol phones to stay connected to the hotel ecosystems. These protocols function through phones in the guestrooms and allow guests to make orders for housekeeping directly through touchscreen technology provided to them in their rooms. These order systems are directly connected with room service. Likewise, some of the hotels following the modern technologies also make use of wearable devices for easy identification of their guests. Technology is also used in the serving process by allowing customers to select products from technology-driven tablet menus. These revolutions may take place in the forefront of a service where customers perceive the innovation, or they may function in the backend. The technologies are beginning to be integrated within the hotel system in a manner that they are simply becoming "invisible to consumer". The new generation is about involvement of consumers in the business process. In similar context, Sarmah et al., (2017, p. 2647) state

> "*Basic technology-based service (TBS) adoption model in luxury hotels is necessary such as smart phone apps, in order to achieve the impacts on the guests' innovativeness, willingness to co-create, need for interaction and involvement on their adoption intention towards co-creatively developed new services*" (p. 2647)

(Sarmah et al., 2017; Crick and Spencer, 2011) also confirm that new and modern technologies have also given rise to the call centre concept, where the management has started taking the services of others, i.e. outsourcing. Therefore, in implementing the holistic approach, it would not only be effective for the business to interrelate its processes and procedures, but also to link those

business processes with the processes and activities of outsourcing companies (Sarmah et al., 2017; Crick and Spencer, 2011). Richard (2017) offers a critical view of customer relationship management in the hospitality sector for the players to pursue a holistic business approach and states that avoiding relationship management with their customers through technological innovation, would mean encountering failure. Such negligence results in the loss of brand image and reputation, loss of credibility, and weakening mechanisms of communication (Richard, 2017). In the era of the internet, it is impossible for a hospitality organisation to achieve a level of success without improvement in business strategy.

Moreover, technological innovations are expected to reshape the nature of the hospitality organisations' production, service, and distribution channels by reframing the nature of the business and customer exchange and interaction (Nemec Rudez and Mihalic, 2007). These innovations are also changing the nature of the business connections with their competitors. When measured in terms of business impact, technological innovations have been targeted for the development of new channels in order to rapidly identify the changing demands of customers with deep level analysis. However, in following the technological innovations, many hotels are experiencing a wide range of benefits as well as risks in the process of integrating new technologies with their traditional style of working. For many hotels, skill development and staff training are still challenging issues in the adoption of new technology platforms. Nevertheless, it can be examined whether organisations are pursuing improvements in the communication processes as well as in their business practices. Hjalager (2010) emphasises that one of the most important technological innovations which is becoming popular among the hospitality sector organisations across the globe, namely social media. Hjalager (2010) assumes that social media and new forms of this media are great opportunities to obtain high-level information and to create networks with advanced market segments. With the help of social media, hospitality organisations find it quite beneficial to identify the range of behaviours in relation to their traditional customers.

In a similar context, Mitic and Kapoluas (2012) have identified that there are a number of challenges in the process of adopting social media vehicles in the hospitality organisations. They believe that for hotels, it would be very difficult to modify their existing business structures and to start pursuing social media-based business practices.

Hotels would be required to initiate the process of strategic dialogue with their stakeholders in order to attain success both in terms of value as well as in terms of eliminating the indirect challenges (Chan and Guillet, 2011; Mitic and Kapoluas, 2012). In recent times, two of the most prominent social networking sites, Twitter and Facebook, have been used by hotel organisations in order to direct efficient interaction with their customers. Organisations are using these virtual networks to gain customer feedback and to influence customers with new types of behaviours. The literature also explains the changes occurring in the behaviours of conventional customers. It is not difficult for other businesses to target your customers. The only significant challenge in this globalised and competitive era is related to the customer retention. Such consumers have become highly sensitive to the prize along with the needs for ethical brands. Buyers' power has increased in the hospitality sector too and customers are searching for the best option to dispose of their incomes. Social media is identified as a tool by the researchers as well as business analysts for dealing with the retention problems faced by organisations. Researchers indicate that management at present does not only have to look after cost reduction in order to offer competitive prices to their customers, but is also required to concentrate on the holism of the business practices.

According to Kim et al. (2009), new technologies have also made it convenient for the hospitality organisations to carry out data mining of their customers' information. It was not easy for the organisations to create and maintain their customers databases. Up-to-date customer databases and their profiles are necessary to respond to changing customer needs in a timely manner. Technology-centric databases are not only helping organisations to integrate different information about the customers, but are also helping the business to match and offer the services in accordance with the customers' profiles. Data mining is defined as the utilisation of data from stored databases with the ultimate aim of recognising the irregular trends, patterns and challenges with the help of virtual data processing tools (Kim et al., 2009). Since the hospitality industry is identified heavily as a customer-centric industry, these mining technologies are of great support for hospitality sector organisations. These technologies are helpful in dealing with the vast volumes of guest information, which is not possible through traditional types of databases. This data mining innovation is also helpful for hotel organisations in order to deal with their complicated databases to understand the current trend and for predicting future customer behaviours.

Previous studies have reported several cases of success stories where hospitality organisations were able to target customers that are more loyal, hold the high-level customers, and to target profit maximisation. Additionally, for a service industry such as hospitality, the human element is one of the most challenging issues in the implementation of business practices (Cheng et al., 2012). According to Pérez (2004), technology innovation has also directed the businesses to modify their skills productivity and the quality of their employees in order to increase the level of the service quality and to raise the standard of their human capital. These findings have significant implication for the current study, as the understanding of the relationship between the technological innovation and hospitality sector would help to identify how UAE luxury sector organisations are responding to new technologies. These findings can also be used to realise how the luxury sector is integrating technology with their holistic business practices to shape the customers in line with the long-term success objective. After setting out the general discussion on previous research findings, in the next section of the literature review specific focus is placed on the use of technology in the UAE luxury sector as well as the global luxury sector. Such analysis will assist in identifying the current business practices and subsequently in highlighting the result gap driving the need for the current investigation.

2.7 Empirical Studies Showing Holistic Business Practices in Luxury Hospitality

Studies focused on the global luxury hospitality sector have provided sufficient evidence of the implementation of holistic business practices and the resulting customer-centric outcomes (Lu et al., 2015; Marić et al., 2016). In one of the qualitative studies, Lu et al. (2015) investigate whether luxury hotel managers and customers have a similar understanding of service quality and satisfaction. The aim of the paper was to identify whether hotel managers are pursuing a holistic approach in shaping the experiences of their customers. Managerial and guest interviews were conducted from the luxury hotels in Taiwan and the results of the research showed no primary level differences in the understanding of the managers and guests. The findings further showed that luxury hotels in Taiwan focus on the integration of culture, people and business processes in driving a large part of their hotel operations. Business management has shown a clear understanding of the experiences and demands of their guests. In a similar context, Marić, et al.

(2016), in their investigation, criticise the fact that the hospitality industry overestimates the significance of intangibility.

A holistic approach allows managers to view the connection between tangible and intangible attributes. Business researchers, Parasuraman, et al. (1988) in their SERQUAL model, identify that customer satisfaction and experience in the hospitality industry are influenced collectively through the tangible and intangible elements of services. Customers' experiences are highly dependent on the physical as well as emotional aspects of services, for which it has been observed that customers have started evaluating the services of hospitality organisations not only during consumption, but also in the arrival areas.

In a quantitative study conducted to investigate holistic customer experience in selected resort hotels in China, Ali, (2016) focuses on the factors behind the conversion of satisfaction into positive behavioural intentions. The main aim of this study was to shed light on the issue of customer experience in luxury settings. By pursuing a quantitative methodology, Ali (2016) adopted a survey strategy and distributed questionnaires to 1570 Chinese customers. The findings of this research were quite helpful in understanding that service performance is dependent on the three key aspects: physical environment, interaction with staff, and interaction with customers. Additionally, (Ali, 2016) has also summarised the critical dimensions of customer experience such as recognition and escapism, peace of mind and relaxation, hedonics and involvement (Ali, 2016).

In an investigation of holistic tourism as an alternative form of tourism, , Rocha et al. (2015) identify that balancing the needs of the body, mind and soul of consumers is vital for hospitality organisations in targeting the satisfaction and experience of the customers. Empirical research was based on a questionnaire sent to 300 holistic providers in four different Portuguese destinations. The findings show that customers view the causality between motivation and self-image as well as satisfaction. The study has highlighted the importance of maintaining the connection between the experience, motivation and satisfaction of the Mughal customers in order to regard the service delivery to the customers as holistic.

The importance of soothing multiple senses of the customers is identified as a vital approach towards value creation in the luxury tourism (Hassanien et al., 2010; Dixit, 2017; Schmitt, 2010; Krishna, 2012; Brakus et al., 2009; Wiedmann et al., 2009). Wiedmann et al., (2016) identify the

need to meet the wide-ranging demands of the consumers through innovative ways, which can simultaneously reside in the design of the guest experience and holistic memorable satisfaction.

It is high time to be responsive to the subjective perceptions of individual consumers in the luxury tourism; service excellence should stimulate the consumers' emotional reaction and transform this into a holistic experience. Wiedmann, et al. (2016) stress the importance of targeting the composition of all the five senses such as sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. According to the researcher, luxury hotels need to send the strategy to motivate the sensory stimuli to lead towards loyal customers. In this context, luxury brands should charge their customers through all touch points including physical as well as technological channels. A holistic approach is examined as the one in which the business is focused on the whole experience creation process such as pre-purchase, during purchase, and post-purchase processes (Wiedmann et al., 2007). The framework, in this study (see Figure 8), provides information about the all-inclusive package offer to the customer, including multisensory marketing, cultural perceptions and brand experience.

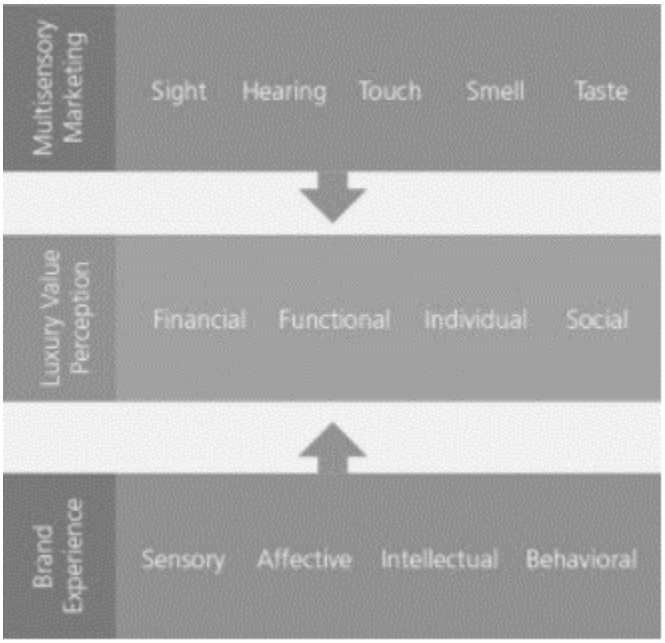


FIGURE 8: CUSTOMERS' EXPERIENCES (WIEDMANN ET AL., 2016)

Based on the above information, the next section of the chapter reflects on the economic importance of hospitality policy, initiatives taken towards holistic business practices, and holistic developments carried out in in the hospitality sector in the UAE.

2.8 Economic Importance of Hospitality Policy in UAE

The hospitality sector plays a unique role in raising the national economy and strategic development in the UAE. Tourism resulting from the rise of hospitality sector contributes a large portion of the gross domestic product. The hospitality sector contributes up to 5% of the total GDP of the UAE. Ministries along with federal and local bodies are working in collaboration to direct this sectoral policy towards the aim of diversification in the region. However, the policy needs to pay attention towards the management and monitoring of the water supply and demand following the additional supply of luxury hotels in the country (Sadaqat, 2017). Although the UAE's hospitality industry shows remarkable results due to supportive government policies, the 5% rate of value-added tax (VAT) is expected to have an influence on the industry players. Customers in the luxury and other sectors would be required to pay an additional cost for additional services attached with the luxury experience. The cost may be higher for the luxury sector customers because of the varied level of services offered to them such as hotel accommodation, restaurants services and entertainment activities. The new tax policy aims to generate $25 billion for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (John, 2013). It is a challenging aspect for hospitality organisations to ensure that the tax does not influence their customers. The high occupancy rate in the luxury sector is one of the reasons behind imposing the tax in the sector. However, it is expected that with an efficient holistic approach, hospitality organisations would be able to overcome the adverse effects of the new policy on their business practices. Through innovative technologies, managers can address the customer concerns. Improved services further encourage the customers towards the sustainability of the sector as a whole (Balakrishnan and Rowland-Jones, 2017). According to the study of Patil (2010), it was determined that hospitality industry of the UAE has been considered to be growing at a rapid pace for the last two decades. Economic policies are considered to be an important element of the hospitality industry. It was estimated that the overall revenue of the hospitality industry increased at a rate of 10% as seen during the start of the 2011 fiscal year. It was determined that hospitality industry of the UAE decreased during the year 2009 but since then, it has been growing at a rapid pace. It was estimated that during 2011, Abu Dhabi alone achieved a turnaround of 10% in the first quarter of the year which was viewed as a rapid advance as compared to the revenue rate during the period of 2009 to 2010. The hospitality industry of the UAE contains various hotels having different standards such as 2 stars, 3 stars, 5 stars and 7 stars hotels, as well as resorts.

It was estimated that room occupancy increased by 2.6% in Abu Dhabi during 2011 and it was considered that this rise in the hospitality industry is due to the quality services provided by the luxury hotels of UAE and due to increase in global travellers. According to the report generated after the Arabian Hotel Investment Conference (AHIC) of 2011, it was determined that economic aspects of the hospitality industry of the United Arab Emirates could be influenced through the diversification of products. It was analysed that initially starting from the year 2001, the occupancy rate of the hotels has increased by 24.1% during the last ten years. Furthermore, according to the study of Nick and Pongrácz (2010), it was analysed that RevPer that is revenue per available cubicle or room increased from around $92.46 in 2010 to $102.32 (U.S dollars) during 2011.

As seen from the research work of Haitao, Bo and Lei (2012), the direct contribution of the hospitality sector has increased by 138% during the last ten years as noted during 2017. In addition to that, the employment rate in the growth sector was viewed to increase by 119% during the same fiscal period. It has been considered that this contribution to the GDP would further increase by an additional rate of 72% until 2026, as well as contributing to a growth in the employment at a rate of 16%, producing more than 700,000 jobs for the residents of the UAE.

2.9 Initiatives towards Holistic business practices

The exponential expansion of the hospitality industry in the UAE shows that the players in the industry have recognised that they can no longer operate without considering their surroundings, i.e. environment and overall sustainable business focus. Businesses have started considering their social responsibility in adopting a sustainable supply chain to ensure the health of the customers as well as in directing a safe and healthy environment for the employees. The businesses organisation has taken eco-friendly practices and green design initiatives to illustrate their concerns related with the social, economic, environmental aspects. The Dubai Sustainable Tourism Initiative is one of the greatest examples of such initiatives where the hospitality organisations are reflecting their efforts. The analysis of the initiatives has shown further that the hospitality industry is responsive to the demands of the business stakeholders.

The research of Aregawa (2015) further indicates that the in highly competitive and global environment, the hospitality industry faces a challenging battle for the customer's favour and their

purchasing power. In order to do that it is imperative for the hospitality industry to ensure strategy positioning. However, Ismail (2010) further demonstrates that the hospitality industry grows significantly as a result of the polices of the sustainability, which includes the growth of the sustainable economy as well as the perspective that is social and organic. In addition to this, it is imperative for hotel managers to be aware of the significance of growth management, which should be sustainable, and it must not be in the trap of the growth that is unsustainable. According to Pitoska (2012), the hotel that functions under the philosophy of the healthy corporation follows the development of sustainable value and they formulate their own development of sustainability which hugely depends on both internal and external environment. In addition to this, the findings and the development of the opportunities for sustainable growth and the profit for the corporate are the heart of the reflection of all the actively managed hotels. Similarly, Haitao, Bo and Lei (2012) show that with the help of innovative strategies only the hospitality industry can participate in the development of the sustainable region. On the other hand, the research of Hope (2009) shows that the development in the hospitality industry in the countries that are less developed require moderate investment and they have a huge impact on the economic growth of the regions. Nega (2018) further show that the sustainable hospitality industry has a huge impact on the environment, as well as the communities in society. Moreover, the research of Chavan and Bhola (2014) shows that the main reason for adopting a sustainable environment in the hotel industry is the demand from stakeholders of the industry as well as the need for the development of the economy. The stakeholders are seen to have a huge impact on the strategies of green marketing and these strategies are further affected by the factors that are organisational, perceptual and behavioural. However, hotel managers are often unaware of the actions that they need to follow in order to achieve sustainability. Moreover, Jauhari et al, (2009) state that the performance and the size of the company also have an impact on the practices of the environment of the tourist establishments. However, it can be seen that today industries all around the world are involved in the sustainability practices which includes the hotel industry, airlines and the restaurant industry as well.

2.10 Holistic Business Development in UAE

Business leaders have started to recognise the importance of new and shared understanding of the factors needed to pursue sustainability leadership. Holistic business development encourages

business leaders to look ahead beyond profitability and spread their business towards the wellbeing of the people and the planet. From the findings of a speech given by the UAE Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, Sadaqat (2017) points out that despite increased holistic business development in the UAE, there is a misconception prevailing concerning sustainability practice. Conventional business leaders regard sustainability as bad for their business as it encourages them to sacrifice their lives to technologies. The government of the UAE has taken the initiative in the form of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to encourage private organisations to realise the true essence of holistic business development and to implement them in the adoption of business initiatives (Sadaqat, 2016). Additionally, recent developments in the country have shown that numerous national and organisational level practices are in line with the integration of business standards such as business excellence (BE) and investors in People (IIP). It can be analysed that the UAE has started to focus on European standards for dealing with their staff and employment issues. The adoption of IIP is a great example in this context, which is a holistic framework for human resource development established by the Commission for Employment and Skills UK (Winterbotham et al., 2013) during the 1990s (Garad and Martis, 2017). Business organisations in the UAE currently demonstrate their implementation of the UK-based standards in order to enhance their business excellence performance and to improve the learning and skills of employees. The literature has also confirmed the importance of employee capabilities in the overall accomplishment of holistic business practice goals (Ciobanu and Neamţu, 2017). Ciobanu and Neamţu, (2017) in their also confirm the importance of analysing the impacts of new technologies on management style. Different type of leadership and management styles are capable of influencing the organisational employees. These styles, on the other hand, are reliant on the digital components of the business (Ali, 2014). According to Ciobanu and Neamţu, (2017), it is necessary to modify the business leadership according to the changing digital technologies in order to maintain business sustainability in the ever-changing business environment. Holistic business practices cannot be implemented without integrating leadership into other components.

The government of the UAE has also recognised the importance of entrepreneurial capabilities of business leaders. For this purpose, they have undertaken initiatives towards the mean of achieving science, technology and innovation in the country. By revising the curriculum of higher education institutions of the UAE, the government has attempted to train future business leaders to develop self-confidence, locus of control and risk-taking attitudes, which are indispensable for the

implementation of benchmark holistic business practices. The MASDAR initiative offers a great example in this context. This step can be analysed as a social initiative towards sustainability business practices. The hospitality industry in the country can also take immense benefits from the increased potentials of the educated workforce in implementing novel innovations (Hameed et al., 2016). Evidence from real-life practices have confirmed that businesses in the UAE acknowledge the importance of integrating the economic, social, as well as technological innovation in order to present the holistic business to the highly competitive global market. Examples of such initiatives include green initiatives, human resource development activities, use of social media technologies, increasing revenues for improving profits, investments in social initiatives for infrastructure development, education, health and well-being, environmental concerns, and investments in the new digital innovations. Despite this, 76% of the US business organisations merely realise technological innovation as a way of only adopting a specific technology such as automation, data analytics and other applications (Papazian, 2017). Business management fails to recognise the importance of talent pools and a set of external factors needed to strengthen the place of such technological innovations within the vessel organisation (Carbo et al., 2017). It can be analysed that employees showing the higher levels of social usage as well as trends of virtual translation cannot demonstrate the business abilities to respond to the holistic business practices. Besides contributing to the environmental issues, a holistic approach requires companies to demonstrate the rule in the overall digital culture such as motivating employees towards information as well as taking measures for the security of cyber-practices. The findings related to the holistic business developments in the country can be used to frame the primary of the luxury sector.

2.11 Research Gap

There is a gap in the literature in the area of investigating the impacts of a holistic business approach on customer experience in the UAE luxury hospitality industry.

Several studies were reviewed in which authors have the discussed holistic business approach in the hospitality sector in general, however, so far, none of the studies has placed specific emphasis on the holistic business approach in relation to customer experience and the sustainability of the firm. P empirical investigations have also highlighted the limitations of sample size and resources available to previous researchers. The current investigation is intended to bridge the research gap

and provide an initial picture of sustainable holistic business practices in the UAE hospitality industry, particularly in the luxury sector. Based on the critical areas identified in the review of the literature, a comprehensive conceptual framework has been drawn up to show the path chosen for directing the primary investigation in the current study regarding the UAE luxury hospitality sector.

2.12 Theoretical Framework

Subsequent to the discussion of the other people's theories and ideas, the theoretical framework drawn up for the current investigation aims to test the effectiveness of holistic business practice theory within the UAE luxury hospitality sector by collecting original qualitative data. Figure 9 identifies the factors, which are given significant importance by the existing literature in order to shape customer satisfaction. Most researchers have considered word-of-mouth communication as crucial in enhancing the understanding of customers in relation to sustainable processes and procedures. When customers gain awareness of sustainability through direct connections, the same contribution achieves positive customer satisfaction towards a specific brand or service. Likewise, both personal tangibility and intangibility needs are given worth in the existing literature for their contribution to driving positive customer satisfaction. Furthermore, marketing of a total sustainability approach, and performance and productivity of motivated employees are also recognised as significant factors for customer satisfaction in the literature. In this regard, academic theories and empirical findings have highlighted the direct relationship between positive satisfaction and experience of customers. This theoretical framework will be applied to the primary findings in assessing how the holistic business practices of luxury sector hospitality organisations in the UAE differ from the literature.

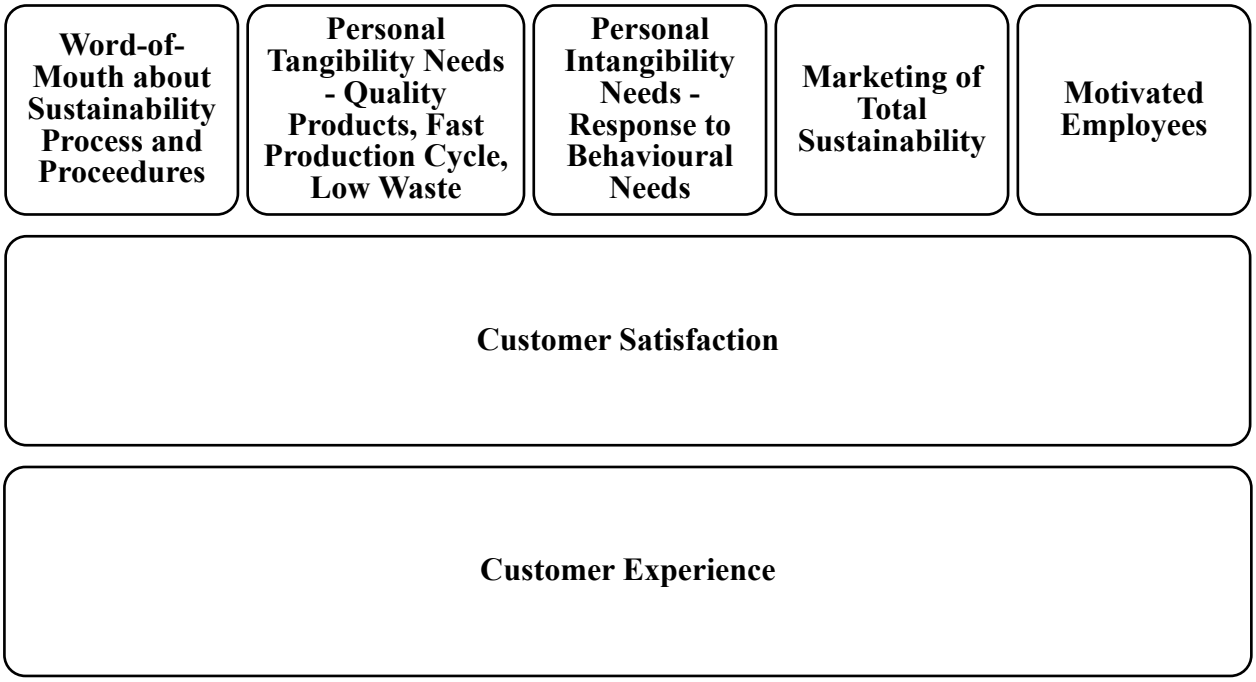


FIGURE 9: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.12.1 Hospitality Process

From the review of the literature relating to hospitality processes, three critical processes were identified, namely operating processes, supporting processes and managerial processes. The primary investigation will also target all these three processes, while focusing specifically on operating processes in extracting information from the participants of the UAE luxury sector. The literature has defined a process as a set of actions needed to convert inputs into outputs and simultaneously, to reach towards the desired aim. Processes in luxury hotel organisations are no different from the premium or mid-range hotel organisations, as discussed in the contextual framework above. The sub-processes aforementioned assist further in investigating how much the managers are responding to the implementation of these within their businesses.

Researchers in their past studies have shown that the hospitality process starts when the customer initiates an information search about the organisation and the process ends when the customer departs after consuming the goods and services of the organisation. In meeting customer demands, a range of activities such as production, service delivery, marketing, administration, customer service, and others are all required to be aligned with the customer's needs (Tesone, 2012; Evans, 2015; Pantelidis, 2014). Hospitality processes may vary for different customers, since the demands

of different customers differ from each other (Hassanien et al., 2010; Chon and Yu, 2012). There is a possibility that in responding to one customer, business managers need to use one or more processes as their inputs. All the processes however should be integrated, despite the fact that not all of them are used in all transactions (Sloan et al., 2013; Huber and O'Gorman, 2008). For example, a customer who is searching for the total information online would contact customer service. In order to meet his information needs, hospitality management would not use the other business processes but due to the interrelatedness among the processes, customer service can be perceived as up-to-date and able to provide reliable information to the customer. This means that for customers who are inquiring further availability of rooms in the hotel, customer service cannot respond appropriately if the administrative department has not updated the customer service staff about the availability of the products and services (Pappas and Bregoli, 2016). Likewise, the supply process is not able to specify the list of raw materials in the food and beverage categories, unless they have information about the raw material available in the storage room or warehouse of the production department (kitchen process).

Similarly, the marketing department would not be able to create appealing advertisements and campaigns for targeting customers, unless the customer service department has informed them about the feedback and reviews of the departing customers. The literature has identified customer feedback is an important aspect of the business management because in the modern era, customers have started to focus on social, economic, ecological, and technological aspects.

2.12.2 Hospitality Procedure

Hospitality procedures refers to the set of activities needed to be completed in a specific process. The literature defines ‘procedure’ as a way to fulfil a task in a manner that the same is reflective to meet the defined standards (Wood and Brotherton, 2008). As defined in the context discussed above, each of the hospitality processes is further categorised into a set of activities needed to complete the process effectively and to bring about the desired outcome. The ongoing connectivity between procedures and process is a vital feature of the holistic business practice approach, specifically in the hospitality organisation. All the discussed procedures are used in investigating the UAE luxury hospitality sector to identify the importance of following procedures by organisations.

2.12.3 Innovation and Emerging Trends

The business literature also identifies that hospitality sector organisations focus on the technological innovations, not only in the context of internal business practices to generate customer and revenues, but also concentrate on the technological innovations in relation to environmental, social and economic aspects (Lashley, 2016; Pantelidis, 2014). These trends highlight that the luxury sector should also focus on all-inclusive sustainability rather than environmental sustainability. There is ample evidence in the past that show that a range of technologies are adopted by business organisations for improvement of the customer experience. However, a large percentage of hospitality sector organisations still lack the interconnectivity between the business and the holistic business practices (Pantelidis, 2014). Existing studies show that innovation can occur at diverse levels of the business, specifically in the hospitality sector. These levels may include services, primary processes, secondary processes, communication, technology and service connectivity, as well as in the supporting business process (Starr and Gupta, 2017; Rozenes and Cohen, 2017).

2.12.4 Evolving Customers and Expectations

The contextual framework of the research has substantiated the fact that hospitality is all about looking after the customer's feelings and emotions. Due to the evolving nature of customer preferences, organisations operating in the hospitality sector are required to change their business dynamics in order to stay responsive (Wood, 2013). Business management needs to focus on the improvement of guest awareness about the positive emotions and business aspects, and to prevent them from being distracted from the negative aspects of the business. It is the responsibility of business management to minimise the passive impacts of overall customer experience (Bagdan, 2012; Wood, 2013).

2.12.5 Employee Motivation

Another factor highlighted in the conceptual model of the investigation is employee motivation. Just as in other business industries, employee motivation is crucial for the service industry (Hertel, 2014; Silva, 2009; Kusluvan, 2003; Sommerville, 2007; Hayes & Ninemeier, 2009; Endter, 2011;

Gellerman, 1993). Maroudas et al., (2008), in an investigation of the employee motivation in the luxury hotel industry, researched the perceived effectiveness of human resource practices. This study suggests that it is highly important to develop different motivational programs for the workforce, based on their individual characteristics and backgrounds (Maroudas et al., 2008). From these findings, it can be implied that it is also necessary for hospitality organisations to motivate their employees in order to enhance customer experience and satisfaction. However, employee motivation cannot be developed as a generalised approach. The nature of employees needs associated jobs as well as this management system. The literature demonstrates that exceptional service experience for customers is only possible when employees are trained and motivated to deal with the different types of guests' experiences (Hayes and Ninemeier, 2009; Chon and Maier, 2009). Numerous theories have also been developed by business management researchers in order to define the role of employee motivation in the overall success of the business. Among the prominent theories include Maslow's theory of a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), Herzberg two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1964), Locke's goal theory (Locke, 1968), and Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). All of these studies have depicted the role of different related factors and the work environment in increasing employee participation and satisfaction.

The hospitality industry has suffered a huge downtown in the UAE because of high employee turnover. Ponzini (2011) shows that the retention of employees has become a challenge for the managers and hence the employee turnover in the hotel management industry has increased significantly. Jenkins and Karanikola (2014) further explain that this employee turnover mainly due to labour mobility of and the hotel industry is still considering this challenge as the thorn that is affecting the profitability of hotels. In addition to this, low motivation and increased workload are additional factors contributing to increased turnover in the hotel industry. Therefore, the research of Tajeddini, (2009) indicates the significance of increasing the motivation level of hotel employees in order to retain them. Nevertheless, Akgunduz, (2015) further highlights that it is a universal concern for employers to consider the factors that motivate employees and the factors that do not motivate the employee. Such factors include the work environment, the kind of work, colleagues, managers and salary. In addition to this, the research of Padilla-Meléndez and Garrido-Moreno (2014) further shows that in hotel industry the workload is greater than other industries, therefore it is imperative for organisations to increase the motivation level of their employees. Similarly, Ahmad and Daghfous (2010) further indicate the significance of the motivation of

employees as they state that the employees are more committed towards their organisation if they are motivated to perform in their jobs. Padilla-Meléndez and Garrido-Moreno (2014) further recommend that the organisation must implement the theory of self-determining as it focuses on the multiple kinds of the employee motivation , such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When employees are anxious about their jobs and achieving the goals of an organisation, then they are at the stage of motivation. Similarly, when the employees are dependent in the external behaviours such as focusing on the external rewards then this stage of the employee is considered as the extrinsic motivation. However, when the personal interest of the employee motivates him or her to perform better, then it is considered as intrinsic motivation.

The research of Shariff, Zainal and Hashim (2010) indicates that the management of the hotel must focus on increasing the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the employees in order to retain them. Nevertheless, according to Paryani, Masoudi and Cudney (2010), the level of motivation of the employee increases from the needs, desires and the expectations of the employee. Ahmad, 2015 states that in order to retain an employee organisation must initially satisfy their primary needs. In addition to this, the research of Farouk et al. (2016) further indicates that the motivation of an employee has a huge impact on his or her productivity, and the productivity of an employee eventually affects the hotel's performance overall. Similarly, according to the research of Karatepe and Kaviti (2016) career progression is an additional factor that motivates the employee, as working in the same position for a longer period of time makes the employees feel stuck in one position, therefore they look for alternate solutions where they see growth in their career path. Moreover, according to the research of Stephenson, Russell and Edgar (2010), it is imperative for hotel owners to find employees that are interested in working in the hotel industry as employees perform better and their productivity is increased if their career interest matches with their jobs (Wang, 2016). Moreover, the research of Karatepe (2011) further shows that the job satisfaction of an employee significantly depends on the salary that the employee receives. Furthermore, Shallal (2011) claims that the motivation of an employee significantly reduces if their salary expectations are not met. If the employee thinks that his or her pay is less the he ought to receive, or his fellow employees are receiving a higher salary for the same work, then this demotivates the employee. On the other hand, racist and the discriminative behaviour of an employer also demotivates an employee at work. Suliman and Sabri (2009) show that in the hotel industry, people from all over the world visit and stay, so the hotel managers , particularly in the UAE, also

consider hiring employees of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Working in a diverse workforce is critical for both employees and employers and if the employer fails to manage equality among the employees, then the motivation level of the employees significantly reduces. Therefore, it is imperative for both the employers and the fellow employees to not to discriminate and pass racial comments against the employee that belongs to a minority ethnic group.

However, Siddiqi (2011) explains that even if the leaders and the employers formulate strategies to motivate the employees and work on motivating them, there are some instances where the employees do not become motivated to work or perform better. In such cases, leaders are required to change their practices and focus on looking at the factors that can motivate the employee.

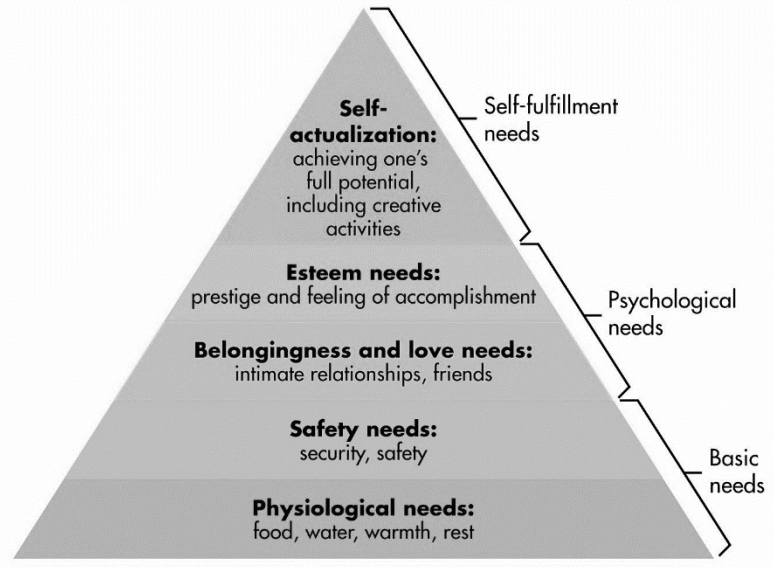


FIGURE 10: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS (MASLOW, 1943)

2.12.6 Enhanced Productivity

Similar to other variables, enhanced productivity is also identified as an important factor in driving the holistic business approach. Enhanced productivity can be associated with customer experience as well as employee motivation in the holistic practice approach. Luxury hospitality is a service sector which places great value on productivity. Employee performance has a strong influence on organisational productivity as well as on the market position of the business. Rewards and

appreciation are recognised as important factors driving employee motivation and enhanced productivity. Moreover, in providing accommodation, luxury hotels also offer different types of services to the customers. Excellent delivery of these services is ultimately dependent on employees' performance (Bowie et al., 2016).

According to Hope (2009), it was determined that productivity is considered to be the overall performance of the hospitality industry that includes profitability as well as customer satisfaction. Productivity is referred to as the association between the output of goods as well as services and resource inputs. It was viewed that the hospitality industry was emerging as one of the largest industries contributing directly to the GDP of the UAE. Productivity could be improved through various marketing and HR strategies. As stated above in the management training section, training and development programs are viewed as an important part of the company as it improves the skills of the employees. Training could increase the knowledge and awareness of the workers to assist them in personal skill development and thereby increasing their performance, thus directly contributing towards enhanced productivity. In addition, various marketing platforms could be used in order to market the hotels for vacations that would attract more tourists from all around the world. A number of special factors make productivity problems a particular issue in the hospitality sector. The first is that the industry is at an advanced stage of its life cycle. The life cycle concept corresponds to the stage of product development, service and industry experience. At the delivery stage, the industry is relatively new and attracts relatively few people. At this stage of hospitality, very few people eat, rest (only very wealthy people) or live in a hotel. The second stage is growth, which can be very fast. Upon the arrival of two specialists, income increases. The number of these households has increased to 55% of all households. This means that more people are spending money, but they do not have time to prepare their meals at home. Between 1972 and 1975, sales in food service companies increased by 75%. During this period of economic growth, it is possible to hide operational errors. Misuse can be offset by increased market sales. It was determined that productivity of the hospitality industry could be increased by focusing upon the individual departments being operational in the hotel.

According to Ismail (2010), it was determined that productivity could be measured through the efficiency rate that is achieved through looking at the ratio of outputs produced from given number of inputs. It was estimated that productivity of luxury hotel of the UAE could be influenced through

various factors. Productivity could be increased through maintaining the input while trying to optimise the outputs as well as increasing the outputs through increasing the initial inputs. Furthermore, enhancing outputs through decreasing the inputs in order to produce more cost-effective outputs.

The concerns that could be faced by the hospitality industry of the UAE include the identification of the output type in order to optimise it efficiently, and to increase the overall productivity of the hotel that would further assist in attracting more tourists from around the world. The UAE hospitality industry could increase its productivity with technological advancement. There are various technologies that have assisted the hotel industry, including automated check-in and check-out systems that provide convenience to both the management of the hotel as well as guests. In addition, CCTV cameras and walk-through gates could improve the overall security of the hospitality industry. It was considered that technological advancements could enhance the productivity of the hotel through applying management systems such as a channel manager, point-of-sale systems that allow the hotel management to reduce the man-hours of the employees and that could be used in other processes. This allows the management of the hospitality company to provide more time for workers to interact with tourists and to fulfil their needs. There are various other factors that need to be considered by the UAE luxury hotels, one of which is the diversity of tourists that needs be identified in order to provide them with efficient services, as tourists belong to various cultural backgrounds and regional areas have dissimilar needs.

Furthermore, it was considered significant to establish strategies that focus on the skill development of employees, as per the technological requirement, in order to cope with the globalisation concerns that could hinder the overall productivity of the hospitality industry of the UAE. It was considered necessary that the hospitality owners, as well as the managers, should use tactics to provide job satisfaction to employees in order motivate them, as this could directly contribute towards increasing productivity for the company. Furthermore, it was determined that goals should be made clear to all the employees and plans should be provided to them accordingly, in order to reach the target productivity. Therefore, managers should communicate with their departments efficiently in order to provide them with a clear path to achieve the defined outcomes of the company that would increase the productivity of the hospitality industry. In addition to that, the hotel should develop strategies focusing on customer satisfaction provided to the tourists that

visit such luxury hotels that would help to attract more tourists from the same region, thus providing a boost to the overall productivity of the hotel industry.

2.12.7 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is also identified as one of the critical research factors in investigating the effects of holistic business abroad on the customer's experience in the luxury sector of UAE hospitality (Hill, 2007; Hill et al., 2007; Hill and Brierley, 2017; Devaux, 2014; Grigoroudis and Siskos, 2009; Rao and Chandra, 2013). Customer satisfaction is identified as a major factor to assess how much the products and services offered by a company have resulted in meeting the expectations of the customer (Hill and Brierley, 2017; Hayes, 2008). Customer satisfaction is an outcome of the customer's experience when it exceeds their specified satisfaction goals (Sunder, 2011; Denton, 1991). In the current study, the investigation of customer satisfaction would help in understanding how the UAE luxury sector surpasses customer expectations when focusing on the business practice goals. Management's focus on customer satisfaction ultimately leads to customer loyalty. However, customer satisfaction is also dependent on multiple factors working interdependently (Dominici and Guzzo, 2010). By using mixed method methodology, Mubiri (2016) investigated how customer satisfaction enhances customer loyalty in hotels. The research was focused on a specific case study of the Lake Kivu Serena Hotel. Based on the interviews and questionnaires findings, numerous factors were found that influence customer satisfaction, among which service quality was a vital element involved in customer relationship management. The investigation informed about the importance of maintaining a balance between profitability and customer retention in order to positively influence customer satisfaction within the sector (Jauhari, 2014). The research of Politis et al., (2009) defines customer satisfaction as the difference in the expectations of the customers and the services and the products that the customer receives from the management of the hotel. In addition to this, the research study of Makanyeza and Chikazhe, (2017) further signifies that the satisfaction of the customer is significantly based on the structuring of the perceived value of the customer regarding a particular product or service. However, according to the research of Hussain, (2016) the concept of satisfaction is only acceptable when the expectations of the customers are positive in nature. Similarly, the concept of the expectations

from the point of view of customers is based on the reference points through which the customer judges the service of the hotel management.

The research of Julaimi, Abdul Talib and Suhaimi, (2016) further shows that the relationship between customer satisfaction and the services of the hotel management starts with the first interaction or stay in a hotel and continues until the end of the lifecycle of the customer, as in most cases when the customer finds its peace and satisfaction at one place, he or she prefers not change it. Furthermore, Eid (2013) demonstrates that the hotel industry is bounded by the customers only and it is imperative for them to be customer-centric in order to market their services. Therefore, management ensures that their customers receive best of their services. Similarly, according to Ahmad (2015), managers of UAE hotels make sure that the customers' demands are fulfilled in a timely fashion and that they remain continuously satisfied, and in order to maintain their satisfaction, the management of the hotel must ensure that customers are fed punctually, that they are provided with clean supplies and that they always feel welcomed. Moreover, Wu and Lu (2012) also state that the satisfaction of the customer is the philosophy of a business which is related to the development of customer value, predicting the expectations of the customers' and then managing them and most importantly displaying the capacity of the management to satisfy the needs of the customers. According to the research of Padilla-Meléndez and Garrido-Moreno (2014), service quality and customer satisfaction are the two main aspects of any kind of business industry. In addition to this, particularly concerning hotel management, in order to satisfy the needs of the customer, the management must formulate strategies that focus on the factors such as listening ears, which means the ability of management to handle complaints and grievances from customers. Moreover, another strategy that the management must focus on is the pricing of their services in that the pricing must be reasonable and lastly, the management must provide efficient security as the security of life and the belongings of the customer in a new city or country is the main concern of the customer. The research of Arif, Gupta and Williams (2013) show that in order to enhance the satisfaction level of the customer, the management of hotels are focusing on investing more money to improve the quality of the services they provide and the customers' perception of the value so that the management of the hotel will be able to achieve the customer loyalty of the as well. Similarly, Masarrat and Jha (2014) demonstrate that organisations all over the world are surviving only because of their customers; if customers are not available then there will not be any purpose of the organisation.

Eid and El-Gohary (2015) further add that in order to keep a business running and attract more customers, it is imperative for organisations such as the hotel industry to deliver services that are of high quality and which further lead to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The research of Al-Hawari and Mouakket, (2010) further adds that in the hotel industry, the best marketing strategy is the word-of-mouth strategy, and this can only be achieved by providing excellent care and satisfaction to the customers and by meeting their demands adequately. According to the research of Stephenson, Russell and Edga (2010), all customers are different in nature, therefore their determinants of satisfaction differ too. However, in case of the hotel industry, all customers display their interest in three main determinants: adequate pricing, clean supplies and better appearance of the hotel. In addition to this, the research of Karatepe (2011) further indicates that the comfort and cleanliness of the room, immediate services, employee friendliness, security and safety and a convenient location are the most important determinants of customer satisfaction . Moreover, according to Eid (2015), the quality of staff and the room and the value and service that are provided are further factors delivering satisfaction. Similarly, free breakfast, the shuttle services around the city and the atmosphere and ambiance of the hotel are additional factors determining customer satisfaction. However, Daghfour and Barkhi (2009) found that the factors that retain customers include security, pricing, cleanliness and staff attitude. Sunder (2011) further shows that one of the strategies to enhance customer satisfaction levels is benchmarking. Benchmarking strategy allows hotel owners to learn from their competitors and to be able to adopt the strategies that their competitors are following. However, in a few cases, the hotel industry does not share its secrets with competitors. Further, Stutts & Worton (2006) show that the only thing that can retain the customers and increase their level of satisfaction is innovation. If customers are provided with innovative services, they are more likely to stay. However, Stevens (2017) argues that the strategy of benchmarking is more likely to work for chain hotels, where all the branches of the hotel under the similar chain share the same policies and rules, irrespective of their location.

The hotel management follow the strategy of the benchmarking irrespective of their geographical location in order to provide the customers with the same services, environment and the goods as that of the other hotels that are functioning under the same chain. Moreover, thee research of

Ahmad and Daghfous, (2010) further indicates that in order to achieve the loyalty of the customers, it is imperative for the hotel management to adopt the customers' needs and wants.

2.12.8 Sustainable Business

The current contextual framework is also informed about the more enhanced view of sustainable business practices. This view can be applied in investigating the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE with respect to sustainable and holistic business practices (Gilmore et al., 2014; Rheede and Blomme, 2012; Ruiz-Molina et al., 2010; Jingyan et al., 2014; Fevzi, 2014). Understanding would be helpful in investigating the primary research participants (Bader, 2005; Parsa and Narapareddy, 2015; Hawkins and Bohdanowicz, 2012). The current investigation not only focused on the ecological environmental aspect of sustainability, but also examined how luxury hospitality organisations frame their business practices in line with the sustainability of the economic, social and technological environment (Legrand et al., 2016). Researchers have pointed out on significance of such aspects in a critical manner. Organisations need to look after the operating costs as well as both internal and external environmental factors in order to drive sustainable business practices (Jones et al., 2014; Taheri and Taheri, 2018; Chen, 2014; Jones et al., 2016; Nyahunzvi, 2013). The needs of all the stakeholders, such as employees and customers, account as vital aspects of the holistic business (Gilmore et al., 2014; Sloan et al., 2013; Lee, 2010).

2.12.9 Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis of the interview findings will be carried out to identify the responses of the interviewees in line with the components of the above-mentioned conceptual framework. The frequency of the most used words in texts will be used to derive codes, categories and themes for discussion.

Themes	Names of Authors	Areas and methods	Gap
Hospitality Process	(Hassanien et al., 2010)	Study conducted literature review analysis using past studies.	Too much dependency on the past literature to achieve the aim of the study questions; the reliability of the research.
	(Chon & Yu, 2012)	Study carried out qualitative research using past research.	Due to reliance on the past research, study failed to come up with new findings.
	(Sloan et al., 2013)	Study undertook qualitative case study approach where it analysed different case studies of different companies.	Due to case study design of the research, there is high probability of personal bias. Moreover, the in-depth nature of the data makes it difficult to apply the findings of the research on a large scale. It raises further concerns about reliability, validity and generalisability of the results.
	(Huber and O'Gorman, 2008)	The study has taken a qualitative approach	The study failed to provide accurate

		and carried out a review of the literature.	findings on how the holistic stakeholder management system affects customer retention, specifically in the hospitality industry.
	(Tesone, 2012)	Content analysis of past studies is carried out by using data of the last 20 years.	The study focuses on different areas related to hospitality management including sustainability, leadership and strategic management, due to which the research lacks specificity in its findings to conclude the study.
	(Evans, 2015)	Mixed method approach is used, e.g. literature review, case study analysis and content analysis.	The research design of the study lacks the validity and reliability; as a result, significant bias is involved in the findings of the study.
	(Pantelidis, 2014)	Conceptual framework analysis using different past	Different models are employed by the researcher to achieve the aim of the study,

		models and framework.	i.e. Gilbert's consumer decision framework; however, models come with certain limitations which are not considered in the study. Too much dependency on the use of model and framework without considering their limitation increases the probability of uncertainty of the research findings.
	(Pappas and Bregoli, 2016)	Qualitative interview with 10 British and 10 Chinese hospitality consumers. Responses were analysed by thematic analysis and content analysis.	Interviews were conducted through digital media such as Skype and WeChat. Lack of face to face interviews and a dependency on the digital media enhance the probability of wrong responses due to poor network. Moreover, researcher has not carried out a pilot study to confirm that the media chosen

			for conducting the interviews is appropriate to collect the interview responses.
Hospitality Procedure	(Wood and Brotherton, 2008)	Content analysis of past research is conducted using data from past 15 years.	The study has taken hospitality management education into account. The educational perspective of the study critically lacks the practical practice of hospitality strategic management, due to which the findings of the study are not effective for professionals.
Innovation and emerging trends	(Lashley, 2016)	Mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative is employed. Qualitative data is analysed through content analysis and quantitative data is analysed through statistical analysis.	Too much reliance on the guest perspective provides insight into consumer perspective only and lacks the management's perspective on the issue related to problems encountered in

			meeting the customers' needs in the hospitality industry.
Customer Expectations	(Wood, 2013)	Questionnaire conducted with 30 hotel managers. Data is analysed through statistical analysis.	The study researched management's perspective by using a quantitative approach, which is likely to make it difficult not only to generalise the findings but also lack of in-depth insight of the phenomenon from the perspective of customers.
	(Bagdan, 2012)	Mixed research approach is employed. Data is collected through questionnaire and interviews with 300 customers and 15 managers of hospitality industry.	Small sample size of hospitality industry does not cover the entire industry, due to which generalisability of the findings is questioned.
	(Maroudas et al., 2008)	Empirical research was conducted in Athens, where 185 employees of hotels were surveyed. Data	The study provided insight into employees of all level including managers, department-based

Employee Motivation		was analysed via cross-tabulation analysis.	staff and others. Due to difference in the perspective of different levels of employees, it is possible that there is lack of consistency in the findings of the research.
	(Chon and Maier, 2009)	Qualitative analysis of 250 consumers of hospitality industry. Data is analysed through descriptive analysis.	Targets the entire hospitality industry including tours and travel, hotels, restaurants, culinary, casino operations, cruises and the recreation and leisure industries. Due to large scope of the research, it is difficult to imply the findings of the research on a particular segment of the industry.
	(Jenkins and Karanikola, 2004)	Literature review and content analysis of official websites.	Observation-based content analysis that can involve personal bias in making judgment.

			Literature review undertaken by the researcher cannot be applied to the case study of the research.
	(Tajeddini, 2009)	Closed-ended questionnaires were administered to hotel managers and owners with 129 hotels in Iran. Regression analysis.	Sample of the the findings of the study cannot be generalised due to lack of diversity in the subjects/samples. For instance, a few managers and owners of hotels represented small and medium size whereas others represented large.
	(Akgunduz, 2015)	Survey questionnaire of 227 hotel employees in Turkey.	Managers' perceptions were not investigated and as a result presents only a one-sided view of employees.
	(Padilla-Meléndez and Garrido-Moreno, 2013)	Questionnaire of 128 CEOs in small- and medium-sized hotels in Spain. EQS software was used to perform multivariate analysis	Study focused on small and medium size hotels only; its findings cannot be applied to large size hotels.

Enhanced Productivity	(Bowie et al., 2016)	Structured interviews with consumers of hospitality industry. Data is analysed through descriptive statistics.	The study focuses on the marketing strategies of the hospitality industry in attracting the customers. Due to lack of focus on a specific factor of marketing, the study addressed different issues such as sustainable marketing, corporate social responsibility and relationship marketing, which makes it difficult to imply the findings of particular marketing strategy.
	(Hope, K., 2009)	Questionnaire with 200 consumers of hospitality industry. Data is analysed through regression analysis.	There is lack of pilot study to confirm the reliability and validity of questionnaire developed for the research.
	(Politis et al., 2009)	Two surveys were conducted. Linear programming model	Due to regional characteristics of Greece, the model

		was used to analyse the data.	results are limited to Greece only.
	(Mubiri, 2016)	Interviews were administered by management and employees and questionnaires were conducted by customers. Results were analysed through t-test.	Due to case study research design, findings are limited to Case-Lake Kivu Serena Hotel only.
	(Dominici and Guzzo, 2010)	Unstructured interview with management and semi-structured interviews with guests. Interviews were analysed through qualitative content analysis.	Due to qualitative and case study research design, findings of the research are limited and cannot be generalised.
Customer Satisfaction	(Makanyeza and Chikazhe, 2017)	Cross-sectional survey of 310 bank customers. Structural equation modelling was used for testing.	Study was conducted in a small town Chinhoyi in Zimbabwe. Due to political, geographical, cultural and economic characteristics of the region, its findings are not applicable to

			other parts of the world.
	(Ali, Hussain and Omar, 2016)	Questionnaires with 450 guests. Responses were analysed through partial least square based structural equation modelling.	Despite a large sample, the findings of the study are limited as it is conducted in resort hotels in Malaysia. Moreover, quantitative analysis makes it difficult to gain in-depth insight into the research phenomena.
	(Julaimi, Talib and Suhaimi, 2016)	Review of constructs and dimensions related to international tourist in the United Arab Emirates.	The researcher has not provided any details related to research strategy, which puts a significant question mark on the credibility of the literature review analysis carried out and so on the findings of the research.
	(Eid, 2013)	Survey using a sample of 221 Muslim tourists. To test the hypothesis, exploratory,	Study was able to find the relationship between constructs and variables of the model; however, it

		confirmatory factor, and structural equation modelling analysis were conducted.	did not identify the missing Islamic attributes value in the model.
	(Wu and Lu, 2012)	Survey questionnaire administered by 560 guests	The study is based on assumptions where variables are measured without error. This has significant impact on the reliability and validity of the research.
Sustainable Business	(Gilmore et al., 2014)	Survey with 88 hotel guests. Responses were analysed through regression analysis.	The researcher asked consumers about the green initiatives of hotels and their impact on their decision to visit the hotel; however, there is no clear evidence that hotels had taken the green initiatives and if consumers were aware of that. As a result, it is possible that results are affected.

Table 1: Thematic Analysis

2.13 Conclusion and Conceptual Framework

2.13.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provided below has been drawn up to identify the set of dependent, independent, and mediating variables that guide the research aim of this investigation. Since the aim of this research is to investigate the impact of the holistic business approach on the customer experience in the UAE luxury hospitality sector, holistic business approach is recognised as an independent variable while customer experience is regarded as a dependent variable. The comprehensive literature reviewed in Chapter Two has informed that the holistic business approach is a broader level aspect which indicates the role of practices, procedures, as well as human resource involved in the wholesome framework, where each of the components of the holistic business approach contributes individually as well as collectively towards the accomplishment of the shared goal. For this purpose, a set of five independent variables is identified, namely business practices, business processes, customer expectations, employee motivation, and productivity and sustainability. Additionally, customer satisfaction is referred to as a mediating variable in driving the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Dependent variable and mediating variable: Past studies have investigated customer experience as a driver of customer satisfaction. According to Pozza (2017), five kinds of experiences [sense, feel, think, act and relate], triggered by the different elements of the marketing mix at different stages of the purchase process, can potentially influence customer satisfaction. This research attempt to show how the experiences gained during the pre-, during and post purchases stages ultimately shape the customer satisfaction level. However, there is very limited literature findings that highlight the impact of satisfaction on the overall customer experience in the hospitality industry. Customer experience is an important variable in the contemporary service industry.

Experience allows the measurement of feelings and sentiments among customers that shape their positive perceptions about the performance of the goods or service, which they are intending to buy. In this regard, the current investigation plans to identify the relationship between the two variables. It is aims to identify whether satisfaction of the customers driven by the holistic business approach can lead to positive customer experience among the customers of the luxury hospitality

sector of the UAE. It will investigate how the holistic strategy and results in sustainable customer satisfaction for the luxury hospitality sector, providing the customers a complete memorable experience.

Independent variables: The study aims to identify the relationship between the independent variables of the holistic business approach and the mediating variables of customer satisfaction. For this purpose, the relationship between the five different components of holistic business approach will be investigated in connection with their influence on increasing or decreasing the level of customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction and holistic business practices: In identifying the relationship between these two variables, the research plans to investigate the effect of social, economic, cultural and environmental decisions and activities of the luxury hospitality organisations on their customers' satisfaction. This will further help to identify how organisations are focusing on different dimensions of holistic practices equally.

Customer satisfaction and holistic business procedure: To investigate the relationship between these two variables, the study plans to examine the influence of three business processes, namely operational, supporting and managerial processes on the level of customer satisfaction. The motivation to investigate the relationship and holistic business procedures and customer satisfaction is gained through the framework of Krstic et al., (2015). In this framework, the researcher has identified how the everyday operational activities in different departments, marketing and sales, and managerial activities such as human resource management, IT management, financial and physical resource management and quality management individually and collectively contribute to positive customer satisfaction in the luxury sector.

Customer satisfaction and customer's expectations: Likewise, to examine the relationship between these two variables, the researcher plans to investigate how the pre-purchase expectations of the customers contribute in shaping their satisfaction level after the purchase of the same product or service. The literature substantiates that customers are satisfied when their expectations are met. However, these expectations are driven generally through the sources of information that are used by the customers to collect knowledge

about the brand or service. This information impacts the customer's feelings and emotions and the service or product delivery below the previously claimed expectation level then results in dissatisfaction for them.

Customer satisfaction and employee motivation and productivity: Furthermore, to measure the relationship between these two variables, the researcher plans to investigate how the luxury sector organisations in the UAE enhance employee motivation and productivity to drive customer satisfaction. The contribution of leadership and managerial processes is high in driving employee motivation and productivity. When employees are motivated, they are expected to perform beyond expectations, the benefits of which will ultimately flow to the organisation in the form of increased productivity, profitability and customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction and sustainability: To inspecting the relationship between these two variables, the researcher plans to investigate the practices of sustainability in the luxury hospitality organisations of the UAE. The researcher tends to examine how the sustainability focus, including internal and external environmental attributes, is influencing customer satisfaction. Under this relationship, it will be assessed whether contemporary organisations in the luxury sector are only focusing on the ecological environmental aspect of the sustainability and overlooking the economic, social and technological environments. Generally, sustainability is related to all the stakeholder's needs including customers and employees, rather than only one individual focus area.

Consequently, the conceptual framework would allow the examination of the multiple cross-connections between the independent, independent and mediating variables given below.

Holistic Business Practice – Customer Satisfaction – Customer Experience

Holistic Business Procedures – Customer Satisfaction – Customer Experience

Customers' Expectations – Customer Satisfaction – Customer Experience

Employee Motivation and Productivity – Customer Satisfaction – Customer Experience

Sustainability – Customer Satisfaction – Customer Experience

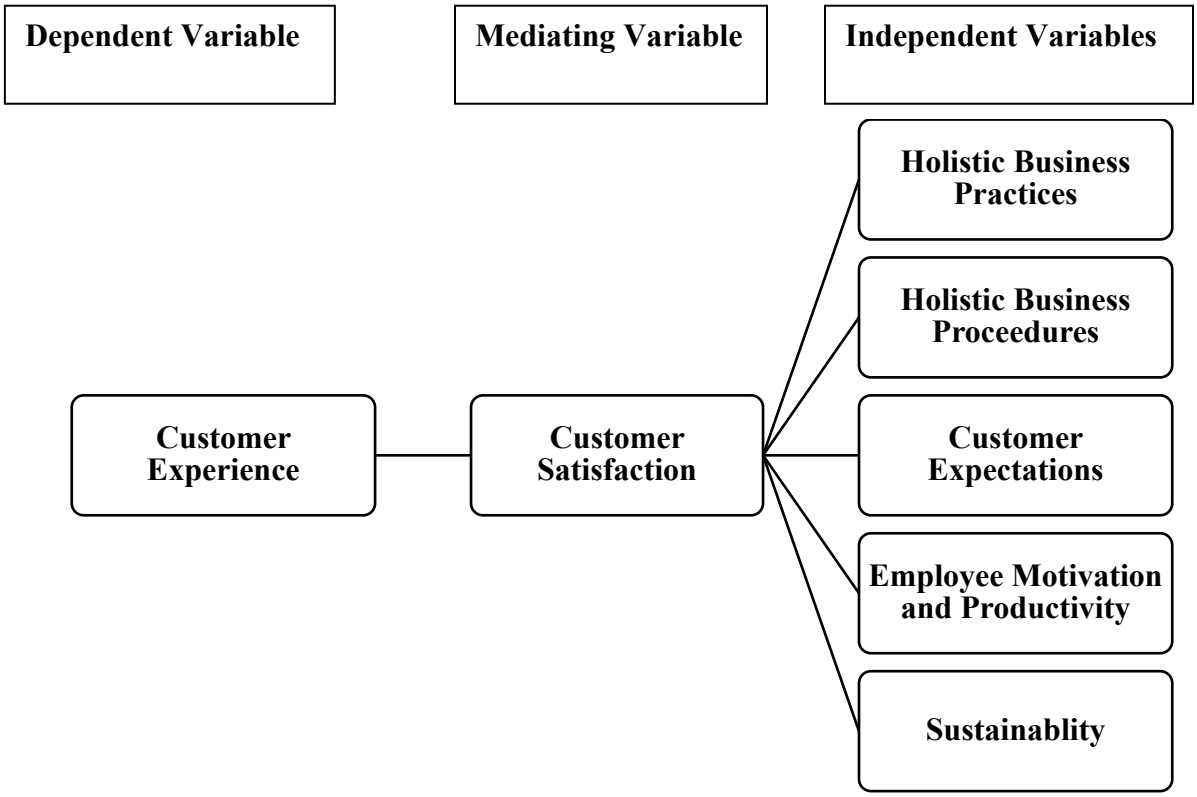


FIGURE 11: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.13.2 Conclusion

In this chapter, both the contextual as well as conceptual frameworks have highlighted several key insights about the holistic business practices and their implementation within the hospitality sector in general, and the luxury hospitality in particular. From the contextual factors initially discussed, it was found that hospitality sector needs to look after the integration of business processes, procedures, technological innovation and evolving customer expectations. Only through this holistic approach can hospitality organisation achieve the goals of employee motivation, customer satisfaction, enhanced productivity, as well as sustainable business. From the review of the academic literature as well as published findings about the UAE business developments and initiatives, this chapter has informed about the efforts undertaken by the hospitality businesses in

order to stay responsive to the economic, social and technological environments, along with the ecological factors necessary for the sustainable business practices with the luxury sector. From the examination of examples about the sustainable business practices analysis in the global case studies, it was depicted that the luxury sector lags far behind the others. However, further investigation from the primary participants would help in substantiating the secondary findings with more accuracy. The literature in the above chapter was very helpful in understanding the current practices adopted as well as the improvements needed in order to pursue a more inclusive holistic business practice approach. A summary of the key insights highlight that the holistic approach is all about moving from the shareholder and profitability perspective towards the stakeholder approach in terms of overall business success. All these findings can be used to bridge the research identified within the literature with respect to a lack of research into the luxury hospitality sector of the UAE. The next chapter of the study presents the research methodology designed to conduct the primary investigation of the actors in the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to justify the choice of research methodology for this research, which aims to investigate the influence of holistic business practices on the luxury sector of the hospitality industry and its impact on customer experiences in UAE. Saunders et al., (2009) have informed the methodological design through the concept of the research onion, which can be applied to social science and business management studies. The six-layered onion effectively helps to explain the choice of methodology by highlighting how a series of decisions were made at each layer to arrive at an overall comprehensive research methodology.

The current investigation is based on a qualitative research methodology. The choice of this methodology stems from the nature of the aim and research objectives. Furthermore, its appropriateness is justified by academic and practical evidence. Similar to quantitative researchers, the current study did not want to determine the cause and effect, to predict or to describe the distribution of specific characteristics of the population (Flick, 2018). Rather, the focus of this study was to uncover the meaning of phenomena (holistic business practices), by identifying how the people (managers and team leaders) involved in such experiences interpret their experiences and construct the world. Additionally, unlike quantitative research, this research did not aim to generalise the conclusions beyond the research setting, namely the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE. Instead, based on the research aim, this study was only focused on the chosen sector. It tends to emphasise the impacts of holistic business practices on consumer experience in the luxury hospitality sector of the UAE. The investigation was a comprehensive evaluation of the luxury sector in a specific geographical location. The rationale behind selecting the qualitative research methodology based on interviews and observations can be better explained from the need to pursue the qualitative phenomena of truth in context and time-specific findings (Lapan et al., 2011), i.e. the current economic importance of hospitality policy in the UAE, holistic business practices and initiatives, developments, emerging trends and areas for improvement.

The nature of this type of study requires a deeper understanding, ultimately substantiating the managerial interview as an appropriate choice. Past academic researchers have also substantiated the importance of interviews in investigating holistic business practices in the hospitality sector.

Lu et al., (2015) use managerial and guest interviews to investigate the extent to which luxury hotels in Taiwan are pursuing a holistic approach in shaping customer experience. Likewise, (Mubiri, 2016) also use interviews to investigate the impact of customer satisfaction on their loyalty in Lake Kivu Serena Hotel. Buijtendijk and Tschunkert (2016) conducted structured interviews from hotel managers (15-sample size) in six sub-chains as the appropriate choice to identify the opportunities, constraints and possible solutions for sustainable development of hotel industry in Inle Lake, Myanmar.

Based on the brief overview of the chosen research methodology, this chapter details and explains all the methodology using the Saunders et al. (2009) research onion.

3.2 Layer 1: Philosophical Stances

In relation to the first layer of research onion, which comprises the philosophical stance, it was necessary to clarify the underlying assumptions used in the study to view the under-investigated phenomena about the holistic business practices in the luxury sector and their impacts. Three philosophical stances were considered in this investigation for providing a comprehensive philosophical framework for investigation.

3.2.1 Epistemological Philosophy

Saunders et al. (2009) define epistemology as a philosophical stand addressing the facts by focusing on the acceptable knowledge in the field of research. For this purpose, a comprehensive literature review was carried out of the holistic practices in the luxury sector and the customer's experience to identify what information is known to be true. The philosophy further guides the researcher towards the three positions of positivism, realism and interpretivism.

Among these three philosophical positions, interpretivism was chosen for the current investigation in order to emphasise the meanings conferred by the people upon their own and others' action. Interpretivism helped in analysing the perceptions, experiences, values, ideas and motivations driving the interpretation of the people (managers and team leaders of

different luxury hotels in the UAE). Past academic researchers (Minor and Ritchie, 2016; Buijtendijk and Tschunkert, 2016) have also considered interpretive epistemology as an appropriate choice for gaining deeper understanding of the hospitality industry from the perspective of a holistic experience. Minor & Ritchie (2016) chose a similar philosophical stance based on the assumption that knowledge is not discovered but created in the minds of individuals living in a society. Consequently, an interactive research process becomes indispensable to reflect on the subjective views of people who have experienced the holistic business practices in the hospitality sector themselves. Cash also substantiates that hospitality management is an entirely subjective phenomenon, which may vary among different individuals, organisations and society as a whole. Consequently, for some traditional business managers, hospitality management is still reliant on the management of food, beverages and accommodation in a service.

In contrast, contemporary hospitality managers may consider hospitality management as an all-inclusive approach, that is to say delivering products and services in a holistic manner. Hence, an interpretive epistemological stance was identified as useful in understanding the tangible and intangible components involved in the holistic business dimensions identified in Chapter One. These may include environmental, social, cultural and economic decisions.

3.2.2 Ontological Philosophy

The research onion (Saunders et al., 2009) define ontological philosophy as one that is focused around the nature of reality, perceptions of reality and how this has an influence on people's behaviour. Generally, three positions are commonly agreed in ontology: objectivism, constructivism and pragmatism.

To increase the credibility of the research findings related to the holistic practices in the hospitality sector of the UAE, objectivism was identified as feasible. Objectivism addresses reality by separating the meanings of a social phenomenon from the social actors. By making comprehensive observations of the multiple hospitality study, an attempt has been made to integrate practical realities in the luxury sector in this research. The objectivism position was necessary to gain deeper insights into the current hospitality process, procedures, innovation

and emerging trends and evolving customer expectations. Simultaneously, it further informed whether the current practices are aligned with the holistic business approach or not.

Lashley, 2007 and Sadaqat (2016) also consider observation in the hospitality industry as a feasible philosophy to identify how the industry has described its best practices and what further is required to be undertaken. Analysts in Khaleej Times (Marashi, 2017; Sadaqat, 2016) further report that it is necessary for business managers and team leaders in the hospitality industry to increase understanding about holistic business practices between all level of employees as well as stakeholders to enhance participation and foster sustainable holistic development.

According to Shaikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, UAE hospitality firms need to consider

> "*...the importance of a renewed and more holistic business strategy that looks beyond profits and extends to the welfare of the people and the planet"* (Sadaqat, 2016, p. 1).

> "*Governments today should be the very models of sustainability today. Those that do not meet that challenge will never persuade their citizens or their commercial entities to embrace sustainability. In addition, private enterprises must be convinced to adopt sustainable practices. We need to work together to make people understand that sustainability which is good for society, can be good for business as well.*" (Sadaqat, 2016, p. 1).

Objectivism was helpful in strengthening stakeholders' perspectives in response to holism policies and practices.

3.2.3 Axiological Philosophy

Moreover, the third philosophical stance of axiology guides researchers in applying their own values at all stages of the research process in order to increase the credibility of the research results (Saunders et al., 2009). Therefore, the choice of holistic practices and impacts on consumer experience highlighted the value the researcher places on social issues. It was necessary to study the judgements about the values posed by the managers and team leaders of

luxury hotels in the UAE for the effective implementation of the holistic business practices. The emphasis on managerial values has facilitated the identification of whether or not UAE managers have adopted equality approach in addressing the environmental, social, cultural and economic decision in their business policy-making and strategic implementations. Furthermore, axiology assisted in understanding how the managers and leaders in the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE have directed their efforts in promoting the values related with the ethical and sustainable business practices, alongside the satisfaction of their business customers.

3.3 Layer 2: Approaches

Following the choice of appropriate philosophical positions in epistemology, ontology and axiology above, the researcher started to assess and justify the choice of approach.

The selection of an appropriate research approach was dependent on the interpretivist, objectivist and axiological values (Saunders et al., 2009). Additionally, it was necessary to review the aim and limitations of the research prior to selecting an approach.

Inductive approach

The inductive approach is mainly used in those research studies where the aim is to develop a new theory. Under this approach, researchers start from the research questions and move towards observations and decryptions of the research issue and finally towards the analysis (Saunders et al., 2009). Since the literature review in Chapter Two has informed that significant work has been done in theorising the concept of holistic business practices, the investigated issue cannot generally be treated as novel. The focus of research is not on the development opportunity, but rather tests activities which make the inductive approach inappropriate for the current research.

Deductive approach

In contrast, the deductive approach refers to the approach where the focus of the researcher is on finding answers to the research question, which could lead to a revision of theory (Saunders et al., 2009). The researcher needs to consider the speculated information and

test whether the existing data can be accepted or rejected (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Similarly, the deductive approach was identified as feasible for the current investigation, as the primary participants helped in identifying the similarities and differences in what is already known in the literature about holistic business practices in the UAE luxury hospitality sector and the practical realities highlighted by managers and team leaders.

3.4 Layer 3: Strategies

After the selection of appropriate philosophy and approach, the third level of the research onion requires the selection of an appropriate research strategy. Saunders et al. (2009) define strategy as the research style adopted by researchers in data collection and data analysis, based on the individual benefits and limitations associated with each strategy. Among the range of research strategies available, the choice of a feasible approach is ultimately dependent on the compatibility and consistency of the strategy with the research aims and objectives and other components of the research methodology (Badke, 2011).

Additionally, in business management studies, the choice of more than one strategy can be identified as feasible based on the design of the investigation. Researching holistic business practices in the luxury sector of the UAE was based on the subjective paradigm. Therefore, among all the available choices for research, such as experimentation, survey, action research, grounded theory, ethnography, archival research, observations and interviews, the latter two strategies were acknowledged as appropriate (Saunders et al., 2009; Groves et al., 2011).

Interview Strategy: Interviews are recognised as one of the most adopted research strategies selected by business management researchers for gathering useful, valid and reliable data relevant to the research questions and objectives. The interview strategy is highly effective in situations where investigation needs to ascertain the level of formality and structure when gathering information from the sample group (Creswell, 2009). In assessing the holistic business practices and policies within the luxury sector of the UAE, the researcher would need to exercise adequate formality in communication and interaction with the high, middle and low-level managers. This has ultimately substantiated the effectiveness of the interview strategy.

Furthermore, the flexibility of the interview strategy in gathering surface level as well as in-depth finding-related research phenomena was also a key reason behind selecting this strategy. Both the researcher as well as the interview respondents can share their views in detail about a specific subjective phenomenon, for instance holistic business practices in this particular research (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Additionally, the variety of choices available in the interview strategy also justifies its usage for data collection. Generally, two different types of interview strategies are available: the structured and semi-structured interview. Each of these can be employed based on the nature of the research investigation.

Structured Interview: Structured interviews are supportive to the researcher, whereby using a predetermined and standardised set of questions, evidence can be gathered from the participants. The use of recorded answers to the structured questions further reduces the time constraints involved in the interview process, as well as reduce the risk of variances in the respondents' answers (Saunders et al., 2009).

Semi-Structured Interview: In contrast, semi-structured interviews are helpful for gathering data findings from participants through a non-standardised approach. The researcher uses a list of themes and questions relevant to the research topic. The number of questions may vary based on ongoing communication with the respondents. Furthermore, the conversation flow further directs the order of questions with room available for additional questions in order to explore the research questions and objectives in more detail.

The current investigation regarding holistic business practices in the luxury hospitality sector of the UAE has regarded semi-structured interviews as the most suitable for devising a phase-based approach. Each of the semi-structured interviews were conducted in an organised manner, details of which are provided in Section 3.7 (Layer 6: Techniques and Procedures).

Observation Strategy: The second research strategy selected for this research was observation. Observation is helpful in gathering data findings where the research questions and objectives are concerned with what people do. Similar to interviews, observations can be further subcategorised into participant observation and ethnographic observation. In this research, both types of observational strategies were effective in gathering appropriate data from the research participants.

Participant observation refers to the qualitative strategy used by to discover the meanings attached by people to their actions. For the Research Objectives 2, 3 and 4 to examine the current business approach, the significance of a holistic approach to customer experience and the impacts of customer experience and sustainability, participant observation was carried regarding out how employees in the luxury hospitality industry in the UAE are responsive to the four dimensions of holistic businesses. The actions and behaviours of the employees were helpful in detailing the response of UAE firms to emerging trends in the hospitality industry. Additionally, ethnographic observations were also carried out to gather how the written and documented policies, practices and development respond to the holistic business practices. However, in contrary to the interview strategy, it may be time-consuming to attain full incorporation into a social scene to practice and document long-term alterations in actions and opinions. However, the findings received from this strategy can bring more comprehensive and generalisable findings.

Both the interview and observation strategies were helpful in the successful accomplishment of the five research objectives set out in Chapter One of this research (re-stated below).

- To draw a conceptual framework linking the key research variables together, i.e. holistic business practices and the luxury hospitality sector
- To identify what is the current business approach in the UAE luxury hospitality industry
- To access the significance of a holistic approach to customer experience
- To access the impacts of customer experience on sustainability
- To formulate guidelines to enhance business sustainability in the luxury hospitality sector

3.5 Layer 4: Choices

Moving on to layer 4 of the research onion, the selection of an appropriate choice from the mono-, multi- and mixed methods was needed. It was necessary to define how the researcher wants to use the quantitative and qualitative methods in the study. In more detail, the choices significantly influence the decision of the researcher to prefer qualitative or quantitative data collection methods over others (Creswell, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009). Quantitative research involves statistical data focused on quantity and measurements, while qualitative research aims to analyse personal accounts, opinions and description in order to gather rich data about research phenomena. Based

on the design research and nature of the research aim, a single study can utilise a multi-method approach, where both quantitative and qualitative data are collected, but the researchers' outlook is entrenched in only one of them. For this purpose, data analysis is carried out from only one point of view (Saunders et al., 2009). Likewise, the research investigation may involve mixed methods including quantitative and qualitative research methods by emphasising both of them. Hence, the findings under each of the methods are used to cross-relate the findings gathered from the other method, respectively. In the mixed method, it is quite easy for the researcher to reduce the limitations of the individual methods and fill the data gaps for increasing the credibility of the research findings.

In the context of the current thesis, mono-method research has been selected. The mono-method is focused on either quantitative or qualitative data collection.

For the purpose of the current investigation, only qualitative data methods have been chosen due to the underlying assumptions and demands of the interpretative philosophy, objectivism, research values, the deductive approach and the use of interview and observation strategies. The choice of mono-method research is certainly justifiable from the existing literature, where other researchers have also applied the qualitative or quantitative method to direct the flow of their data findings from the respondents in the right direction. Investigating holistic practices in the hospitality sector requires adding up findings from all levels in order to reach the understanding of the whole. For this purpose, researchers in the business management field need to consider the tangible and intangible aspects of the business to address how the policies and practices are responsive to the different dimensions of the business, which are necessary to achieve the aim behind the holistic approach.

It can be depicted from the literature reviewed in Chapter Two that holistic business practices require businesses to focus on their profitability along with other business elements. It requires them to exercise an integrated approach for the satisfaction of all the stakeholders rather than privatising the practices and policies for meeting the needs of only one stakeholder (customers or investors) (Marla and Taori, 2007; Catizzone and Muchena, 1994). Therefore, with the help of the qualitative approach, investigators in this field are able to identify how managers can understand whether service quality and service delivery to the customer is in line with the holistic approach. A range of qualitative studies (Lu et al., 2015; Catizzone and Muchena, 1994;

Buijtendijk and Tschunkert, 2016; Mubiri, 2016) all highlight the need to look into customer experience and satisfaction in line with the integration of culture, people and business processes in order to devise a larger picture of hotel operations. It is therefore necessary to establish how the UAE manager is investigating the tangible and intangible attributes required by their customers to drive satisfaction, including both the physical as well as emotional aspects related to services. Qualitative investigations are useful in analysing how the managers, as well as the customers of luxury hotels, are placing importance on the holistic experience in order to drive sustainability of the sector for themselves as well as for the coming generations.

Furthermore, , in opting for the quantitative methodology as opposed to a qualitative one, might have limited the research may have been limited to only one or two dimensions of the holistic business practices.

Furthermore, the focus on opinions and experiences of the participants has assisted in the analysis of the response of the luxury hospitality sector to the infrastructure development, environmental concerns, waste management, innovation, investments in social initiatives and satisfaction and loyalty of the customers (Carbo et al., 2017). Similarly, it can be critically analysed that holistic business experience does not require viewing each dimension in isolation, but instead requires the researcher to focus on the integrated view and the interrelationship between the different aspects to show how one element significantly affects other ones to frame the overall holistic business practices. Additionally, the current investigation did not consider the cause-and-effect relationship between the holistic business practice and the measurable elements such as profits, target markets, market share, or other business costs and benefits relating to luxury hospitality firms. It merely attempted to identify how businesses are responding to holistic business practices and what further improvements are required.

3.6 Layer 5: Time Horizon

Subsequently, the fifth layer of the research onion stresses the importance of a timeline to determine whether the study is be short-term or long-term. It is necessary to identify an appropriate time horizon, as the entire research design and strategy is dependent on it. Furthermore, the choice of a time horizon cannot be made without considering the major research aim and research

questions. Situations where the research questions require the researcher to take a snapshot of a phenomenon under investigation may need to set a short time horizon. Correspondingly, in studies where the nature of the study requires the representation of a range of events over a given period, a long time horizon may be required (Saunders et al., 2009).

Generally, there are two types of time horizons available to business researchers and these are cross-sectional and longitudinal horizons.

Saunders et al., (2009) define cross-sectional studies as the ones that focus on a specific phenomenon at a particular time. It can be depicted that most of the academic projects experience time constraints and researchers do not usually have enough time to analyse a specific phenomenon over long period, with the exception of healthcare studies, which often consider long-term investigation including baseline and follow-up studies. On the contrary, business management studies attempt to identify the relationship between research variables at a particular point in time.

Conversely, longitudinal studies are defined as ones which are feasible for investigations that attempt to study change and development. For this purpose, researchers are required to carry out ongoing observations of people, places and events over time. However, in executing longitudinal studies, researchers are required to exercise control measures over the variables in order to protect these variables from the effects of the chosen research process. The choice of this time horizon provides a rich source of data for testing and evaluation.

For the purpose of the current investigation, both the time horizons are considered, in order to gather the relevant data findings from the primary and secondary data sources related to UAE luxury hospitality firms. Interviews from managers and team leaders were helpful in gaining an understanding of the current holistic business practices being exercised within their chosen organisations. Through interviews, it was possible to gather information about the experiences of managers in relation to the current hospitality process, procedures, innovation and emerging trends as well as customer expectations. Certainly, the current managers were able to share the current situation of the hospitality sector more effectively relative to historical situations. For this purpose, the interview strategy was used to explore the current dimension of the holistic business practices in the UAE luxury sector. The interviews identified the impacts of components of the holistic

business approach on employees' motivation, enhanced productivity and satisfaction and on sustainable businesses in the UAE luxury hospitality sector.

The choice of a cross-sectional time horizon has been justified by hospitality researchers in previous studies. Menezes and Cunha (2016) adopt a cross-sectional perspective in investigating different hotel chains to assess eco-innovation, design, barriers, incentives and motivations. With the help of cross-sectional design, it was possible to investigate multiple cases of different global hotel chains to access relevant information by addressing the greater analytical benefits and reduced risk of replication. The cross-sectional design assisted in gathering data from multiple data sources in order to increase the credibility of the research findings. Likewise, Walls (2013) also posits that the use of cross-sectional design is effective in investigating the physical environment as well as human interactions influencing the dimensions of consumer experiences in a hospitality setting.

By focusing on the idea of studying a phenomenon at a specific point of time, hospitality organisations can set out initiated business practices necessary to provide customer experience according to the emerging trends. Therefore, the objectives of the current investigation were to identify the current trends emerging in the industry in the context of the holistic business practices for suggesting relevant improvements to the hospitality players. The use of a cross-sectional design investigation was helpful in assessing the aspect of behaviours related to holistic business practices and consumer experience.

On the other hand, participant and ethnography observations supported the analysis of the range of events and developments which have occurred in the hospitality organisations in the UAE. However, due to limited resources and availability of time, the focus of the observations was not spread over an extensive time period. Rather, observations of the events and participants were carried out for a week's duration. However, by reviewing the documents of the hospitality firms and their practices, it was possible to identify the trends and changes emerging in the holistic business practices of these hospitality forms over a longer period. It can be recalled from the theoretical and practical significance of this research (referred to in Section 1.7),the significance of this research study is attributed to its ability to re-evaluate the UAE luxury hospitality sector

after the passage of 20 or 50 years. Therefore, by evaluating how the current practices are in line with the holistic business practices, and how much the current practices are different from the historical ones, the findings of this investigation have attempted to provide a 'kind' of diary of events exhibiting the developments.

The choice of multiple strategies addressing the short and long-term horizon can be justified from the methodological design adopted by previous researchers in the fields of business, hospitality and sustainability management. In one such study to investigate the Soarak Hotel and Casino and their sustainability framework, Adesina and Ezenagu (2013) use both interviews and field observations within the methodological design. The researchers administered filled interviews with the staff and residents, while in-depth interviews were carried out with the hotel staff. With the help of multiple methods, the researchers were able to identify the range of clients as well as historical antisocial activities within the hotel.

Therefore, the current investigation has applied long-term residents for studying events and behaviours in the overall business environment and management to extract relevant information about the holistic business practices.

3.7 Layer 6: Techniques and Procedures

The sixth and final layer of the research onion, techniques and procedures, identifies the practicalities of data collection and analysis. It exhibits the range of data collection and data analysis procedures decided by the researcher based on the decisions made in the previous five layers, where the ultimate aim is to answer the research question. The layer is further sub-categorised into sample groups, research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis method (Brace, 2008).

3.7.1 Sample Group

The choice of an appropriate sample is reliant on the sampling technique and sample size. A random sampling technique was identified as feasible for selecting the group of people in the data set (Fuller, 2011). Every individual who met the sample criteria was included in the sampling process. Every *n*th item was included in the investigation, from the population of managers and team leaders. It is important to highlight that the sample group did not include

subordinates or team members (Kumar, 2008). Because the study was conducted in Dubai, UAE, there was a possibility that separate participants were unable to speak English. Therefore, it was established that the participants were able to speak English before including them in the investigation process. Furthermore, the inclusion criteria also required the participants to have a minimum of three years' experience.

Furthermore, communication and experience were the key factors in deciding whether the participants selected would be able to convey relevant findings of the research phenomena or not. Furthermore, 15 hospitality industry professionals from the top, middle and lower level management made up the sample size of this investigation. Based on the time-consuming nature of the interview process and observations, twelve semi-structured interviews and observations were carried out, which is identified as a statistical sample with the power to estimate the research variables.

Due to the researcher's personal experience in working with the various levels of managers and departments in the hotel groups, it was easier to access the desired number of individuals. Therefore, through coordination with training departments in hospitality firms in the UAE, it was possible to access the sample. However, before initiating the primary investigation with the selected sample, they were asked for oral consent to ensure that they were participating voluntarily without any pressure or coercion.

3.7.2 Research Instrument

This section details the aspects and questions included in the interviews for each of the semi-structured interviews planned and conducted.

3.7.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The research instrument developed for the semi-structured interviews comprised of 20 questions. Each of the questions was related to one of the dimensions of the holistic business practices. From Question 1 to Question 5, participants were asked about the holistic business practices of their luxury hotels in driving customer satisfaction, such as luxury products or

services offered, measures taken to deliver luxurious experience, ways to ensure high customer satisfaction, criteria used to measure customer satisfaction, and the use of holistic business practices in improving the customer experience. Subsequently, in Questions 6 to 10, participants were asked about the holistic business practices and procedures adopted by luxury hotels such as the type of holistic practices, the length of time such practices have been adopted, the role of technology implementation, and the efficacy of such implementation on customer experience and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, in Questions 11 to 15, participants were asked about the relationship between the holistic business practices and employee motivation, sustainability and productivity of the business. The key factors highlighted in the interview questions included the link between luxury products and services and sustainable business practices, the role of employees in successful adoption, the effect of such practices on employee morale, alignment of such practices with the strategic goals, and effective organisational designs. Additionally, the semi-structured interview enquired about the effect of such practices on the overall performance of the hotel.

In Questions 18 to 20, participants were interviewed about their opinions on the gap currently existing in holistic business practices, how improvements can be made and, on the measures, necessary to ensure that business strategies are aligned with the sustainable growth objectives.

3.7.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process for the current investigation was categorised into interviews and observation. To gather interview responses from hospitality industry professionals, twelve top, middle and low-level managers were approached to acquire data related to their perceptions, opinions and experiences regarding the current holistic business practices and procedures within their organisations. However, they were provided with a hint in the interview questions to ensure that they are responding to the research in the right direction. A pre-defined set of interview questions was helpful in making an adequate assessment of the issue.

All these interview methods were helpful in exploring individual as well as collective perceptions and experiences related to holistic business practices in the hospitality sector in the UAE. The interviews were conducted only once and the duration for each interview varied

from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. The interviewer made optimum use of the time in gathering as much information as possible from the selected managers and team leaders of the chosen forms. It can be depicted from Section 3.7.2 that the set of research questions was comprised of the factors and variables identified in the research question in Chapter One. The sociodemographic details of the participants were also collected, such as age, gender, educational qualification, experience, department and specific connectivity with any of the four dimensions of the holistic business practice. Additionally, in order to capture the interview responses more effectively for subsequent data analysis, these interviews were recorded with the consent of the respondents. The records of the interviews further assisted the researcher in identifying and synthesizing the content and verbal prompt, necessary for the interpretation of the research findings in the form of verbatim transcripts.

3.7.4 Data Analysis Methods

Thematic data analysis was identified as a feasible technique to identify the relevant codes from the data.

This approach helped to identify the most frequently uttered or spoken words in answer to the interview questions from the transcripts in order to generate codes (Saunders et al., 2009). Simultaneously, based on the shared and relevant aspects, these codes were synthesized to generate categories, which were later combined to develop themes. Firstly, a table of initial codes was created from the transcripts, which included single words, phrases and direct quotes from the respondents' transcripts. Secondly, these initial codes were revisited to ascertain that they included relevant details and were not just highlighting irrelevant information. Subsequently, an initial list of categories was developed using a combination of relevant codes. Then, the list of categories was modified based on an additional reading of the interview transcripts. Finally, after revisiting the categories and subcategories, several themes were extracted (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Kumar, 2008).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

An academic investigation cannot increase its credibility with researchers until it opts to conduct the research process in an ethical manner in order to increase benefit and minimise the risk of harm for anyone directly or indirectly involved in the research. Correspondingly, in order to investigate the holistic business practices in the luxury hospitality sector of the UAE, the researcher assures that no one was physically or emotionally harmed. Compliance with universities ethical guidelines has been given significant priority (refer to the ethical approval form – PG2/E1 Form in the Appendix). The core ethical guidance documents have all been complied with, for instance UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice (2017-2020), Data Protection Act 1998, University's Research Data Management Policy, and Code of Human Research Ethics (The British Psychological Society).

Additionally, for the health and safety of the researcher as well as the participants involved in the primary investigation, appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards were considered to control the research environment in order to protect mutual rights of the participants and researcher.

Moreover, the range of ethical considerations include the following.

3.8.1 Informed Consent

Participants were asked to provide informed consent to ensure that everyone included in the sample participated only after gaining complete knowledge and understanding about the research aim, objectives and the process.

3.8.2 Voluntary Participation

Secondly, the primary research participants were asked to participate voluntarily in the research process without any pressure or coercion. They were also provided the opportunity to withdraw from the research at any point at their discretion.

3.8.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

Privacy and confidentiality of personal information, such as participants' names, the names of the hospitality firms, contact information and addresses, were given high priority. The information was kept private in a password-protected folder and was not shared with any other person. Additionally, such information will be formally discarded after six months of successful completion of this research.

3.8.4 Originality

In using the interview transcripts and observational data gathered from the hospitality firms in UAE, originality has been exercised in extracting relevant findings from the transcripts. Originality was essential to ensure that the original data do not lose their meaning as conveyed by the primary research participants.

3.8.5 Reliability and Validity

In order to increase the reliability and validity of the research, it was necessary to identify the effects of the interview questions on the perceptions and containment of the participants with their organisation, prior carrying out research. It was extremely important to reduce such effects and exercise great caution in designing the research instrument. A pilot study was carried out to test the reliability and validity alongside credibility of the both the of research design and instrument design. Furthermore, expert opinions were also gained from supervisors and academic professionals to check the relevancy of the research questions.

Only up-to-date and recent data sources were used to draft a comprehensive literature review and conceptual framework to provide a basis for the interview questions. Likewise, only those research sources were included in the conceptual framework, which can report consistent findings. Both the reliability and validity of the research instrument design are necessary to devise a replicable research methodology, which can be easily replicated by researchers opting to carry out a similar investigation. It was necessary to ensure that the interview questions were designed in a such manner that they can easily answer the specific concept and can measure the research topic.

3.8.6 Credibility

Likewise, the credibility of the research findings was also considered in order to ascertain that the research is trustworthy and believable. By using up-to-date and relevant data sources to devise the research instruments and to review the literature, the conclusions of the study were supported by the research findings.

3.8.7 Citation and Referencing

Furthermore, complete in-text citations and referencing guidelines were compiled to enhance the research credibility. Academic references need to provide credit to the original authors of the data and information used in the investigation. In the absence of appropriate referencing, research may encounter the academic offence of plagiarism.

3.9 Conclusion

In summarising the overall research methodology chosen to investigate the holistic business practices within the luxury hospitality sector of the UAE, it can be concluded that the integration of epistemology, ontology and axiology have offered significant direction to the research design and process. The conceptual framework discussed in Chapter Two has informed the methodological framework for the current investigation (literature review). All the layers of the research onion have aimed individually as well as collectively to adopt the choices which can help the researcher in the successful accomplishment of the research aim and set of objectives. It can be depicted that by adopting only one logical stance from epistemology, ontology and axiology stances, it would not be possible to gather an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the holistic business practices in the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE.

This combination of three philosophies has ultimately helped in identifying the current trends as well as a historical account of the holistic business practices, procedures and developments within the hospitality firms. Furthermore, the focus of the research on the four dimensions of the holism such as environmental, social, cultural and economic decisions provided a rationale for selecting more than one option for deeper analysis of the issues under investigation. Similarly, it can be concluded that epistemological approaches, choices, strategies and methods have helped in

identifying the subjective view of the holistic business practices while the ontological components have assisted in understanding the objective view of the holistic business practices through observations of the participants and the environment as a whole. It is expected that the integration of the methodological choices made to investigate the research issue has resulted in relevant findings, which can be generalised to the overall luxury hospitality sector in the UAE. Furthermore, due to the comprehensiveness of the findings discussed in this study, these can be compared in future studies with the other luxury hospitality sectors in Middle Eastern, Asian or Western countries. The compliance of ethical guidelines has further increased the credibility, reliability and validity of the research instruments and the research design.

The overall methodological findings are summarised in Table 2.

Research methodology components	Epistemology	Ontology	Axiology
Philosophical stance	Interpretivism	Objectivism	Research values/ holistic business practices/ sustainability/ customers satisfaction/employee motivation
Research approach	Deductive	Deductive	Deductive
Research choice	Qualitative	Qualitative	Qualitative
Research strategy	Three-phase Interviews	Observations	Value-based discussions
Research method	Mono method	Mono Method	Mono Method
Time horizons	Cross-sectional	Longitudinal	-
The techniques and procedures	15 Face-to-face semi-structured interviews and observation Thematic analysis	Participants observations and ethnographic observations Thematic analysis	Value-based discussions on the interviews and observational findings

Table 2: Summary of Methodology

3.10 Summary

This chapter has presented the research methodology for the research. A combination of three research philosophies are proposed to achieve the aim of the research including epistemology, ontology and axiology. A conceptual model has been developed based on dependent (customer experience), mediating (customer satisfaction) and independent variables (holistic business practice, procedures, customer expectations and employee motivation). Primary data was gathered through semi-structured interview consisting of twenty questions with twelve high, middle and low-level managers in the hospitality industry. Data was analysed through thematic analysis where categories and codes were generated from the responses of the managers and different themes were created.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Primary Research Findings

4.1.1 Topic 1: Current holistic business practices and measures taken for customer satisfaction

Sub-theme 1a: Current organisational practice in the UAE hospitality industry

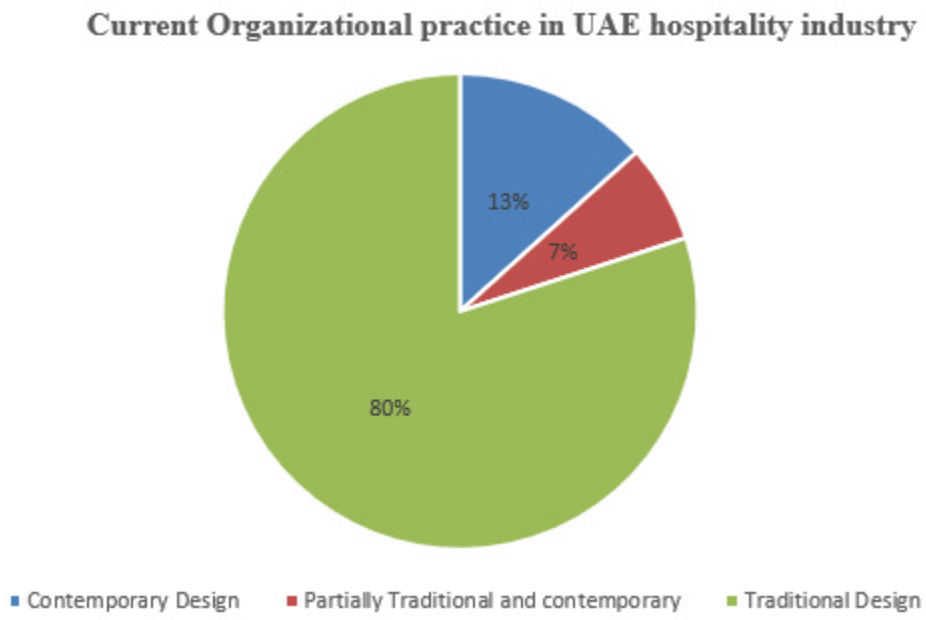


Figure 12: Current organisational practice in the UAE hospitality industry

Contemporary design

According to Figure 1 above, 13% of the respondents said that current organisational practice in UAE hospitality industry was contemporary. Mr. X said:

> *It is contemporary. We have a team structure wherein we are boundary-less and open-door policies. There is no top down approach. Instead of relying on senior management to drive the business we empower our employees to make decisions and implement changes.*

Ms. I added:

> *We are a chain of luxury serviced hotel apartments in Dubai. It was traditional but we flourished very well due to the leadership style.*

Traditional design

Figure 12 also shows that 80% of the respondents reported that the current organisation practice of the UAE hospitality industry was traditional. Respondent E noted:

> *I think our organisation is quite traditional in its structure. We operate a global head office and then we oversee the individual International brands. It is structured in a very traditional way.*

Respondents added that their organisations were very traditional, and that type of design worked for them well. They said that their traditional structures had different departments from marketing, finance, human resource, food and beverage, catering and maintenance to customer services. Also, they made sure that every employee and customer was satisfied and contented with their services. Respondent K said

> *Our organisation was based on a traditional structure. We operated a small head office which ran 4 branches and each branch reported to an operations director. Although the structure was traditional, we placed great focus on giving each branch manager a high level of autonomy in the running of their individual branch. We were very open to ideas and encouraged free thinking and initiative.*

Partially traditional and contemporary

Figure 12 shows that 7% of the respondents reported that the hospitality industry in UAE was partially traditional and partially contemporary. Mr. J said:

> *Well I would say it's partially traditional and contemporary. Well tradition is with the respect of property and contemporary by the management. So, if you ask me the reason why it's both 50 50.*

Sub-theme 1b: Measures taken for customer satisfaction



Figure 13: Measures taken for customer satisfaction

Assessment and appraisal system

Respondents said that employees were assessed and appraised. Through this system, employees felt valued and were able to serve customers well. Respondent K said:

> *We had an assessment/appraisal system in place so that staff felt valued and to ensure that there was a benefit to them when standards were achieved. A positive assessment could lead to reward such as additional time off, a financial bonus such as commission.*

Customer feedback

Respondents said that their organisations valued customers' feedback. They had platforms where customers could leave feedback and through this, they were able to improve their services according to what customers had suggested. Respondent H said:

> *The foremost strategy that allows us to contribute towards the development of customer satisfaction is encouraging feedback systems. These systems allow us to effectively reflect back on our service.*

Mr. E added:

> *So, we work with a number of outside, third party agencies which conduct mystery shopping as well as our special monitoring agents to looking at TripAdvisor and other platforms like Feedback sites in terms of their experience.*

Information on customer preferences

Respondents said that they obtained customers' information before they visited their hotel. In the information they received, customers stated their preferences and how they wanted to be treated. This made it easier to satisfy customers. Respondent K said:

> *Firstly, we had clear protocols on each element of the guest journey including arrival, meet and greet, protocols for booking and recommendation as well as within the treatment room. This was crucial for us as the spas could be busy and we wanted each guest to feel that she was of the highest importance to the business.*

Respondent W noted:

> *Guest experience begins before they arrive, so we have our front of house team who sends them a welcome email asking for their preference during their stay, special request, they create a personal touch so when the customer arrives, he knows who to go so we connect with guest on personal level.*

Loyalty programs

Respondents also said that they had loyalty programs where returning customers were given preferential treatment. Ms. I noted:

> *Having dual loyalty programs where the regular guests always come by addressing their needs and the preferences of their rooms by viewing the guest history before the guest arrives them and we got high customer satisfaction.*

Meeting customers' expectations

Respondents said that they satisfied customers by making sure that customers' expectations were met. They had well-established checks and balances to ensure that customers' needs were met. Respondent B said:

> *So, we only obviously operating within the ultra-luxury leisure. So, Guest expectation from us are obviously very high. So, we have a number of checks and balances in place to ensure that we continue to live up to guest experience.*

Respondent Q added:

> *We make sure our customers get luxurious and enhanced experience, for this, we have three shifts of service and three different kinds of menus for each time that is morning, afternoon and evening. For this the hotel crew welcomes the guests warmly and keep proper check of ambiance of the choice of customer, hygiene etc.*

Personnel training

Respondents added that they conducted personalised training to ensure that standards were met by all staff and that they understood why the standards had been put in place. Respondent P said:

> *Well one of the main ones was we opened an academy. A few years ago, now and in the academy when people are employed initially apply for a position that is from kitchen porter. I'm not saying that on any particular scale but from kitchen porter up to Operations Manager for example. They have to go through our running of academy and the Academy is basically every department within the organisation. They have to learn about every department within our organisation and then they have to sit exams as well as an intense three-week course.*

Respondent Y added:

> *After hiring qualified and experienced profiles we provide them with two weeks' training in which they learn about the basic tactics and discipline of the organisation. Moreover,*

during these trainings the employees' expertise in preparing food and serving it to the customers in the given time limit are enhanced.

Promotions and offers to attract customers

In addition, respondents said that they had promotions and offers to attract and satisfy customers. They worked with third parties to conduct mystery shopping which gifted deserving clients. Mr. E noted:

The vertical axis links the customer up and down to the product because product and customers are the two main factors. So, we work with a number of outside, third party agencies which conduct mystery shopping as well as our special monitoring agents to looking at TripAdvisor and other platforms like feedback sites in terms of their experience.

Respondent W said:

Beyond that we do have our unique guest experience systems in place like welcome gift on arrival, we offer complimentary services example free wi-fi or free shuttle service or local attractions free tours.

Use of technology

Respondents said that they used technology and apps to enhance customer experience. Some had tools which provided real time up to the minute feedback by aggregating all of the feedback from across all the different social media channels and through that feedback, were able to reach the expectation of customers. Mr. T said:

So, it was all technical you manage so we use technology and app to see the enhanced experience to your customers.

Respondent W added:

> *We do have in room technology like smart room keys that allows guest to access the room with their smartphones. Tablets are provided for effective communication.*

Sub-theme 1c: Criteria used to measure customer satisfaction



Figure 14: Criteria used to measure customer satisfaction

Customer experience

Firstly, respondents said that they ensured that they improved the quality of their services to strengthen customer satisfaction. If customers had a good experience, then they knew that customers were satisfied. Mr. E noted:

> *We make sure to improve customer satisfaction through improving service quality. Based on the foregoing and based on experiences we have had in recent past; we seek to respond how and why companies should tend towards the creation of a brand highly experiential*

and how this brand experience contributes to brand capital, brand-consumer identification and communication.

Also, if customers spent time in the hotel's recreational facilities, then this showed that customers were satisfied. Respondent W said:

Spending on site example using our bar services, wellness services, recreational services, restaurant services also indicates that the customers are having a positive experience.

Customer loyalty

Secondly, respondents said that they measured customer satisfaction if there were returning customers. Also, if customers recommended the hotel to other customers then they were satisfied with the services offered. Mr. X said:

You can check the loyalty of the guests That's important. If they recommend your hotel to other guests that's another key of them and that's you look at it from a satisfaction survey.

Respondent Q added:

Loyalty over time, discount offers, feedback from the clients and new clients coming to the hotel with the reference of the previous clients.

Customer reviews and feedback

Thirdly, respondents said that they measured satisfaction by customer reviews and feedback. If the reviews were positive, then their customers were satisfied. Negative feedback meant that customers were not satisfied. Mr. G said:

We believe that collection of feedbacks from the customers for the customers is an integral part for any business. We make sure to apologise for any kind of negative feedback. We have placed a feedback form on our website and request our customers to fill the form while checking out.

Respondent Y added:

> *Obviously, the main criteria which we have set to measure the customer satisfaction is through their reviews or feedbacks on our website/webpage on different social networking sites.*

Customer surveys

In addition, respondents said that they gave customers a hotel questionnaire to give their direct feeling of their experience in the hotel. Respondent B said:

> *So, every guest who stays in a hotel is just invited to give direct feedback through a questionnaire.*

Respondent S added:

> *We have devised questionnaires that truly gauge their expectations as a guest, and also how we measure up in terms of the quality of our services.*

Provision of small surprises to increase satisfaction

Also, respondents said that they offered small surprises such as Mystery Diners to customers to increase satisfaction. Respondent P said:

> *And we have what we call a wow factor when you try and come up with ideas to wow guests with small surprises like having their cakes ready because you can see them paying the bill and then which number the code is so on when they're walking to ask for their code that code would already be ready to move.*

Respondent Y said:

> *Also, we measure the customer satisfaction by giving small surprises to our special customers by offering them loyalty programs or vouchers.*

Working with third parties

Respondents said that they measured customer satisfaction by working with third parties like TripAdvisor and Milky Way. Respondent B said:

> *So, the first way is each of our hotels has two mystery shoppers per year. We work with a company called the Milky Way and this is the first reference point which we use.*

Ms. I added:

> *It is a net promoter score it is one of the criteria which is comes under my Dahlia and also other online tools like TripAdvisor hotels dot com through better with the bookings come from the customer reviews so you can track through a fee as well.*

Sub-theme 1d: Impact of holistic practice on customer experience

Adoption of a holistic practice

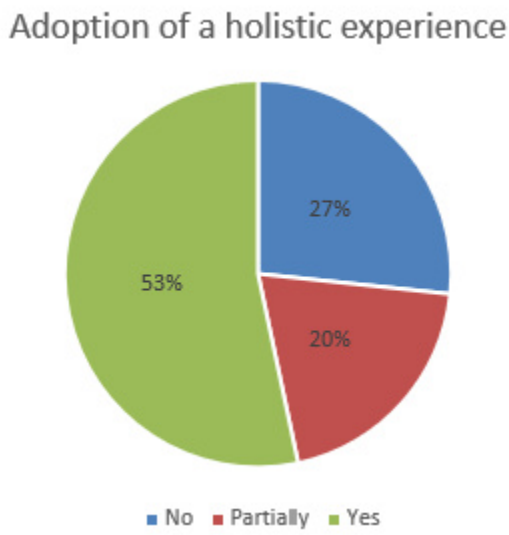


Figure 15: Impact of holistic practice in customer experience

Figure 15 above shows that 53% of the hotels had adopted a holistic practice, 20% had partially adopted while 27% had not adopted a holistic practice.



Figure 16: Impact of holistic practice in customer experience

Building strong relationships with customers

Respondents said that holistic practice helped them build strong relationships with customers. Respondent W said:

> *Nowadays clients are more aware and conscious about environment and they educate us more than us educating them. So, we look at the preferences and then adhere to it and try to delight the guests at every point. In terms of eco friendliness we care about what liquids we use and try to reduce laundry*.

Respondent Y added:

> *We are offering food items meeting the holistic behaviour of customers and so building a strong relationship with customers.*

Focus on sustainability

Respondents observed that holistic practice helped them focus on sustainability. Customers demand for sustainable products and through holistic practice they were able to offer what customers wanted. Mr. X said:

> *Yes, because the customer is aware of everything nowadays. The customer is very smart and have their knowledge on the top tip of their hand. I think they are more digitally aware hence are more knowledgeable. You can Google anything, understands anything, know anything, they all want to contribute to the society in one or other form. They are sustainable generation I would say ha-ha.*

Respondent S said:

> *The holistic approach from our customers' perspective, has evolved to state, where they demand a lot more than what is good enough at the moment. At our facilities, the demand for wellness and eco-friendly practices has become a part of standardised guest norms.*

Customers looking for authentic experience

Respondents said that customers were looking for an authentic experience and through the holistic practice they were able to offer such experience to customers. Respondent B said:

> *For authentic experience it is the way in which you know the ultra-wealthy the ultra-high net worth individuals are living their lives. They're looking for much more.*

Respondent H added:

> *I would rather say that these approaches are preferred by customers because when it comes to satisfaction, they prefer integrating effective customer development abilities. Here, I would conclude that our customers are showing interest and concern towards holistic business practices.*

Involvement of staff in decision making

Respondents said that employees felt as being part of the hotel because they were involved in decision making and their ideas were considered. Mr. J said:

> *So, the management was quite strong in that for any decisions or any concepts introduced would first be given to or explained to the low level of management which is the low-level employees of this is the blue collar and white collar. So, we used to have kind of a discussion a one- or two-day discussion review it according to the aspects of it.*

Low staff turnover

Also, respondents said that employees felt valued hence leading to high retention rate. Mr. J noted:

> *So, by giving us these particular criteria for empowerment most of the employees they used to stay longer. Staff turnover was very less. Great. So yeah. So, this is what happened till 2017.*

Hostility from customers

Respondents were perturbed that some of the holistic practices were not well received by customers leading to resistance to some services. Mr. K said:

> *We implemented a waterless manicure/pedicure. We didn't do this to save money. It was a measure to save the vital resource of water. The protocol was efficient, hygienic an extremely professional. However, we experience a lot of opposition from customers who wanted the old way to remain. As with anything, it suited some people and not others.*

4.1.2 Topic 2 Holistic Business Practices Adopted

Sub-theme 2a: How long it has been since this approach was adopted at your hotel?

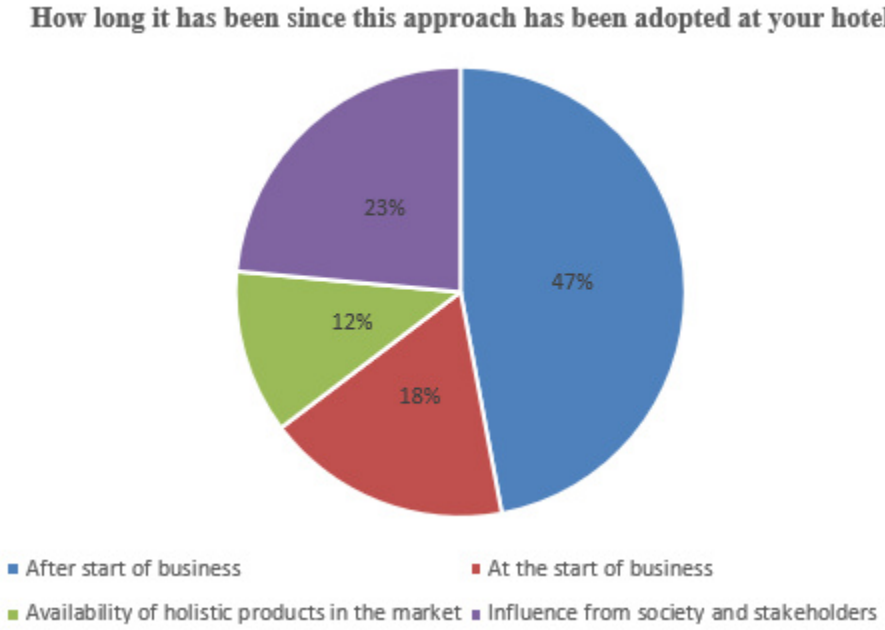


Figure 17: Adoption of approach

After start of business

According to Figure 17 above, respondents said that 47% of hotels adopted holistic practices after they had been established. Mr. Z said:

> *We have recently started this holistic approach in order to develop an accurate and functional budget. We have taken holistic approach as a big picture view to include the initiatives of our company, to reduce our cost, to identify significant operations, and to optimize our strategies.*

Respondent Y added:

> *To be very honest, we haven't started our business with this perception but with the time and extensive transformations in the environment of entire globe and also the changes in the society have enforced hospitality industry to adopt such practices or approaches. But I guess in between these changes and execution of practices we have not forgotten our values or framework on which we have had structured our business.*

At the start of business

Respondents reported that 18% of the hotels adopted holistic practices at the time they were established. Ms. I said:

> *The hotel chain was sustainable and most of the holistic approach were in place I just grew with it. I think we were the leaders.*

Respondent W noted:

> *I've been doing this from long ago, since I've been a general manager from past 16 years I've been brought up with this procedure and I believe that staff and customers should be involved in the development of this process. They should be involved in the processes and then they feel good and proud about it right.*

Availability of holistic products in the market

Respondents said that 12% of the hotels adopted holistic products after those products had become available on the market. Respondent K reported:

> *Some of these changes have been influenced by availability of more holistic products on the market and this will naturally influence choice. When attending trade shows and exhibitions then you can say that this approach is taken and adopted from the sheer availability on the market.*

Respondent Q added:

> *The approach worked well to draw in the local inhabitants and enliven the street by providing the services 24/7.Also, the strategy implemented for the purpose to sell the right product to the right customer at the right time for the right price.*

Influence from society and stakeholders

Finally, respondents reported that 23% of the hotels adopted holistic practices due to influence from society and stakeholders and competition from their business rivals who had already adopted holistic practices. Respondent K said:

> *I believe it's a combination of influence from society as well as our own general awareness of market trends, customer demand and the changing face of business.*

Respondent G added:

> *As I said we are in the initial phase of implementing this approach so I would say it was not until last year that the shareholders have realised that to be in competition and sustain we need to shift our approach so yes not long ago and you know it's not always easy for the change as it's a whole culture change.*

Sub-theme 2b: Role of technology in implementing holistic approach

Building brand image

Firstly, respondents said that technology helped in building brand image of businesses. Mr. E said:

> *In my opinion, technology is important. It can help in building reputation and brand image. Technology plays a major role in contributing towards the development of organisational operations.*

Customer engagement

Secondly, respondents said that technology was used for customer engagement. Hotels use technology to help customers book rooms and also receive customers' feedback. Respondent B said:

> *This was really how I recognised the need for us to remain relevant to and engage with our customers as well as our guests so the technology we really had to embrace technology.*

Respondent H added:

> *In fact, we have installed many different software versions that help us stay connected with the customers.*

Improving efficiency

Thirdly, respondents said that hotels used technology to improve their efficiency. Technology was utilised for different purposes including check-out and check-in times, room allocation details, management systems for reputation, billing through cards and online accounting. Mr. X noted:

> *The technology is helping in many ways to improve or to speed the processes or to actually streamline the process It doesn't matter what the process is technology simplifies it.*

Respondent S said:

> *Technology is merely a means to improve efficiency. If something can be automated, it will be. If something can be replaced by a machine, it will be.*

Keeping track of staff and management

Also, respondents said that technology was used keep track of employees. Technology was used in all departments from human resources departments to monitor staff turnover and identifying the reasons. Respondent P said:

> *I think technology keeps traceability it helps you know exactly where you are. In olden days it was all pen and paper and a calculator so to speak with proper technology and pay now you can control your business from wherever you are in the world.*

Respondent Q added:

> *We are using the tools of technology to keep track of staff and management of the hotel.*

Marketing of the industry

In addition, respondents said that they used technology to market their services. Respondents said that they had boosted sales and customers with the help of technology. Respondent Q said:

> *The hotel management told us that they are utilising the concept of digital systems for satisfying the customers and attract more new clients.*

Respondent Y said:

> *This technology has also aided companies promotes them and globalise them. In fact, technology has greatly helped us introduce ourselves in the business market and understand our position in the industry.*

Reduction of human conflict

Respondents said that technology helped in reduction of human conflict. Customers could get information using their devices thus reducing contact with employees that leads to conflict which could occur through their engagement. Mr. X said:

> *Somehow implements it without the need of staff member getting involved and avoid any kind of arguments that could arise due to certain process example when we implemented, iPad in the rooms to choose room services there was a notice for turn-down service*

Mr. J added:

> *If we use technology as our communication tool it avoids conflicts because a staff member may not be able to spend that time communicating effectively but technology does.*

Reduction of staffing cost

Respondents said that technology helped in the reduction of staffing costs. Technology replaced human resources thus lowering staffing costs. Mr. X said:

> *Likewise, there are many other examples right from check-in to check-out where technology has not only reduced staffing cost but also has reduced process and procedure implementation time.*

Mr. Z added:

> *Like installation of technology systems have reduced our human staff to a great extent that helped us to reduce our costs. But yes, it has threat for our senior staff who are not aware of technical machinery much.*

Sub-theme 2c: Procedures Adopted by the Hotel

Impact of top-bottom leadership approach

Channelling ideas and decisions in a structured manner

Respondents said that it was easy to pass on ideas and decisions in a more structured manner in a top-bottom approach. Information would be easily passed from top management to all departments. Respondent H said:

> *The top to bottom approach or the funnel approach is always easy and direct in companies. For us too, the top to bottom approach is ideal because it allows us to channelize ideas and operations in a structured manner.*

Decreased risk in decision-making

Respondents said that there was decreased risk in decision-making. Decisions were only made by the top management meaning that the people involved were fewer, hence fewer contradictions. Respondent S said:

> *There is also decreased risk involved in the decision-making process. But we do value ideas from each employee, and over time, these ideas and opinions, when nurtured, develop further into complex, organic goals that improve the quality of our services.*

Disconnection in departments

Respondents said that there was a disconnect in departments. Since communication came from the top, it was hard for one department to know what other departments were doing. There was no horizontal communication nor activities. Mr. J said:

> *The previous management team but the current one is totally different. I mean there is an improper communication between you know the management or the department especially in decision making and they are supposed they do love to play ball which means throw the ball around and never take the blame.*

Respondent W added:

> *The finance department would not know much about leisure department. Restaurants may not much about finance department and to my surprise most of the departments didn't know anything about merchandising department or retail department so when I analysed the budget I saw some departments performed well compared to others which is the case in hospitality industry in fact in most of the business but when it was analysed by the board of directors they rarely looked beyond that one department that's not performing and this effects the employees as they rarely look beyond their functional silos when pressure is placed on them due to lack of performance.*

Employees' vision not part of company's vision

Respondents said that all decisions were made at the top management. Low cadre employees felt out in decision making. It was hard for them to share their ideas. They did not feel as part of the company. They did not share nor carry the company's vision. Mr. X said:

> *Employees vision will not be a part of company's vision hence you are both moving in different direction which is not good for company*

Respondent S added:

> *From our viewpoint, in a top-down organized firm, the decision-making is at the top and the knowledge is at the bottom, so, there is a need for inclusion of all employees, their ideas, and their perceptions of the business in order to make the most informed decisions.*

High staff turnover

Respondents said that there was high rate of resignation. Employees were leaving companies with a top-bottom management approach to companies where they felt valued and as part of the company. Mr. J said:

> *That all this time. So due to this reason we have business like lot of employees who have been falling under the militancy or forcing themselves to resign to end a career in full proof.*

Mr. T noted:

> *The organisation never evolves in such an approach in my opinion as I am a live example of such disaster. Well I would say now it had a negative impact. the brand hasn't never evolved. We didn't. we didn't listen to the team members of staff. We lost. We lost some very good team members that felt undervalued because they were, we would as I said we would do these meetings they would put their point across and maybe something small but you know the small things are the things that keep the staff happy you know.*

Lack of passion and motivation

Respondents reported that employees lacked passion and motivation. It just become a job where their existence was not recognised. The management was not in close touch with lower employees. Mr. X said:

> *You will see the difference in standards it will not be consistent as everyone does what they want to do as this just becomes a job or a source of income rather than a passion as they are not motivated to work rather forced to do what is to be done.*

Mr. Z said:

> *We provide our employees free hand and open environment that help them to stay motivated, and to build a culture where our employees can openly share their thoughts with management. So yes, have deployed top to bottom approach.*

Reception of technology

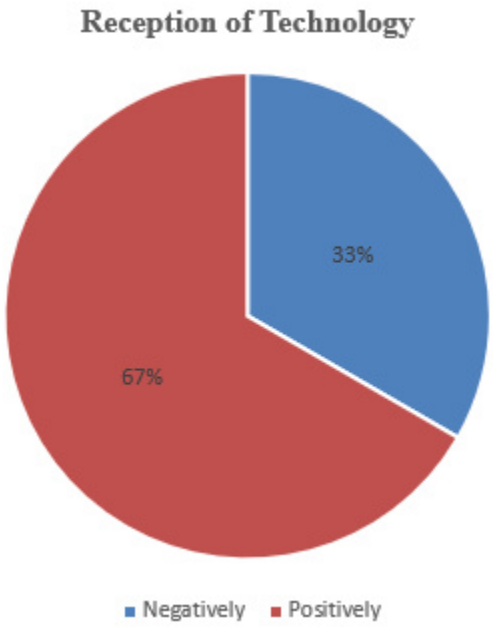


Figure 18: Reception of technology

According to Figure 18 above, 33% of the respondents said that use of technology was negatively received. There was fear that technology would lead to loss of jobs. Respondent W said:

> *I know there is a fear in the industry specially hospitality that the technology is a threat, but it all comes down to education and creating awareness. As we are very strong on technology our staff will has never seen as a threat as its simply making their work easy rather than keeping manual records which are suspectable to human error.*

Respondent Y added:

> *But yes, there are some negative aspects of technology for instance, due to computerised system some positions have been replaced like cash counters are now free of employees; our customers just have to swipe their credit/visa cards to buy food.*

On the other hand, 67% of the respondents said that use of technology was positively received. They said that use of technology would lead to efficiency and smooth operation of the hotels. Respondent B noted:

> *I mean that is that's the future. It is really the future. But what we've done as well is we've been scratched out with a technology platform. Yes. Called Salesforce. Salesforce is one of them made a cloud-based system. So, from a commercial point of view business back in 2016 I was looking for a business partner that could provide me with a simple global database.*

Mr. G said:

> *We have boosted our sales and customers with the help of technology. It has reduced our expenses but yes, we had to hire technical trainers to educate our staff about the usage of technology which caused us an additional expense for the time being.*

Sub-theme 2d: Role of holistic business practice in achieving customer satisfaction

Customer loyalty and feedback

Firstly, respondents said through holistic practice, it was easy to get customers' feedback and also determine their loyalty. However, in the UAE it was hard for customers to leave feedback. If they were not well-treated or quality of services was poor, they never returned to that hotel. The holistic business practice came to solve this. Mr. T said:

> *The reason the platforms for feedback the reason that in the UK if you have a bad experience you go on social media you can tell anyone about it, whereas in Dubai it's not the case. They just go okay, we're not going to go back again.*

Easy to evaluate customer satisfaction

Respondents said that through the holistic approach it was easy to measure customers' satisfaction. Measures had been put in place for customers to leave their feedback and review the quality services they had received. Respondent S said:

It is easy to evaluate customer satisfaction in terms of a customer's stay at our hotels. But from the standpoint of a hotelier, it's worth pointing out that most surveying and feedback monitoring tools provide nothing but a snapshot of the end result.

Improved customer experience

Respondents said that holistic practices helped in attracting customer satisfaction because it helped in promoting service quality. Adopting the latest technology routinely directed customer complaints to the right department and to the employees who were well trained to handle them reducing unhappy customers and negative feedbacks. Mr. J said:

So, let's say you for example we know what the basic things that customer need. It's not important that he can that person can get from anywhere from any time. I understand. But there's something on his attention to detail or personalised service instead of the guest taking care of himself. What if we take care of that then for the entire stay?

Ms. I added:

The operation of an organisation clearly says it all and who is involved in the operations it's all your employee from lower and middle management so if the staff are happy it reflects back on operations. Likewise, as I said previously, nowadays customers are very much aware and they are very demanding they know what they want and how they want etc., and you should be able to cater to the demand to be in business.

Increased awareness

Respondents said that their reach to the market was easy. Holistic practices created avenues where companies could market their services. Through social media and third-party relations, companies increased awareness. Respondent B said:

Our reach into our market is much more alive to do so whether I'm communicating through traditional or online or offline media or social or digital. The engagement with our client list should be much more powerful.

Respondent Y said:

> *The increased awareness about everything among customers has what enforced us to adopt practices which could help in achieving customer satisfaction.*

Key for ROI

Respondents reported that a holistic approach was the key to generating positive return on investment because the staff understood how to fulfil customer needs even if they needed to go out of their way. There was increase in profitability due to increase in the number of customers. Respondent B said:

> *I mean if I talked about it from my perspective yes, we see more commercial because yes, it is a personal perspective. What it means is for us as a business is our profitability.*

Respondent H added:

> *The implementation of the customer satisfaction is ideally effective and fruitful for the business performance.*

Most effective motivation tool for employees

Respondents said that employees were involved in decision making and their ideas were valued. They felt as part of the company. This increased their morale and motivation. Mr. G said:

> *Also, when it comes to employees, this is the best approach, and this is the best motivation tool.*

Mr. J added:

> *I would say is as an employee, I was given the empowerment to actually design a put group based on the culture.*

4.1.3 Topic 3: Relationship between the holistic business practices, sustainability and employee motivation

Sub-theme 3a: Impact of Holistic organisation design on employee motivation and morale

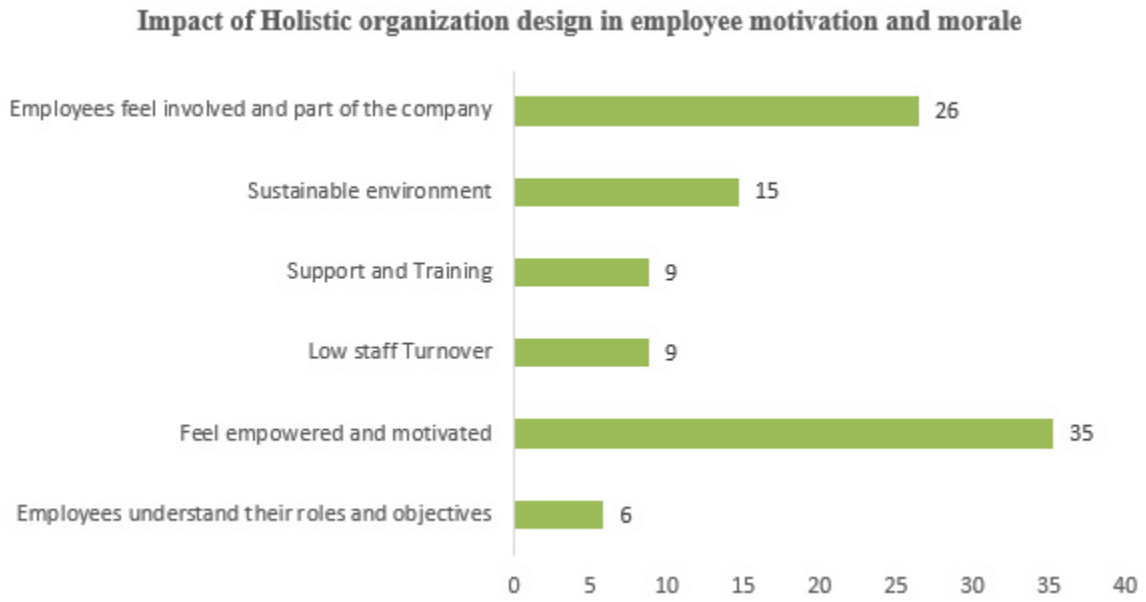


Figure 19: Relationship between holistic business practice, sustainability and employee motivation

Sustainable environment

Firstly, respondents said that adoption of a holistic experience had led to the creation of a sustainable environment. Customers appreciated that such an environment helped in boosting the morale of employees because customers were happy. Respondent Q said:

> *It's actually very positive because the clients are happy when interacting with happy employee and happy employee makes happy work environment.*

Respondent Y said:

> *It is very important, as per my opinion, to look at what actually the guests want. Basically, what the guests look into is the eco-friendly environment of the hotel.*

Employees understand their roles and responsibilities

Secondly, respondents said that employees clearly understood their roles and responsibilities. Respondent B said:

> *I understand their roles or responsibilities and they understand very clearly my philosophy and expectation so there is a clear vision that flows down from top to bottom. They understand what their goals objectives are and then they're just a lot easier to get on with it and so I find that very effective.*

Feeling empowered and motivated

Thirdly, employees felt empowered and motivated. Respondents said that motivation of the employees was dependent on their morale. High morale of employees reflected high motivation levels. Mr. X said:

> *You only work from your heart and you give everything. Hundred percent. So, they're motivated to be motivated and be genuine and be happy. They look after your guest which in turn looks after your business if you look after them. So, the guest comes back and talks about it better. So overall your business would be much better if you do this*.

Mr. G added

> *Our employees are our main resource. We ensure that we provide them a relaxed environment so that they can prosper and grow with Job satisfaction, respect and we also allow them freedom to share their thoughts in an open environment that keeps them motivated.*

Low staff turnover

In addition, respondents said that employees were happy and comfortable, hence a high retention rate. Mr. T said:

> *For me if we had a more holistic approach to staff retention would have been a lot better but I think it would have felt a lot more valued. And I think they have been happier.*

Ms. I added:

> *In terms of staff turnover, we had less than a percent staff turnover so we can't stop there, and the credit goes to the business approach, of course.*

Support and training

Respondents said that employees got the opportunity to train, which boosted their morale because they had added new skills. Ms. I said:

> *The employees got the opportunity to cross train. The hotel believed in investment on their staff, so you are not stagnant, you had a vision, and this is the place to be to fulfil it.*

Respondent Q added:

> *We take care of our employees and use this approach to support them and train them in every way for job satisfaction, respect the needs of the workers and right of freedom to share their thoughts in an open environment*

Employees feel involved and part of the company

Also, respondents said that employees felt proud, completely involved and connected to the organisation. Mr. E said:

> *I think that they feel involved and yeah, I think I was to, if I talk about my specific area. Ok. The way in which I empower my regional offices, my sales organisation and commercial organisation is such that I understand their roles or responsibilities and they understand very clearly my philosophy and expectation so there is a clear vision that flows down from top to bottom.*

Respondent S added:

> *We feel that encouraging employees to voice their opinions more freely and giving them an opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process, has vastly made a difference on the way the hotels operate.*

Sub-theme 3b: Role of employee in implementing holistic practices

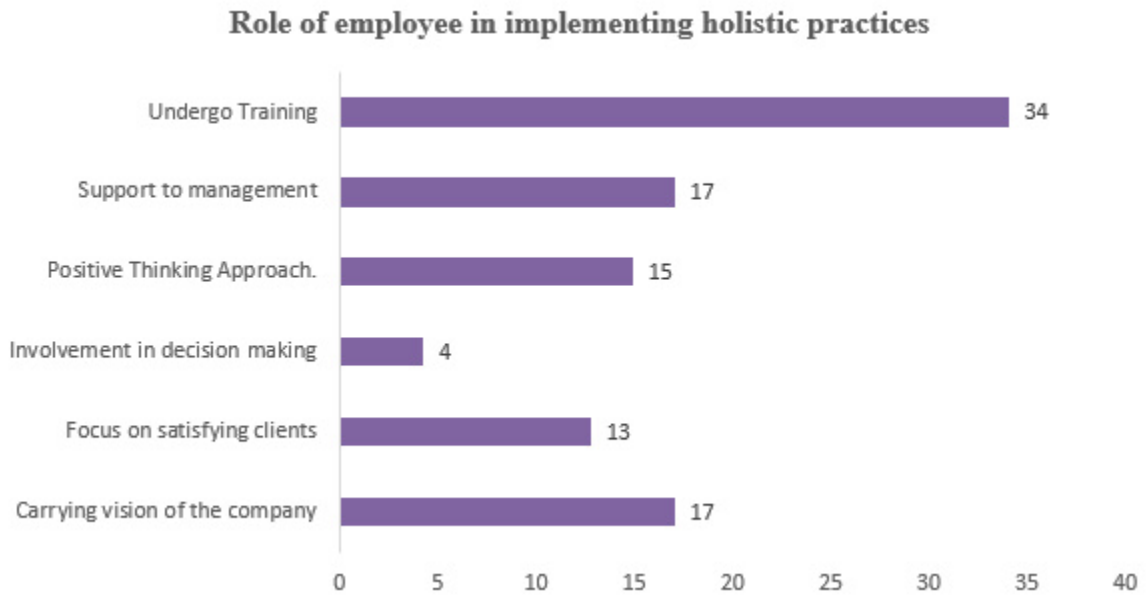


Figure 20: Role of employee in implementing holistic practices

Carrying a vision of the company

Firstly, respondents said that employees carried the vision of the organisation. Employees had direct contact with customers. So, it was easy to sell the vision of the organisations to customers. Respondent H said:

> *The employees in an organisation can play a significantly effective and efficient role in driving and improving vision management.*

Mr. G added:

> *They carry forward the vision of hotel like working on the ideas to better solve the issues that occur in any scenario and plans for the management hotel, guests, allocation of room, listing, services and food management and division of teams for the morning shift.*

Focus on satisfying clients

Secondly, respondents said another role of employees was to offer services to customers and ensure that they were satisfied. Employees were focused on satisfying customers and performed duties to add value to the business for its growth and success. Ms. I said:

> *They are customer facing and they know more than anyone about the customers' needs and what their dislikes. Even if it's a traditional approach you can't do anything without the willingness of your staff.*

Respondent W said:

> *Employees are most close to the customers starting from front of house to housekeeping. The manager may see them once, but the staff may interact with them on several occasions for various reasons, so who is your key player? It's the employee, so our organisations takes pride in employee care and training which is evident from our business reviews.*

Involvement in decision-making

Thirdly, respondents said that employees were involved in decision-making of the organisation. Mr. T said:

> *So yeah, I think they...you've got to trust the team and you've got to, you've got to hope that they deliver on the standards that that we implement. But for me you've got to stand back. You can't stand over every single member of staff and kind to let him just go. Let him do it. So, there was lack of progression because of this interference of the higher authorities hence the vison never filtered down.*

Support to management

In addition, respondents said that employees offered support to management. Respondents said that employees were the part of company. They played an important role in management.

As the structure of the hotel was horizontal, so communication between management was done between peer-to-peer groups. Respondent B said:

> *It's important that the vision flows down to each and every person in your department and that's not enough they need to trust and believe in you as their manager and in your leadership. The success of my department is my staff I can say that very confidently.*

Mr. E said:

> *It's important that the vision flows down to each and every person in your department and that's not enough they need to trust and believe in you as their manager and in your leadership. The success of my department is my staff I can say that very confidently.*

Undergoing training

Also, respondents said that the role of employees were to undergo training so as to improve the quality of services they were offering. Mr. X noted:

> *We have a robust training program for every individual that joins our firm and our main aim is to foster the vison and mission of our firm in each and every individual.*

Mr. Z said:

> *Training is provided to educate and generate awareness amongst the employees about the organisations and how the tasks are handled. It further makes them self-confident.*

Sub-theme 3c: Effect of holistic practices on the overall performance of the hotel

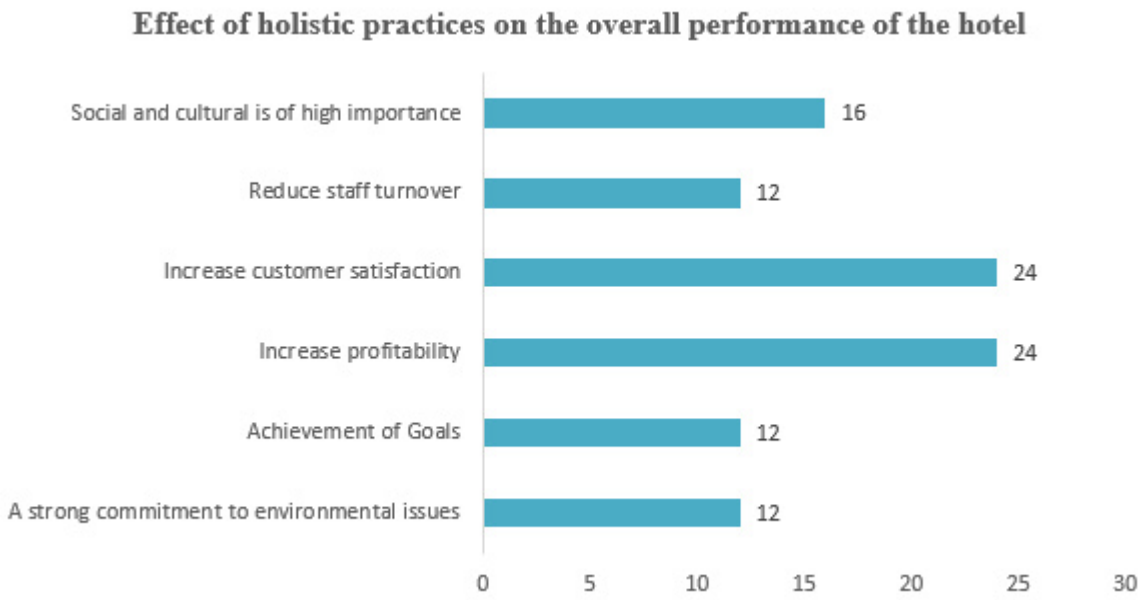


FIGURE 21

Figure 21: Effect of holistic practices on the overall performance of the hotel

A strong commitment to environmental issues

Respondents said that holistic practices had brought about a commitment to environmental issues. Hotels had become aware of ways of protecting the environment through the use of sustainable products. Respondent K said:

> *The company has a strong commitment to environmental issues and in fact, is a key player in bringing these into their business through sustainability practices. This is obvious throughout the design, build and consumption. It's very refreshing to see within this industry.*

Respondent Q added:

> *Environmental: the factor associated with the environment are linked internally relative to the situation, beliefs, practices, and behaviours within the boundaries of business. A business has more control over its internal social environment than it does with its external social environment.*

Achievement of goals

Respondents said that holistic approaches led to achievement of goals. Respondent S said:

> *Our management team make sure to keep track of all the four main business elements that is economic, social, cultural and environmental, to keep up with the success of hotel. Either it's to take care of growing inflation or growing environmental challenges, even if it's about it providing employees their rights and keeping concern of culture. Our hotel management tries to stay at top.*

Respondent Y added:

> *This could lead us to our destination. A hotel chiefly requires these four vital elements to get highest position in the business market. And obviously, it would take time to reach to that phase.*

Increased profitability

Also, respondents said holistic approaches helped to increase profits due to a growth in customer numbers. Respondent B said:

> *What it means is for us as a business is our profitability will increase and our reach into our market will be much more.*

Respondent Q noted:

> *Economical: these indicate the trends in the economy which provides the business a platform to achieve its goals. These include consumer behaviour, employment factors, interest rates, and banking and inflation and overall economic indicators.*

Increased customer satisfaction

In addition, respondents said that they offered customers a wide variety of products to their satisfaction. Respondent B noted:

Increase customer satisfaction as you will be meeting the needs of the ultra-luxury market.

Mr. T said:

Customers are all aware and educated and they know if your staff are happy or not as they communicate and ask lots of question and psychologically, they are more aware so to sustain in such market you need to move with the trend.

Social and cultural factors are of high importance

Respondents added that holistic approaches impacted social and cultural welfare of both customers and employees in terms of attitudes, opinions, and interests of the employees as well as the customers, thus impacting the sales of products and revenues generated. Respondent K noted:

Social and cultural is also of high importance and local culture, tradition and practices are all taken into consideration and given high importance regardless of the location (and these are worldwide).

Respondent Q added:

Cultural: the factors of the culture impact the business a lot as it's an extensive aspect. It influences the values and priorities of the workers, he functional areas of the marketing cluing sales, and the distribution. It also influences the decision making and analyzation power to enter a new market.

4.1.4 Topic 4: Gap in the current business practices and measures to be taken to be taken for sustainable business

Sub-theme 4a: Current approach and gap in the market



Figure 22: Current approach and Gap in the market

Contemporary vs traditional approach

Respondents said that there was a gap between the contemporary and traditional approach. Most of the hotels were operating in the traditional way, meaning that they had not fully embraced a holistic approach. Mr. X said:

> *And from the hospitality industry I believe that it is only valid in small percentages of what turns out to be adopting this approach the rest are just running the hospitality in traditional way. And this is a big gap not only in Dubai but UAE as a whole.*

Respondent S added:

> *We were one of the only few hotels chains here in the Middle East that felt responsible enough to consider such practices. Currently, there has been a shift in how each hotel*

chain addresses the approach in their own customized formats. They are slowly learning things the hard way.

Desire for a sustainable environment

Respondents said that the hospitality industry in the UAE was moving towards a holistic approach to incorporate sustainability within all business practices and operations. Respondent B said:

I think if I look if about past five years, it's all about wellness. We're working at the moment with a consultant to really look at the way in which we provide a plant-based diet. Of course, I have a plant based.

Mr. E added:

Customers are more aligned towards holistic practice and they are looking for eco-friendly resource even in UAE, which is very much a man-made country. Likewise, staff are going self-employed as they prefer quality of life against stressful work environment. They want to work in natural and greener environment compared to few years ago when employee worked for money under any stressful conditions so yes overall it is changing, and it has to change.

Disconnect between top and bottom management

Respondents observed that there was a disconnect between top management and bottom management. There was a lot of micromanagement and employees' opinions were not considered. Respondent W said:

There are other companies who involve the people a lot of satisfaction levels given to the employees at work. So that's where the gap is. That gap has to be filled by the senior management and the vision has to flow through each and every employee of the company. If the owner is only concerned about the financial results, then definitely it's not a sustainable business and unfortunately that's the case in most of the businesses today.

Market is not ready

Respondents added that the market was not ready for holistic approaches. Most customers rejected products and services which had been introduced. Respondent K said:

> *The market is just not ready for it and the demand from customers is not great enough. With an increased awareness of the wider issues such as climate change, environmental issues, etc. this will inevitably increase, but the process will be slow compared to other markets.*

Sustainability has not been fully embraced

Respondents reported that sustainability had not been fully adopted by most of the hotels. Mr. T noted:

> *I don't think so when I say that if the team was supposed to do so it would probably go, "OK, let's not use plastic straws anymore". But if we served a plastic straw - and I'm using that as an example because it's a big deal in hospitality at the moment - if we sent a plastic straw in London it would be frowned upon and someone would pull the plastic straw out and go, "No I don't want a straw", whereas in Dubai they wouldn't mind. It's amazing.*

Ms. I added:

> *In my opinion UAE is not yet there although they claim to be. but, you know, we can claim anything, as UAE is all about showing off the lifestyle and the luxury. I think many hotels speak about sustainability and holistic approach, etc. but very few implement it and that's the gap for me.*

Use of social media

Also, respondents said that hotels had started using social media to communicate with clients and also market their services. Respondent P said:

It is a big one, because over the last few years people become much more aware of food due to the success of certain restaurant groups advertising media social media, television. People are much more aware of food, where taking allergens into consideration as well or these things. From my experience 10 years ago, a lot of this wasn't how it is now. Especially with the social media and I know this type of stuff.

Respondent Y added:

Well, over the last few years due to the advancement in the field of social media and establishment of restaurants have altered the thinking criteria of people. Customers are now more aware of the foods and latest technology and so, yeah.

Sub-theme 4b: Ways of Improving Current Practice



Figure 23: Ways of Improving current Practice

Advances in use of technology

Firstly, respondents suggested that hotels needed to increase use of technology in their operations. Mr. X said:

We need to be more innovative when it comes to digitalisation. We should be able to give virtual experience to our customers and that's one of our plans in pipeline.

Respondent P noted:

So, if there was something else that we needed to implement, we learn from somewhere else or something new technology becomes on the market.

Being more sustainable

Respondents added that hotels needed to adopt holistic approaches, so that they can be more sustainable. Mr. G said:

If you ask me, I want to change many things, ha-ha! But from an organisation point of view, we would like to be more eco-friendly resort rather than a hotel, which we are, but for some reason it doesn't come across like that.

Mr. Z added:

We need to be more innovative and eco-friendlier and we need to change our approach towards employee, as employees are jot employees anymore. They should be a part of the company growth. We should be more culturally aware. We are working on it.

Customer education

Also, respondents suggested that customers needed to be educated on the introduction of holistic approaches so that they can be more receptive to such practices. Respondent K said:

This can sometimes be seen as 'cutting corners' by customers who may not be familiar with sustainability practices. I do think that subtly educating customers in the company's choices and their impact on social/economic/cultural/environmental factors will inevitably increase customer satisfaction, as it will attract those customers who are looking for exactly the type of destination which is prioritising these factors.

Embracing social media as a marketing tool

Respondents reported that hotels needed to embrace social media more as a marketing tool. They observed that social media was underutilised and that hotels did not recognise their power. Respondent B said:

> *But as technologies and technologies can guess as the way in which people can tell the sun has come the way in which you know our social media our digital world converges.*

Mr. E added:

> *But as technologies and technologies can guess as the way in which people can tell the sun has come the way in which you know our social media our digital world converges. Accordingly, we need to bring much more alignment across the way in which our content is distributed so definitely more alignment and innovation is needed in the hospitality sector.*

Evaluate customer satisfaction

Respondents said that hotels needed to evaluate customer satisfaction further and improve where necessary. Respondent H said:

> *To actually improve and strengthen customer satisfaction, I think changing and developing current practices can allow us to manage our brand image. We focused on attracting strategies that can help in enhancing satisfaction of customers. It will help in bringing this transformation.*

Respondent S added:

> *It is easy to evaluate customer satisfaction in terms of a customer's stay at our hotels. But from the standpoint of a hotelier, it's worth pointing out that most surveying and feedback monitoring tools provide nothing but a snapshot of the end result.*

Streamlining management and management processes

Also, respondents suggested that there was need to streamline management and management processes. Hotels needed to do away with vertical thinking and embrace horizontal thinking.

Mr. G noted:

> *We feel there is a communication gap in the hotel, as every executive member in the department is concerned with his or her work. Therefore, they are not well connected with each other and with customers directly.*

Respondent P said:

> *The more horizontal it is, the easier it is. Being very vertical structure, it can be very time consuming, there can be communication gap. Again, leadership plays a key role in the organisational design. So yes, we need more vertical structure to be successful in implementing these approaches at every level.*

Sub-theme 4c: Holistic practice and strategic goals of the company



Figure 24: Strategic goals of the company

Being sustainable

Firstly, respondents identified sustainability as one of the strategic goals of their organisations. Organisations wanted to use more eco-friendly products. Ms. I said:

> *We did use eco-friendly products for laundry and our spa, although it was expensive. But we had good sales in the spa due to the nature of the products. This was all budgeted for from the financial year, so we were very much in line with our targets.*

Respondent S said:

> *We had to reset your expectations and pleasantly surprised to discover that it's possible when we make a better choice for yourself and the planet, we are indeed making our hotels a wonderful place to stay for our customers.*

Effective communication

Secondly, respondents identified effective communication as another goal. Organisations wanted to pass on information effectively to their employees and customers. Respondent B said:

> *They are very much aligned with the activities and the actions taken by each of the regional cell's offices because obviously what they offer, but my regional offices will have a direct impact on the business success of the hotels.*

Mr. E said:

> *Therefore, in the same way, the needs of the hotels need to be conveyed very clearly to the regional offices. We want to know what their opportunities are, what their challenges are and accordingly the regional offices will adapt and modify their strategic plans based on the needs of these individual units. If there is a flowless connection within these units, subsequently this enhances the financial growth of the company leading to sustainability.*

Financial stability

Thirdly, respondents said that hotels hoped for a financial stability. Mr. X said:

It's about financial stability as a business and you try to align them. You're trying to align them because one is to make money, and the other is customer experience and their needs and you need to spend money to get the latter.

Increased customer count

Also, respondents identified increase in customer count as another goal for organisations. An increase in customers meant increase in revenue. Mr. J said:

We can also expect the returning customers to come back again. Our strategic goals are clearly not aligned. It's as simple as that.

Respondent Y said:

If we become successful in acquiring 120 loyal and satisfied customers in a month just by adopting these practices, then what else an organisation wants except for this customer count to get doubled?

Involving low cadre employees in decision-making

Also, respondents said that another goal was to involve employees in decision-making. This will make them feel appreciated and feel part of the organisation. Respondent W said:

Best things the top management and senior management is to delegate and cascade down the outcome. The results should be expected from the property through employee engagement and through employee involvement.

Skills and leadership programs for staff

Also, respondents said that organisations needed to transfer skills and leadership programs to their employees. Respondent K said:

The company needs to continue to expose staff and senior management team members to other areas, to head office and to overall strategy to increase cohesion and satisfaction.

Mr. J added:

> *It starts with enriching your team and ensuring your upskilling and training and giving them opportunities, listening to them and feeding back and not ignoring them and making still value to the vision you want to see your soar was clear to everyone. There wasn't enough support for the staff.*

The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the interviews and observations conducted from the sample of primary research participants.

4.2 Analysis and Discussion

4.2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the findings extracted from the semi structured interview transcripts and observations. Upon analysis of the findings through NVIVO, four key themes were identified, each with its own sub-themes (categories) and codes. Firstly, this chapter provides answers to the three main research questions set out in Chapter One. The answers are supported by primary data findings. Subsequently, an explanation is provided of how these answers correspond to the knowledge that already exists about the selected subject area. In this regard, the chapter aims to discuss the primary findings alongside the literature reviewed in Chapter Two to address similarities and differences between the two data sources in informing the holistic business practices of the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE.

Research Question # 1: What are the current business practices in the UAE luxury hospitality industry?

Initially, the research attempted to identify current business practices in the hospitality industry. The answer to the research question reveals that current business practices of the hospitality industry in UAE are not holistic, although the organisations do focus on the measurement of customer satisfaction and have appropriate processes and procedures to direct the holistic practices. Despite this, the outcomes are not up to the mark, as suggested by the theoretical researchers. Business practices are defined as rules, regulations, procedures, and directions that suggest the performance of regular or routine activities within an organisation. According to Badbury (2003), business practices in the organisations are to be aligned with the interests of all the stakeholders, rather than only the interests and needs of a specific group, for instance either customers or employees. On the contrary, the answer to Research Question 1 highlights that UAE luxury hospitality organisations do not consider the entire organisation within their processes and policies, but rather only specific component (customer satisfaction) is integrated. The answer confirmed that holism is absent within the practices of the luxury hospitality organisations.

The hospitality sector organisations in the UAE looks at profitability and business productivity but without overall business improvement. It seems that business practices are not aligned to coordinate the dependent and independent business sectors together.

4.2.2 Current Holistic Business Practices and Measures Taken for Customer Satisfaction

The absence of holism in the business practices of the UAE's hospitality industry can be traced back to the emphasis placed on the role of customers and their satisfaction in successful business management and the overall function of the organisation. However, such business practices do not support earlier knowledge about holistic business practices. In the literature, Lapina et al. (2013) define a holistic business approach as an interconnection among the different business combinations which are constantly involved in exchanging their information and operation with each other in order to lead to effective outcomes. The researchers highlight the critical role played by employees alongside customers in the decision-making process to eliminate the defects and to increase the total quality of products and services. Such improvement can affect the internal and external environments surrounding the business, such as economic, ecological, social, political, and cultural aspects.

In the context of the answer to Research Question One reporting the critical role of customers in shaping the holistic business practices, the primary data findings did support these findings. Customer satisfaction is the central element of a business model in every global industry. Businesses in the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE also attempt to place great effort on the optimisation of customer satisfaction through their holistic business models. However, such consumer business practices, and efforts do not also appear to be adequate in line with the globally-accepted holistic business model. Lapina et al., (2013) and Badbury (2003) consider a holistic business model as sustainably directed management practices which are related to the system linking approach. Organisations pursuing a holistic business practice do not consider the external environment to achieve sustainability, rather their belief about sustainability directs them to interrogate the internal and external worlds together.

Lapina et al. (2013), and Badbury (2003) also suggest that in the context of the customer satisfaction, management needs to focus on the sustainability of customers' lifecycle rather than only the products and services they are looking for within the organisation.

Comprehensive insights into this lacking in their efforts can only be viewed through the lens of the four dimensions highlighted in the primary data. These dimensions include (a) current organisational practice; (b) measures taken for customer satisfaction; (c) criteria used to measure customer satisfaction; and (d) impacts of holistic practice on customer experience.

a. Current organisational practice

With regards to the current organisational practice, the primary data findings indicate a lack of contemporary approach (only 13%) and the presence of traditional design (80%) as the two sub-themes. Most of the organisations are traditionally structured, regardless of the extension of their operations and brands at international levels. The primary data findings reveal that in pursuance of the traditional design and structure, management follows centralised control and levels of autonomy. The participants confirmed the presence of only traditional departments, such as the ones associated with food, beverages, and accommodation. Most of these luxury sector organisations do not have departments that are generally available in contemporary organisations, such as marketing, finance, human resources, food and beverage, catering and maintenance to customer services.

The choice of organisational design is one of the significant challenges faced not only by the hotel businesses in the UAE, but also worldwide. Burton, et al. (2011) have stressed the importance of the structure in deciding whether it is responsive to current customer needs. Traditional structures are mainly workable for the manufacturing industries, even for the ones with small scale operations. Service organisations require contemporary designs, where the managers are not focused only on departmentalisation similar to traditional managers. Researchers in the literature (Burton et al., 2011; Stutts and Worton, 2006) inform the significance of multiple elements in shaping the organisational structure within contemporary organisations, such as work specialisation, patterns of authority, control and coordination.

Levels of autonomy provided to the branch managers by encouraging the idea sharing and free thinking cannot be regarded as enough for practising the holistic organisational practices. But, their accountability towards operational directors further pressurises the branch managers to limit their thinking. Eid and El-Gohary (2015), in the wider literature, confirm the significance of decentralised decision-making to delimit the capability of the

individual to share his ideas and innovation freely. As for researchers, free thinking and decentralised decision-making results in innovation at a broader level.

Unfortunately, luxury sector organisations in the UAE currently have a limited understanding of decentralised decision-making. Managers are given authority to decide, but such authority cannot be exercised to introduce new policies and practices for customer. Instead, in most cases departmental managers consider the top-down decisions and add their ideas at an operational level only.

b. Measures that were taken for customer satisfaction

In the context of measures taken for customer satisfaction, promotions and offers (22) and use of technology (20) dominate the UAE luxury hospitality industry, followed by activities to meet customer expectations (17), customer feedback (15) and personnel training (13). Surprisingly, current industry players do not emphasise the qualified HR (4), loyalty programs (2), and assessment and appraisals (2) in any significant manner. Apparently, it can be viewed from the findings that the UAE luxury hospitality players mainly focus on the numbers game to succeed in capturing the target market. Promotions and offers are still given priority in attracting and satisfying customers. A mix of monetary and non-monetary elements in these offers is used to shape customer satisfaction. In contrast, Bakator and Boric (2017) argue that promotional strategies, although extremely important to influence the consumers, are not effective alone. Rather, promotional activities integrated with technological solutions achieve better results in effective outcomes.

Similarly, UAE luxury sector players also focus on the use of technology. Most of the participants agreed on the inescapable nature of technology in the contemporary environment.

Daghfous and Barkhi (2009) explain the importance of innovation in different kinds of industries for implementing and introducing new ideas. Moreover, technology provides them with an effective platform to allow the individuals to share their ideas and concepts which each other without any restriction.

The primary findings revealed that UAE luxury hospitality players consider the use of technology to enhance the experience of their customers. For this purpose, the use of technological applications, smart key rooms and tablets are considered in most of these hospitality organisations. Real-time feedback from customers is gathered through social media channels. However, at this point, it is questionable whether the use of technology can ensure success. Kamar (2014) provides an explanation of the issue by highlighting that technology-driven transformations are an indispensable element within the modern international hospitality sector. The rising pressures from economic and industrial relations between the different stakeholders require organisations to abandon the individualistic approach and pursue a collectivist's approach. The adoption of technological advances in the right direction is therefore necessary for the effective transformation of the luxury sector in the UAE. The players in the industry need to identify the importance of technology at all levels rather than merely associating it with the customer service or feedback levels. In fact, at the feedback level too, luxury hospitality players in the UAE have not adopted customers feedback. Although most of the participants formed a collection of feedback as an integral part of their business, they are focused on providing apologies rather than learning from the negative feedback.

On a positive note, luxury sector organisations are using their online websites as well as social networking sites for gathering reviews and feedback from their customers to determine satisfaction levels. Besides online platforms, physical platforms are also offered to customers for the provision of feedback related to the quality of services. This rejects the views of Baggio et al. (2011) related to the use of technology by business managers to maximise its benefit. In the modern environment, trends have changed where the managers, employees as well as customers have an opportunity to integrate through technology.

In the same way as international organisations, the hospitality sector organisations in the UAE have also recognised the problems and challenges of technology. Although they recognise technology as an influential factor for business operations, their current practices reject the view up to a certain extent. Organisations are pursuing the basic technology-based service adoption model achieving innovativeness, willingness and an increase in customers.

However, to remain competitive and sustainable, it is extremely important for organisations to stay responsive to new and emerging concepts such as call centres and outsourcing (Sarmah et al., 2017). Organisations which are not responsive to technological innovation are considered as negligent and consequently, they may lose their brand image and reputation. The role of technology is highly apparent in enhancing communication among the business and customers. Hospitality organisations in the UK need to consider the importance of innovation in reshaping the nature of hospitality production, service and distribution channels by reframing the interaction with the customers (Nemec Rudez & Mihalic, 2007). It seems that the hospitality sector organisations are currently using technology mainly for cost reduction and revenue generation purposes. They have not recognised the real role of technology in supporting the business organisation in increasing their market value in front of the customers.

It can be depicted that the UAE luxury sector organisations are currently focusing on general technological solutions. Hence for them, the adoption of new and advanced technological solutions appears challenging, which is imperative for the demonstration of a comprehensive approach. Chavan and Bhola (2014) further indicate that the use of technology cannot be made only to differentiate the organisational functions from its competitors and shape out competitive practices. For them, only the personalised actions of the employers and management can be identified as a key solution to deal with the relationship problems between the different stakeholders. Personalisation of services via technological transformations can assist in delivering exceptional services to the customers. To identify the reasons behind not considering an all-inclusive approach towards customer satisfaction measures, the subsequent main themes 3 and 4 in this chapter can possibly guide the discussion.

Most companies consider customer satisfaction as an outcome of the consumer's experience and therefore their efforts are further diverted towards the business areas, which can contribute to increased customer experience. Sunder (2011) explains customer satisfaction as a difference between customer experience and their specific satisfaction goals. In similar contexts, although the primary data findings confirmed that the luxury sector hospitality organisations have considered customer experience as one of the criteria

for the measurement of customer satisfaction, their consideration is merely worse the overall service quality improvement. None of the participants supported the findings of the earlier research related to the total quality management approach in increasing the improved quality of services. The gap in the primary data findings and the literature has specifically highlighted the absence of an operations management focus within the practices of luxury sector organisations in the UAE. Total quality management is about high value-creation and reduction in defects and wastage arising from the business operations. The impact of delay and waste in the operational processes have significant impacts on the delivered service quality to the customers.

According to Lahap et al. (2007), it is impossible for organisations to satisfy their customers without improving the decisions and processes at all levels to improve the service delivery time and interoperability of the business aspects. It can be depicted that the Six Sigma and lean management approaches are the dominant strategies adopted by contemporary organisations for directing their employees towards efficient operation management. However, the effects of such employees adopting total quality management practices are visible also in the customers' satisfaction (Barbara McCrory, 2015). Probably, because the hospitality organisations in the UAE have not considered an integrated approach to combine the critical role of customers and employees, the primary data participants were not able to specify the influence of these total quality management approaches on their holistic business practices to direct customer satisfaction.

In the UAE, luxury hospitality organisations mainly rely on the conventional approach to delivering promotions and offers. The findings can be linked to the sub-theme (a) above as the influence of the organisational structure or design cannot be overlooked in understanding how these organisations respond to customer satisfaction.

It can be depicted that most luxury sector organisations are focused on the external factors or customer-linked elements, while neglecting the internal factors associated with employees or team members responsible for customer satisfaction. Consequently, less focus is placed on the qualification of the human resource team and assessments and appraisals.

Additionally, UAE hospitality organisations do see the connection between customer satisfaction and loyalty. Less consideration is placed on loyalty programs, where the research in the wider literature has confirmed that when the customers are satisfied with the products and services, they are loyal to the business. On the contrary, the primary data findings inform the approach of the UAE luxury hospitality organisations as directed towards the new target markets rather than retaining the loyal ones. Unfortunately, none of the players address the concerns associated with the relatively high cost in attracting new customers compared to retaining existing ones. Masarrat and Jha (2014) show that business organisations across the world are striving to keep their customers and to keep their business running in the competitive environment, they do not need to maintain customer base but also need to attract new customers.

c. Criteria used to measure customer satisfaction

The data collected from the luxury hospitality sector organisations of the UAE revealed that significant importance is given to consumer reviews and feedback for the measurement of customer satisfaction. In contrast to the findings of Sub-theme (b), customer loyalty appeared as the second most preferred criterion chosen for measuring customer satisfaction. Additionally, hospitality organisations prefer to provide small surprises to enhance the satisfaction of their customers. As far as the surprises are concerned, offerings for loyalty programs or vouchers, offering for cakes to celebrate, or paying their bills via codes are some of the options highlighted by the respondents.

Most of the players are focused on the traditional criteria for the measurement of customer satisfaction via customers reviews and feedback. Negative feedback is considered as non-satisfaction while the positive feedbacks are regarded as satisfaction. On the contrary, international organisations welcome negative feedback from the customer and encourage them to highlight the negative loopholes, which they need to change/improve.

Negative feedback offers lesson learning for the organisation. Unfortunately, the luxury sector organisations in UAE consider negative feedback as challenging, according to the responses gathered.

The criteria that were given less importance include working with third parties, use of social media, customer surveys and customer experience. In the contemporary era, no organisation can operate in isolation. Consequently, the services provided by third parties are extremely important for checking customer reviews and to help them in gaining access to the business services. Only some of the UAE hospitality organisations use the services of third parties such as TripAdvisor and Milky Way.

d. Impacts of holistic practice in customer experience

The most significant impacts identified from the responses of primary participants were focused on sustainability and customers looking for an authentic experience. Only a few of them consider the impacts of low staff turnover, the involvement of staff in decision-making, hostility from customers and building a strong relationship with customers.

Sustainability appears as a significant sub-theme in both the primary and secondary data findings. The impacts of holistic practice shape the perception of the consumers towards sustainability. Ultimately, the customer starts demanding sustainable products and requires the businesses to deliver them such products via holistic practices. This can be linked to Sub-theme (b), where the involvement of customers in using technology to communicate is highlighted. Such technological engagement ultimately allows the consumers to understand anything and know anything they need to be aware of in the modern environment. Digitally aware customers ultimately apply their knowledge to the businesses with whom they are interacting. Consequently, customers demand wellness and eco-friendly practices to deliver services to their guests within the hospitality organisations.

With sustainability, customers prefer authentic experience in accordance with the affordability of the customers. Holistic business practices have allowed hospitality sector organisations to integrate effective customer development abilities. This suggests that customers are not inclined towards those organisations which are shaping their experience, but rather towards those organisations that offer them an ‘authentic’ experience.

Authenticity is vital for modern customers in every industry as they want the product and services that match their class and social status. In this regard, they are not ready to sacrifice

authenticity. UAE hospitality needs to improve the way it addresses authentic experience-based practices.

4.2.3 Holistic Business Practices Adopted

Under the second main theme, four sub-themes were depicted from the findings of the primary research participants. These themes include (a) duration of adoption of the holistic approach in the hotels; (b) the role of technology in implementing the holistic approach; (c) procedures adopted by the hotel; and (d) the role of holistic business practice in achieving customer satisfaction.

a. Duration of adoption of the holistic approach in the hotels

The answer to the research question one did reveal that the UAE luxury sector hospitality businesses have adopted a holistic approach on their own as well as under the influence of the external factors. However, the percentage of organisations that have adopted such an approach on their own is quite low. These primary findings correspond with the existing literature up to a certain extent, although both sources of data have confirmed that the hospitality industry in the UAE has started to recognise the importance of holistic business practices.

For many organisations, they are unable to survive without considering the effects of their practices on their surroundings. However, still, for most of them the adoption of sustainable environmental practices is the outcome of demands from the of industry stakeholders as well as the need for the development of the economy, as explained by the Dubai Sustainable Tourism initiative. Similarly, Alameeri et al. (2018) have criticised the sustainability management practices adopted by hotels in UAE. They imply that most of the sustainability practices are directed towards the requirements of the employees, the government and the customers. Consequently, the focus of the hospitality players is on economic sustainability rather than on the environmental and social dimensions of sustainability in their holistic business practices.

The primary data findings have supported the answer of the research question by indicating that 47% of the respondents confirmed their adoption of a holistic approach after the start of their business. On the contrary, only 18% of the businesses adopted the holistic practice

areas at the establishment phase. The findings further highlighted that such adoption was dependent on the internal as well as external factors affecting the business, such as influence from society and stakeholders (23%) and availability of holistic products in the market (12%).

The reasons identified by the primary participants for adopting holistic business practices after the establishment of the business were the need to develop an accurate and functional budget and to reduce operational costs. Interestingly, respondents confessed that at the initial starting phase of the business, they did not have any perceptions related to such adoption, however the time and the extensive transformations in the environment forced the hospitality industry to adopt such practices. Consequently, one of the respondents did identify the impacts of such changes and execution of holistic business practices on their forgotten values and frameworks.

On the other hand, individuals who adopted holistic practices from the start indicated the reasons for doing so, such as the connectivity with such approach throughout the individual's growth, and the fact that the managers and leaders of those organisations were brought up with this procedure. Therefore, they have firm beliefs about the involvement of staff and customers in the development of holistic practices.

In substantiating the answer to the first research question, the primary findings further demonstrated the availability of more holistic products in the market influencing the choice of the luxury sector organisations. The growing presence, as well as usage of the approach in the market have further helped their hospitality organisations in offering their services 24/7 by targeting the right customers at the right time and at the right place.

Additionally, the primary participants influenced by society and stakeholders shared that rising market trends, customer demand and the changing face of business require them to adopt the business practices to stay competitive with their business rivals. Pitoska (2012) further explains this point by highlighting that the philosophy of healthy corporations in the contemporary environment is dependent on the internal and external environments. The sustainable values developed by these organisations must stay responsive to society as a whole to achieve sustainability. However, the practices for achieving sustainability are

dependent upon organisational, perceptual, and behavioural factors, as explained Chavan and Bhola (2014) in the literature, but sectors are not reflected in the practices of the luxury players is evident from the primary data findings. For this reason, although there has been a long duration in some of the luxury hospitality organisations in UAE pursuing the holistic practices, none of them is able to identify the impact of their size and performance on those sustainable practices (Jauhari et al., 2009).

As reflected in the primary data findings, for most businesses the adoption of holistic business practice was a way to compete rather than to facilitate business improvements. The primary data findings have confirmed that unfortunately, the luxury sector organisations in the UAE that have adopted holistic business practices have done so because of their shareholders' realisation towards competition and sustainability. Such adoption was a way to make the investors happy. For this reason, some of the managers specified the complexity and long duration requirements for shifting their existing approach towards a holistic one. For them, adoption of a comprehensive approach is a change which requires the entire culture of the organisation to change in response.

b. Role of technology in implementing a holistic approach

Furthermore, the answer to the first research question would not be complete without assessing the role of technology in the implementation of holistic approaches within the luxury sector of the UAE. The answer to the research question confirmed the significance of technology in helping the luxury sector players to reap the benefits of holistic approaches to a certain extent. At present, organisations have not successfully reaped the benefits of technological support for the complete implementation of a holistic approach. The primary data findings support that most of the organisations have been using different types of technologies for the development of the brand image, customer engagement, efficiency improvement, staff tracking and employee management, marketing, conflict resolution, and for reducing staff cost. Interestingly, none of the reasons identified above received majority votes from the respondents. Some organisations preferred the use of technology for one purpose, while the other organisations preferred their use for other reasons.

Firstly, the primary data findings revealed the role of technology in building a brand image of luxury sector organisations. According to the respondents, the role of technology is crucial in the development of organisational operations which ultimately help the businesses to enhance their reputation and image in the eye of customers and the market.

Secondly, customer engagement was identified as the core reason behind the use of technology in luxury sector organisations in the UAE. The respondents sharing customer engagement knew that technology is extremely useful for them for maintaining connectivity and relevance of the business in the eye of the guests. They showed their awareness about the need to embrace technology to stay connected with customers.

Thirdly, efficiency improvement was also recognised as one of the reasons behind the adoption of technology for holistic business practices. The hospitality players used different technologies for the check-in and check-out procedures, room allocation, reputation management system, card billing and online accounting. In summary, technology has helped the luxury sector organisations in speeding up and simplifying their processes.

On this point, however, the primary data findings did highlight the critical point related to automation and replacement of human resource with machines. One of the respondents spoke about technology as a mere means for replacing machines and stepping ahead towards automation. Papazian (2017) in the existing literature shows that luxury sector organisations are not the only ones realising technology and innovation as a way of achieving the goals of automation, but there are also business organisations in the United States too that are pursuing similar aims by recognising the use of technology. For these US business organisations, technology is the mere source of automation and data analytics applications, and fail to recognise the importance of talent and a set of external factors required to strengthen the adoption of such technology aligned with the type of organisation (Carbo et al., 2017). The choice of appropriate technology and the industry in which it operates holds a dominant and critical position in decision-making (Li, 2018).

In addition, the role of technology highlighted by the primary respondents in keeping track of staff and management supports the answer of the first research question. In almost all

cases, the luxury sector organisations' technology is adopted in almost all departments, from human resources to overall operational management. It can be depicted that organisations are using the technology for maintaining traceability of their data, which was quite difficult in earlier periods where the traditional modes of documentation such as pen and paper and calculator were used. As an alternative to these modes, technology has offered a new way for luxury sector organisations to control their business in a virtual environment. These findings correspond to the already existing knowledge about the use of technology in connecting the business without the restrictive boundaries.

Furthermore, marketing as a key perspective of the business organisation in the digital environment also requires the luxury sector organisations in the UAE to adopt the role of technology for the delivery of customer-oriented products and services. It is important to highlight that for the luxury hospitality organisations in the UAE, the use of technology for marketing is only limited to the purpose of boosting sales and to attract customers.

Hotels are using technology for globalisation and introducing themselves in the business market. To put it simply, UAE luxury sector organisations are considering a technological means to improve their awareness about the market and their competitors. In contrast, global organisations who use technology as part of their holistic business practice are considering its usage not only to direct sales, but also to drive awareness about the business and the overall environment.

Similarly, in the context of conflict resolution, luxury hospitality organisations recognised the use of technology for the provision of adequate information to their customers in a digital environment. In this manner, they can reduce the interaction between their employees and the consumers, which with regard to human conflict is necessary in the holistic business practice. Less interaction between employees and customers is considered as a good way to reduce conflict and arguments. However, by reducing such interaction, these luxury hospitality sector organisations have forgotten that constructive conflicts are the root of new ideas and innovation. Ciobanu & Neamţu (2017), in contrast, show that technology can be used as a communication tool, but without the engagement at the human level and involvement of employee, the business cannot achieve the goals of holistic business practice effectively (Ciobanu & Neamţu, 2017).

c. Procedures adopted by the hotel

As highlighted previously, technology is vital in shaping the holistic business practices of the sector organisations in the UAE, yet the question is how to identify the way in which the current organisational procedures adopted by the hotel facilitate the use of technology. In this regard, the reception of technology is positively inclined within the luxury hospitality of the UAE. 67% of the respondents consider technology as helpful in educating and creating awareness as well as simplifying business tasks such as manual recording. The use of technologies is considered helpful in reducing the chances of human error. However, for 33% of individuals, adoption of technology has an adverse impact on the existing workforce by imposing a threat on their jobs. The risk of replacement of work by computerised systems such as cash counters leads to resistance among hospitality employees.

The current procedures recognise the role of technology in using cloud-based systems for simplifying their global databases and connecting to their business partners effectively. Technology allows them to lead efficiently and smoothly. In this regard, many of them have used technology for increasing their sales and customers and to reduce expenditures. However, the expenses related to the education and training of the staff about the usage of emerging technologies appear as an additional expense for hospitality organisations. However, despite increased reception, the leadership of the business is still responsible for making effective decisions about the use of technology.

The interview findings are consistent with the literature, where Bilgihan & Nejad (2015) identify that hospitality sector organisations are using technology mainly for cost reduction and revenue generation purposes rather than considering the advent of new technologies as an opportunity to increase the market value of their brands and their business, respectively. Where the technology can be used for tracking customer trends, it seems that at present, luxury hospitality organisations are far away from the optimum use of technology for their benefits. Unfortunately, leadership and management in luxury sector organisations consider technology as a means to achieve short-term goals. They do not recognise the significance of these technologies in encouraging innovation and simplifying the dynamic and interactive business processes. Sarmah et al. (2017) also indicate that the changing

customer needs require service industries to redesign their processes instead of relying on earlier ones. In contrast to the primary research participants, the literature views emerging technologies as a means to achieving a comprehensive approach. These researchers view technology as a supportive tool for business transformation, rather than a source of merely accomplishing the stated business goals for a specific period, such as increased sales, decreased expenses, customer satisfaction, customer motivation, brand imaging and positioning, targeting, and segmenting and value proposition (Sarmah et al., 2017). Contradictory to these business goals, technology can also offer transformation of existing procedures, such as co-creation of products and services.

It is also important to identify whether the current procedures facilitating technology adoption are contributing favourably to the accomplishment of the holistic approach. In this regard, participants highlighted the impact of the top to bottom leadership approach in channelling ideas and decisions in a structured manner. The use of a top to bottom leadership approach is referred to as a funnel approach by the primary participants, capable of connecting the top and operational levels together. Wang (2016) also confirms the significance of strong leadership to make quick and challenging decisions by utilising their strong leadership qualities and decision-making abilities. However, there is a possibility in a top-down and centralised leadership approach that interaction between groups of people may be slow. The primary findings did not correspond with the general leadership and management literature, where top-down leadership is regarded as a traditional approach to be used in unskilled workers' environments such as factory or manufacturing organisations. According to IreneHuertas-Valdivia et al. (2019), paradoxical and empowering management styles positively impacts on the workforce in the hospitality sector. Based on the findings gathered from a structural equation modelling using data from 340 employees and Spanish hotels, these researchers reported that psychological empowerment of the workforce is dependent on the empowering and paradoxical leadership styles compared to the servant leadership. Such leadership procedures allow the workforce to enhance their job engagement. It can be depicted that both primary and secondary data findings are similar in identifying the role of leadership and holistic business practices, while they differ from each other in terms of leadership style. The primary findings from the UAE indicate that luxury sector players are more inclined

towards the use of top leaders' expertise and innovative ideas. In contrast, while the literature requires leaders to understand the need to introduce innovative ideas, they should be alongside the promotion of creativity and innovative ideas among co-workers (Chaudhuri and Ray, 2015).

In addition, the participants justified the use of the top leadership approach to decrease the risks in decision-making. For them, less involvement of people in the decision-making further eliminates the chances of contradictions. Despite valuing the ideas from employees in the process of improving the service quality, hospitality managers do not directly involve their employees in decision-making.

Fortunately, luxury hospitality sector organisations in the UAE are also aware of the adverse impacts of top-down leadership. Many of the players in the interviews highlighted the impact of top-down leadership on the disconnected departments. For them, top-down leadership results in a lack of horizontal communication. It means that every department is responsible for functioning in respect of its own activities rather than having any concern about the roles and responsibilities of other departments. An example shared by one respondent revealed that the finance department in their luxury restaurant has no understanding about the merchandising or retail departments and therefore are not able to understand the connectivity between the functional performances of the two departments. This lack of performance and the existence of functional silos in the merchandising departments are likely to affect the financial resources of the business.

Moreover, when all the decisions are made by top management, the participants shared that it has significant impacts on the low-cadre employees, who find it hard to share their ideas and not feel they are part of the company. It shows that hospitality sector organisations in the UAE do not consider employees' vision as a part of the company's vision. However, the respondents talked about the need to integrate decision-making at the top and knowledge at the bottom levels by including all employees in making the most informed decisions.

Another adverse impact of the top-down leadership procedure was revealed in the form of high staff turnover. Currently, the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE is experiencing a

high rate of resignations due to the low value they are offered in the organisation. The current militancy forces employees to resign. Primary findings indicate that this negatively impacts on the evolution of the brand. For them, such a procedure prevents revolution of the business brand by making staff unhappy and limiting their potential.

It is therefore evident that the primary participants are not connected with the luxury hospitality sector employment because it is their passion, rather it is recognised as a source of income for them. At this point, it is extremely important to indicate that the understanding of the participants related to the deployment of the top to bottom approach was wrong to a certain extent.

Some of the primary participants believed that the deployment of such an approach has helped their employees to share their thoughts with management in a free and open environment.

d. Role of holistic business practice in achieving customer satisfaction

Likewise, the findings of the interviews with the participants informed the answer to the research question by highlighting the role played by the holistic business practices in achieving customer satisfaction. Six significant areas were identified: customer loyalty, easy valuation, customer experience, increased awareness, return on investment (ROI) and an effective motivation tool for employees.

The first key role of holistic business practices was recognised in relation to customer loyalty and feedback. Many of the participants shared that with the help of holistic practices, they were able to overcome the difficulties associated with customer feedback in the UAE. When customers are not well treated or quality of services offered to them is poor, it reduces the chances of their return, as well as loyalty towards that specific hotel. For many of the primary participants, the emergence of holistic business practices has come to resolve this issue. In this regard, similarities can be found between the primary and secondary data findings in relation to the importance of customer feedback. Similarly, in improving the quality of services, holistic business practices have allowed consumers to

share experiences on social media as a way to encourage others to visit the same hotel or restaurants.

This primary finding supported the literature, where Chanand Guillet (2011) and Mitic and Kapoluas (2012) emphasise the use of prominent social networking sites Twitter and Facebook to offer direct efficient interaction between organisations and customers. At this point, it can be depicted that holistic business practices have simplified customer feedback processes for hotel organisations. The traditional survey-based method was less cost-effective and time consuming and ultimately less attractive for customers to share their concerns. These findings can be linked further with the increased reception of technology highlighted in above-mentioned subtheme.

Pappas and Bregoli (2016) have tried to show how the total information available in the online world can help hospitality organisations to improve their customer service communication and keep their customer information up-to-date and reliable for the improvement of processes.

The significance of feedback is ultimately visible in terms of improved customer experience. When using the feedback, hospitality organisations can evaluate customer satisfaction easily by assessing their stay and spending in the hotel and they ns are also able to personalise their services to meet the needs of their different customers. Likewise, increased awareness of the production services among the customers ultimately helps these organisations to improve their return on investment, as the increased number of customers due to improved services ultimately increases the profitability of the business.

Additionally, the role of holistic business practices in achieving customer satisfaction is also related to the employee motivation. According to the primary participants, where the employees are not motivated to perform their tasks, they are not involved in decision-making, which ultimately impacts the customer satisfaction of the hotel restaurants. Maroudas et al. (2008) report similar findings by stating that holistic business practices are an effective tool for employee motivation, as without workforce empowerment and engagement, luxury hospitality cannot generate exceptional service experiences for their customers. In this context, a range of business management theories have emerged that

identifies the significant role of employees in the business. However, under this subtheme, the participants merely pointed out the role of employee motivation in the holistic business practice areas, but they did not cover the strategies, or the ways used by the hospitality organisations for motivating their employees. Specifically, these factors would be considered under the third main theme as analysed below.

From the understanding of the current holistic business practices and procedures adopted by UAE luxury sector organisations, it can be depicted that holistic business practices are new and therefore the duration these practices have been adopted is also very short.

The role of technology, the procedures adopted by the hotel and the role of holistic business practice in driving customer satisfaction are explicit from the practices of UAE luxury organisations. However, the presence of these were both positively and negatively evident within the existing practices of UAE hospitality organisations. To identify the relationship between these business practices - specifically sustainability in the context of employees- the third main theme of the chapter was developed.

4.2.4 Relationship Between the Holistic Business Practices, Sustainability and Employees

The responses gathered from the primary participants under this second key theme of the research were divided into two sub-themes, namely. the impact of holistic organisation design on employee motivation and morale, and the role of employees in implementing holistic practices. The findings allowed the search for an answer to the Research Question 3. Both the primary and secondary data findings have confirmed that the role of employees in holistic business practices directly drives customer experience for hospitality organisations.

Research Question # 2: What is the relation between the holistic business approach and customer experience?

a. Impact of Holistic organisation design in employee motivation and morale

In assessing the impacts of holistic organisation design on employee motivation and morale, many primary participants (35) indicated empowerment and motivation as a key impact. They believe that a holistic business approach allows them to work from their heart and encourages them to look after the business guests more effectively. Hospitality organisations consider the employee as a business resource. These primary findings support the existing available knowledge. Provision of a relaxed environment for employees can help them grow and enjoy the benefits of job satisfaction, respect and freedom. Although employee motivation is valued in the UAE luxury hospitality sector, the management did not view that employees' motivation cannot be developed as a generalised approach as informed in the wider literature. Hayes and Ninemeier (2009) and Chon and Maier (2009) stress the nature of employee's needs relate to the associated jobs as well as management system. According to them, employees should be motivated in line with the types of jobs performed rather than opting for a generalised approach. In a similar context, a range of prominent theories is available to educate the manager about the different factors, which can contribute to increasing employee motivation and their participation and satisfaction in their work environment. The findings from the literature can be used by human resource managers in hospitality organisations of the UAE to identify solutions to their problems, which are mainly related to employee satisfaction, motivation and turnover. These theories include Maslow's theory of a hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943), Herzberg's two- factor theory (Herzberg, 1964), Locke's goal theory (Locke, 1968) and Vroom's expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). By using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, managers can identify the different levels of motivation for the employee starting from physical needs and moving towards higher self-actualisation needs. From another perspective, Herzberg's two-factor theory can help managers to identify the needs of their employees with respect to hygiene factors and motivators. Similarly, goal and expectancy theories can allow managers to help their employees identify intrinsic motivation and to direct them in deciding the outcomes of their behaviours to stay motivated. Although not pointed out by the primary respondents in the interviews, the literature provides information about the set of factors behind employee motivation, including work environment, types of work, peer relationships, good management, salaries

and compensation, and workload. In a similar context, another significant impact of the organisation design on employee motivation was related to the feelings the design offers to the employees in becoming part of the company (26).

The primary data findings also identify support and training, sustainable environment, low staff turnover, and employees understanding of the rules and objectives as the other significant impacts of holistic organisation design. In the context of sustainable environment (15), the primary data findings illustrated that holistic practices have helped to create a sustainable design capable of making the employees happy. They need to ascertain that when the employees are happy, they ensure happy clients too. Additionally, the primary respondents connected their answers in this theme with the significance of the eco-friendly environment of the hotel. In their opinion, guests are looking for an eco-friendly environment in the contemporary world.

A luxury hospitality organisation offering the sustainability-based services to guests can lead to an improved position in the sector. However, attaining sustainability without motivated employees is not possible. This key point further indicates a direct relationship between holistic business design (sustainability) and customer experience. These findings correspond with the existing literature.

These findings can be discussed in relation to Topic 1, Sub-theme, namely, current organisational practice. The traditional design and practices of the luxury hospitality organisations is a significant barrier to the implementation of sustainability practices. Likewise, Sub-theme (c) in Topic 2 (Current organisational practices) also highlights the critical role by the top management via the top to bottom leadership approach in reducing the involvement and participation of employees. Sustainability is a business practice which requires efforts from all levels from top managers to the operational level employees. Unfortunately, the primary data suggests that the luxury hospitality organisations in the UAE do not recognise this aspect. Although they are focusing on the sustainability practices, the lack of employee involvement and motivation can limit the benefits of sustainability for these organisations. At this point, it is also important to highlight that most of the managers and employees in UAE research organisations are confused in defining sustainability practices. For them, sustainability is only related to external

environmental factors, such as the true friendly environment. Consequently, they have failed to connect the internal and external environmental factors driving the sustainable business practices (Jones et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2016; Taheri and Taheri, 2018).

Similar to the primary findings gathered through interviews with the respondents, the literature review findings related to the luxury hospitality sector of UAE provided an explanation of the deficiency identified in the sustainable business practices of the luxury sector. As per the summarised findings of Chapter Two, the cultural hospitality sector is required to integrate their business processes, procedures, technological innovations and ever-evolving customer expectations in order to achieve the overall goal of holistic approach, including the sustainability business aspect.

The influence of the top-down leadership approach can be viewed as significant only in directing the sustainability practices towards the reduced ecological footprint. However, in terms of ecological sustainability, UAE luxury hospitality organisations are far behind in complying with the Six Sigma approach. They are more focused on the reduction in pollution and waste management while undermining the significance of other factors such as reduced production costs, increased customer satisfaction, increased employee satisfaction, increased profitability and reduced process cycle time (Radzi et al., 2014; Eckes, 2002). It is important to highlight that in the literature, some researchers view six Sigma as a methodology for dealing with team members effectively as they are main carriers of underpinning philosophy (O'Mahony et al., 2011). It is, therefore, the role of the top leaders to provide resources and eliminate barriers allowing the team members to champion their sustainability roles in the hospitality sector (O'Mahony et al., 2011).

b. Role of the employee in implementing holistic practices

Furthermore, in line with the literature, the primary findings also identified a two-fold relationship between employee motivation and holistic practices in attaining customer satisfaction. In relation to this aspect, a large percentage of the primary respondents highlighted training as a key role of employees while implementing holistic practices (34). In contrast, the literature findings indicated a lack of training and development programmes in the contemporary hospitality industry of the UAE. Training is not considered an essential part of the company’s operations strategy. On the other hand, the literature did highlight

that if offered, training opportunities are designed to increase the knowledge and skills of the employees according to the requirements of the company rather than based on the individual needs of the employees. Patil (2010) provides a great insight in this context by highlighting that the hospitality industry of the UAE needs to consider that quality of service is directly proportional to the quality and productivity of employees. Alack of personalised as well as collective training opportunities for the employees can limit efficient service delivery to the customers.

Similarly, supporting management and carrying the vision of the company received considerable responses from the primary participants (17 each). It can be depicted that participants below holistic practice areas supported management, while the top management of the UAE luxury sector organisations consider holistic practices to direct the employees towards established goals. It shows that UAE managers did not consider holistic practices to improve employees understanding rather than a way to perform their jobs and associated tasks (Jauhari, 2014).

In recognising the role of employees at a personal level, 15 of the respondents indicated a positive thinking approach as another role that they contribute to the holistic business practices. Some other employees' roles highlighted in the primary findings were focused on satisfying clients (13) and involvement in decision-making (4). It is quite surprising that the two most important roles of the employees are given less concern by the UAE luxury hospitality participants. Alternatively, all the above-mentioned roles are related to the internal development aspects of the employees rather than for the accomplishment of the main goal of the business, i.e. customer satisfaction.

c. Effect of holistic practices on the overall performance of the hotel

Lastly, to seek an answer to the third research question, namely the relationship between the holistic business approach and customer experience, participants' responses were gathered in the context of overall performance of the hotel. Among the most cited responses were increased customer satisfaction and increased profitability (24). Additionally, holistic practices have also allowed the hospitality sector to increase the importance of social and cultural factors. The participants agreed that such practices have helped them in reducing

staff turnover, the achievement of their goals and in raising a strong commitment towards environmental issues.

These primary findings have further provided answers to the third research question by indicating a direct relationship between holistic practices and customer experience. All the above given impacts on the overall performance of the hotels are directly or indirectly related to enhanced customer experience.

The primary findings support the existing literature, where Krstic et al. (2015) confirm the collective role of the operating, supporting, and managerial processes in shaping effective organisational practices in the luxury hospitality sector. The overall performance of the hotel can only increase when the business practices are aligned with the needs of all the three processes respectively. In contrast, the primary findings indicated that respondents are more focused and after supporting and managerial processes to implement holistic practices for understanding markets and customers and for enhancing managerial practices to deliver a quality product in the optimal utilisation of resources. The respondents did not share their concerns about how the operating processes such as housekeeping, suppliers of necessary inputs, guest arrivals and departures, in the process of producing and serving food and beverage, are aligned for the implementation of holistic business practices specifically. At this point, the role of leadership as identified in the above-mentioned themes cannot be overlooked.

In discussing the relationship between the holistic business practices, sustainability and employee motivation under Theme 3, both similarities and contradictions between the primary and secondary data findings can be seen. Although, the respondents showed their understanding of the relationship between these factors, the practical evidence supports the idea that such understanding is practically implemented hospitality sector organisations. In this context, the third key theme was extracted from the responses of the primary participants as discussed below.

4.2.5 A Gap in the Current Business Practice and Measures to Be Taken for Sustainable

The fourth theme drawn from the findings of the primary data participants was helpful in searching the answer to research question four. As depicted above that primary respondents from the hospitality sector organisations of the UAE are not able to identify the meaning of sustainability holistic business framework effectively. It is extremely necessary for them to identify the appropriate recommendations for the effective implementation of the holistic business framework.

Research Question # 3: How can a holistic business framework be recommended for sustainability in the luxury hospitality sector?

a. Current approach and Gap in the market

For making effective recommendations, the current approach and gap in the market were identified. Majority of the primary respondents did confirm that sustainability has not been fully embraced within their hospitality organisations (22) although there is a strong desire for a sustainable environment (30). Findings of theme 1 can be cross-related to recognise that organisations pursuing holistic business practices do not consider external environment is essential factor in improving sustainability. The overall focus is, therefore, not focused around sustainability of the business but on the reduced environmental footprints. At present, UAE hotels are using technologies in engaging customers and employees for the implementation of holistic practices, but the top leadership did not allow these stakeholders to contribute to decision-making. Evidence suggests that the current focus of the hospitality organisation is towards the sustainability of economic aspects such as profitability, customer satisfaction rather than on the all-inclusive dimensions of the holistic framework.

Answering the research question three for identifying the gaps in the market, the primary findings reported that the market is not ready and there is a disconnection between the top and bottom management. These findings can be related to the sub-theme c of topic 3, where the influence of top leadership was identified in shaping holistic procedures. Additionally, financial constraints and the use of traditional approach within the current UAE hotels are also reflecting key gaps in the market.

b. Ways of Improving current Practice

To bridge the gap identified above, primary data participants did highlight the set of practices needed for improving the current practices of the luxury hospitality sector organisations in the UAE. A large percentage of the respondents agreed that by streamlining management and management processes, significant improvement can be achieved in the current practices.

These findings have provided guidance in answering the research question 3 but have failed to identify the specific strategies, which can be used to streamline managerial processes. Cerović, (2010) in the academic literature have specified that the businesses should try to transform their holistic business development focus from the profitability focus by spreading it towards the well-being of the people and the planet. (Krstic, et al., 2015) specifically suggested the need to consider the performance of management in shaping out the staff and business practices in terms of administrative and technical support to the employees. Managerial processes should identify the roles and responsibilities of connecting operating and supporting business practices together for the overall value creation. Unfortunately, at present managerial practices in the UAE luxury organisations are disconnected. In this regard, Lahap, et al., (2007); Krstic, et al., (2015) suggest that managerial processes should set the direction, coordination, integration and control of the overall organisation in a collaborative manner. They need to develop human resource management, management of information technology adoption and usage, management of financial and physical resources and management of reputation, quality and change. It can be critically examined that UAE luxury sector organisations can connect their holistic business practices with the six Sigma approach for reaping effective outcomes.

Additionally, other recommendations highlighted the primary responses were bracing social media as a marketing tool, be more sustainable and advancement in technology usage (13). It can be depicted that although the Participants are aware of the appropriate strategies necessary for the improvement of current practices, yet these strategies cannot be implemented without effective empowerment of employees at all the levels in the hospitality organisations in UAE. hence, there would be a need to modify the correct traditional approach towards a contemporary approach, where the idea sharing is encouraged the employees for the effective utilisation of social media, technologies, and sustainability initiatives. They should recognise that it is not the usage of the recommended practices rather collective contribution of the

stakeholders to become more innovative for the delivery of services and products to the customers. For this purpose, existing literature also agrees with the primary data participants for reducing the communication gap in the organisational design.

c. Holistic practice and strategic goals of the company

However, the above recommended practices could not be implemented without identifying the priority is given by the hospitality organisations at UAE to the different strategic goals. As revealed from the responses of the interviews, currently most of the organisations are focused towards the financial stability and customer account as the leading strategic goals. In this regard, they are shaping their holistic practices towards profitability and economic outcomes. Although the skills and leadership programs are offered to staff as a part of strategic goal, the direction of these programs is also towards the accomplishment of tangible goals. Only few participants have highlighted the preference given to the productivity, sustainability and involvement of employees in decision-making with the strategic goals of their properties. These findings have significantly provided great insights for the answer for the research question three indicating that at present luxury sector organisations are not given significant attention towards the intangibility. The findings are well suited with the already existing literature findings discussed in Chapter Two, where Marić, et al., (2016); Parasuraman, et al., (1988) showed that hospitality as she overestimates the significance of intangibility. Therefore, focus on the delivery of tangible components of product and service has overlooked the emotional dimension of the customer experience altogether. Similarly, offering compensations for the delivery of services to the employees could not lead to effective employee motivation. Organisations should embrace their teams to up skill themselves according to the emerging opportunities in the market. Unfortunately, there is not enough support in the hospitality sector of the UAE at present.

4.3 Conclusion

Based on the overall analysis and discussion of the primary and secondary data findings undertake, to seek the answers to the three research questions, it can be depicted that current holistic business practices for customer satisfaction, sustainability and employees are not aligned in UAE according to the global practices and trends. There are significant gaps in the current business practices and

measures are taken for the implementation of holistic business practices. The set of recommendations given in key theme 4 can guide the UAE luxury sector effectively. The current organisational practices are traditional, which direct the use of technology, promotions and offerings for customer satisfaction in a traditional manner. Employees are not given a significant role in the implementation of holistic business practices.

Customer reviews and feedbacks are the key criteria for customer satisfaction measurement, but these feedbacks are not directed to attain the overall goal of sustainability and to provide authentic experience to the customers. The novelty of holistic approach in the UAE can be considered as one of the critical reasons behind the significant differences between the holistic business practices identified in the literature and theories at the ones practised in UAE. The final chapter of the research provides conclusion, recommendations to inform appropriate direction to the players of the luxury hospitality sector of UAE.

4.4 Summary

80% of the current organisational practice in the UAE hospitality industry follow traditional design. 20% hospitality organisation use technology and 22% adopts promotions to attract customers. Customer reviews are used to measure the customer satisfaction. 53% responses show that organisations adopt holistic practice in customer satisfaction whereas 34% focus on sustainability. 47% of the organisations have the holistic approach at the hotel after start of business. Technology has been found to be effective in implementing holistic approach such as increasing customer satisfaction, improving efficiency, and keeping track of staff. Top-bottom leadership approach is also effective in challenging ideas, decreasing risks in decision making, and high staff turnover.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The final chapter of this thesis provides a summary of key insights gathered from the investigation into the holistic business practices in the luxury sector of UAE, in the form of an appropriate conclusion. This chapter also provides managerial recommendations for the luxury sector players, managerial implications, pathways for future research, limitations of the current study and a conceptual model drawn from the findings.

5.0 Conclusion

The aim of the research was to investigate the influence of holistic business practices in the luxury sector of the hospitality industry and its impact on customer experiences in the UAE. The methodological design was based on semi-structured interviews and observation was implemented for gathering the set of primary and secondary data findings. These findings can be summarised to show the successful accomplishment of the set of five research objectives. The successful accomplishment of the Research Objective 1 is shown in Section 5.6 below.

Research Objective #2: To identify what is the current business approach in the UAE luxury hospitality industry

The study has concluded that the current business approach revealed by the interviewees from the luxury hospitality industry is quite disintegrated. Several small to medium-sized and large-scale organisations are working in the luxury sector of the country, yet very few of them can understand the real meaning of a holistic business approach. At present, most of them pursue a traditional business approach. The design and structures are mainly focused around the traditional departments such as food, beverages and accommodation, and a very minimal focus is given to contemporary departments such as marketing, finance, human resources and customer service departments. In this context, this study has highlighted the importance of departmentalisation in a holistic business approach. Additionally, lack of engagement from the operational level employees is also contributing substantially in shaping current practices. UAE organisations only offer autonomy to the branch managers to encourage them in idea-sharing and free-thinking. The limited decision-making capacity of the employee's further limits innovation, which is an important feature of holistic business practices.

In compliance with the traditional practices, the measures and strategies used within the UAE hospitality sector are traditional in design such as promotions ,offers ,technology however, the current use of technology is not driven towards collective idea sharing. The has study also discovered positive aspects of the current practices in the luxury sector of the UAE, such as the use of online websites and social networking sites for reviewing and receiving feedback from customers. However, the current use is only in its initial stage. The use of basic technology-based services cannot help organisations to achieve the goals of innovation, sustainability and a holistic approach. There is a need to improve organisational methods rather than focus on the simple use of technology in differentiating products and in communicating the business message among the employees, customers and managers. The study has confirmed that most of the luxury hospitality organisations consider customer satisfaction as an outcome of customer experience. They look towards the areas highlighted by customers in their feedback based on their experience of the hotel products and services. However, the contemporary business practices require the organisations to minimise the gap between the customers experience in customer's expectation by targeting their perceptions towards the holistic business practices. Hospitality organisations should not look towards what customers perceive as a holistic business experience. The organisations review negative feedback as non-satisfaction and positive feedback as satisfaction. They do not try to identify the perceptions associated with the negative feedback of the customer, which could later be used for product and service improvements. Likewise, there is an absence of operations management in the current practices of the luxury sector organisations. The gap between the strategic-level understanding and operational functions further prevent the UAE hospitality sector to address the authentic experience needs of their customers.

Research Objective # 3: To assess the significance of a holistic approach to customer experience

In pursuance of the successful accomplishment of Research Objective 3, this research has found that both the UAE and the global luxury hospitality industries are attempting to identify the significance of the holistic approach to customer experience. The UAE, as a centre of tourist attraction for the local and international visitors, needs to constantly adopt holistic practices.

In this context, customer satisfaction is given significant consideration by luxury sector organisations. Analysis of the primary and secondary findings has found that hospitality organisations are using technology to increase the customer satisfaction level associated with the products and services that they offer. However, the organisational policies are inclined towards the needs of leadership, society and stakeholders, as well as to the availability of holistic products in the market. The businesses do not have any perceptions related to such practices, rather than they are reliant on the market support available for the businesses aiming towards the holistic business practices. Due to the novelty of the holistic business approach, UAE actors in the hospitality sector are mainly focused on financial and functional elements relative to the individual and social elements of the value proposition. They are not targeting the behaviours of the customers to transform the experience, but instead technology, the regulatory environment and society is supporting and welcoming the adoption of holistic business practice, which is critical for them. The study has confirmed that the holistic practices are implemented by the hospitality organisations in the development of their brand image, increasing customer engagement, improving efficiency, staff tracking and resolution of conflicts. Additionally, organisations also intend to lower their staff costs and enhance marketing and employee management via a holistic framework. It is important to highlight that these organisations do not consider customer experience as a required separate component.

However, to increase the brand reputation and image in the eyes of customers and the market, the use of technology is vital. Customers are engaged in different procedures such as room allocation, card billing, online accounting and feedback through automated processes. However, the goal behind these automated processes is to replace human resource with machinery and to reduce the overall cost of business operations. In this regard, the technologies used by the UAE luxury sector are the basic ones rather than technologies which are used by global business organisations, such as data analytics applications. One of the key points that has been identified in the study is related to the use of technology to reduce interaction among the employees and customers. For the luxury sector organisations in UAE, less interaction can help in reducing conflicts and arguments between the two stakeholders simultaneously.

These practices are not welcoming from the perspective of global customers, who require continuous engagement and interaction to share new ideas and innovation with the employees

and management. Evidence from the global practices rejected the idea of using technology as a communication tool without the involvement of the human resource of the organisations. Technology is always beneficial when used with and for the human resource, including employees as well as consumers. Additionally, the procedures adopted for the customer's experience are not aligned with the education and training needs of the staff. For most of the hospitality organisations, investing in staff training is an additional expense. Luxury hospitality is all about integration of the emerging technologies to redesign the processes in a co-created environment. It seems that the current strategy will work in the short term but not in the long term, where the needs and expectations of the customers are exceeding tangible boundaries.

At present, luxury sector organisations in the UAE are not focused on intangible elements. The implementation of the Six Sigma approach is also not visible in the luxury sector. Customer experience is not connected with the collective decision-making stage needed to achieve the goals of project management, database decision-making, knowledge discovery, process control and change management. In summarising the findings, this study concludes that current business management practices are not responsive to the emerging needs of customers and their expectations.

Research Objective #4: To access the impacts of customer experience on sustainability

Furthermore, from the findings of the investigation, it can be summarised that UAE's luxury sector merely considers customer satisfaction as outcome of customer experience. In this regard, most of the hospitality practices are aligned to increase customer satisfaction. However, at present the customers expect the services of the hotel to be based on the reference points. The level of information they receive from the other resources ultimately guides their individual expectations towards the brand. However, the management of the research organisation should not consider customer expectation as the point of delivery of products and services which can satisfy customers.

Rather, they should consider the internal perceptions, which are also contributing to shaping their experience related to a brand. On the contrary, the UAE hotel managers certainly look after the fulfilment of customers' demands by offering them quality food, clean supplies, and

a welcoming environment. Customers are also offered opportunities to provide their feedback regarding the hotel's engagement in complying with corporate social responsibility as well as customer satisfaction. Customers' perceptions of value are not given any worth in the UAE luxury sector, which prevents it from the achieving customer loyalty objectives.

The study further concludes that luxury hospitality organisations are not connecting the different dimensions of sustainability together in order to estimate experience. Evidently, the most neglected area is related to the employee motivation. Although, the managers are aware that empowerment and motivation of the employees are the key pillars to the limitation of realistic business approach in line with customer experience, the practical evidence is quite positive. Top leadership ultimately makes decisions about the work environment, the kind of work, salaries and compensation and workload for the employees. The current organisational design does not offer employees an opportunity to become part of the company and to make them feel valued. Additionally, the level of support and training offered to the employees for the sustainable environment is quite low. In shaping positive customer experience, sustainability needs to be present at all levels of functional, managerial and operational level procedures. The top to bottom leadership exercised in luxury sector organisations fails to connect the internal and external factors necessary to drive sustainable business practices. For example, training opportunities offered to employees are not aligned with their individual needs, but rather are set to enhance the knowledge and skills of employees in direct proportion to the decisions of the top leaders.

For this reason, the current holistic practices adopted for customer experience can affect hotel performance through increased customer satisfaction and increased profitability. There is a direct relationship between holistic practices and customer experience and the benefits of such a relationship can only be reaped when the business practices are aligned according to the needs of the operating, supporting and managerial processes, respectively. The concept of sustainability has not been fully embraced within the hospitality sector, despite the fact that there is a strong desire for a sustainable environment.

Additionally, the market is not ready for the successful implementation of holistic practices. This study has also found that the discounted link between the top management and employees should be bridged.

Research Objective #5: To formulate guidelines to enhance business sustainability in the luxury hospitality sector

To ensure the successful accomplishment of Research Objective 5, specific guidelines have been developed for enhancing business sustainability in the hospitality sector. Firstly, the study has confirmed the need to bridge the gap between current practice and the theoretical model of sustainability, based on the Six Sigma approach. By integrating the Six Sigma approach with the business policies, organisations would be able to set out a clear roadmap for the implementation of holistic practices. Luxury sector businesses should consider a set of practices for the development of long-lasting customer experience. These practices should include activities for reducing process cycle times by training employees, reducing pollution through reduced waste management, reducing production costs by streamlining the current procedures with the use of technology. Additionally, in pursuance of the Six Sigma process, the hospitality sector can increase customer satisfaction by targeting the gap between expectation and experience. Elements of tangibility should be combined with intangibility. It is extremely important that the procedures and practices are aligned to target the senses, behaviours and functional attributes of products and services and hospitality organisations.

Additionally, employee satisfaction should be given central importance in holistic business practices. The guidelines developed using the Six Sigma approach can provide great insights into the need to drive employee satisfaction using technological and operational processes. The managerial processes should be modified to involve employees in setting the direction, coordinating, integrating and controlling the overall organisation in a collaborative manner. Employees should be encouraged to share ideas with top management by allowing them effective utilisation of social media, technologies and sustainability initiatives. All these initiatives should be linked together to achieve the profitability objectives. Skills and leadership programs should be offered to staff as a part of the strategic goal in order to enhance productivity and sustainability of the organisational design. The study has confirmed that hospitality processes and procedures should consider innovation and emerging trends, involve customers' expectations, employee motivation, productivity, customer satisfaction and sustainable business.

It is important to connect the sustainability goals with holistic business practices in line with the strategy of the luxury hospitality sector.

The practices should not only be responsive to the environmental sustainability concept, but the guidelines should also consider the implementation of all the four dimensions of the holistic approach, namely environmental, social, cultural and economic. Both internal and external environmental factors should be considered to drive sustainable business practices respectively.

As a final conclusion, the relationship between the independent, dependent and mediating variables can be summarised. The theoretical and empirical findings gathered from the luxury hospitality sector organisations in UAE have informed that at present the business practices and procedures employed by the organisations are not completely holistic. Consequently, the impact of the currently employed holistic approach is not altogether positive on their customer satisfaction and customer experience. Organisations are not focusing on the holism approach.

Holistic business practice – customer satisfaction – customer experience

With respect to current holistic business practices employed in UAE's luxury sector organisations, currently, only economic and environmental decisions are recognised as the preferences given by managers. Consequently, the lack of cultural and social focus in the business practices ultimately reduces customer satisfaction and negatively impacts the customer experience.

Holistic business procedures – customer satisfaction – customer experience

With respect to the current holistic business procedures adopted in UAE's luxury sector organisations, the focus is mainly placed on the supporting and managerial processes rather than on the operating processes. At present, innovation, technology and creativity are visible in increasing marketing and selling efficiencies as well as improving managerial processes such as human resource management, technology and others. The luxury sector organisations have failed to identify the connectivity between these three procedures. The limited use of technology at the managerial level for gleaning customer feedback and for dispersing

marketing messages ultimately reduces customer satisfaction and negatively impacts the customer experience.

Customers' expectations – customer satisfaction – customer experience

With regard to the current customer' expectations in the UAE's luxury sector organisations, the focus is placed on the tangibility elements. Innovative brands and services are offered to the luxury sector customers to satisfy their functional level needs. The lack of emotional and behavioural focus results in the corresponding lack of delivery of services beyond the existing level of customer's expectations. To a certain extent, this is contributing to reduced customer satisfaction and customer experience.

Employee motivation and productivity – customer satisfaction – customer experience

With respect to employee motivation and productivity, the top to bottom leadership approach is adversely affecting the feelings of connectivity of the employees with their respective organisations. The luxury hospitality sector employees do not feel themselves as connected and part of their organisations. Lack of individualised training and participation in decision-making create to significant barriers to increased employee motivation. The consequences of demotivated employees can be seen in the reduced customer satisfaction and customer experience.

Employees Sustainability – customer satisfaction – customer experience

Lastly, with respect to the independent variable of sustainability, luxury sector organisations in the UAE consider economic sustainability and ecological sustainability as the key pillars. They do not consider all the stakeholders' needs while implementing sustainability practices. This has impacted the level of customer satisfaction and customer experiences in these organisations.

The negative relationship between customer satisfaction and customer experience in UAE hospitality sector organisations requires business and regulatory actors to recognise their roles in adopting a holistic approach by integrating everyone from all the dimensions of sustainability. In this regard, a set of recommendations, managerial implications and conceptual model as set out in this chapter would be helpful.

The achievement of the research objectives substantiates the successful accomplishment of the current research. The next section of this chapter provides practical recommendations to actors in the luxury hospitality sector in the UAE.

5.1 Recommendations

The following set of recommendations can provide great insight to the managers of the luxury hospitality sector.

- Firstly, luxury hospitality organisations should consider a holistic leadership approach to include people from all the levels in the idea-sharing and decision-making process.

- Personnel training should be given priority in order to boost human resource potential without the fear of staff turnover.

- Since the luxury sector hospitality organisations target customers based on their lifestyle and capability to pay high prices for the hospitality experience offered, managers should therefore consider collecting tangible and intangible attributes together. Along with food, rooms and customer services, customers should be offered multisensory marketing, cultural perceptions and brand experience. Customers should be considered as part of the decision-making process by connecting them to the business through all touch points, including physical as well as technological channels.

- The use of social media, as well as a traditional marketing approach, should be promoted among employees to deliver co-created products and designs. Employees should be trained to increase their potential and competence in dealing with local and global customers. Employees should be trained to communicate in different languages, to deal with different types of customers and through different communication channels.

- Currently, luxury sector organisations place low focus on loyal customers. In this regard, they are paying a high amount for attracting the target market new customers every time. Setting customer loyalty as a criterion for measuring customer satisfaction can help the luxury sector of UAE to lower their cost of business. The ultimate benefit of reducing marketing expenditure would flow to the customers, who would be charged competitively low prices with extensive service offerings.

- Delivery of production servers should be based on the customer's need for authentic experiences. Authentic experience for the customers in the luxury sector organisation is the only way to decide whether the both products and services offered comply with their customers' expectations.

- It is important to consider that the customers of the luxury hospitality industry are not as price sensitive as those of other product and service organisations. Luxury sector customers require the satisfaction of their sensory, operational, as well as functional level, to be fulfilled. They want to create a long-lasting image of the experience. Therefore, the set of products and services offered to such customers should be not only in terms of tangible but also in intangible terms.

- Luxury sector organisations should consider benchmarking as a routine strategy in order to increase their understanding about their competitors, not only in the local environment but also from an international perspective. It is generally presumed that hospitality organisations do not share their secrets with their competitors. However, by approaching the loyal customers of competitors through improved products and services, luxury brands can also access secret information about their business procedures. Even though these customers are not able to share trade secrets, they can still provide helpful insights into the company, including strategy related to pricing, security, cleanliness and staff attitudes.

- Contemporary departmentalisation can provide great support to the hospitality organisations in connecting the production, service delivery, marketing, administration, customer service, and others together. This set of contemporary departments compared to the traditional food and accommodation-related departments would provide a great opportunity for managers to evaluate the performance of different operational and functional areas collectively, as well as individually. Departmentalisation also offers an assessment of the practices of the employees of the different departments, which allows the identification of fraudulent activity.

- By using an extranet or conference meetings on a periodic basis, staff can be involved in decision-making.

- Organisations should consider accessibility of the holistic products in a broader international market rather than only relying on the UAE's limited market. For example, the use of media technologies, training and procedures can be made by approaching the international suppliers of these holistic products. It is likely that this can provide cost-effective acquisition of holistic products for luxury sector organisations.

- The role of regulatory policies cannot be overlooked in encouraging voluntary sector organisations to develop an accurate and comprehensive operational environment.

- Sustainable practices by the organisation should be parallel to the cultural needs of the customers. It is important to understand that both the national as well as international level customers utilise the UAE's luxury sector. Holistic business practices should be responsive to the individual cultural needs of different customers rather than relying on the home culture alone. For instance, food and accommodation as key products of the hospitality offered to the guest must be designed via a personalised approach. Likewise, the use of technology should be considered after understanding the level of acceptance by various

customer types. It is likely that some businesses would be required to provide training to their customers regarding the use of operational technologies offered as a part of their services, such as using billing systems , feedback systems and others.

- As demonstrated in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two, luxury sector organisations in the UAE should consider adopting different novel technologies to make customers feel as though they are part of the company. The set of technologies recommended include phone-as-key-cards, mobile self-check-in, mobile booking, self-service check-in kiosks, lobby media panels, electronic luggage tags, bring-your-own device, bring-your-own content platforms, smartphone boarding passes, hotel service optimisation systems, and guest device connectivity tools (Bilgihan & Nejad, 2015).

- Customers should be offered tours of the kitchen and production areas to allow them to assess the preparation, cooking, hygiene and finishing of the organisation's products. Their engagement can provide them with a high level of customer experience, which is necessary for customer loyalty in the long term.

- Innovation is a key to success, whether in the form of technological, operational or human resource levels. Technology offers a great role in supporting the business organisations' connection with all stakeholders. For example, data analytics or big data opportunities can be used to collect information from employees, customers and regulatory bodies to enable the creation of innovative service design.

- Additionally, ecological footprints besides other dimensions of the sustainability or holistic approach should be given significant attention. For instance, taking part in the green initiatives introduced by the government of the UAE can allow hospitality organisations to improve their brand image in the eye of global customers.

- The positive reception of technology can only be attained by providing confidence via training to the employees. They should also be motivated to stay in their positions after training rather than switching towards new opportunities with competitors in the market. However, the role of management cannot be undermined in this context. Leadership can motivate employees to stay in their organisation for the long term.

- Besides promotions and offers, hospitality organisations should consider offering loyalty programs such as redemption points to confirm that customers are valued by their service provider. Loyalty should be treated as a strong criterion for the measurement of customer satisfaction. Loyal customers not only make substantial purchases with similar brands but also contribute to dispersing the message about the business brand in front of others. Loyal customers can be regarded as an approach to implement a word-of-mouth strategy.

- All these recommended strategies can only be implemented practically when the employees are motivated towards such implementation. It is the responsibility of leaders to motivate and satisfy their employees so that they ready to contribute to the holistic business practices objective.

5.2 Implication for Managers

The recent scientific literature has raised concerns about whether the adoption of holistic business practices can help organisations in different sectors to attain the goals of overall sustainability and stakeholders' approach. Specifically, the hospitality sector has not received any attention regarding the implementation of holistic business practices and procedures for the delivery of memorable customer experience. The findings of this empirical investigation have significant implications for the managers of the luxury hospitality organisations of UAE. Both the theoretical and empirical findings have provided possible suggestions for improvement in the current practices of hospitality organisations. Luxury customers do not require low price products, rather they search for the

production services which can represent their lifestyles and emotional expectations. However, the delivery of such production services is impossible without the involvement of all the stakeholders performing together for the accomplishment of the shared goal, namely. holism, total sustainability or Six Sigma.

5.3 Suggestion for Future Research

The current research was based on the deductive approach and qualitative data method, which limits the use of quantitative data assessment in analysing the holistic business practices of the UAE luxury sector. Future research can take advantage of this opportunity to carry out a statistical or quantitative analysis of the outcomes and benefits reaped by UAE luxury sector organisations in implementing holistic business practices. By assessing the impacts of such practices on the aspects such as customers and their spending habits, waste management, carbon footprint, employee productivity, profitability and repeat purchases would further clarify the effectiveness of holistic business practices. Simultaneously, mixed research could be carried out to correlate the findings of qualitative and quantitative data together to reach an appropriate conclusion.

Moreover, future researchers could also opt for a comparative analysis of the UAE luxury sector organisations with those of other Middle Eastern, European or Asian countries. Such analysis would further assist in identifying the similarities and differences in the policies and the internal and external environments supporting or obstructing the implementation of holistic business practices. The current findings only relate to a single specific country and the individual cultural and national level differences cannot be overlooked when assessing the current mood of holistic practices. In this regard, future researchers could also investigate the perspective of industry authorities or regulatory bodies, which will further help in identifying the root causes of the current problems.

From the review of the literature gathered in Chapter Two, it can be concluded that the level of support offered to the luxury sector organisations in the UAE is mainly associated with economic performance. In this regard, it is extremely important that luxury sector authorities should provide their opinions and perceptions regarding the areas of improvement in the gaps and the industry practices relative to international stakeholders.

5.4 Limitation

As with all research, there were certain limitations which should be identified in order to generalise the research findings. Firstly, the geographical location of the investigation was set in United Arab Emirates. The findings of the investigation pertain to the internal and external environmental factors in the national and market environments of the UAE. These factors can differ in different countries due to the variation in political, economic, technological, legal and social factors, as well as the differences in the internal organisational practices. Such differences can limit the implementation of the current research findings to other countries of the world. It is suggested to analyse the macro- and micro-environment of the specific country prior generalising the findings of the current investigation pleaded with holistic business practices in luxury sector organisations. Additionally, the use of qualitative data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews and observation might have imposed the influence of researcher's personal experience of hospitality on the findings. However, great care was exercised in shaping the research questions and assessing the validity and reliability of the questionnaire before carrying out primary investigation with the luxury sector participants to eliminate any partiality or bias.

5.5 Conceptual Model

The overall findings of the research can be integrated to develop a conceptual model. The model given below exhibits the successful accomplishment of Research Objective 1, namely. to draw up a conceptual framework linking the key research variables together:. holistic business practices and luxury hospitality sector. The conceptual model provides a summary of the factors where improvement is needed in the UAE luxury hospitality sector to drive holistic practices, sustainability or total stakeholder perspective. The conceptual model indicates how by focusing on the contextual factors, the luxury hospitality organisations can shape an effective leadership approach. Such a holistic leadership approach would ultimately help to connect the operational, supporting and managerial processes together in order to drive employee motivation and productivity and to shape supportive regulatory policy guidelines. All three aspects will further assist in achieving the objectives of the four dimensions of sustainability, consequently resulting in positive implications.

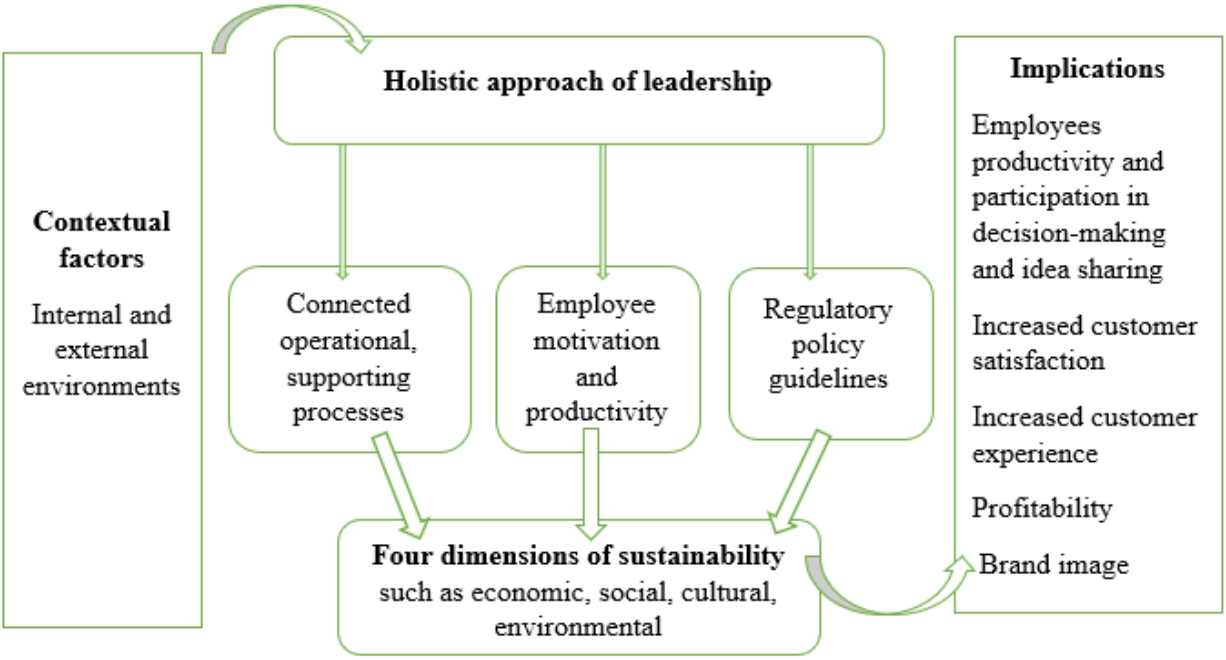


FIGURE 25: CONCEPTUAL MODEL

5.6 Summary

The current holistic business approach shows that the luxury hospitality industry is considerably fragmented. Most organisations pursue a traditional business approach, in which there is a lack of engagement from operational level employees. Both the UAE and global luxury hospitality industries identify the significance of a holistic approach to customer experience. Moreover, customer satisfaction is also given significant importance. UAE's luxury sector merely considers customer satisfaction as a result of customer experience. Hotel managers, therefore, focus on the fulfilment of customer demands by offering them different features such as quality food, clean supplies, and a welcoming environment.

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APPENDIX

Participant Information Sheet

1.Research Project Title

An Empirical Research on the Impact of Holistic Business Approach on Customer Experience in UAE Luxury Hospitality Industry

2. Invitation

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide to do so, it is important you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

The study is intended to bridge the research gap by highlighting the need to optimize all the four factors making the holistic approaches i.e. environmental, social, cultural, and economic decisions. The study aims to show the interdependence of these four factors on each other to create a unique 'whole' for the luxury sector businesses. Specifically, the business managers and Directors in the luxury hospitality sector of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are the main study subjects. The focus is placed therefore on the business measures and customers' experience.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because being coming from a Hospitality background and worked in UAE for almost 15 to 20 years as General manager, F&B Manager and Director of various hotels , you will have knowledge about the Area of my research and will be able to share and contribute towards the body of knowledge and add a purpose to this research.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be able to keep a copy of this information sheet and you should indicate your agreement to the consent form sent by email. You can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be asked to give an interview which we estimate will take you 1hour to 90minutes. You may also wish to agree to a follow-up interview to find out more about your approach.

7. What do I have to do?

You will need to give an interview based on the questions relevant to the research topic. There are no other commitments or lifestyle restrictions associated with participating.

8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. The potential physical and/or psychological harm or distress will be the same as any experienced in everyday life

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will have a beneficial impact on the hospitality sectors in terms of sustainability and management approach. This will add to the body of knowledge and will open a platform for further research in this field .Results will be shared with participants in order to inform their professional work.

10. What happens if the research study stops earlier than expected?

Should the research stop earlier than planned and you are affected in any way we will tell you and explain why.

11. What if something goes wrong?

If you have any complaints about the project in the first instance you can contact any member of the research team. If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the University (UWTSD) to take your complaint further. See the details below.

12. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified or identifiable in any reports or publications. Your organization will also not be identified or identifiable. Any data collected about you during the interview will be stored online in a form protected by passwords and other relevant security processes and technologies.

Data collected may be shared in an anonymised form to allow reuse by the research team and other third parties. These anonymised data will not allow any individuals or their institutions to be identified or identifiable.

13. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

You will be recorded while interviewing with permission being gained from you prior to the interview.

14. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

During the interview we will ask you about your opinions and current practices in relation to Hospitality sector in UAE and customer experience .Your views and experience are just what the project is interested in exploring.

15. What will happen to the results of the research project?

Results of the research will be published. You will not be identified in any report or publication. Your organization or company will not be identified in any report or publication. If you wish to

16. Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is self-funded

17. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically Reviewed by Dr.Paul Reynolds my lead supervisor and Director of research under the strict guidelines and policies & procedures of University of Wales Trinity Saint David London

18. Contacts for further information

Dr. PAUL REYNOLDS email : Paul.Reynolds@lsclondon.co.uk OR plrphd12@gmail.com

Signature of the participant: ……

Thank you for taking part in this research.

Letter of consent

Title of the study

An Empirical Research on the Impact of Holistic Business Approach on Customer Experience in UAE Luxury Hospitality Industry

I confirm that I have read and understood the information about the Research as provided in the Participant Information Sheet dated [06/12/2018].

I confirm that that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and the researcher has answered any questions about the study to my satisfaction.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.

I understand that I can withdraw my data from the study at any time.

I understand that any information recorded in the investigation will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.

I consent to use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving as explained in the Participant Information Sheet.

I consent to being audio interviews being recorded as part of the project Yes/ No

I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant and Date Signature:

Researcher and Date Signature :

Semi Structured Interview Questionnaire

1. How would you explain your organization design as Traditional or Contemporary?
2. What measures are taken to deliver the enhanced experience to customer?
3. How does your hotel ensure to achieve high customer satisfaction?
4. What criteria does your hotel use to measure customer satisfaction?
5. Did your hotel adopt holistic business practice to improve the customer experience?
6. What are those holistic business practices that your hotel has adopted?
7. How long has it been since the hotel management adopted a holistic approach?
8. What is the role of technology in implementing holistic approach in your hotel?
9. How does holistic business practice affect the customer experience in your hotel?
10. What is the role that holistic business practice plays in achieving customer satisfaction in your hotel?
11. How does your hotel link luxury products and services with sustainable business practices? Please provide examples.
12. What is the role of employees in the successful adoption of holistic business practice?
13. What is the effect of holistic business practice on the employees' morale?
14. How is holistic business practice aligned with the strategic goal of your hotel?
15. What effect of organisational design do you find on holistic business practice of the hotel?
16. How does holistic business practice affect the overall performance of the hotel?
17. How does customer experience of holistic business practice affect the business sustainability of your hotel?
18. In your opinion, what is the gap in the existing holistic business practice of your hotel?
19. In your opinion, how can your hotel improve customer satisfaction by changing the current holistic business practice?
20. In your opinion, what measures should the hotel management be taken to ensure that its business strategies are aligned with sustainability growth?

INTERVIEWS

First one is free or preferential rate to arranging for celebration for a particular guest even if there's a couple coming in. We do provide free amenities such as giving them cake or you know different kinds of cocktails. If we do have government officials or VIP or even celebrities, we do get a physical line up where there's an are aides who will be standing all by the entrance. And it is one of the top-level managers that will be assisting the guests to the rooms. And moreover the other measures what we do tend to do is by giving in like luxurious transportation to particular place maybe airport drop off or pick up you know and also try to get the feedbacks related to it which can actually substantiate guest reactions or be nervous about it.

[00:04:29] Okay great. So how do you measure customer satisfaction.

[00:04:44] So if I'm analyzing with the other properties from mine, they do have various tools OK that can measure it. And For us let me speak of the property where I work and so we do have an interactive website that has got A lot of information and updated status of the new offers that we bring in. We also try to e mail the repeated guests who would like to come and experience the new concept and through the web site which is connected with several third-party portal we try to get in feedbacks. Now when we talk about feedbacks what I've liked from the other models is most of the time when the checkout is happening I guess that is the time when the feedback session is actually taken note of the feedback section 2 can be taken either by a manager or by the receptionist is there for us. We also take it a day prior to the departure. The reason why they take it is because we tried to model it in a different way so to get the departed details to breed or change anything. On top of that they do ask for feedback to how their state was in particular. So, for example if a particular customer didn't like something, we tried to give them something complimentary or even give a voucher for their next visit so the unsatisfaction doesn't breed and they are happy before they leave.

[00:06:49] Exactly. Yep.

[00:07:04] So did you put an adopt holistic business practice to improve the customer experience.

[00:07:14] It's yes and no. Ok. I will have to tell you via a small brief on the history. OK. Before I was into the new management. So apparently till 2017 we had such a management where a holistic approach business practice was complete and used in it.

So, the management was quite strong in that for any decisions or any concepts introduced would first be given to or explained to the low level of management which is the low-level employees of this is the blue collar and white collar. So, we used to have kind of a discussion a one- or two-day discussion review it according to the aspects of it.

It's going to be false or it's going to be positive or what are the changes done has to be required to be introduced in it. So, by giving us this particular criterion for empowerment most of the employees they used to stay longer. Staff turnover was very less. Great. So yeah. So, this is what happened till 2017.So now in 2018 the whole system changed because we don't have the full management anymore, so the holistic approach just left instead it's completely into silo management. Okay. Now if you tell me what happened to the new ones is for the first reason is because of the pressure of export 2020. If the management is deciding on a product decision or an offset, He/she wouldn't let us know. They wouldn't or that the management wouldn't allow us to think or react or give a suggestion if this would be good enough or not. Nothing of this would happen. Well for the low-level employees it's as a trial and error method. So, if anything happens, they will not be responsible for it at the end and this week we'll be taking the burden.

Okay so now we have the Expo 2020 coming in. So apparently the property would be under a lot of pressure where they are trying to find investors to put in a lot of share and stakeholders as well. OK so right now what the market is doing what the government is or doing is trying to initiate a fee. We have different nationalities trying to invest based on the share of money or be happy under the country was trying to bring in technology. This can actually reflect on the entire country as such but for me I would collectively call it as an economical and technological to understand.

[00:11:09] Ok so how has it been since there were 10 adopted and they this as you said that they adopted a holistic approach and then they finished in about. So how many years did you have that holistic approach.

[00:11:24] I would say for about 10 to 15 years. I would say for about 10 to 15 years we had this approach and now its traditional approach I mean very silo management.

[00:11:28] Okay. And was that the time when the business was flourishing and the never repeat customers and everything.

[00:11:34] Was that a pattern. Yes, totally true. And we did have a lot of customers who prolonged their stay for about more than a year. Oh okay. It was like really long stay.

[00:11:49] Okay I understand. So, what does the role of technology in the hotel industry.

[00:12:00] Sorry I didn't get you.

[00:12:01] What do you get all of technology.

[00:12:04] Well. OK. Got it. So, the role of technology that we totally get is by implementing quite a few of a number of tools an aspect too. So, let me rephrase the sentence. Yes. So, as we all know that the technology or a business is granted to four different sectors. It can be social and cultural based on It can go through the technological aspect as well. So, for technology what's being have is still old tradition. So, the old concept is still run in the family. We have not tried to implement advanced technology until today apart from our interactive web site.

[00:13:01] Why could they have not adopted. Considering that the technology is moving at such a fast pace.

[00:13:07] Why do you think is it anything to be related with the logical approach or is it something else.

[00:13:15] Well the management the current management is fine too. First, he wants to actually categorize the whole segments of the departments before he goes into technology. Well that is really a wrong approach. Understand. And any of our solutions we tried to approach to the management is never listen. So, most of the time when just customers at this rate when they have complaints regarding technology, they're not ready to listen and understand. I don't think they see this as a threat, but they are behind.

[00:13:54] How does holistic business practice affect your customer experience in the hotel. Now you could give me some examples from the time that you had holistic approach at the hotel for the time. Yes PBL. How did you come back to your customer experience in the hotel?

[00:14:10] That's a good one.

[00:14:13] Well I would say the most in my previous experience with previous management is the holistic approach approaches. The reason is we did have a good mix of plan of action and this plan is being shared to almost every department.

You know when we analyze what is happening externally and what's happening internally there's two different sites. So, when we talk about the holistic approach.

Well I could say that the development in the hotel used to come in quite often. Well there are a lot of changes that used to happen often depending on the market so how the customer wants and how the consuming needs are used to get that done in the in the property. So, let's say you for example we know what the basic things that customer need. It's not important that he can that person can get from anywhere from any time. I understand. But there's something on his attention to detail or personalized service instead of the guest taking care of himself. What if we take care of that then for the entire stay? Understand what the person says. OK. Get what they want and how they want. Maybe they want to develop or redevelop something in the room ask for their preferences and get that done which most the hotels of the year I've known is not giving them that much attention. In my previous company what I would say is as an employee I was given the empowerment to actually design a put group based on the culture. Ok.

Cultural aspects. And so, for example if I have 10 rooms given to me, I can actually design each room depending on the cultural aspect of a particular country. If it is yes if it is run that comes with the Arabic culture. Yes, I can design based on that. It becomes on American. Yes, I can do that. You know we can even apply social sciences to it. That's how incredible it was. And depending on what the customer needs when we see increased prices because that's what we have to understand but unfortunately this is not the case now so as mentioned we had long staying and quality customers with our previous management so definitely lack of this approach no has become a question of sustainability for our organization.

[00:17:21] So how do you measure employee satisfaction that you go to now moving on from customers. How do you measure employee satisfaction at your hotel?

[00:17:33] Well that's pretty tricky. Why do you think it's tricky?

[00:17:41] It's when it's considering employee satisfaction and so it can be a major downfall at times. Understood. OK. Yeah. OK so employee satisfaction is taken based on yearly meetings but the line managers meeting.

[00:18:07] So it's not a monthly or weekly meeting.

[00:18:09] No. I make yearly. OK. Yeah. AP If there is. OK so positive there is in the big area is that an employee has made in the punishment.

[00:18:23] Or I suppose saying warning has been given the same time. It will not be taken for what not for the following month or for the following year. But the feedback session for the employee on what he or she wants to say happens on an hourly basis. That's what is getting much downsizing the company overall. And to be in particular the interaction with the employee to us line managers or even top understatements are completely ignored. So, since our management is completely saleable, I would say that the benefits are even decreasing. And that also is on depending on the scale of the salaries what they receive. Because right now happening is the law at a normal level. Employees are being considered. I know it's racist, but I should say it's the customer like slaves. All my aunts want to wear.

[00:19:34] Yeah. Oh yeah, I can hear you. Yeah, I'm kind of echoing the right.

[00:19:41] Okay great. Okay. Yeah.

[00:19:47] We are being considered as slaves the on base oddly I level as well. I understand because the main managers under talk are coming from a particular country. They have a product that they experience, and they always form one team. Oh, and for them it's like you know union. That's how it runs. OK. So, when they have a high level of salary scale given. And the question is why the lower level employees are not considered the same. I understand OK it's a little bit disgusting to be said. And the worst part is the knowledge and experience we will be having cannot be justified with the managers as you say completely understand.

[00:20:48] So that's that. That's the only way of making your employee satisfaction it's once in a yes.

[00:20:53] And that's it. Yeah. Once in the. That's it. Yeah.

[00:21:00] Yeah. So. And we have. So, if an employee suppose he wants to share his ideas to be the next possible. Which is quite rare to happen is worth the age? Ha. Oh yeah. No. That depends on the topic. Depends on psychological approach. It doesn't depend on professional ethics that starts to be implemented or that new requires to be shared.

[00:21:31] Understand. OK cool. All right.

[00:21:35] What more is that. Like you said there was like holistic business practice for a few years younger tech. So, what was the effect on the employee's morale at that time then you had policy business practice at your hotel.

[00:21:51] Well we did have, or we didn't have professional etiquette okay. We used to receive training during those point of time. We used to be reviewed by the management and how we were actually looking on. OK. There was a proper communication between the departments which is really good set back to her. And we always considered ourselves as one family rather than ten different departments they understand. They used to work together for anything. And if suppose we don't know something; we had a person to ask even if it's from the other department or he just level anything. So, they were ready to help in any manner they could.

[00:22:44] Are like a maybe functional unit that everybody knew what everybody was doing, and it was their understanding together. Exactly. OK. And did you notice that during that time the staff turnover was very low and there was more productivity.

[00:23:02] That's a whole key. So once if the management is really good at having his holistic approach then obviously the customers would be satisfied. Through our employees see if you do remember the statement of what Richard Branson the CEO of Virgin Atlantic had said Follow You Follow your employees more training on employees and the customers will obviously follow. Yeah that's the kind of statement that we all want in to do in life. I understand. So. So during those times of holistic approach you used to get in it and more motivation huh. On a motivational aspect. Yes. We used to get that a lot and then other stands training aspects we used to get. And of course, the more training that we get the more productivity we have.

[00:24:10] I understand.

[00:24:12] So when you have support all of India have such an it's so what our management used to do on a occur on every quarterly basis we used to get training modules based on what the on the job profound what we have. And apart from that upgrading our souls to a better opportunity. So asked to nurture the same so as to nurture the customers to get a better satisfaction for the entire state. So for this reason what we used

to do is we used to create our own ideas implemented and that's what we call the wowing the guests and the San.

[00:25:02] So at your hotel how does your hotel link luxury products and services with sustainable business practices like do you use any kind of amenities. That is all eco-friendly. Reduce carbon. You say. So what are the measures that you have taken.

[00:25:23] Well our luxury products are not sustainable. At a minimum guess what. You have. The products that we have it's not a bio product. It's mostly chemical and the kind of products that we sell is more costly than you buy the products. Okay so if you compare with hotels in Sweden or other countries sustainability is highly measured. Yes. Yes. So then those properties it can be done because fit is implanted from the start it cannot be converted from an existing retail to a sustainable Hotel. Now you know what I mean. So it's like you're already having a non- biological product that you want to get that converted into a bio. It's requires huge investment and a time. The products we had 15 years ago wasn't bio products. Yeah. And we did. OK. So a few of the cost we reduced now is through electricity. So for example the bulbs we use consume less energy which reduces the costs on electricity and water. It's the same we recycle because mostly in Dubai we don't have a fresh water apart from underground. Understand. So what happens is the recycling they recycle it from the sea taking out the salt and giving us fresh water. So it's already a kind of recycle eco-friendly aspect of water. Exactly. It's for the water. It's done. If you tell me about the food products what we have before and what we have now is entirely different being used to have organic products Yes of course for the meat and chicken to an extent these used to happen farm produced. It's a farm produce even eggs some produce again. OK. And to have a sustainability in the business what you need to have is a plan growing trees and even donating to a particular for charity. OK. And of course donating or growing up. We do have turtle rehabilitation center which is seen as sustainable practice and that is good for the brand.

[00:29:24] That's a very good practice.

[00:29:26] Yes. That would be your measures like you know towel you say it has to be reviewed. There you go. What is the message that you give to your customers about? Tell them you say that. Yeah.

[00:29:37] Tell me to be frank. We don't get it.

[00:29:40] Ok. Because it's a luxury. So you like to to people to use as many as.

[00:29:46] Yes. You tried to be when we don't recycle the old ones. We just throw it away and get the fresh ones don't understand.

[00:29:53] Ok. What is the role of organisations management like up of the top management data managers in the sustainability of a business?

[00:30:03] What do you think. Well.

[00:30:18] Ok. So at the current time if you tell me since most of banishment are under currently are no idle management what is the word sustainability cannot be put into matter.

[00:30:54] Well the implementation was quite easy, and I had said in my earlier statement it was all this sharing and caring. Okay. You know I was the main aspect for it. The previous management team but the current one is totally different. I mean there is an improper communication between you know the management or the department especially in decision making and they are supposed they do love to play ball which means throw the ball around and never take the blame. That all this time. So due to this reason we have business like lot of employees who have been falling under the militancy or forcing themselves to resign to end a career in full proof. But if you had Tell me about the previous management that did follow horizontal approach our turnover the revenue generation it was much more and balanced like you know between our job and the responsibilities that you have to take it off because if you have the management who is actually supporting us in the better way it is we can actually you know control on being there rather than throwing us out. It's a different aspect. But this silo approach has taken out the best part of working here as an employee and that’s what I do.

[00:32:37] I understand. OK.

[00:32:40] So how do you think the holistic business practices are aligned with the strategic goal of your hotel.

[00:32:53] can you repeat that again. I just lost it.

[00:32:55] How is holistic business practice aligned with the strategic goal of your hotel like a hotel would have a strategic goal of being profitable It wants to be expanding. So what do you think is the role of holistic business practice in that?

[00:33:10] Does it have a role or how is it in your opinion.

[00:33:16] Ok so if Holistic practice is put in two and if the silo management is taken out. Yes they do have a lot of chances to improve. We need to look into the needs of technology and economy aspects of the industry. OK. Since these two are the aspects for the market you know the holistic approach can actually Give us a good diversion. One improving the customer satisfaction. Yes it can actually balance the difference between the budget of the general expenses and the profit gained either on a quarterly more yearly basis than on depending on the how the strategy or the concept has been introduced. Then we also have new forms of KPI key performance indicators which can be taken either from the travel first or for career you know consultants and educate our employees for the betterment of the hotel. Okay in this in this way everyone can be confident enough to say that yes our company is the best I understand OK and really financially satisfy the company's goals at the moment we are kind of falling under the crisis. You know it's like just going under the bus OK, but a holistic approach is totally different. Current management is jumping from a crisis to double up revenue as a whole. So when our return on investment generate profits all then we can improve on a lot of things within the company itself, but this is not the case . We can also expect the returning customers to come back again .Our strategic goals are clearly not aligned it's as simple as that.

Q) Do you think the customers are moving towards the holistic approach as well?

A) The customers are very much aware now a days and they choose eco-friendly luxury resorts as they want to contribute towards the society in one or other way and they don't mind paying. They are very particular about the products they use even to level where they want to see happy staff. They are demanding so you need to be prepared to cater for that demand. Customers bring customers so for us that's the huge marketing tool. Customers ask various questions about chemical in pool, food in restaurant if its organic etc. as they expect it naturally to be organic for the price they pay.

[00:35:41] I understand. Right. How does your organization does impact the process and procedure of your hotel? Like you said 10 years before it was different now it is silo.

[00:35:53] So how what is the impact on the process and procedures of your hotel. Because of this management.

[00:36:02] Oh yeah. This Spanish bond is actually going to help. So. On if you've been you've when you talk about the technological aspect. Any waste of technologies. What we have is still set the same but not the fear talking but the customers the customers wait here before. There's no turning back. I don't listen because of the silo management. Now if a customer is having a negative feedback it's not promised to them. Amanda promises I never kept at the same time. And if I'm comparing with other properties that cool if they are having a holistic approach I would say holistic approach is mostly implemented in properties that are below 4 or Harvick below 4 stars. You know the reason is because the organization is less with number of rooms and the employee can be sustained easily.

[00:37:24] So.

[00:37:31] So if the person you know the person the problem with the procedures of you who is an example of decision making and all that stuff.

[00:37:40] How does it how does this holistic business approach in fact that your organization design. Basically the current organization design how this tragedy affects the decision-making process the implementation process.

[00:37:55] Well since our management is already a silo minimalistic approach. Well if we need to improve bring back our holistic approach and this will bring back the organization to life again the entire management should actually change. So right now if a guest is requesting for customized service it cannot be given because that particular employee can only take up to 3 to 4 customers request in a week, so one is lucky if they fall under this group. So if when the holistic approach comes back into action through Team turnover can be quite effective and the employee hierarchy can also change.

So there's a large gap at the moment. Yes there is indeed a huge one.

[00:39:38] So in your opinion how can you want an improved this gap.

[00:39:56]stop being a racist and stop supporting the employer's approach solutions should be given in short time. The management should listen to what the employees say. New Strategies should be implied

depending on how the market works. The management will have to share his ideas. Make trial run and try to implement slowly rather than you know putting the whole process in at once Started slowly and make it grow up and understand. What are the mistakes or what are these side effects?

So if you need to have a most diversified or strong department all these negatives should be actually taken out only through a holistic approach. We can actually do it.

Q)what is the role of technology in implementing such practice in your hotel?

A) Technology is the key. But as I said we are not innovative enough so I really can't speak from our organization point of view but can give my general opinion. Example if your pool is closed you would have updated your digital system or news displayed in screens or their mobiles to avoid frustration once they are physically here and find out. likewise educating customers on room services, water waste, Laundry use etc. and if we use technology as our communication tool it avoids conflicts because a staff member may not be able to spend that time communicating effectively but technology does. Same goes for on the day offers etc. Staff training can be easily done through technology use all those interactive sessions can be done on the go or at their own times. PDP online portals can assist in reducing staff turnover in many ways. So yes technology is the key as I said.

Q) What is the effect of holistic business practice on employee morale?

A) It plays a very important role again I will talk through my personal experience when I belonged to my organization 15 years ago. We have Goal setting and this goal setting gave us a personal development plan and our vision was embedded in the company's vision, so we had a say and we had our personal growth. We got staff discount vouchers for our performance we were treated as guests not as just employees. Our cultural background was taken into consideration. It was a platform where everyone could flourish no matter what background they hailed from and this impacted the productively staff were more friendly and comfortable and staff turnover as obvious was very low, but revenue was high. This all changed with the new management. No one is happy to come to work they feel demoralized. Trainings all needs to pay for by the employee and we are not allowed to use any of the facilities we are strangers to our own workplace. So overall a holistic approach needs to come back for thus business to flourish.

Q) What do you think is the role of an employee in actually implementing the vision of the management?

A) They play the majority of the part so if they are embedded in the vision they will transmit it in a positive way. Its only through them that the organization can successfully implement changes or new developments. They are the customer facing people ,they are the ones who interreact

with the customers and they get the feedback so it's crucial that the employees understand and are in line with the company's vision.

Q) What effect of organizational design do you find on holistic business practice of the hotel?

A) It goes without saying that if you have a leader who has an open-door policy with no hierarchy it will be a sustainable business with happy staff and happy customers. Everyone is involved in the process and procedures making of the hotel and implantation is easy as I mentioned previously but again I can't speak on behalf of my current organization as this organization design has ruined the business as a whole. My colleagues have left and its only me left due to personal issues and parental pressure the customers are misled both by staff and company. By staff because they are not happy and they seek every opportunity to convert this message to customers and the company portrays it in a very good light which is not the actual case and customers do realize it once they are here and this is evident that we do not have repeat customers and it's not up to affordability. We were once upon a time the most expensive hotel bit this is not the case anymore our clients are going to Jumeirah group and one and only etc.

Q) Did you think the staff was forced to adopt it or was it naturally that your team was educated, and they supported it?

A) We don't have holistic approach in the hotel neither we are trained in any of those. We need to pay for any extra training and the training the hotel gives us are due to the fact that they want us to implement it positivity, but it's not associated to holistic approach or sustainability its more customer service etc. very basic. The customer service will naturally improve if they take care of the staff they will not need to invest in training for that.

Q)Do the company spend on cross training of employees?

A) Well trainings are only based on certain areas because some kind of training that what we are receiving is not of what an employee should expect. Usually the training is really expensive, and we need to pay for that. But there is a 3 day free training And the management actually thinks that this particular training can actually improve or give us more knowledge about the hotel experiences and how to approach a guest in a different way rather than our self-approach and this is a complete waste of time as they are trying to make us robots rather than bringing our best individual aspects out. . So what the property is trying to do is you

know have a plant in a stagnant area not making us think but to go prosper what and how they needs So if we are based on that level and have a process of creating to inspire guest the management will not train us and economy is to be blamed for that which I don't understand. Just to give my example when I belonged to previous management is started as a receptionist but now I am a butler for VIP section and I enjoy that and when I approached my manager for a personal development plan he recognized my caliber and gave me the opportunity but now I am stagnant for past 15 years no growth at all and this is due to the scary atmosphere where everyone is afraid to lose their jobs and they put their head down and work as directed my management.

[00:44:15] You know when you talk about this holistic approach these books about the economic impact. So what do you think is the economic impact if we have a holistic business holistic approach?

[00:44:28] Yeah.

[00:44:28] Just imagine you had that holistic approach in your hotel workers with economic effects the economic how would the economy affect this holistic approach.

[00:44:39] Well we would be transforming into generating a double revenue. OK. That's what the first criteria. The second would be competing against the international markets. How about the domestic as well? We would try to make the company much stronger by giving more importance to the sales and marketing trying to get the high spend customers to know what our property is and to serve it better so that you know it's the it's from the customers. The word of mouth goes I'm one out the tap. I'll be or how that management company as well.

[00:45:31] I understand. So think we established a holistic approach in hotels.

[00:45:35] We assist in the reduction of the product production costs. For example like you know your plane your staff at our might this good that would impact the production cost of offer.

[00:45:50] The production costs wouldn't affect that much because at the moment we're trying to reduce costs as much as we can. The reason is because since we are entering into the event of Expo 2020 yes most

of the hotel years they do know what would happen in the future. Well to my analysis what I can say is after this event is done then there would be a major crash in finance. OK. And the financial aspect. So but this reason most of most of the properties what they do is reduce costs as much as they can internally so that they can withstand that the following year crisis.

[00:46:41] Right. OK. Got it. Now I have your final question here for you your opinion.

[00:46:47] This is absolutely your opinion just not even considering where you work or where you have what work measures the hotel manager can

Take for its sustainability.

[00:47:01] Ok. I would give you a thought as points. And so explaining it's an inventor you know that would be much clearer to you as well. Yes. So the first floor in the hotel is required to have a vision in creating an ecological environment when planting trees or go green. We're having a production plant put decompose food products or recycle bins. You know these are effective ones. The next one is reducing the cost effectiveness in electricity like how we had 15 years ago the same approach should be done here in this prison scenario as well reducing cost reducing electricity is one of the major factors that we are. So we still haven't done yet. Well we have re empathies from what we vegetable to what we are off now. The third thing is donating funds in natural habitat with the free access to the customers to understand to type of reserves that we have in the country. Fourth one would be fund raising with the infrastructure of what we have in comparison to the cultural and economy value. So if the management has a pretty good knowledge in providing these elements in would be good for the customers in building up a good rapport among themselves on the property. So understand the next one what you are what I would love to such just is to develop or recreate in kind of an arena to showcase the imperial or the medieval times that's kind of the history of the country or the emirate as a whole. So by giving this we can actually expedite to the customers to make them understand as to what Dubai is all about and how they can be implementing or giving in. Are ideas from what we had previously one in historical basis and to give future aspects.

[00:49:47] You know I understand.

[00:49:51] Yes. So these are my suggestions in it. And then my last point will be nurturing the customers children because in this time what I can say is that we have lot of children who are spending and who doesn't have any idea of how to reduce costs on based on the sustainability.

[00:50:18] They just would love to spend. You know. So it became advise them and help to nurture nature by reducing cost of living.

[00:50:31] And you know a growing aspect the aspects of what are what would be the future that would be holding.

[00:50:41] Yes. Based on nature. Come thinking. Goodness. Yeah. Big point intelligent. So that the children were raising the right now when they reached to a particular age.

Q) Is hospitality industry moving towards holistic approach in UAE?

A) Yes definitely. You see our business depends on European and UK customers and most of Europe and UK are into sustainability .Its less observed amongst the locals. If you are not into this sustainable trend your business will become a history in no time.

[00:50:54] They would make the mistake of spending too much on this one. Got it. Yeah I think I. Thank you very much. We have come to the end of this interview and thank you very much for your valuable time. Q..

F) Ok. So this to be we are going to talk about the holistic business approach. And I'm going to ask you a few questions. Based on your experience how would you explain the organization design as traditional or contemporary.

B) I think our organization is quite traditional in its structure.

B) We operate a global head office and then we oversee the individual International brands .It is structured in a very traditional way.

F) Ok what measures are taken to deliver the enhanced experience to your customers?

B) So we only obviously operating within the ultra-luxury leisure. So Guest expectation from us are obviously very high. So we have a number of checks and balances in place to ensure that we continue to live up to guest experience. So we work with a number of outside, third party agencies which conduct mystery shopping as well as our special monitoring agents to looking at TripAdvisor and other platforms like Feedback sites in terms of their experience. It's the engagement that's key to provide the service . So we really encourage feedback to reflect back on our service. Of course in today's social media world nothing escapes the attention of the Internet. So whether it's TripAdvisor or other forums in which we continually monitor, we actually have social media sensing tools which give us daily feedback on what's been posted what's being written tweeted. So it's being monitored continuously. We have a tool called every night which provides real time up to the minute feedback by aggregating all of the feedback from across all of the different social media channels and through the feedbacks we are able to reach the expectation of our ultra-luxury customers.

F) Right. How does your hotel ensure to achieve high customer satisfaction?

B) So the first way is each of our hotels has two mystery shoppers per year. We work with a company called the Milky Way and this is the first reference point which we use. The second reference point is guest feedback. So every guest who stays in a hotel is just invited to give direct feedback through a questionnaire. Finally as I said earlier customers reviews in third party web sites which are monitored continuously gives us a good indication of our areas of improvement.

F) Oh great. Did your hotel adopt holistic business practice to improve the customer experience?

B) As per your first question and you know yourself having worked in a hotel environment you know hotels are by nature very silo Yes. You have a very traditional. Hierarchical approach to management and leadership. General managers generally are not into operations, so they are there just to make decisions and then there is the executive team to oversee the operations and then each executive member is looking after his/her own area and departments are not very well connected. Spa and recreation are separate division likewise engineering and sales and marketing. So I think there is a lot actually to learn within the hotel sector since breaking down some of those .Traditional silos with which we grow up with and practice it wherever we go or are forced to follow it. You do your work experience in food and beverage divisions and you work throughout your carrier accordingly so it's very areas where we can adopt the holistic approach example thinking green etc. but very limited in rest of the area of holistic approach.

F) Ok. What are these holistic business practices that your hotel has adopted? If they have?

B) I think there's really an opportunity for us to think more laterally as opposed to vertically because actually we did not look at our businesses very holistically at all. OK. We think about our food and beverage. We think about the room products, but we don't think how that is connected to each other strategically. Even within My Space was a specialist area of sales and marketing. We tend to work very silo in that environment so its sales and marketing and in fact what I'm trained to change is that we think about that as being a commercial division. So rather than talk about sales marketing indications what I want is to start talking about it as being a commercial team, working collaboratively working holistically across sales marketing communications digital social as one entity rather than one team focusing just on sales or one team just focusing on. Social media let's say that is an option which Obviously I can directly impact you need to be much more holistic approach to how we work with our clients as the market.

So do you think this approach if established can have a positive effect.

[00:06:11] Financially as well. Are you think it's not going to have that much financial effect?

[00:06:16] I think yes. I think it's simple. I think this is the future. Okay. And. to be honest it's an initiative which I'm driving. And over the last. Five years is something which I've been working towards. But this is specifically within the cells within the commercial understand function.

[00:06:38] Ok so I'm quite happy to elaborate on this because this is my really my passion for these elaborate operations.

[00:06:47] Ok so I'm now the global head of sales marketing for the company. So I came up to this traditional sort of sales. But I saw this as a real limitation to the business because in todays.

[00:07:03] Event the way in which society works today is very different from how it was five years ago.

[00:07:08] So five years ago it was good enough to be working as a sales team and looking after travel agents and tour operators and the traditional way we would see the traditional business partners for our hotel business. But what I wanted to do is break down the that stereotype. And in fact what I created was commercial centers. Which is really what we're sitting in.

[00:07:33] Here. OK so I created a concept. My concept was built around. A philosophy of business. It's personal. OK. And what it did it put the customer at the center of the. The proposition and underpinning that I have three core values where the hotel company people want to do business with. We keep it simple and innovate dominate and be entrepreneurial. So are my three core values. Wow that's great. And this is what I stand behind. For the last five years huh. So what was important about that is that.

[00:08:16] As a global business I needed to find a single proposition which resonated across all of our markets. So whether it's U.K. France Germany Russia Australia India the Gulf region or the US which is about all of our key source markets are located. This simple proposition gave me a starting point team from which I could then build a single commercial focus around knew how we approach all of our markets looking. So. that was my starting point. Over the last couple of years what I've started to do is integrate much more closely into sales marketing communications. Because today there is much more of a convergence of technologies around the way in which we need to communicate to ours. Customer systems. And then this isn't also interesting definition as well. What we're talking about when we talk about customer we're talking about the customer is the gas.

[00:09:22] I'm staying in the hotel room. Oh we're talking about customers booking a hotel on behalf of somebody else like a travel agent. Got it. Yeah.

[00:09:31] But why communicate differently to these guys at the very end.

[00:09:37] Yeah. They're still people. Yes business. Yeah it's personal. Yes. So this entire philosophy has now become so much more holistic approach to how we communicate have the same message to the guests or to be to be traditional business partner. And so as a consequence what I've done. within the regional offices now.

[00:10:03] Is they have six key strategies which they have to focus on. And of course that's what happens with travel agents because line of course is the typical route to market but they have six in total six key areas travel agents' airlines campaigns consumers partnerships and niche markets. To each of my regional heads have to develop strategies across these six key areas. OK. And those strategists Should cross sales communications marketing social and digital.

F) Wow that's a pretty bad practice in itself.

B) Yeah. That's I base my retirement plan. That's right. You heard it here first.

B) Yes it does. I mean that is that's the future. It is really the future. But what we've done as well is we've been scratched out with a technology platform. Yes. Called Salesforce. Salesforce is one of them made a cloud-based system. Now what. That's my question next question anyway. Yeoh's from a commercial point of view business back in 2016 I was looking for a business partner that could provide me with a simple global database. Is this client. So what I wanted was to have a single platform in both our regional sales offices no hotels would have a single view of the customer. And in this context when I refer to the customer I'm talking about how to be part of travel agents once and so we started to partner and what we discovered was that this started to grow and transform our business. So rather than just being a simple database being what we started to do is build out. In fact we counted 24 business processes which you manually managing. We've built these business practices out on our salesforce platform. So this now provides a robust automated platform Which we never allow business. This now will further evolve so that our guest database to our Web site and in fact all of our customer touch points will set within this one ecosystem. Currently we're probably about 18 months away in Completing that goal. I understand that's been most efficient in the last five years. Technology can bring plenty of opportunity and can be very beneficial to hospitality if used cleverly and today's generation are naturally born with the skills and are technology natives not immigrants so this is not seen as a threat but yes we do our older generation work force who are digital primitive but our training center is well equipped with necessary tools and training.

F) So what's the role of technology in implementing these practices that you're seeing. I think you covered a lot on it.

B) So. I realized. Probably about three years ago that more importantly for the business to remain relevant we really have to evolve and this was really .This was really how I really recognized the need for us to remain relevant to and engage with our customers as well as our guests so the technology we really had to embrace technology. And in fact over the next six months I got Quite a big plan simply to further enhance enhanced risk and further break down some of the barriers separating these commercial functions so the way in which again sales marketing communications are working I'm really working on bringing it together as a single function. And I'm not working in isolation of each other. Say. The technology which is underpinning all of that. And bringing this transformation. So it actually a whole philosophy ,my philosophy is taking the business from being transactional into being content driven.

B)Yes I see.

B) And I'm just about at the end of the month and June actually I have my annual sales and marketing workshop and.

B) There was a big unveiling of a new law the next strand of this philosophy which is talking about likability and business.

B) Okay what underpinning. Yeah what we're doing is looking at the way in which there's a whole conversation. Yeah we are creating a commercial differentiation by being likeable. OK. And this doesn't simply mean getting lost. I understand. Yeah. It's about how we're engaging with them with every element of that distribution chain understand creating that ecosystem.

[00:15:25] Yeah. And what my philosophy is taking the business from being transactional into being content driven.

[00:15:33] So that's like a holistic approach adapting. Fantastic.

F) How do you think the holistic business practice affects the customer satisfaction in the hotel.

B) I mean if I talked about it from my perspective yes we see more commercial because yes it is a personal offer perspective. What it means is for us as a business is our profitability and our reach into our market is much more alive to do so whether I'm communicating through traditional or online or offline media or social or digital. The engagement with our client list should be much more powerful. Now. That's on the commercial side of ,Operations. So have a long way to go although we have implemented several strategies in place but the organizational design needs a holistic leader but as I said it will increase your profitability , reduce staff turnover ,increase customer satisfaction as you will be meeting the needs of the ultra-luxury market.

[00:16:29] What about eco friendliness and this of is that something that's a part and parcel of the hotel already or not yet.

[00:16:35] It's. A very interesting point that you make because. four or five years ago I was at my sales conference talking about this toy in fact even as recent as. Now I say four or five years ago I started a narrative within our business around the way in which particularly within the ultra-luxury that how our guests will help.

F) Is your guest moving towards holistic approach too?

B)They are. I was with somebody earlier this week discussing exactly this. For authentic experience it is the way in which you know the ultra-wealthy the ultra-high net worth individuals are living their lives. They're looking for much more. Let me put it in this context. In 2003 when the opening Atlantis Yeah it was good enough the we were was providing an ice spa. Yeah we were having yoga etc. That was great but look at It now it has evolved but Yeah that's no longer good enough as the wellness and eco-friendly has become a part of guest demand. Within the hotel environment it's providing a holistic experience and perhaps whether it's through the wellness component. Yes whether it's through the Food Beverage element as well as the environment and sustainability guest are looking at sustainable practices. So I mean even at the very simplest level Yes. The idea of having disposable plastic bottles is costing this is totally you know what our guests don't want to see. Yes. So the simple plastic straws. Yeah. All of these products. We have a very proactive approach to eradicating these things just across all of our business. One of our resorts. also has a very strong affiliation with a company which is taking plastic out of the ocean. Recycling that plastic and Making shoes is quite famous. Yeah. Try that. Which we're partnering with them all. Yeah. I'm in fact all of our hotels have some kind of sustainability slash eco initiative within their local environment.

[00:19:10] Ok. Well as a business we've figured out what my guests want to see is the authenticity behind our approach to.

[00:19:23] Sustainability. Me being.

So yeah what we really wanted to do was make sure that each of the individual hotels is doing something which was relevant to that community where a lot of relevant to their society. Or rather the environment in which they were operating. OK. So how we approach that.

[00:19:59] How do you measure employee satisfaction at your hotel.

[00:20:03] So in fact this month you do a colleague engagement survey. Okay. So every once at once a year every single one of our employees. is and is encouraged to complete the public engagement survey. Okay.

[00:20:19] So that's the way to measure.

[00:20:21] That's absolutely in addition to that. There is if there is really a serious situation where somebody is feeling uncomfortable with some sexual harassment or there's an ethics issue that they're concerned about. Yes we have a very strong culture around. We able to report.

[00:20:42] Oh that's a lot of issues. Okay. So we have a third party that provides an ethics hotline. Yeah.

[00:20:49] So either by phone or by email totally confidentially. Okay. That employee can report any issues that you feel uncomfortable about. Okay. That I don't think is in.

[00:21:02] Something's happening right away. Yeah. So I nearly everybody just the Republican gets say no. But then at any moment in time if somebody feels there something which is they're not comfortable with then they have the opportunity to confidentially report that through its online portal and all that important.

F) How does your hotel link luxury product and services with sustainable business practices. Please provide examples later.

B) So we have one particular resort which is in Australia which is in quite remote locations. And while commitment is that all of the food produced is from a source within 100 kilometers a day of that sort. So that means working with local level obviously local produce .Whether it's cheese. Yes. The meat producers. Other products are the hotel amenities which made of bamboo and hence are even edible, but they are top end products. Our housekeeping department don't use any chemicals .Todays market is very much green, so luxury means green and we are trying our best to be but again as I said we need more horizontal approach as opposed to vertical.

F) What is the role of organization's management in its sustainability being traditional?

B) Yeah. It's almost harder at the top level to be able to influence what happens into the bottom. Yes like I was saying before our strategy has been very much too decentralized we encourage each of the resorts to take their open initiatives. because it has to be an authentic to the specific need. And as well as being something which the hotel in that location can actually support. So we don't dictate it. Decentralizing from a centralizing that has always really been the culture of our organization since I joined. So each of the hotels is quite unique to me in both the way in which they operate in the environments but this was not the case few years ago hence there were issues with financial performance, Hotel ratings were going down as the individual hotel manager was not allowed to give opinions in the best interest of the hotel that he manages so it was like one size fits all and hence it failed to sustain hence the impact was in all four corners of the business.

F) Ok. What is the effect of holistic business practice on the employee morale?

B) I think that they feel involved and yeah I think I was to if I talk about my specific area. Ok. The way in which I empower my regional offices, my sales organization and commercial organization is such that I understand their roles or responsibilities and they understand very clearly my philosophy and expectation so there is a clear vision that flows down from top to bottom. They understand what their goals objectives are and then they're just a lot easier to get on with it and so I find that very effective. Because again working across global markets in what works in one market might not necessarily work in that market. OK. So while I provided a framework maybe that I outlined earlier how each office translates or interprets set rather than to their own markets is really important and I give them complete freedom to innovate and take actions for their particular area and they feel empowered and motivated . So that's how I've enabled more offices to be successful.

[00:24:52] That's really great. So you're actually taking the initiative already for the holistic approach to be established. Correct. Okay.

[00:25:00] How do you think is the holistic business practice aligned with the strategic goal of your hotel.

[00:25:05] Okay so. That's a very good point. When I took over I first took on this global issue ,10 years ago there was a total disconnect between departments, so part of my initial strategy and again why I created this sort of global purposely business. It's personal resistance It seems. I Used to make sure that there was a much more cohesive alignment between the regional offices and the hotels. Okay so today six years on what that looks like is each of the resorts in each of the regional office's hub are integrated businesses. They are very much aligned with the activities and the actions taken by each of the regional cells offices because obviously what they offer but my regional offices will have a direct impact on the business success of the hotels. Yes and in the same way the needs of the hotels need to be conveyed very clearly to the regional offices We want to know what their opportunities are what their challenges are and accordingly the regional offices will adapt and modify their strategic plans based on the needs of these individual units. If there is a flowless connection within these units subsequently this enhances the financial growth of the company leading to sustainability.

F) Right. How does your organization design impact the process and procedure of your hotel?

B) Yeah. So this is something again which I get worked on to ensure this alignment. So. Through the review of our business processes the automation and Practices through the implementation of sales force the visibility of what activities are taking place in the market is clear. So by having of a single platform building and sales force in each of the hotels has a very clear view of what activities are being undertaken by each of the regional sales offices. So this total transparency. And also what happens annually is we have this workshop where all of the resources come together with each of the regional sales offices. And so they spend in a workshop environment. Time of one on one time with each office with each resort to make sure that they are aligned in their businesses that they align their business objectives. This is the initiative that I have taken.

It has taken a lot of effort to reach to this stage of staircase at this level.

[00:28:03] How does customer experience affect the business sustainability of your hotel. Well.

[00:28:10] In the sense that.

[00:28:16] If I come back to my philosophy of business it's personal. The customer's house is in the center of our business within the hotel sector. Without the guest we have no business. Yes.

[00:28:29] So that happen. And that was why this. And somehow the organization had lost sight of this.

[00:28:39] Ok. And that's why I draw the customer right into the center of what we do. OK so that is that's how I have built now the structure and the organization so that the customer is very much in the center of what we do.

[00:28:56] Ok. Which sustains and promotes the profitability of the hotel.

F) What do you think is the role of an employee in actually implementing the vision of the management?

B) It is the reality that if unhappy staff will lead to unhappy service and staff emotional health is very important for the business so we do have special counselling and training programmed specially created for staff for cross training and freedom to express in complete confidence what is going on in their mind ,If they are happy at work or is something bothering them. Although the hotel is very much traditional in approach but my department and as a regional hospitality directly I ensure that my staff are happy and we take collective decision and this ensures a smoother implementation .It's important that the vision flows down to each and every person in your department and that's not enough they need to trust and believe in you as their manager and in your leadership. The success of my department is my staff I can say that very confidently.

P) Did your organization ever force employee to follow the rules and implement procedures where their participation or willingness was very minimal or absent?

PA) I can only speak on behalf of my department that I have never been in this situation with my staff but yes in other departments operationally there are many such situations and the outcome was the employee lose their motivation and either they became a negative influence for the organization or they left with bitter memories which again is very harmful for the business sustainability .

F) Ok. In your opinion what is the gap in the existing holistic business practices of your hotel.

B) So I think we need an evolution of the commercial function, Yes is to further break down those traditional barriers between sales marketing communication and as I said earlier I'm on a journey at the moment to move from transactional to being content driven. It's almost is thinking that we are you know we are creators of content as opposed to do the process of transactional. Distraction. Yes, and that's the mind shift that I'm taking on the environment too. OK. Some people are on board and some are not you Know. But as technologies and technologies can guess as the way in which people can tell the sun has come the way in which you know our social media our digital world converges. Accordingly we need to bring much more alignment across the way in which our content is distributed so definitely more alignment and innovation is needed in the hospitality sector. Also the vertical thinking has to be faded and horizontal thinking has to come into play.

F) Is use moving towards holistic business practice?

B) I think if I look if about past five years It's all about wellness. We're working at the moment with a consultant to really look at the way in which we provide a plant-based diet. Of course I have a plant based. I myself am based yeah said something which is very passionate and somewhere in my life .But it's something which I think we need to really push on. Yeah. Much more. OK. That's what our customers are expecting particularly at the very high end of the market which is where we're located . Customers have a high expectation in their own lives. Yes well that's progress of what their dietary intake spiritually what they do. And that's where I see us as I tell you we are taking quite big steps to transform that traditional spa offering up deep tissue of a Swedish massage and a sense of becoming much more of a wellness center defiantly customers are more aligned towards holistic practice and they are looking for eco-friendly resource even in UAE which is very much a man-made country likewise staff are going self-employed as they prefer quality of life against stressful work environment ,They want to work in natural and more greener environment compared to few years ago when employee worked for money under any stressful conditions so yes overall it is changing and it has to change.

F) How much do you encourage staff cross training ?

B) we have an employee-branding concept of joy. So we have a whole training philosophy and employee philosophy around creating joy. We create joy for our employees we completely create joy for our guests and that's what we put in the center of our employees training. That's that was what we felt was our point of differentiation. So even though our resorts are in the ultra-luxury space we are Culture and employee conscious.

[00:32:57] The second last question. In your opinion what measures should the hotel management be taking for its sustainability. I think we covered it but.

[00:33:06] I think yeah. I mean interestingly the hotels are. That's really fine yeah. Typically hotels are very difficult. Yes hotels are by their nature.

[00:33:19] Yes not environmentally friendly. Yes. In terms of air conditioning the power of the construct shown in all of this.

[00:33:29] However we are we take this very seriously about looking at ways in which through construction and through ongoing processes to review of our procurement we run into sets that we talked about whether it's simple things like single use practice I mean single use plastic that we are very consciously looking at each of these aspects.

[00:34:00] Yes. As our obligation as a as a business we need to be doing this that is a threat to the world. But it's also expected from our guests. Okay. So yes we as a business are. I have an obligation. But by the same token it's also demanded and expected by us this is what.

[00:34:21] Great. Do you think this holistic practice will assist in reduction of the cost? which is the main concern of most of the hospitality industry.

[00:34:30] Unfortunately not.

[00:34:31] Okay.

[00:34:33] Well in most cases even come back to the concept of the plastic straw. It's very difficult yes to find a more cost-effective solution. I understand. And so while. Is it? At what price is sustainability. Yes. What prices do you put on replacing single use plastic? Inevitably that can be. It isn't it isn't. It isn't necessarily that. In fact in most cases. Sustainability is going to cost us even more. We need to do it the right way. Okay then.

[00:35:24] Financially I understand then doing it right that I do that that focuses on the environment inside. But when the holistic approach comes to the employee site what do you think will introduce a bill that have an impact on staff turnover or.

[00:35:46] We've looked at this in many different ways. And. Depending.

[00:35:57] On the intel. So yes there is a certain employee that it's a means to an end in terms of an income.

[00:36:04] Okay. And that is the main motivation.

[00:36:10] So for me to say that it's going to have a very strong large impact on employee satisfaction, and I think would be wrong. Okay. Um certain. senior level positions and. It comes down to the individual culture individuals value system. Unemployed that is that purely to earn money to support his family. It isn't really going to be so interested. And it's about his pay packet. Yes. In the best case. Yes. If along the way we as an organization we can provide a better environment for the employees for our gas system and for the environment in which we work. Yeah and operating hotels. Yes. And that's a benefit that's a benefit.

[00:37:02] Ok. And how important do you think this is the last question. The article How important do you think that the main leader of the organization. If he had a holistic approach that everyone should be included in the process and procedure. Do you think it would be good impact on it will be about in fact that it has to be led from the top?

[00:37:22] Yes. Okay. So the. Yeah that's right. It has to be the senior management has to buy in to the strategy.

[00:37:32] Ok. And that would be a good impact or a bad impact that if that happens. That would be that other impacts will get better.. Yes. Great. Thank you very much .Thank you.

Mr. T Interview

[00:00:02] Ok. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview your son when I started my first question.

How would you explain your organization design? Was it temporary?

[00:00:13] It wasn't Partially traditional and partially contemporary and when I say that it means some of the organizations approach was very holistic and modern but on the other hand certain aspects of the business was very traditional as it was a family owned business and run by ethos etc.

[00:00:20] It was the restaurant group in the UK but also international as well.

[00:00:27] We had a quite a prominent restaurant in Dubai just in the DRC.

[00:00:33] It was two hundred and fifty covers in terms of restaurant turnover. It did close to 60000 UK. I don't know where that isn't dioramas. I'm sorry.

[00:00:49] Now the actual set up. It was a family owned business. So the owner was based in Dubai but I actually would frequent and come over to the UK the head office was based in the UK but the actual operation fell under the UK arm of the business and there were some problems it was it was difficult because they will choose a couple.

[00:01:14] So culturally it was a new restaurant that we were trying to manage in the UK.

[00:01:22] So particularly when you think about marketing PR and sales you're dealing with a different clientele different demographic and what works in the UK didn't always work in in Dubai.

[00:01:35] We had some communication problems. One the time difference.

[00:01:40] But also because our CEO was trying to manage and living in Dubai. Dubai basically became his favorite restaurant council. He would have. He was very hands on in terms of the direction that the brand was going to go in the promotions that we would run the new menu the wine list the cocktail list and we were essentially micromanaged in Dubai.

[00:02:05] Very different to the UK. Excuse me.

[00:02:09] We had a very strong management team there was in Dubai with the laws. They could only work a short number of hours, so we had to. We were quite top heavy with our senior management team and an equally as well that paid a lot more money. So culturally we found it very difficult one because in the UK we were working probably 60 hours a week. We were trying to speak to the guys in Dubai and they were doing 40 hours a week. And obviously as well you know Sunday is the start there. We count in Dubai. So we were also having to work on Sundays which is difficult although that is hospitality but equally it's still a cultural mind change that that needed to happen. And it's very difficult to run a restaurant via Skype. I mean I would visit the restaurant probably once a quarter.

[00:03:05] And then I would undertake a full marketing review PR review I'd look at the sales strategy. But ultimately you can't manage. As I said you can't manage a restaurant from. via Skype. And it was very difficult. They would go off and do things without our knowledge not because not because they were being going behind our back or anything, but it was purely on the basis that the communication didn't always flow. And equally at the weekend when you know that Saturday being the day off it was very difficult for us to kind of pick up the pace. Two days three days after things had already happened.

[00:03:49] But I mean it was it was a very successful restaurant. It was as I said it I mean it was it was micromanaged by the CEO because he lived there which made it very difficult to. to actually express ourselves because we were essentially just implementing his vision which.

[00:04:12] Was it was a good thing. He had a lot of experience. He said at the restaurant group 25 years ago.

[00:04:21] What works 25 years ago didn't. I would suggest probably didn't work or wouldn't work now. And that was very frustrating. He's also an expat.

[00:04:31] So you know he only lived in Dubai for four years and he would very much say this is what we do in Dubai. It works like this.

[00:04:44] And sometimes it felt that it was his opinion over would override everything. Particularly when it came to things like venue the layout menu engineering was difficult.

[00:04:57] Purely because we had a core product and the core. To his beak. But then you know sometimes we felt that because it was Dubai they had to have certain dishes on the menu that would typically Argentine for instance in the brand strategy was always about the provenance of the menu needed to be around Argentina. So yes beef would be the hero product. But we were we were putting menus in putting dishes on the menu just to be the word appease everybody.

[00:05:30] Should I say. Which we found was against the brand standards and it was you know we built a business in the U.K. at 16 restaurants and was very successful.

[00:05:40] But we found that we had to manipulate the brand standards a little bit in Dubai just to appease everybody which is you know good and bad. I mean it was it was a successful restaurant. But from a marketing and a branding perspective you know you kind of go kind of cringe a little bit because it's not actually the core of the business. You know you you're manipulating to appease everybody completely understand.

Q) So it was very much a traditional approach as opposed to contemporary. Right. What measures are taken to deliver an enhanced experience to customers.

A) Ok. So we ran a CRM system. We implemented that back end of 2018 and we would use that along with the reservation platform open table to look at guest trends create user profiles create guest profiles. It was a very analytical approach absolutely right.

And from that we'd be able to determine trends that were happening not only in the restaurant but also what's happening in Dubai. So for instance if we always knew if there was a new restaurant that was opening or a new type of cuisine or new trend you could kind of you'd always be able to see it in the analytics. We would pull up and what do what we'd be able to do is create you know a profile on you for instance globally you would dine in the restaurant let's say .Four times in the last six months we'd be able to understand the beef that you had the wine that you had the table that you sat on how long you sat at the table and what your other guests had and you could start to see trends and you'd start to look at when it came to for instance menu engineering we use these data we'll use this data and kind of go OK well you know that starts is not solved.

That can come off the new open new openings in Dubai are fish restaurants. So let's add two or three extra fish dishes. Ok .So this is how like you insured. So it was all technical you manage so we use technology and app to see the enhanced experience to your customers. Yeah.

Q) That's leads me to the next question *what is the role of technology in implementing such practice in your hotel?*

A) It's a good question technology can actually illuminate what's actually happening in the restaurants but for me human touch is more important I mean I find that you can actually read too much into data and you know sometimes you just got to go with your gut. I think it's The best feedback you can get the best data you can get is actually talking to the guests when they're actually in the restaurants and actually building a relationship with them instead of actually purely just looking at a spreadsheet saying okay let's build a menu purely on what the computer says. Guest profiling is great as long as you used in a right way. You know what I've always said that I don't want my team to have a big brother approach. The guests should feel like we're utilizing the data in a positive way not in a way where we're spying on them essentially you know because there is that you know with GDP are you know and actually how utilize the data sometimes can be a little bit intrusive. So it's about making sure that if you've got the information make strategic decision based on the information that you have. But ultimately you know you can't. You've got to stick to the core principles of the brand and actually kind of go Well we're a steak restaurant you know just because everyone's having fish at the moment doesn't mean to say we should do less steak. You know it's the DNA of the brands and the core values of the brand must always win out.

[00:09:46] Right. How do you manage to keep that as sustainable did you adopt any sustainable strategy at the restaurant?

[00:09:54] No I would say as it was a traditional approach and the owners were very rigid in the terms and conditions that was drawn years ago when the company was formed so they are not innovative example t's very difficult to buy purely because we have issues bringing in the wine and the beef. So the wine that was to. No hang on. Yeah those two wine wholesalers. You could only use them, and you could out you're only really allowed to sell what wine they had. So if they only had 10 variants of Malbec then that was the only the wine that we could have. So we were in in the hands of them really on the basis that if we wanted to be more sustainable it was very difficult because you couldn't actually get the products. And equally beef because it's coming from Argentina. You know it has to come by and so there is a. there's a carbon footprint there which unfortunately I think I think he did buy it was it's not that they don't care. It's. More the fact that they're not that bothered I feel about sustainability. If you look at Europe and America and elsewhere we able to make decisions very quickly on things like you know not using plastic anymore plastic straws for

instance whereas Dubai They don't grow anything they don't produce anything they import everything. So whilst it's I'm sure they could import paper straws. They're a little bit behind in terms of sustainability. And equally as well. It's a very rich country. And The discerning demographics that live there if they want yellow fin tuna then they're going to have yellow fin tuna. Whilst it's it would be in the UK would be probably frowned upon in Dubai.

It's very difficult to buy purely because we have issues bringing in the wine and the beef. So the wine that was to. No hang on.Yeah those two wine wholesalers. You could only use them, and you could out you're only really allowed to sell what wine they had. So if they only had 10 variants of Malbec then that was the only the wine that we could have. So we were in in the hands of them really on the basis that if we wanted to be more sustainable it was very difficult because you couldn't actually get the products. And equally beef because it's coming from Argentina. You know it has to come by and so there is a. there's a carbon footprint there which unfortunately I think I think he did buy it was it's not that they don't care. It's. More the fact that they're not that bothered I feel about sustainability. If you look at Europe and America and elsewhere we able to make decisions very quickly on things like you know not using plastic anymore plastic straws for instance whereas Dubai They don't grow anything they don't produce anything they import everything. So whilst it's I'm sure they could import paper straws. They're a little bit behind in terms of sustainability. And equally as well. It's a very rich country. And The discerning demographics that live there if they want yellow fin tuna then they're going to have yellow fin tuna. Whilst it's it would be in the UK would be probably frowned upon in Dubai.

Q15) Did you think the staff was forced to adopt it or was it naturally that your team was educated, and they supported it?

A15) I think you have to invest in your team. You have to ensure that you are constantly training your upskilling your ensuring that you know they feel valued and ultimately if you have a healthy happy team that you enjoy coming to work in and want to be in the business then that's a good thing because I think that will rub off on the guests. And that holistic experience that you talk about would ensure that the guests actually feel valued because they see happy staff and they go well. This must be a great place to work team look really happy. They're going above and beyond for me. They're ensuring that we have a wonderful experience. Absolutely It starts with enriching your team and ensuring your upskilling and training and giving them opportunities. Listening to them and feeding back and not ignoring them and making still value to the vision you want to see your soar was clear to everyone. There wasn't enough support for the staff. The marketing department wasn't big enough. Ultimately you know we were running a business which probably needed investment particularly in that need management level where they were the ones on the floor talking training guiding. We didn't have enough of those guys so everything that was done or implemented was not a choice it was by force.

Q) *Is hospitality industry moving towards holistic approach in UAE?*

A) I don't think so when I say that if the team was supposed to do so it would probably go OK let's not use plastic straws anymore. But if we served a plastic straw and I'm using that as an example because it's a big deal in hospitality at the moment if we sent a plastic straw in London it would be frowned upon and someone would pull the plastic straw out and go No I don't want a straw. Whereas in Dubai they wouldn't mind. It's amazing. So. Yeah. So I think it's down to education and awareness and it still stands standstill in terms of sustainability. Long term I think they'll get there but at the moment I don't think it's a pressing matter for them. Right. I think that. Money rules in. And I think I think it's about the experience and it's about the next best thing in terms it's the biggest the most glamorous. It's a very affluent place.

Q5) Do you think the customers are moving towards the holistic approach as well?

A5) I don't think UAE in particular is moving toward holistic approach. All they want is a luxurious place to stay, Good food ,high standards to living rest they don't care what costs it comes at haha but European and UK customers are defiantly more demanding in terms of sustainability I think they are more educated and aware.

Q) So when the decisions were made from the top was the cultural aspect taken into consideration

what the customers as well as am always we always I mean we probably thought about it too much actually.We actually you know it was always okay in Dubai. Our customers like X in Dubai and we always looked at it like they said in terms of. we would make decisions purely on trends which I touched on earlier which I felt was probably wrong for the DNA of the brand. Because what happens is you know you make so many different decisions that in let's say three years' time you've manipulated the brand so much that all of a sudden you can't remember who you were or where you were.

[00:14:04] When you started the concept. It was very difficult because there was a lot of competition and equally competition breeds competitiveness and particularly in the restaurants. Now what we found you know we would go OK well one restaurant is doing the brunches for instance they're incredibly popular. Everybody goes out on a Friday and has these amazing boozy brunches and we would do that, but you know one of the arguments from my side was well everyone else is doing it why do we have to do it you know. And you would go to these brunches and they were quite lavish, and they were very booze heavy and that wasn't who we were. And you know I was someone I always fought against.

[00:14:47] And you know our style of cuisine didn't quite couldn't quite adapt to a boozy brunch.

[00:14:56] You know we didn't have dainty little dishes we were big wholesome steaks and a big glass of red wine that's that that suit what the brand was. So for me it sent a mixed message when we started to do brunch. But you know we had to do it because everyone else was doing these brunches and we needed to trade just because everyone followed it.

[00:15:18] But back to the set with the brand.

[00:15:20] Yeah I felt it was you know it was a bit garish should I say no it's not the right word.

[00:15:31] What's in it. You don't you know you go to these brunches you eat alone and you sit down for three hours whereas you would go to go and have a steak and a glass of red and maybe a nice portion of chips but that didn't fly you didn't sit in the brunch atmosphere but it was worth 200 to 300 covers every Friday for us.

[00:15:52] So we had to do it so that the recession had hit the buy. What the decisions changed economic busy December based on economic situation of the business. Did you maintain the brand are you couldn't? You had to downturn in certain things like high stop staff turnover.

[00:16:09] Yeah staff turnover was difficult because we would send a lot of a lot of the team out from London and there were obviously quite strict employed more than those in Dubai. So it was culturally it was difficult because again there was so much competition that the team where you know. if they had a bad week or a bad month they knew they knew full well they could get picked up by another restaurant very quickly and the law is on the side of the employees in Dubai. So yes our employers. employees. OK so staff turnover was quite significant also as well that. if you struggle out there to get the skill level. So that's why you see a lot of a lot of Europeans going over to Dubai to actually to work out there because they have the skill set the Emirates these you know. don't need to what I said that I need to work with you know hospitality for them is not something that they venture into it tends to be the expats and a big Indian and Sri Lankan community and so the skill set is difficult. It's tough you know the best managers get stuck sorry best managers get stacked up by the best restaurants the best nightclubs and this is very hard it's very hard to keep a good team really hard.

[00:17:41] So from a marketing point of view you could do a very holistic approach towards marketing.

[00:17:48] Yes you know as I said earlier it was what worked in London didn't always work in Dubai. And I sometimes I had to turn a blind eye to certain things because the culture was there. Okay here's a great instance. So there's something out there called The Entertainer. It's a book. Yes you know. Yes it's massive in Dubai and it's. in London.

[00:18:11] It's perceived as very low read internet is like Groupon. Yes. You know it's a you only do it if you're desperate or it doesn't do. It doesn't breed loyalty it doesn't breed.

[00:18:26] You know guests are only going now because it's a deal. You know it's a very heavily discounted experience that.

[00:18:34] Doesn't for me sends wrong messages whereas I thought this big time in Dubai you know in London we wouldn't do it because we wanted to be a destination. But we also wanted to be something where guests aspired to wanted to come to the restaurant. And if you start discounting and you're on third party websites you become very accessible, but you actually loot you lose loyalty as in Dubai. If you're not in the entertainer then you get left behind because everyone loves a deal. You know that you see brands like the Ivy and Petit maze on and Zuma and all of these amazing beautiful restaurants but they're all in this entertainment magazine.

[00:19:16] I find it bizarre, but it took me a while to get my head around it. I fought it and then I did turn a blind eye to it because that's the culture that they do. They would also say they the guests would turn up to see Dubai with these vouchers and actually walking to the restaurant with a voucher. And I was just like Oh my God. But that's the culture.

[00:19:39] Yeah. So did you find it very difficult for people to actually accept the cultural the friends like European employees when they went there and work in Dubai. Did they find it difficult to adapt to the customer's needs?

[00:19:54] I think it's.

[00:19:57] Dubai is a beast. And I mean that in a nice way is you have to culturally buy into Dubai. You have to embrace the lifestyle. You know you're paid handsomely you're paid well you're rewarded well. There's a lifestyle in Dubai which you can't you wouldn't have in London.

[00:20:21] But it's not for everybody. We found that the managers were probably 50/50 in terms of the. English based managers that we sent over there some embraced it some loved it some didn't.

[00:20:36] I think I mean me personally I would go there once a quarter. And for me I was quite happy to come home. I found I found it. soulless. That's the wrong word to me. I find it a bit fake. Understand. OK. And I think it's like a big fairground. I mean it it's just there's so much to do out there. Yeah. But it doesn't seem. Doesn't seem real.

[00:21:09] As I understand so. Example Let's say one of your weight was our waiter has come up with a fantastic idea that could actually work. Yeah. Was that then perceived positively by the management and assistant for implementation. Ah it was. How was it.

[00:21:25] Was it easy as we were. We used to us used to run a monetary forum where the team would which would come in and go right. I went to a pretty major on weekend and they were serving this station they were doing this experience. They were doing these cocktails and they would only feedback and discuss what was going on. Talk about competitors. There was always an opportunity for the team to get involved in the development of the brand but ultimately it was it was.

[00:21:56] The CEO the guy that was saying lives in Dubai. He would make the decisions. I was simply there to actually put everything down on a piece of paper presented to him and go.

[00:22:07] What do you think. And then he would make the decisions.

[00:22:10] Right.

[00:22:11] So there was no say basically no I think we would. Okay. There was no shape we would have robust conversations.

[00:22:20] But he would always win. Okay. Got it. And do you think was that a control issue because that person who was the CEO at that time was from one of the Gulf countries are he is a European but why was he not able to accept those decision.

[00:22:36] Was it his leadership style.

[00:22:38] Yeah he was. He would micromanage every situation. The founder of the business. He'd run it for 25 years. And we had to respect that. Absolutely. He's run a very successful business and for 25 years to my feeling was that. The trends passed him by a little bit, and he was kind of set in his ways and when he set up the business 25 years ago hospitality has evolved, and he didn't evolve. And that's his choice. He was you know CEO he's done incredibly well he's very successful. I feel that. the business probably would have benefited from him possibly stepping aside and letting someone like myself or the CEO so shallow at the time have more of an impact. And in terms of I think we certainly knew trends we were certainly more. Yes we were younger. But I guess we were more aware of what was happening particularly in Dubai we would always adapt the menu adapt the menu to his vision on what he wanted. Yes it was successful. But. you know we were in a very popular place. We were opposite Zuma next to Liberty Mays on the IFC. It was incredible amount of foot for Zuma was full. Then we would be busy as well. Zuma was empty. We tended to be empty. So we picked up a lot of traffic from the restaurants around. The brand didn't evolve. It was open for it was open six years before we even looked at doing a refurbishment. I think you know you've got to you've got to stay current. You've got to make sure that you know you have you got the best deejay you've got the best décor you've got the best ingredients you know you have to make sure that you're constantly re-evaluating where you are. Similarly in Dubai because there was so much competition out there. It's become a bit stagnant that clearly says that if the holistic business practices were followed the time if it moved on it would have been somewhere else today and the sustainable it would have been more sustainable.

Q)What does the role of holistic business practice play in achieving customer satisfaction?

A) My opinion I plays a very positive role but the reality in Dubai It's very difficult. I found it's very different to the UK on the basis that you could be a very average restaurant and do very well in Dubai. The reason the platforms for feedback the reason that in the UK if you have a bad experience you go on social media you can tell anyone about it Whereas in Dubai it's not the case. They just go okay we're not going to go back again. Even in terms of a holistic approach I think it's I'm not sure if the guests are aware as such in Dubai of what's happening around them. And that's quite a statement. But you know they dine out every night. I'm talking about the demographic that would go to gaucho which would normally dine out and probably wouldn't cook. I mean they are young professionals they know. You know they want experiences. They go

out. very late during the week you know on a school night as we would shaping it. But that's the practice. I'm not sure to be honest how the holistic approach would affect that customers as they don't care.

Let's take an example of an employee ,so if the employees but you know listen to their ideas well you know like I accepted. do your thing that would have been a good impact on the under business in itself.

[00:27:08] Yeah do. I do. We have some really good some really good team members. I feel that again these guys are the ones that were going out to all the other restaurants. They were they were dining out they were talking to the team members. And I think if we had listened to them just to understand trends a little bit more just to understand what was going on in Dubai we probably would have. been in a better position now.

Q) What's the criteria used in your Hotel to measure the customer satisfaction.

A) We did have feedback system in place which was very basic. We didn't have a strong marketing team, so it was up to the staff to ask verbally to each customer about their experience and it ultimately depended on the staff if he/she filled the feedback form. We did monitor online tools, but it was not enough to receive a feedback that was measurable. We didn't have enough repeat customs which was the evidence of our service and quality. Eventually the business had to be sold to different group and I had to leave.

Q)Right. What is the role of employee in successful adoption of holistic business practice you think? Sorry that I get sorry.

What is the role of employees in the adoption of holistic business practice so let's say we have decided to implement the sustainable aspects we have simply decided to listen to our employees? They're giving a flourishing environment. What do you think is the employee's role in actually implementing all this?

A) Well they I mean the employees are the ones that are front and center. You know they are your Mini brand ambassadors essentially because they are representing you. I mean you can't I always found that you can't micromanage every single employee you got .You know they're employed to do a job of course You know so we have an employee to be a receptionist and be a

receptionist and actually be engaging and be smiling and ensure that there's a welcome there's an element of trust. You have to you've got to trust these guys because that's what they've been employed to do. And so I think I think they are critical absolutely critical one from implementing the brand standards but also implementing the DNA of the brand and the core values of the brand and the Grizzlies for instance that would could probably 200 steaks at a night. Yes. And we held them in such high regard. Some of them were paid more money than the head chefs because it was ninety three percent of what we sold with beef. Understand it was all coming from the grill. So yeah I think they you've got to trust the team and you've got to you've got to. Hope that they deliver on the standards that that we implement. But for me you've got to stand back. You can't stand over every single member of staff and kind to let him just go. Let him do it.So you think there was lack of progression because of this interference of the hired authorities in this vision.

Q) So your overall design of the operation is top to bottom approach management. How do you think this impacts on the holistic practices?

A) The organization never evolves in such an approach in my opinion as I am a live example of such disaster. Well I would say now it had a negative impact. the brand hasn't never evolved. We didn't. we didn't listen to the team members of staff. We lost. We lost some very good team members that felt undervalued because they were we would as I said we would do these meetings they would put their point across and maybe something small but you know the small things are the things that keep the staff happy you know. And that sometimes we took that for granted. And. because there's a wealth of places to work particularly in hospitality they would jump ship very quickly .So the soft turnover was very high. So which means actually increase the training cost.

[00:30:38] Training costs. Yeah. I mean we had we had a training academy. All members of team members of staff Backhouse and front notes would have to go through. And that was about half a million pounds a year for the overall cost of running that.

[00:30:53] Oh OK. So did you put these employees who left.

[00:30:58] Up to because word of mouth is a way of marketing so. Of course the word of mouth has not been very positive for your particular restaurant.

[00:31:06] Yeah it must have been negative. You know a disgruntled employee is not going to say nice things about the restaurant and we had a particularly tough manager how he worked.

[00:31:21] She is very robust in her approach. And she felt that well if you didn't like your job no problem at all. We're replacing which clearly long term was wrong. You know because the restaurant is now it's not doing very well.

Q)Yeah right. So if you had this holistic business practice in place what would have been the impact on employee morale.

A)I think that they just felt valued. I mean that's the big thing isn't it. You know we're asking a lot particularly hospitality is tough. Yes. You know you're on your feet you're running around. It's quite an intense situation because you're ultimately you know you're there to give the guests an experience .For me if we had a more holistic approach to staff retention would have been a lot better but I think it would have felt a lot more valued. And I think they have been happier. I mean obviously that's what it is you work in hospitality it's the meaning of hospitality to impart experience on someone you know whether it's someone or you know being hospitable towards someone is to be nice. And if you're not nice chances are you're not happy if you're not happy it means that something's happened at work. What am I trying to say? I think it's very difficult to. it's easy to look back. Yeah. Okay well that didn't work because of X Y and Z. I think you know We should have value to team a lot more. I think that there was a was a big.

Big gap between management and the team. And I think they felt very undervalued in terms of you know their feedback and input and it was very much like you know it's all .

[00:33:20] So did you see that the unhappy employees. it was actually transmitting to the customer expedients in a negative way. Basically.

[00:33:29] Yeah. I mean particularly in sort of towards the end. You would see feedback on things like TripAdvisor. Yes. The average rate with rating would go down. We would always rate a good restaurant and four-point sixty-four point seven stars. You know we were around four point to four point three. So you know you have to put the two together and say well you know something's not right. Yeah. Now whether that's the guest experience or the food or you know it's all it all linked back to staff does it all links back to those that are the ones that are in the firing line and those are the ones that are given the experience definitely.

Q) What about staff development and cross training?

A) In my opinion cross training is a very important to actually you know develop the skills because maybe I as a person would have a specific skill that I haven't realized. But then I'm constrained to that could come up and I could be the best in that particular job. Giving you an example it's particularly in one of the restaurants in Piccadilly that we set up. We cross train the waiters to work on reception because that way the restaurant set up is very open. It meant that they have more hours to learn new skills and it meant that you know there wasn't the monotony of doing the same job because you're changing up. So variety is the spice of life as I said So you know. Yes I really enjoy cross training because what it means is the fact that you know you get the team feel valued and they feel that you know they can offer more than just simply being a waiter.

You know they will use different skills different skill sets that maybe that they could have used before.

[00:35:30] So when we talk about the general manager or a manager of the place whenever you want. He was so saying no because he had no knowledge about different other different categories of the business. He was just focused on his was just one particular aspect. He didn't understand the bottom two down approach.

[00:35:47] Yeah I agree. He was right. He was the old fashioned of old school. You know he would he would assume that. just because it worked 25 years ago it was it was going to work this time as well.

[00:36:02] Trends passed him by in the industry passed him by a little bit. And as a service for instance evolved. He would he would he would he would want every guest to have the same experience where my approach would be. Well that's a table of.

[00:36:20] Young business professionals. He would treat them differently than you if you had four female companions that are out celebrating a birthday or something and he would probably be a bit more engaging with the females.

[00:36:35] But you know for me that that was that service that's hospitality that is the business evolving because you offer the same experience you the same quality beef and the same quality wine but you approach the table differently and you speak to guests differently because that's the sign of the times. And each guest wants it. they want they want an experience, but they want a different experience. Because of the environment that they're in right.

[00:37:04] So if he was given he if he. An opportunity to go and learn all the other departments how it works how it feels to work as a waiter how it feels to work as a chef in the kitchen. What do you think? So if he understood all that aspect very well he would have been managing his leadership quality would be different.

[00:37:23] Absolutely. I gave it a big probably a lot more respectful. Yes. And actually because you go he'd know exactly what they're going through what they're doing. I think it's. really important actually for no matter whether we're talking about the way to a managed, but I think managers now nowadays. Have to know the business inside out.

They have to know what the guy for instance that works backpacker house does differently to the guys that work for the house and I think you get more respect from one from the team because they see you rolling your sleeves up a little bit get involved in the business and actually funny going. Yeah. Okay I understand that it's a tough job and some of them are low paid low skilled jobs. but you gain so much from it and you get so much more respect from the team.

[00:38:16] Okay Anderson. So I would say he was under the example he was a European personal even then it was difficult for him to understand the cultural aspect of European how they make decisions how they make was it. Was it a case?

[00:38:30] Yes absolutely. I mean as I said he was he was he micromanaged every situation you know he would manage the business from Dubai. OK. And it was very difficult. And equally we would manage the business from London that way.

[00:38:45] Right. So how is the holistic business practice aligned with the strategic goal of their business.

[00:38:52] I was so example you know like when we say that there are four dimensions to this holistic approach which is economical social cultural and environmental.

[00:39:05] So what would how do this four align with the strategic goal of the business. If we adopted a beautiful approach towards the employee value of them we adopted a sustainable pact bear. We adopted a more contemporary style of listing. How do you think it does align with the strategic goal the financial goals the marketing goals? How do you think it aligns together?

[00:39:29] I think maybe naturally that you would see that the business would be a very healthy business. I think you have to invest in your team. You have to ensure that you are constantly training your upskilling your ensuring that you know they feel valued and ultimately if you have a healthy happy team that you enjoy coming to work in and want to be in the business then that's a good thing because I think that will rub off on the guests. And that holistic experience that you talk about would ensure that the guests actually feel valued because they see happy staff and they go well. This must be a great place to work team look really happy. They're going above and beyond for me. They're ensuring that we have a wonderful experience. Absolutely It starts with enriching your team and ensuring your upskilling and training and giving them opportunities. Listening to them and feeding back and not ignoring them and making still value to the vision you want to see your soar was clear to everyone. There wasn't enough support for the staff.

The marketing department wasn't big enough. Ultimately you know we were running a business which probably needed investment particularly in that need management level where they were the ones on the floor talking training guiding. We didn't have enough of those guys. So our strategic goals were not clear and neither they were aligned in any way at any level.

[00:41:29] You didn't have enough. And why did you think it would, but it was not enough of that.

[00:41:36] At the time. Financial purely financial. You know we ran the business in Dubai the way that we would run the business in London or in the U.K..

[00:41:49] Which was silly because we it's a more it's a more labor-intensive experience in Dubai.

[00:41:57] It was a bigger restaurant. It was the guests the more demanding.

[00:42:02] So you need more hands-on front of house team more Barker House team because we're offering more menus bigger mindless bigger cocktail lists because we were trying to appease everybody and please everyone. And if you do that you're trying to be a jack of all. It's fine if you if you can pull it off the team. Let's do it. Yeah. A body.

[00:42:28] And we would cut corners and that would you know what it would if the staff saw it because ultimately they were being pushed further and harder than they wanted to. They were working a lot harder,

but they could see the gaps. And ultimately they're not they're not fools. They know exactly that we're trying to.

[00:42:50] Run and run a business. Probably two or three like. They don't feel valued. The managers get frustrated because they're the ones that are actually having to jump in and help and do work that ultimately they're not paid to do. No managers should be there to oversee what's happening on the floor.

[00:43:08] You'll be there to ensure that the guests have an amazing time trust the front house team to ensure that they are managing the situation and doing what they're paid to do. But the managers unfortunately didn't help.

Q) Is Technology adopted positively and used cleverly? or seen as threat by taking away jobs?

A) We were not innovative with technology so it was never become a threat, but I know our staff would have adopted easily as they were very educated and even our European customers would have accepted it but not sure about UAE locals although UAE has its own innovation center.

Q) How does your hotel link luxury products and services with sustainable business practices? Please provide examples.

A) I didn't see a link as we didn't have any of such practices in our hotel unfortunately, but the CEO always thought he is up in the game and very much in competition with the market ha-ha. By charging for every extra service you can't claim that it's a luxury service . There were some rooms which didn't have free wife access and we charged them, and you know internet is expensive in UAE .Our plastic use was very high again our focus was cost reduction, but the products looked great and presentable. The spa products were highly chemical based which showed immediate results but again it was suitable for use market we never had Europeans clients or up clients enjoying any of our spa facilities

[00:43:28] I understand. So what's a. possible way of measuring employee satisfaction.

[00:43:34] Yeah we did. We did. What do we do? We use Survey Monkey. OK. And we would send out our once a year. We would ask. something like 20 questions. Not quite. quite generic you know rate your overall

experience at work. Big thing was star food you know. Do you enjoy Star food? If not why not. You know and it was the same question every time and the same answer and the fact that they would come back and go you know if you want me to do 10 hour shift and you want me to take an hour break make sure you know is nourish me and give me. decent food. It was always the biggest problem in terms of feedback from the staff. There was probably wasn't enough social interaction in terms of. I mean they would socialize together outside of work. There was too much of a disparity between management front house and back hours. They didn't come together often enough for social occasions. I'm not saying going out drinking but just something. subtle like everyone eating together. Well it was. It's a tough business. It really was particularly in Dubai because.

[00:44:53] Because it was a very demanding business and it was it was busy, and we do breakfast lunch dinner go all the way through.

[00:45:00] So there was no respite. There was no downtime. It would simply you know you were busy all the time so. Yeah.

[00:45:09] Right. So. Of course the customer and place feedback were taken but nothing was done after.

[00:45:18] We would talk about it. We would again you know. it would go to the CEO and we would say look this is the feedback. This is what the team had told us.

[00:45:26] This is what they want. He would you know he would go. Okay yeah great. I probably would never get implemented because it was it was hold on to everything. Which is frustrating because you could see that the fact that the team.

[00:45:40] We're unhappy with that. And you know they would. And ultimately they lose respect for the management around them because they go in. You know we're giving you our feedback. Nothing's changed. Hopes that the high staff turnover.

[00:45:52] Right. So yeah and here again it kept repeating and nothing was done for the same.

[00:45:57] No. I'm just going to get me. Sorry. No it's okay.

[00:46:26] See me. Yep. So yet and yet again they will take this away and nothing would have been done.

[00:46:33] No I mean we were a lot better in London than we were in Dubai. Okay.

[00:46:39] We have more restaurants. So it was easier to implement. We're standing by. You know you had one restaurant so there was there's a cost with everything of course. And equally you know that there was more pressure on London on the basis that we were a bigger brand the bigger concepts were perceived as a chain whereas we were just a one off to Dubai Cafe.

[00:47:03] So yeah it was. It must have been very frustrating for them.

[00:47:08] What the effect of organizational design though you'll find on holistic business practice of the hotel. So if it was more contemporary do you think it would have been had a positive impact.

[00:47:17] Yeah absolutely. I think you know you look at hotels in the way that they are set up. Mm hmm. Structure.

[00:47:24] Obviously they take more money. They invest more in staff because it's a more of a more demanding experience. But I think if we'd have taken the approach particularly around H.R..

[00:47:38] And so the staff feedback and incentives hotels have notoriously been brilliant in incentivizing their staff and keeping them engaged and happy. You know I know I know I know lots of hotel general managers and an ED concierge that you know they're constantly engaging with their team rewarding them you know upskilling them training them so that they feel valued. They have more resources in the hotel business which that's not to say that we couldn't do that in the restaurant. It's far easier for a hotel to be able to adopt that approach.

[00:48:16] Understand. So how do you think the customer experience or policy business practice affect the business sustainability of the hotel. So happy customer example. How do you think it will impact the sustainability of your hotel?

[00:48:36] Well let me show you. If you judge a hotel based on occupancy rates. Yes. And a good hotel. will always be around 80 85 percent. Yeah. You said before. Yes. I think the hotels lead the way in terms of guest experience because the second you walk in the front door you're greeted by a concierge or. Porter yep the reception experience is always wonderful Your taking ups. There's something grand about staying in a hotel isn't there. You lose yourself in in being looked after. That's why you go to these amazing beautiful hotels. That's what you do in a restaurant. It's very difficult sometimes because I think the approach from the management team is probably very different because they feel.

[00:49:32] We've only got you for two hours. You know it's in and out. It's a very. it's a quick turnaround isn't it. As it turns over the. So what are you looking for? The ratio is quicker. Whereas if you go into a hotel you're there for the whole experience you're sleeping there you're staying there you're having breakfast you see the same faces. I think the culture particularly in hotels is different because you're paying more for it as well, so you expect more.

[00:50:03] Unequally because you'll pay more. There's more in the pot to engage staff and ensure that they are fully trained and enriched. So I think.

[00:50:15] I think we could probably learn a thing or two particularly around. You look at brands like the Four Seasons.

[00:50:21] Their approach to the guest experiences is unrivaled.

[00:50:27] There is not a restaurant group by field that have come close to it. I as restaurant in New York restaurants in New York. have a similar approach. But equally you know they're running a 35 40 percent labor cost which is unsustainable or would have been unsustainable for us.

[00:51:50] When you've got all the technology at hand it's how you how you utilize that technology. I think it's. For me it's key that that reception experience when you first arrive because you know.

[00:52:06] Restaurants aren't cheap. Now when you go out when you go out to a restaurant you want an experience and you want to almost lose yourself for two and a half hours and be wined and dined well looked after you're having food that you wouldn't normally have to home for instance. So it's an experience and I think if we have to respect the fact that we're asking guests to part with.

[00:52:30] 60 70 pounds ahead. I think sometimes we forget that you know.

[00:52:36] Guest pay a lot of money to come to restaurants. I think I think we forget now we take it for granted.

[00:52:41] So there is more that can be done particularly around rewarding guests. So we have the technology. Just. I just don't think that we utilize it in the right way.

Q) What effect of organizational design do you find on holistic business practice of the hotel?

a) Again. I think the biggest thing is rewards and actually incentives and giving something back to the team is again go back to technology. You've got brands like Perk box and code hospitality where you know we can we will do not with cash but things like theatre tickets yes tickets to a Competitive restaurant or you know cinema tickets. You know you've got as I said you know hospitality is renowned for low wages and low skill.

So if you have let's say a chef for instance there is two kids to go to the cinema will cost him 45 quid. Well we could you know we can incentivize them and reward them with all these perks to say thank you very much we value you we value what you're doing. So his is something you know that doesn't happen enough particularly in restaurants. We're getting better. There are some amazing restaurants out there that really look after this stuff looks more to one of their staff incentives and staff engagement is brilliant absolutely fantastic. But So nothing positive was implemented hence I can't say from hotel point of view, but my personal opinion is that in such rigid atmosphere no one can flourish neither staff neither customers. You got to move with the trend, you got to adopt new strategies to remain in the market, You got to look after your team as I said before, You got to be sensitive towards culture ,Money can make money but too much of a cost control method by compromising on several aspects are added cost not savings.

that comes that comes from the CEO which unfortunately was not the case.

[00:54:11] Yeah but what if your vision the employees' vision was a part and parcel of the company's vision. Like if I as an employee know that I can grow in this company. This is my vision I will grow in this company.

How did that impact. if you know that you are a dad. And if you are trained and you feel the company you'll be given an opportunity to take a next step within the company.

[00:55:14] So it was a personal development plan program in your company.

[00:55:19] Yeah it was. I mean there was training we were very big of you know we would invest a lot of. the problem as I said there wasn't enough of the middle management to implement.

[00:55:31] That. Those training schedules.

[00:55:34] So you know you would find that some of the staff work would be frustrated because they felt that it was taking too long you know a training plan. We you know a development plan probably would take anywhere between six months to a year if you wanted to sort of step up to a system manager.

[00:55:54] I think how many how many six months six months to a year of last year if you were a head waiter you have to become an assistant manager six months to a year. I think I think you know that the Millennial market or Generation Z should we call them. We don't have patience yet. They didn't have it they didn't know at the time. Yeah.

[00:56:12] Just by that I've got the skill set. Let's progress. Let's do it quicker and I think we our mindset was probably.

[00:56:21] A little bit behind this. Yes I understand. Right. So in your opinion what is the gap generally in Dubai in the existing business practice.

A) The gap is what is too big a gap between the management and Front of house. So as I said there isn't enough middle management that are bridging the gap between the two. There isn't enough communication. And you always have the front house ,back of House gap because it's happens at every restaurant. The divide between those that are cooking the food and those.

Serving it. We should have done more to engage them and actually bring them together socially. But I think it needed to happen from the top and it needed to happen .From the senior management team to actually you know reach out to the to reach out to the staff and actually engage with them. And in terms of insert incentivizing the staff was a gap. Yeah. We didn't do that. I think also was well you know it's true for things to become culture it takes a while. You know if you haven't done it before you can't just switch it on its going to you know this thing you've got to implement it you've got to train it. You've got to ensure it gets through from top to bottom. And there just wasn't enough drive from the from the management team to ensure that it was implemented.

[00:57:58] So in your hotel did they follow the cultural aspect example you know when it's Ramadan Do you have reduced hours or was it very strong because it was Utopia.

[00:58:07] I mean culturally yes Ramadan is a prime example of how you ensure that they have staff right and then wants to go and pray yet when the sun goes down and they come, and they can fast. We would normally have a change over a staff. So the non-fasting knows then work all the way through. So yeah I think I think those.

[00:58:34] Didn't happen as often as it should. I think if you ask if you'd ask the managers they would say yes we're actually absolutely daring to every practice going behind the scenes. Probably not. And it was Christmas was the Europeans given enough holiday I was that considered in the role tap process which we would always say OK what did we do.

[00:58:57] If you worked Christmas you had new year off. Oh OK.

[00:59:00] Work New Year you have Christmas off. That's the way we always used to work it.

[00:59:04] Ok I understand. And was the very adaptable to the cultural and the social aspects of the staff.

[00:59:13] Picture.

[00:59:16] I Yeah. We managed it from London. Oh OK. And so it was.

Q) *How do you think if economic, environmental, social and cultural all these four are considered, how would be the overall performance of the hotel?*

A) I think there needs to be such alignment . Your staff, your customer, culture, environment is all a part of sustainability You actually need to talk and engage with the staff. Well that's a big. Factor. You know. And actually take their feedback and actually do something with it so it becomes tangible. Okay. Also quantifiable. So you could actually turn around and go. So you gave us this feedback. This is what we're going to do to implement it. This is how we're going to change it. This is how long it's going to take. And this is when it will be done by staffing for instance. Yes. I think. a lot of a lot of management actually try and do too much. And try and do it all at once .I think if you can every small step will gain you because the bigger respect when you actually do it right. Customers Listen to you. This is how I'm going to fix it. This is what it's going to be done by. And if you say it's going to be done by a certain time do it because if it rolls over then you lose the respect likewise if you are not giving back to the society you are not a part of society in my opinion and that's how the market sees it now. Customers are all aware and educated and they know if your staff are happy or not as they communicate and ask lots of question and psychologically they are more aware so to sustain in such market you need to move with the trend.

[01:00:36] I understand. Thank you very much for the interview. I'll stop the recording now.

Recording W.mp3

F)So I'll stop with the first question I hear but to hear me. I am.

F) How would you explain your organization design as traditional or contemporary.

W) would define it as tradition.

F) Ok.

W)I would define it as tradition because we have gone through the old school of thought but I I'm in favor of Democratic leadership style which I have followed through and I believe in that and have tried my best to change the culture of the organization and it seems that gradually we are changing the culture.

P) What is the impact of this type of organizational approach in your hotel?

A)This impacts the overall organizational performance. Ideas are shared, Employees are motivated and enhanced Customer experience.

F) Okay what measures are you taking to deliver an enhanced experience to your customer.

W) There are many things right from being very sensitive to every guest service request to ensure that every guest service request is attended with personal touch which I emphasize upon, we ensure that each and every guest is happy when he leaves a property as satisfied when all the services given to him and we ensure that all the guest services which we provide are highest standard.

P)Can you elaborate on those measures please?

PA)Guest experience begins before they arrive so we have our front of house team who sends them a welcome email asking for their preference during their stay, special request, They create a personal touch so when the customer arrives he knows who to go so we connect with guest on personal level. Likewise we use Client feedback to enhance our services or to fix the problem

without any delay. We use Service optimization platform which are very advanced and allows us to evaluate the guest experience for current and optimize for future stays . Beyond that we do have our unique Guest experience systems in place like welcome gift on arrival, we offer complimentary services example free wi-fi or free shuttle service or local attractions free tours. We do have in room technology like Smart room keys that allows guest to access the room with their smartphones. Tablets are provided for effective communication .Also we know the preference of our client well in advance through a pre welcome form and we are prepared well in advance to the client's surprise.

Q7)what is the role of technology in implementing such practice in your hotel?

Technology is key in implementing this approach .As the client demand is increasing with time the costs that hotel incurs is also increasing. Hoteliers will need to overcome this cleverly by using technologies to overcome pitfalls. One of the best ways is staying ahead of your competitors. Providing technologies to staff that can collect qualitative data of customers in real time. Staff will never take it as a threat as its simply making their work easy rather than keeping manual records. Smart systems mean smart operation and reduced labor .We use various technology which assist us in smoother operation across the board and irons out the communication errors. We use hotel management technology, revenue management. CRM ,reputation management system which is a survey system to be ahead of the game. We do have influential videos on sustainability and how customers can be a part of this eco-friendly campaign.

F)Do you think the customers are now more moving towards the sustainability factor. Not only the environment but how well the staff are looked after?

W) Customers are very sensitive, and they can predict everything and anything that's going on around them or even by looking at a staff . Customers want to make a difference themselves by choosing eco-friendly properties to stay. They know if the staff is happy the standards are above expectation. Eco- consciousness is in its peak at the moment. They are not booking only the hotel they are booking an experience, a sustainable experience .Bee keeping experience example is becoming very popular trend. As an organic culture hotel are creating their own fresh and organic garden experience to prepare fresh food and healthy food for their customers of course in Dubai it's not very feasible but that's where I think Dubai is heading towards in next few years. They stand up for fair working conditions. Eco friendly designs are preferred. In various hotels in UAE plants are exhibited to bring indoor garden experiences .Customer service is clearly evident at every touch point during customer interaction. So overall we must be ahead of game to be sustainable.

Q17)How do you think if economic, environmental, social and cultural all these four are considered, how would be the overall performance of the hotel?
A17) The answer is in your question. This actually means being ahead of the competitors. We have discussed plenty on environmental factors. Hospitality is globally customer related industry, so language barriers are very well taken care by having multilingual and multi-cultural employees as well as local festivals are now celebrated globally specially Dubai being so multicultural it is imperative that we adopt this strategy. UAE has gone through some economic downtown recently hence pricing strategy has been revised in many hotels and resorts over Dubai. There are many offers in place to cater to all kind of client needs and to suit their budget, so the hotel occupancy is increasing due to such strategy. Flight inclusive overall experience are on rise as I said, and hotels can match any budget depending on star category .Overall if all these factors are kept in mind to develop a strategy in hotels it will enhance the sustainability of any business without a doubt.

W) Did your hotel adopt holistic business practice to improve the customer experience like environmental sustainability. All the staff are taken into decision making process and procedures come again.

F) Yes. Yes definitely. And we've always been as I mentioned earlier everyone was educated and shown the implication of not adopting such practices . We've always ensured that we take guest feedback form very seriously in our properties and that deals with managements objection for many holistic practices that we wanted or want to launch. Now a day's clients are more aware and conscious about environment and they educate us more than us educating them .So we look at the preferences and then adhere to it and try to delight the guests at every point. In terms of eco friendliness we care about what liquids we use and try to reduce laundry .So we do have that green initiatives .Should you like to just make your bed and leave it for another day. It would be great because you can save gallons of water. We mentioned a smart description that enhances that guest knowledge. It becomes self-educated and they take the decision not to change the linin every day as far as convenience and comfortability the same thing goes in the toilet's products and towels. So we manage to sustain that, and we don't save a lot of whoppers. So on a daily service if you have one hundred rooms occupied maybe 50 guests don't give that much linins to clean every day. Think of its ultimate days. So that maybe saving of cost we save in the water we save enough you know.

P) So are your products eco-friendly. OR It's something that you would adopt?

AP) Everyone would be required to adopt eco-friendly products. Clients are more aware of what they put on their skin. They should be able to eat what they put on their skin. We used to use products which are not very good for environments but since I came on board I have changed to sustainable products which has added

value to our service. Then in the swimming pool we have a backwash in the filtration so we can reuse the water .Lots of lots of gallons of water is saved through this system

F) Excellent. Since when you think this approach has been established. I'm sure it's you who initiated all this approach considering how it is very traditional. So how long do you think it has been like this kind of procedure used at your hotel.

W) I've been doing this from long ago ,since I've been a general manager from past 16 years I've been brought up with this procedure and I believe that staff and customers should be involved in the development of this process. They should be involved in the processes and then they feel good and proud about it right .Our profits has gradually increased which is evident through our financial reports ,our costs have gone down ,staff turnover reduced which was again a major cost.

F) What is the role of employees in a successful adoption of holistic business approach?

W) As I said employees are the key to organization .This is always important in terms of handling the relations of employee and employee requirements and benefits. This is very common practice in sustainable organizations. Employees should be involved in decision making process of the organization this in turn assists in smoother implementation of any process or procedures. They do need to believe in it and to be believe you need to educate them. We do have our training center where we ensure every employee that joins go through in-depth induction and work culture awareness this again gives an important tool to our employees to educate our clients in turn in terms of environment care, Eco friendly products etc.

P) Do you think that has been a time when there has been a silo management kind of process used and it impacted the profitability of the business.

AP) Yes. Many times that would be an organization that I've worked Before and have realized the outcome was not right. It’s a shrewd and very impractical approach towards the employees. They didn't treat their employees well. So there has been a lot of effect on productivity. There's been a lot of effect on the outcome of the required audit outcome and the sustainability of the property.

F) Excellent. So what is the effect of holistic practice on employee morale if you involve everyone in decision making. If that vision is embedded in them What do you think is how it affects the employee’s morale.

W) Well they feel proud about it and they feel completely involved that feel connected with the organization. They feel the profitability the results of the organizations are true that they're being rewarded. So it affects a lot.

F) So your overall design of the operation is top to bottom approach management. How do you think this impacts on the holistic practices?

W) Before I became the GM it was very top to bottom approach although we do have constrains yet in changing the culture completely, but we are not far off. One of the biggest challenges I saw when I started was the departments were very disconnected .The finance department would not know much about leisure department. Restaurants may not much about finance department and to my surprise most of the departments didn't know anything about merchandising department or retail department so when I analyzed the budget I saw some departments performed well compared to others which is the case in hospitality industry infact in most of the business but when it was analyzed by the board of directors they rarely looked beyond that one department that's not performing and this effects the employees as they rarely look beyond their functional silos when pressure is placed on them due to lack of performance. What I mean to say that every department should be considered when analyzing the figures as every department is interconnected if we had good hotel occupancy then ofcoure our retail section and restaurant will make more money as well as our spa so just to look at spa not performing well is not the right attitude as it's not an independent identity it's within the hotel premises with no marketing particularly focusing on them likewise for the other departments too. Same goes for Marketing ,HR, front of house etc. Hence a top to bottom approach is not a sustainable approach in my opinion.

W)How sensitive is your management strategy towards culture.

F) So you have so many different kinds of cultures in India and in turn in Dubai in Dubai we have a lot of different cultures working together. We value their culture as we always honor you know religion and traditions and we always get to step in. So we have different festivals conducted. We have the Filipino ness to divvy up the. Of course the Marines yesterday. You have the indigenous Hindus. We have the festivals of Filipino be out there and in that so there are different diverse cultures and culture and we've done the festivals. So we celebrate all of that. So everybody gets involved in it. Riley did you leave anything right.

F) Excellent. What effort of organizational design do you find on holistic business practice of the hotel? So if our organization design is calling our contemporary how does it affect these approaches.

W) Our experiences in terms of I mean of course as I mentioned earlier if you don't take care of your players you will not achieve what you want. Employee are the key players of the organization. It's always important to

be together with the employees and make sure that they are directed into the right direction. So if you don't guide them if you don't facilitate that engagement properly you will not achieve what your end results are supposed to be. That's the basic principle and practice.

F)What does the role of holistic business practice play in achieving customer satisfaction?

W)As I said earlier happy employees is equal to happy customers so if you have a harmonious work environment where your staff are allowed to innovate it will directly effects the customer service example the house keeping employees who are mostly neglected part of hospitality industry are key in my opinion in establishing holistic practices as they interact with the customers and know their choices as per room request so yes employees play an important role in all aspect of customer satisfaction secondly our hotel is very much culturally aware example during Ramadan we have all kinds of guest request from non-Muslim guest so we cater to them in such a way that it doesn't impact the Muslims who are actually following Ramadan strictly which actually is very important as it's a very sensitive matter. We take care of all budget constraints and understand our clients through digital platforms so we can send special offers matching their budget during special season which actually has increased our repeat customers with time. Lots of our European clients are very eco-friendly and green conscious so as ai explained we have changed our product brand same goes with washing or water and electricity wastage as well so this all ultimately makes our hotel appealing to the present market who are very demanding but money conscious and green conscious.

F)) Is Technology it seen as taking away jobs or accepted and used cleverly?

W)I know there is a fear in the industry specially hospitality that the technology is a threat, but it all comes down to education and creating awareness. As we are very strong on technology our Staff will has never seen as a threat as its simply making their work easy rather than keeping manual records which are suspectable to human error. Smart systems mean smart operation and reduced effort which leaves for time for self-development having said that there are very few clients who don't like automated systems they still follow traditional approach, but we do cater to their needs as well, but it all comes down to learning and creating awareness. I am sure once they know how to use these technologies they will want everything at the click of the button, so our culture is very much technology oriented and our IT department has a strong induction plan and certification for our employees hence they never see it as a threat.

F)your opinion what is the gap in the existing holistic business practice in many hotels in Dubai. My opinion what it. What is it? Where is the gap in the holistic business in Dubai? Hotels. I'm sure most of them adopted or not adopted. Where do you think the gap is and why?

W) Now I can understand clearly you're going to tell me that the gap between the employees and the not completely.

F)Yes. So what is a gap in the existing holistic business practice of the hotel so where do you think the gap lies. That a lot of hotels are adopting this approach and some hotels are not adopting this approach. So where do you think the gap lies. Why did they are not adopting this approach.

W) No quite a few organizations are focused on just getting what they want a then there and not having a long-term vision. They have very strict rules and principles that they want everyone from top to bottom to follow like a Bible. That's not Good as they are not innovating hence the business becomes a history .There are other companies who involve the people a lot of satisfaction levels given to the employees at work. So that's where the gap is. That gap has to be filled by the senior management and the vision has to flow through each and every employee of the company .If the owner is only concerned about the financial results then definitely it's not a sustainable business and unfortunately that's the case in most of the businesses today. Also when your staff are not motivated, and they are not clear with companies' vision there is a lot of confusion on what messages goes out which impacts the business sustainability .Once again due to financial constrains organization cut corners which ultimately effects customer satisfaction directly reflecting on the sustainability.

W) Oh I hope I answered question.

F) No that's fine. I understand your problem probably know about that. I understand. No that's exactly where we are. I was asking and you're going in the right direction. So my last question to you in your opinion what measures the hotel management should be taking to ensure that its business strategies are aligned with sustainability growth.

W) Best things the top management and senior management is to delegate and cascade down the outcome. The results of the expected from the property through employee engagement and through employee involvement. That is the most important things. Organizations must Have a top line to bottom line leadership.. You get the top line always lead by example and bottom line follows the same accordingly. OK it's very important that that's the way it should be. No strategic decisions should be taken without involving employees from all departments. The mission, vision and goals it's all to involve the people collectively. It is the team which

works along and gets the results, so a holistic approach is important in achieving your organizations strategic goals.

F) So in this complete structure let's say an employee from lower management had an idea he wanted to implement that idea as he believes it how likely will that idea be analyzed and implemented?

W) In our organization we have an idea box at the front of house .Every week we open the box to check ideas and in our head of department meeting we discuss it. If the idea seems to be beneficial and profitable to the organization we test it for 3 weeks before implementing and the idea will be named after the employee's initials and again this was something I established after few months of taking over the operations and this has been very beneficial in terms of employee motivation.

F)What about staff development and cross training?

W) As I said it was a culture that I had to establish years ago so it is yet to reach to the point where I would like to see it. Cross training is an important aspect of employee development .It's a great return on investment .It is important to hire employee who can do their job but also recognizing their talents and giving them a platform to multiskilling is a good return on investment for hospitality industry due to such a varied multi-cultural environment. It can boost your bottom line by reducing your costs. Employees are able to collaborate better because if they are over focused on their own area they are not able to build relationships with other department rather they build bridges which in directly effects the business. By developing your employees you are reducing your costs hence staff turnover has reduced drastically in my organization since I took over I should say that was my first achievement. This definitely makes your company agile and increases efficient operations.

F)How much involved were other departments in giving their opinions ?

W)When I took the operations over I saw that it was very silo management .Employees were scared to talk or share ideas and I created an open door policy and encouraged everyone to freely discuss their ideas or issues bit this required a lot of confidence and trust that I had to re-establish with my team as this was not the norm. Also departments were very detached from one another so in a HOD meeting everyone will stick to their own departments and not give any idea example to increase the business in restaurant and this was a matter of concern to me and I has to explore the glass root issues and it came out that there is lack of understanding or lack of business knowledge and there was no cross training programmed and it was never encouraged by the previous management so I had to change the culture and establish cross training department. Sharing opinions was like getting into trouble for the employees due to the previous silo management hence I would say it was a culture I had to develop from base and now it has reached to a point where I wanted it to be so everyone is allowed to share and care for other departments, Positive criticism is accepted and a plan of action is drawn to be implemented which is not only the responsibility of that particular department but it is a collective effort.

F) Great .Thank you very much. I think you've covered all my questions.

Mr. X interview .mp3

F) So my first question Mr. X to you is how you would explain your organization and design. Is it traditional or contemporary as an organization?

X) It is contemporary

F) Can you elaborate a little bit more when you say contemporary?

X) Absolutely ,we have a team structure wherein we are boundary less and open-door policies. There is no top down approach. Instead of relying on senior management to drive the business we empower our employees to make decisions and implement changes.

F) Ok. What measures are taken to deliver the enhanced experience to your customers.

X) We use technology ,so we have an app WhatsApp where people can look at the property and can actually do WhatsApp booking ,which also assist is seamless check in. So you don't have to wait. Plus also you have different experiences when you arrive or you are staying at the property example welcome Drink on arrival, personalized experiences depending on if they're coming for a honeymoon ,whether on a holiday or a business or returning guests.

Q) *What is the role of technology in implementing such practice in your hotel?*

A)In the hospitality industry Human Touch is a key country. The technology is helping in many ways to improve or to speed the processes or to actually streamline the process It doesn't matter what the process is technology simplifies it and somehow implements it without the need of staff member getting involved and avoid any kind of arguments that could arise due to certain process example when we implemented I pads in the rooms to choose room services there was a notice for turn down service .Turn down services increases water usage ,electricity usage and laundry usage and these had videos to educate the customers so they understand that they should be assisting in reducing carbon footprints but usually in a 5 start hotel customer expect run down services ,fresh laundry etc. and if a housekeeping staff was to be involved in such conversation with the customer it may not go down that well as the technology did for us .Likewise there are many other examples right from check in to check out where technology has not only reduced staffing cost but also has reduced process and procedure implementation time.

[00:02:31] Okay. And you think I'm your staff I adopted this technology very well.

[00:02:37] Yes we have.

[00:02:38] Normally in the complex where we'd have a lot of training or anything new comes up we make sure that the staff are trained on that up to date and they understand men. It's important being a contemporary organization that the staff then these things start from down up to down from down up and everybody is online on the same understanding.

F) What criteria does your hotel use to measure customer satisfaction.

X) We have as an organization something called Voice guest this voice which is an international company and then they send a questionnaire .And this is one part of it. In addition you have the guest themselves where normally you call them. They do also have their feedback. You can check the loyalty of the guests That's important. If they recommend your hotel to other guests that's another key of them and that's you look at it from a satisfaction survey.

F) Understand. All right. Did your hotel adopt like sustainability like environmentally friendly approach?

X) Absolutely I mean this is in top of our List ,whatever we do we always think about it. We've just recently implemented also a good filtration system for our Swimming pools and showers. So all the water that comes from showers and everything is we've put a system that gets filtered and then we can reuse it was in our facilities for watering or for different things. We also looking at solar panels to reduce our energy. And there's so many other things that we keep exploring to understand yet these things are very expensive. But people think about it on the short run is not it's not a reasonable thing. But on the longer run and for the environment is a way going to go actually Green.

P) So apart from the water system and all the linens and everything that you use in the rooms are they also environmentally friendly like considered.

PA) Yes it is. And then we have the option for the guest to whether they want to change daily, or they want to be themselves. OK. Environmentally friendly and choose to have every second day or use the towel.

[00:05:31] So there is like an option if you want you can hand a towel. And then we don't take it as a you put it somewhere else and then we take it take it. So you give also declined to be involved in this.

P) Ok. And what about the products that you use in your hotel.

PA) The products we use also we try to use a lot from the local community to support the local community. So if there is any product that's coming out of the local community it's our first choice. Then obviously again in this bar in the rooms we use a lot of B or C that that not use any chemicals. So that helps the environment and helps the client give them a different experience.

[00:06:13] So since when did this holistic approach come into practice since when you joined or was there someone who thought about it.

[00:06:20] It's actually is a companywide initiative.

[00:06:23] Ok but also being a companywide that depends on your leadership and the security that is pushing for it is really believing in it.

[00:06:32] Then you have the opportunity to work more on this project and my leader is a very dynamic young guy who's also have this.

[00:06:45] And on top of his list ever since he took over five years ago and very active on this.

[00:06:51] Ok. With your previous expedience not with the current job experience with the previous experience did you ever come up in the hospitality industry and it was a very traditional style of management.

[00:07:06] You know I always thought it was the you always have this.

[00:07:09] Yes some of them are very traditional unfortunately and some of them are blank to incorporate the new way of going forward looking at the environment at the community.

[00:07:23] Looking around you and how can you also give back to this. Yes of course I that experience.

Q) And in your experience do you think those kinds of establishment who use very traditional approach. Do they sustain very well in the long run?

A)Traditional approach are not sustainable business because guests also now very aware in every aspect you have a look of guest's choice. All right hotels use them if they have environmentally friendly and sustainable regardless if they offer good litters or dining or whatever.

[00:08:02] This is one of the key criteria now that guests are looking at because there is more awareness globally about this I understand.

[00:08:08] So how does this holistic business practice that we are talking about affect the customer experience in your hotel.

[00:08:19] I would say it gives a very positive impact because that's helped the business.

[00:08:26] Clients are connecting with you your they are engaged with you and they really feel that part of the same things you are doing.

[00:08:40] So do you do you think the customers actually want to know how your staff are treated and are they happy. And does that impact.

[00:08:51] Of course Sunny the guests from our experience. Thanks a lot. I mean the first contact is there as the staff as their associates.

[00:08:58] Yes. And the it's the staff I'm happy you can tell immediately they're genuine then happy and the guest knows.

[00:09:06] And normally most of the guests nowadays ask the staff lots of questions are you thinking well what they are doing for you allegedly.

[00:09:14] What do they give you.

[00:09:15] Do they give you that. And that reflect on your work as a leader and as an organization.

[00:09:23] I personally believe in this method that if you want somebody you have to have somebody to work for you and not you force them to work with you.

[00:09:33] They need to have the Web. If they're happy and you give them the right environment and the right tool they will give you 110 percent.

[00:09:40] If they're not and they're just doing it as a job it would not be the same.

[00:09:45] And that definitely guests are interested because this is part of their responsibility is to make sure where they're going.

[00:09:53] That staff unhappy also.

[00:09:55] Ok. So you mean to say that a certain criterion is when you recruit people to know that they really are willing to work credit. Then their motto is just another job.

[00:10:05] Yes exactly. They have control. That's my it seems when I hire. It's two things dispassion.

[00:10:12] Yeah I need to be passionate and you need to have to be trustworthy decided to sing. I look for the rest. Everybody can learn. I can learn the skills I can learn.

[00:10:22] Did you did you do all the other things that did in the Hospitality House. But the most important is this to have the passion about the job because it's not an easy it's not an it's not like as an industry it's because how demanding you always have to be smiling. And if you're just doing it for a job it does not come as genuine.

[00:10:44] Right. That doesn't need to be OK. That also means that basically that your staff turnover will be very low.

[00:10:51] We are actually a one of Bill. If I look around us in the region we have the lowest in the region. We have stuff has been on property almost 20 since the top and 20 years five years but a lot of very low turnover.

[00:11:06] Do the other hotels are also trying to adopt this holistic business practice.

[00:11:12] See if you look at companies they do have similar things. All of them.

[00:11:15] But as I said it depends on the leadership and how much the leadership can take.

[00:11:22] Pressures from their surrounding all stakeholders because that's not they cheap. It was an expensive process.

[00:11:30] Yes it followed this and often we see pressure from ownership or from company to deliver and lead that will normally disregard this.

[00:11:42] But if you have a strong leadership and you believe in it goes into it into internal. OK.

Q)So what do you think is the role of employees in the successful adoption of holistic business practice.

A) It is extremely important. And this is where organizations like ours are not focused on savings rather invest in our employees. We spend lot pf effort and time in developing our staff and fostering our vision in them .Staff or your associates are aligned and understand what we're doing and why are we doing it.

So when did they understand it and they believe in it? They will definitely deliver it because they are the people who has got to deliver and will believe in it .Not me not my director or any of the senior leader is actually the junior staff. Also employees are very much aware now a days they also contribute to the environment, they are conscious about the competition in the market so they want to keep their Job where they are happy and where they have a platform to showcase their hidden talents and nothing is by force we bring the best in them through them might be that's the right way of putting it. Once they believe in it's easy to transmit it to our customers and there on.

[00:12:25] Yes. And the rank and file will deliver whatever we discuss and agree on.

[00:12:30] Right.

[00:12:31] So do you ever find this challenging like in your whole expedience like not only this from anywhere wherever you work that it was a matter that all the people above you like the CEO the bad actors and everyone that is challenging to actually pass this holistic approach to them and make them understand it.

[00:12:51] And it was a challenge for you and.

[00:12:55] It is her fault for you know people are different. Yes. It depends on their background their culture where they've been and how they work.

[00:13:04] All will affect their decision making in your carry and only applies.

[00:13:09] So people who are more understanding of people who are the old-fashioned way I know this, and you follow me.

[00:13:15] Yes. Well this the old-fashioned way is a very difficult way to work especially in this new era of Sustainability and Environment.

[00:13:26] And you know being after the community around you. Yeah. Why the new generations are the people who are adopted or changed to this new thing. will be easier and much. much you'll be much happier and easier to work around them because they kind of.

[00:13:42] Understand or on the same wavelength so few. So that's Yeah.

[00:13:48] So how do people overcome this challenge. Because as you say a holistic approach is not something that everybody understands everybody is different. How do people overcome this as a challenge? Either they leave or what is in your opinion mostly that happens.

[00:14:06] People works for people. That's my personal opinion.

[00:14:10] Also if you are not very happy you tend to leave and go search for another place where you can be heard or looked after or happier. But if you ask me normally I could I could try also convince.

[00:14:24] Yes and you do.

[00:14:27] You tried many times and if you feel that there is no hope. Then you decide you know it's your decision to say I'm staying or I'm leaving. I'm looking for somebody who can understand me, and I work happier with was than what I can make a difference in.

F)What is the effect of holistic business practice on employee morale.

X) It's actually very positive because the clients are happy when interacting with happy employee and happy employee makes happy work environment. They will be a part of the crew and not only the captain, but they are able to set direction for their own growth. You only work from your heart and you give everything. Hundred percent So they're motivated to be motivated and be genuine and be happy. They look after your guest which intern looks after your business if you look after them, So the guest comes back and talks about it better. So overall your business would be much better if you do this.

[00:15:12] But the challenge as I said on the short run is not very effective financially. So people have to have this patience to have it on the longer run.

[00:15:23] Look at the strategic plan for two three years.

[00:15:27] Just saying you know whenever we implement any of these sustainable projects never does a return on investment was any year at the life cycle of six seven or eight or ten years and loves most of the time. Stakeholders don't agree on that because they don't see the benefit in 10 years. They see what they lost now. We'll see you next year. Yeah.

[00:15:51] So then is that a thing that people have to accept are they as a manager you will have to accept it, or you will have alternatives.

[00:16:04] It's silly. It's varies.

[00:16:07] Sometimes you can change and make it and you don't accept it and fight it sometimes you cannot.

[00:16:13] You have to go along with it. Yes that's the reality. If more education and more. about. this. seems the out all like you to people about it because at the end of the day you're touching the human side of people which all that we have it is just the method of understanding it or not understand.

[00:16:35] The cultural aspect takes it into consideration.

[00:16:39] For our staff and for customers.

[00:16:43] Can you come again pushing that cultural aspect example let's say it's Ramadan or Christmas. Of course.

[00:16:49] Absolutely. I mean I look at my team I run yeah.

[00:16:53] And you do. If I look at the way they perform well it's Ramadan. I look into consideration. What is Muslim is not. And I definitely am saying differently.

[00:17:06] The responsibility is the implications and the.

[00:17:10] Yes the culture where you are where you operate from.

[00:17:14] So I've worked in different countries and operating in UAE is different than operating in England.

[00:17:20] Ok. The culture around you is very different. You need to adopt this an otherwise. You won't be successful.

[00:17:26] So that also means reduced hours during Ramadan which can actually impact the business. So how do you overcome that.

[00:17:35] This is something that would not be asked to do it is not a choice because the rights right have reduced ours. And then you trying to see how you can work smarter and harder to deliver the same thing.

[00:17:50] And it's normally it comes with priorities but everything else around you also slow down.

[00:17:55] So it is not an it's not a major impact.

[00:17:58] We haven't seen this as a major impact was reduced our earnings because everything around you we work with. If you're in this environment those down. So you just have to prioritize more be focused more and do so effectively respect these things.

[00:18:15] Does your does your firm celebrate Christmas in the same way as they celebrate Ramadan.

[00:18:21] Absolutely. OK. We do or we do actually not only Christmas and Ramadan we know everything.

[00:18:27] So we have also whenever you have the data. Buddhism in India. We celebrate whenever we have.

[00:18:37] And we celebrate. We have 200 nationalities in the hotel.

[00:18:41] And whenever there is a what you call it a National Day we celebrate for them whether it's one stuff or 100 staff. It's the same.

[00:18:52] I understand. OK. So that's OK. That's a fantastic aspect.

Q) How do you think the holistic business practice are aligned with this strategic goal of your hotel. Strategic goals like financial goals marketing goals.

A) It's not money. Next thing you know it's difficult to be online, but you try to align them. You try. Yeah. You're trying to align them because one is to make money and One is supply and most of the time was the others or this thing is to spend money to get it later and as long as the overall number works then you're in good in good times to be honest financially you're good. The main thing you need to fit in. Because objectively as an organization you're there to make money. That's your number one goal and then a holistic thing has to fit in maybe you cannot do this project this year you do it next year or you plan for it.

[00:19:51] Understand. And so it is yard like you know like let's say in your restaurant. So the restaurant is completely has adopted the holistic business practice. in terms of there being no bad cutlery in terms of their napkin's straws.

[00:20:11] We are. We have. Things are done. Yes things are in progress. OK.

[00:20:17] We also let's say we have we have one of the only those that have a vegan and gluten free restaurant as well.

[00:20:26] Ok right. So it's all in progress.

[00:20:30] It's in progress. Yeah. OK. What effects of organization design do you find on holistic business practice for hotel?

Q)What is the question. So how does the how what the effect of an organization does and as we discuss could be traditional contemporary. How much it has an impact on holistic business practice.

A) Well it's major. If you're that tradition then Mm hmm It's going to be difficult if you contemporary than you are more knowledgeable and aware of the environment and the culture and the culture around you and the community.

Then your sustainability is part of your goals of your target. Then you can incorporate it in all your whatever you do .If you are tradition you are not innovative your business will become history in no time. Employees vision will not be a part of companies vison hence you are both moving in different direction which is not good for company .You will see the difference in standards it will not be consistent as everyone does what they want to do as this just becomes a job or a source of income rather than a passion as they are not motivated to work rather forced to do what is to be done . Customers are very aware now a days as I said, and they ask several questions and unhappy staff means unhappy customers in my opinion so this top to bottom approach is not fit for purpose.

Q) Did you think the staff was forced to adopt it or was it naturally that your team was educated, and they supported it?

A) We have a robust training programmed for every individual that joins our firm and our main aim is to foster the vison and mission of our firm in each and every individual Of course if they are not happy they leave and we can't do anything about it but our staff turnover is very less since I joined as I think happy staff means happy customers and forcing someone to do something they don't believe in is just a disaster in many ways. Moreover whatever we are implementing is for the benefit of everyone as we are taking care of social ,cultural ,environmental and economic needs like reduced hours of working , Environment suitability ,technology, cross training. I understand there are employees no matter what you do they are there just for an income and don't connect with the business but that's OK not everyone needs to be embedded in the vision but then it's by force they need to do the task they are allocated and they have no choice then being cross trained and move to other department if they don't like or move on.

[00:21:32] Let's say there is a recession that has hit Dubai in those times.

[00:21:36] Would you need to compromise with the holistic practices.

[00:21:42] It as a business your objective is to be successful.

[00:21:50] Mm hmm.

[00:21:51] So if there is a dirt town dirt town in Dubai like me which is could be for everyone and it's happening recently in the last few years. You sometimes compromise on things, but you still follow things, so you don't compromise on them that you cut them off.

[00:22:08] You just move them forward and do your planning.

[00:22:11] And you say let's suppose this project and then we start on that day or whenever we see a good sign.

[00:22:18] But you have things that continues which is in place you will not change them.

[00:22:24] Yes. Okay.

[00:22:26] Because I think customers actually notice if you go and you change it from real flowers to a plastic flower in the bathroom example.

[00:22:34] And that's what they do. Yes. And they questioned it.

[00:22:37] Yeah. Okay. All right. Yeah. How does the customer experience the fullest has to? How does a customer experience of holistic business practice affect the business sustainability of your hotel?

F) So in short term how does the holistic business practice affect the sustainability of your hotel.

X) didn't understand your question.

F) *Q17)How do you think if economic, environmental, social and cultural all these four are considered, how would be the overall performance of the hotel?*

X) Of course if you adopt a holistic approach. Yes that would be sustainable and will have a longer life journey and then not to do that. But as I said the holistic approach is a long-term strategic thing is never a short-term thing. And it depends on the leadership I got hundred percent or 50 percent or not at all. I absolutely have on their long-term strategy. It directly impacts your staff turnover, Financial growth as a result of cost reduction. Quality increases as a result of investment in the right direction, Innovation becomes a day to day activity and hence overall it will become the most sustainable business.

Q) *Do you think the customers are moving towards the holistic approach as well?*

A) Yes because the customer is aware of everything nowadays. The customer is very smart and have their knowledge on the top tip of their hand. I think they are more digitally aware hence are more knowledgeable. You can Google anything understands anything, know anything, they all want to contribute to the society in one or other form. They are sustainable generation I would say hahah. They can see how the staff are treated and if they feel suspicious they go further .In a way I feel they get involved in the operations

sometimes knowingly or unknowingly .The market has become very demanding and every business is trying to move accordingly to be sustainable . And therefore yes it the customers are moving towards this approach and somehow forcing the business to evolve along it.

F) So in your opinion what is the gap in the existing business practice ?

X) As a country UAE is trying to be eco-friendly and sustainable overall and you know it's a smart government they are introducing a lot of new initiatives being in new countries only 40 city and it's not very old but I think we have a long way to go still, in reality they are doing and working hard on it. And from the hospitality industry I believe that it is only valid in small percentages of what turns out to be adopting this approach the rest are just running the hospitality in traditional way. And this is a big gap not only in Dubai but UAE as a whole.

I think compared to lot of countries Dubai is a place where innovation is right at the top here. The rest of the world in terms of technology and everything else is really primitive. And I'm sure that the younger generation are very well aligned with that kind of technology. But the older generation are not.

So is that a time when your hotel really finds it difficult to explain the technology to the customer. Let's say if it's a self-checkout checking on checkout counter.

[00:25:37] Yes. At this stage challenging on the. Yeah. To introduce anything new. Because people are used to things. Mm hmm. And the bigger things and people are the change.

[00:25:52] Is it difficult to change because they seem just the best we've been done like that, but you rightly said the younger generation are adopting faster technology and embrace it faster. And the older generation.

[00:26:11] That should be how it used to be done before. But the fascinating enough let's say booking is a.

[00:26:20] Everybody's adopting the new thing. You can see it's almost 90 percent adoption on booking on an online immediately on your phone. This was not the case. If you look we expect everybody else to call. Yes. I'll send it or send the fax or an e-mail or something. But no this DNA there's a lot of.

[00:26:39] Yeah. The update is very high here.

[00:26:42] Sorry. What I'm trying to say is that some of the technology is adopted quickly.

[00:26:47] It depends on how friendly user friendly is the technology. And this time is a bit complicated.

[00:26:55] You pulled out a bit of some of them but if it's a friendly user friendly you will have very high adaptation.

[00:27:03] Ok. Understand. How do you how do your hotel measure your staff satisfaction level.

[00:27:11] We have the company also have a sort of a full scale. Yes. In place of suction it comes once a year.

[00:27:20] But they do also just to say thanks for you hit on it.

[00:27:27] But in an intellectual battle let's say you normally have committees means monthly. OK. And they voice their voice. That was their concern. If there is anything going on or just stuff on a company or something is not done the way they want. Yes.

[00:27:42] And that's Cindy on the worksite in their accommodation. Also we have an accommodation manager. There's another committee and they also can voice that would their concern if that is anything they're not happy with or things they would like to change. In addition there is a monthly meeting with the GM of Virginia staff which they call it. We do a Jim's they paperwork what invites random stuff.

[00:28:07] And also they have the opportunity to talk about and voice anything they want.

[00:28:13] There's a there's a top leadership.

[00:28:16] That's excellent. OK. Do you ever find this?

[00:28:20] Yeah go on. You have also a suggestion box in front of car where people can leave any suggestion they want in a box.

[00:28:29] Anonymous or they can put their name. There's a lot of means nowadays that don't actually have staff either. OK.

[00:28:36] So how does your H.R. manage the fact that OK the customer has complained about your staff, but the staff has been in it. Right. Like done the right pink.

[00:28:46] So is your H.R. then biased more towards the customer or towards the staff.

[00:28:52] How about that. How does the solution get?

[00:28:55] Started. The fact that charged responsibility is stuff so they will never be biased was the guest. And it is this stuff that they need to look after.

[00:29:05] Now the business unit which is operation huh. Then they have to assess what is a.

[00:29:12] What is the situation. And it's very unlikely that the you have these cases where the staff did the right thing, but the guest is not happy or something.

[00:29:23] So it's not describing using this to look after this lot.

[00:29:30] Ok.

[00:29:31] And so they always listen to the staff and you don't listen to them, but you are you oh yeah you listen to them.

[00:29:37] I mean but at the end of the day Mike you have chart a very experienced person in psychology in understanding cultures and they can assess. I haven't seen any cases where.

[00:29:54] The stuff was very right and the guests really kind of big on him or something. Okay.

[00:29:59] It's really very deadly. OK so the lights and all these defects are minimal just by giving the right training to your staff.

[00:30:07] Yes we have actually monthly programs that the learning and development team find finding the gaps in the team and put them forward for the staff that they have online training.

[00:30:24] Also in Europe you have something you can choose your set the platform that the company provides. If you feel the honor develop your sets in finance. There is so many courses you can go and get one yourself online that the company provides.

[00:30:38] So there are three different means we have what we provide them and what they can also look at and what we see the gap and understand.

[00:30:48] Ok.

[00:30:49] So what I see in most of the places is you know the leader is not well versed with all of the departments of a company but in my opinion then when one is a general manager should be able to have a little bit of knowledge about every business that example if you are a general manager of a hotel you should

be knowing how the restaurant is run you should be knowing this bar a little bit not a master of everything. How important is that for you.

[00:31:16] It is extremely important to understand you.

[00:31:19] 6o degrees of the business because yes you normally did leadership have a different background most of them whether it's comes from Adam's perspective or Sands or operation.

[00:31:35] But at the end of the day before you take on the general manager of

the company will put you sort of a two-year program to make sure you are exposed on all the other functions and understand the basic as you said of all these functions how they operate.

[00:31:52] What are the things you need to look and how you make it more efficient. Plus you really rely on your leadership team.

[00:32:02] So if I'm not very strong in finance and I have that, but finance should be stronger than me.

[00:32:09] Yeah I understand his business better and you can guide advice your guide or give you the right information.

[00:32:16] Understand how important cross training for you is.

Ask my personal opinion this is extremely important and helps the person understand what the other function of the business is in the right light not on theoretically or on the books or any confidence or any meeting in training. So it does teach you What is it, how it is and that's how you gain the best experience and you become a stronger person.

In this particular thing you're standing on but that is a cost again because you are taking time out from one department to put your boss in another department to be cross trained. So is sometimes an issue but What we try is to encourage it by allocating it as a self-development programmed ,so you can do it on your off days or on your own time. If it's something you are doing because the company has that skill gap within the organization then it means I'm asking you to do it. That's part of the cost that the company will pay .Example in a department somebody want to be change their line or profession to be something else then

what they are qualified for we do encourage it And he/she would come on his/her own time but if I asked you to go and was training in another department part of your job. So this is part of the company investment. I was normally working in the shop when I entered for the training. So I used to be working but you're not you are actually being trained while at work although it came with extra hours and stress but for me that comes and pays off for later.

[00:33:51] Understand. Okay. so in your experience from the past so many years have there been any person who has actually crossed trained and finished really very well in the other department rather than his own expertise.

[00:34:06] You have a lot of cases like this where people normally especially in the junior level what people like that they start on an entry level some way and they don't they're not sure about that passion or how they love it or what they do best. And that as soon as they cross the line and they feel them side stakes they found themselves in this particular thing. And then you can see them yes flourishing and succeeding.

[00:34:32] Right. And does this talk sometimes you think give negative experience to the customer by feeding them negatively like example the housekeeping department who has more of the interaction with the customer experience. Do you ever see that happening? What happened in your years of experience?

[00:34:52] What is it. So when the staff actually are frustrated with overwork or the company and all that stuff bad feet their feedback to the customers actually when they arrive.

[00:35:02] Have you ever seen such kind of it is of course a nominee at some firms that's complaining. Aha. Or that you can see they're not happy that they had that body and that they reflect on the guest experience. Absolutely. And but this is mainly it's normally individual associate. It's not a white thing. So it could be that somebody had a Monday or stay at and sometimes that's hurting negative thing. Yes I experienced that.

[00:35:32] Right. And how did you overcome it. Doesn't stuff end up leaving or maybe it's the matter of education or awareness. What do you think it is?

[00:35:42] You normally have so you know me to understand why that particular stuff is behaving like this. And then bring him in and ask him what this story is I need to understand why he's behaving like that and

then based on your findings you can make a decision whether there may be any small training needs to arrest. He needs to do this or it could be that that the data is saying that we have to right away.

Q11) How does your hotel link luxury products and services with sustainable business practices? Please provide examples?

A11) Sustainability comes with cost so anything we do at the hotel or have changed it has added cost to our budget example self-filtering, Choline free recyclable indoor pool.Our recreational area was shut down for few moths which effected our business and day spa visitors but again it added value to our services .Our customers preferred our pool and day spa membership increased which in turn has return on investment likewise our skin care and shampoo are all eco-friendly but are expensive but we make good profits when we sell it and also a percentage of the profit go to charity hence in a way customers are happy to pay the price as they know by doing so they are adding purpose to themselves. Another example is our eco-friendly bags that costs as a lots but again the customers love our bag as its made of bamboo and milk and wood and they carry it around not only inside the hotel but outside for shopping as the bag is very stylish and it carry's are brand image and in a way it's a live marketing for us so yes suitability doesn't always comes with cost it also it has a return on investment.

Q) In your opinion how can your hotel improve customer satisfaction by changing the current practice. So, is there something that you would change?

*A)*If you ask me I want to change many things haha. But from an organization point of view we would like to be more eco-friendly resort rather than a hotel which we are but for some reason it doesn't come across like that. We would like to be contribute to the society in some way I mean giving back to the society through corporate social reasonability programme that is not very much popular in Dubai UAE but that's something that we need to focus on. We need to be more innovative when it comes to digitalization. We should be able to give virtual experience to our customers and that's one of our plan in pipeline.

[00:36:43] Okay great. We have come up to the end of the interview. I really want to thank you for your time.

[00:36:51] It has been an excellent experience talking to you.

Topic	Themes	Sub-themes	Coded Text
TOPIC 1: Current holistic business practices and measures taken for customer satisfaction			
	Sub-theme 1a: Current organizational practice in the UAE hospitality industry		
		Contemporary design	It is contemporary We have a team structure wherein we are boundary less and open-door policies. There is no top down approach. Instead of relying on senior management to drive the business we empower our employees to make decisions and implement changes We are a chain of luxury serviced hotel apartments in Dubai. It was traditional but we flourished very well due to the leadership style.
		Partially traditional and contemporary	Well I would say it's partially traditional and contemporary. Well tradition is with the respect of property and contemporary by the management. So, if you ask me the reason why it's both 50 50. Well w the property where I serve runs in possibly both tradition when we speak about tradition, I would rather refer to a composite lifestyle where the customers are rather focused on both culture and when the well-being of the country. And when I'm talking about the contemporary is due to the fact that since the property is based on infrastructure and technology and competing with the market in today's market they are trying to be well established and the most technological aspects where they are trying to introduce or you can say copy from one of the country to introduce technology to the Middle East or any other GCC country
		Traditional design	I think our organization is quite traditional in its structure. We operate a global head office and then we oversee the individual International brands. It is structured in a very traditional way. Well, our organization is Very traditional, and we all are embedded in this approach which actually works. Our organization was based on a traditional structure. We operated a small head office which ran 4 branches and each branch reported to an operations director. Although the structure was traditional, we placed great focus on giving each branch manager a high level of autonomy in the running of their individual branch. We were very open to ideas and encouraged free thinking and initiative. Well, our organization is traditional because we have our global head office and then we oversee the individual International brands. As being in a traditional structure we have different departments for our marketing, finance. HR, food and beverage, catering and maintenance, customer services etc. We make sure our every employee and each customer are satisfied and contented with our services although we are traditional in approach It was very traditional and I would day 5 percent may be contemporary and when I say that it means some of the organizations approach was very holistic and modern but ivy formed only 5 percent of the overall design on the other hand certain aspects of the business was very traditional as it was a family owned business and run by ethos so I would incline it more traditional I would like to tell you that we are operating in a traditional atmosphere means our organizational structure is traditional means we focus on the ideas of luxury, enjoyable, pleasure, and pleasant

			customer services. We take our customers as our assets and pay them individual respect and ensure to take care of their needs in a traditional manner. Ours was a traditional one based on an ethos of simple but classic food lines which basically started as a one restaurant operation which grew with popularity and expanded to over 44 sites based on a classic menu design. We have a traditional organizational culture over here like when a member of our team asks for help, the other member from the team makes sure to help him to the full of his potential. We have separate working departments as per the duties and functions. our organization is quite traditional, in terms of the way we operate. Although we have modernized our facilities for the third time, in the last two decades, and refined most of our offerings, the organizational structure at large is in dire need of a change. I would define it as tradition because we have gone through the old school of thought but I'm in favor of Democratic leadership style which I have followed through and I believe in that and have tried my best to change the culture of the organization and it seems that gradually we are changing the culture but with some constrains. Our organization is a traditional one serving traditional cuisine for over a period of time, approximately from last seven years and has greatly expanded in 20 cities up till now.
	Sub-theme 1b: Measures taken for customer satisfaction	**Assessment and appraisal System**	We had an assessment/appraisal system in place so that staff felt valued and to ensure that there was a benefit to them when standards were achieved. A positive assessment could lead to reward such as additional time off, a financial bonus such as commission.
		Customer feedback	Feedback sites in terms of their experience. It's the engagement that's key to provide the service. So, we really encourage feedback to reflect back on our service. We have a tool called every night which provides real time up to the minute feedback by aggregating all of the feedback from across all of the different social media channels and through the feedbacks we are able to reach the expectation of our ultra-luxury customers. The foremost strategy that allows us to contribute towards the development of customer satisfaction is encouraging feedback systems. These systems allow us to effectively reflect back on our service. So we work with a number of outside, third party agencies which conduct mystery shopping as well as our special monitoring agents to looking at TripAdvisor and other platforms like Feedback sites in terms of their experience. So, we really encourage feedback to reflect back on our service. We try to monitor every move using Trip Advisor software, we ask feedback from each customer and record of they have any sort of complaint or misbehavior. Likewise, we use Client feedback to enhance our services or to fix the problem without any delay.
		Information on the customer on preferences	Firstly, we had clear protocols on each element of the guest journey including arrival, meet and greet, protocols for booking and recommendation as well as within the treatment room. This was crucial for us as the spas could be busy and we

			wanted each guest to feel that she was of the highest importance to the business. Guest experience begins before they arrive so we have our front of house team who sends them a welcome email asking for their preference during their stay, special request, they create a personal touch so when the customer arrives, he knows who to go so we connect with guest on personal level.
		Loyalty programs	having dual loyalty programs where the regular guests always come by addressing their needs and the preferences of their rooms by viewing the guest history before the guest arrives them and we got high customer satisfaction.
		Meeting customer expectations	So, we only obviously operating within the ultra-luxury leisure. So, Guest expectation from us are obviously very high. So, we have a number of checks and balances in place to ensure that we continue to live up to guest experience. In addition to this we offer them advance booking services. We make sure they enjoy every second in the hotel with comfort and satisfaction. We make sure our customers get luxurious and enhanced experience, for this, we have three shifts of service and three different kinds of menus for each time that is morning, afternoon and evening. As we are dealing in a luxury industry, we have a very high expectation from our customers. We make sure that our customers get best services from us without any complaints and dissatisfaction. easy solutions we had a web service solution if a guest had to inform about plumbing issue in his/her apartment they will simply go to the portal and ask for plumber So the reception will get back to the guest within 5 minutes We make sure our customers get luxurious and enhanced experience, for this, we have three shifts of service and three different kinds of menus for each time that is morning, afternoon and evening. For this the hotel crew welcomes the guests warmly and keep proper check of ambiance of the choice of customer, hygiene etc. Since we operate in an ultra-premium space, the guests expect us a lot more from us. We continually strive to better ourselves in terms of individual client experience, not just from the time they check in, but from the moment a booking occurs. There are many things right from being very sensitive to every guest service request to ensure that every guest service request is attended with personal touch which I emphasize upon, we ensure that each and every guest is happy when he leaves a property as satisfied when all the services given to him and we ensure that all the guest services which we provide are highest standard.
		Personnel training	Training was ongoing to ensure that standards were met by all staff and that they understood why the standards were in place. So, it's more personalized training Well one of the main ones was we opened an academy. A few years ago, now and in the academy when people are employed initially apply for a position that is from kitchen porter. I'm not saying that on any particular scale but from kitchen porter up to Operations Manager for example. They have to go through our running of academy and the Academy is basically every department within the organization .They have to learn about every department within our

			organization and then they have to sit exams as well as an intense three-week course people with within the organization are trainers for their departments designate trainers and this runs for approximately three weeks and then at the end of the three weeks intense six days a week courses to learn all about the organization they have to sit exams and only if they pass those exams specific percentage right. After hiring qualified and experienced profiles we provide them with two weeks training in which they learn about the basic tactics and discipline of the organization. Moreover, during these trainings the employees' expertise in preparing food and serving it to the customers in the given time limit are enhanced. Not only this, the employees learn about ethical standards which they have to maintain even if customers act aggressively and sort out everything on ethical grounds.
		Promotions and offers to attract customers	So, we work with a number of outside, third party agencies which conduct mystery shopping as well as our special monitoring agents to looking at TripAdvisor Plus, also you have different experiences when you arrive or you are staying at the property example welcome Drink on arrival, personalized experiences depending on if they're coming for a honeymoon, whether on a holiday or a business or returning guests. The vertical axis links the customer up and down to the product because product and customers are the two main factors. So, we work with a number of outside, third party agencies which conduct mystery shopping as well as our special monitoring agents to looking at TripAdvisor and other platforms like Feedback sites in terms of their experience. for this we try to make the use of personalization marketing that helps us to improve the customer experience in several ways. Like we do marketing emails to individual basis, addressing their names, and numbers. We'll let me say first. So, we do have several measures that can enhance this. First one is free or preferential rate to arranging for celebration for a particular guest even if there's a couple coming in. We do provide free amenities such as giving them cake or you know different kinds of cocktails. If we do have government officials or VIP or even celebrities, we do get a physical line up where there's an area of ladies who will be standing all by the entrance. And moreover, the other measures what we do tend to do is by giving in like luxurious transportation to particular place maybe airport drop off or pick up you know and also try to get the feedbacks related to its which can actually substantiate guest reactions or be nervous about it. We have loyalty scheme free dinner scheme etc., friends and family offer for repeat customers. Our recreation Centre is only for our inhouse customers and they get 50% discount to use the facilities. We had also hired 'mystery shoppers', special monitoring agents validate our TripAdvisor and other review websites, in terms of their experience.

			Beyond that we do have our unique Guest experience systems in place like welcome gift on arrival, we offer complimentary services example free wi-fi or free shuttle service or local attractions free tours.
		Qualified human resource	We also have butler in each floor to cater only to that floor and to cater to the demand of any particular client. As you can see that in our organization the human resource management tends to look for qualified employees who possess prior experience and knowledge regarding hospitality and most importantly about customer satisfaction.
		Use of technology	Of course, in today's social media world nothing escapes the attention of the Internet. So, whether it's TripAdvisor or other forums in which we continually monitor, we actually have social media sensing tools which give us daily feedback on what's been posted what's being written tweeted We have a tool called every night which provides real time up to the minute feedback by aggregating all of the feedback from across all of the different social media channels and through the feedbacks we are able to reach the expectation of our ultra-luxury customers. We use technology, so we have an app WhatsApp where people can look at the property and can actually do WhatsApp booking, which also assist is seamless check in. So, you don't have to wait. Ok. So, we ran a CRM system. We implemented that back end of 2018 and we would use that along with the reservation platform open table to look at guest trends create user profiles create guest profiles. It was a very analytical approach absolutely right. from that we'd be able to determine trends that were happening not only in the restaurant but also what's happening in Dubai. So, for instance if we always knew if there was a new restaurant that was opening or a new type of cuisine or new trend you could kind of, you'd always be able to see it in the analytics. Four times in the last six months we'd be able to understand the beef that you had the wine that you had the table that you sat on how long you sat at the table and what your other guests had and you could start to see trends and you'd start to look at when it came to for instance menu engineering we use these data we'll use this data and kind of go OK well you know that starts is not solved. So, it was all technical you manage so we use technology and app to see the enhanced experience to your customers. Yeah. We also encourage our marketing team to use premium social media tools that monitor everything that is being written, posted or tweeted about us We do have in room technology like Smart room keys that allows guest to access the room with their smartphones. Tablets are provided for effective communication.
	Sub-theme 1c:0Ccriteria used to measure customer satisfaction		
		Customer experience	We make sure to improve customer satisfaction through improving service quality available for the visitors. These services are effective in helping strengthen the satisfaction. We make sure to improve customer satisfaction through improving service quality. Based on the foregoing and based on experiences we have had

			in recent past; we seek to respond how and why companies should tend towards the creation of a brand highly experiential and how this brand experience contributes to brand capital, brand-consumer identification and communication. On top of that they do ask for feedback to how their state was in particular. So, for example if a particular customer didn't like something, we tried to give them something complimentary or even give a voucher for their next visit so the unsatisfaction doesn't breed and they are happy before they leave. Spending on site example using our bar services, wellness services, recreational services, Restaurant services also indicates that the customers are having a positive experience.
		Customer loyalty	You can check the loyalty of the guests That's important. If they recommend your hotel to other guests that's another key of them and that's you look at it from a satisfaction survey. We also try to e mail the repeated guests who would like to come and experience the new concept and through the web site which is connected with several third-party portal we try to get in feedbacks. We didn't have enough repeat customs which was the evidence of our service and quality. Eventually the business had to be sold to different group and I had to leave. Loyalty programs were based on the number of spaces by the person for the seventy-five nine safety standards of the hotels worldwide. They get free breakfast. They get both communities. So, it all depends on how many numbers of nights of stay these stayed loyal to the brand. Loyalty over time, discount offers, feedback from the clients and new clients coming to the hotel with the reference of the previous clients. Loyalty and privacy are the two factors that are kept in mind as a top priority Loyalty over time as repeat customers are great indicates of customer satisfaction
		Customer reviews and feedback	Finally, as I said earlier customers reviews in third party web sites which are monitored continuously gives us a good indication of our areas of improvement. The execution of the feedback systems is actually allowing us to critically analyze the satisfaction of the customers. These measures are helping in setting the criteria for assessing At a basic level we operated customer feedback forms. We ensured that staff were aware of feedback and that they received it in a constructive way. And this is one part of it. In addition, you have the guest themselves where normally you call them. They do also have their feedback. We believe that collection of feedbacks from the customers for the customers is an integral part for any business. We make sure to apologize for any kind of negative feedback. We have placed a feedback form on our website and request our customers to fill the form while checking out. Now when we talk about feedbacks what I've liked from the other models is most of the time when the checkout is happening I guess that is the time when the feedback session is actually taken note of the feedback section 2 can be taken either by a manager or by the receptionist is there for us.

			We did have feedback system in place which was very basic. Feedbacks in any form are equally important either positive or negative. We have special purpose employees for the collection of feedbacks. We have hired people on chat support that collect feedback from customers and record their complaints. Tracking the customer service reviews and loyalty programs Feedback is taken very seriously. And these are the main factors for gas Express and also listening to guests. We also take into consideration every opinion a guest provides us with, in terms of their experience at our properties Customer feedback forms during check out process and they earn loyalty points by completing it We use sophisticated property management system which allows us to Track guest reviews Obviously, the main criteria which we have set to measure the customer satisfaction is through their reviews or feedbacks on our website/webpage on different social networking sites. Most of the times we ask the customers to give us feedback on our feedback cards
		Customer surveys	So, every guest who stays in a hotel is just invited to give direct feedback through a questionnaire. We have as an organization something called Voice guest this voice which is an international company and then they send a questionnaire We have included several relevant questions related to our services, facilities, quality and atmosphere of the hotel. We did monitor online tools, but it was not enough to receive a feedback that was measurable We have devised questionnaires that truly gauge their expectations as a guest, and also how we measure up in terms of the quality of our services.
		Provision of small surprises to increase satisfaction	Secondly, we operated a mystery shopper program which happened on a monthly basis and for all staff in each department. We operated this with full transparency in that our teams were fully aware of the criteria and fully trained to deliver the experience. And For us let me speak of the property where I work and so we do have an interactive website that has got A lot of information and updated status of the new offers that we bring in. We have Mystery Diners obviously. And we have what we call a wow factor when you try and come up with ideas to wow guests with small surprises like having their cakes ready because you can see them paying the bill and then which number the code is so on when they're walking to ask for their code that code would already be ready to move. The most important factor in solving the issues of the budget of our guests by offering special discounts for them in some special seasons. Also, we measure the customer satisfaction by giving small surprises to our special customers by offering them loyalty programs or vouchers.
		Service optimization platform	We use Service optimization platform which are well advanced and allows us to evaluate the guest experience for current and plan for future stays.
		Use of Social media	Social media. We are also on top of the game with regards to social media.

		Working with third parties	So, the first way is each of our hotels has two mystery shoppers per year. We work with a company called the Milky Way and this is the first reference point which we use. To maintain and enhance customer's satisfaction, we work with different third parties. It is a net promoter score it is one of the criteria which is comes under my Dahlia and also other online tools like TripAdvisor hotels dot com through better with the bookings come from the customer reviews so you can track through a fee as well. We work with companies that specialize in 'mystery shopping'. This is vital to understand, measure and interpret primary data that involves every property of ours. We engage in this activity every year.
	Sub-theme 1d: Impact of holistic practice on customer experience		
		Building strong relationships with customers	Now a day's clients are more aware and conscious about environment and they educate us more than us educating them. So, we look at the preferences and then adhere to it and try to delight the guests at every point. In terms of eco friendliness we care about what liquids we use and try to reduce laundry We are offering food items meeting the holistic behavior of customers and so building a strong relationship with customers.
		Focus on sustainability	Yes, whether it's through the Food Beverage element as well as the environment and sustainability guest are looking at sustainable practices. From a business operation perspective, we removed towels from treatment rooms and replaced with sarongs. This meant less washing, less drying time, reduction in the use of energy less frequent washing. We felt that generally reducing waste, measuring product usage to avoid waste and using more natural products for cleaning was also towards being more holistic. Yes, because the customer is aware of everything nowadays. The customer is very smart and have their knowledge on the top tip of their hand. I think they are more digitally aware hence are more knowledgeable. You can Google anything understands anything, know anything, they all want to contribute to the society in one or other form. They are sustainable generation I would say ha-ha. Yes in every aspect of our service through to taking away plastic straws are no longer used we have paper straws .We're trying to remove all plastic where possible we go in with paper bags rather than take away services we prefer now going with paper trying to get all paper across rather than plastic take away containers as example gluten free dietary requirements is another thing high on our agenda as well. The holistic approach from our customers' perspective, has evolved to state, where they demand a lot more than what is good enough at the moment. At our facilities, the demand for wellness and eco-friendly practices has become a part of standardized guest norms. Now, it's no longer about aversion from single-use plastic bottles or disposable plates. Last year, it was wonderful to see our wealthy patrons advocate the need for solar panels at our facility,

			which is exactly the sort of approach we are looking to fulfil in the next two years. It becomes self-educated and they take the decision not to change the linin every day as far as convenience and comfortability the same thing goes in the toilet's products and towels. So, we manage to sustain that, and we don't save a lot of whoppers. So, on a daily service if you have one hundred rooms occupied maybe 50 guests don't give that much linins to clean every day. Think of it ultimately saving of cost, we save in the water we save enough you know. Everyone would be required to adopt ecofriendly products. Clients are more aware of what they put on their skin. They should be able to eat what they put on their skin. We used to use products which are not very good for environments but since I came on board, I have changed to sustainable products which has added value to our service. Then in the swimming pool we have a backwash in the filtration so we can reuse the water. Lots of lots of gallons of water is saved through this system. Customers are very sensitive, and they can predict everything and anything that's going on around them or even by looking at a staff. Customers want to make a difference themselves by choosing eco-friendly properties to stay. They know if the staff is happy the standards are above expectation. Eco-consciousness is in its peak at the moment.
		Customers looking for authentic experience	For authentic experience it is the way in which you know the ultra-wealthy the ultra-high net worth individuals are living their lives. They're looking for much more. That was great but look at It now it has evolved but Yeah that's no longer good enough as the wellness and eco-friendly has become a part of guest demand. I would rather say that these approaches are preferred by customers because when it comes to satisfaction, they prefer integrating effective customer development abilities. Here, I would conclude that our customers are showing interest and concern towards holistic business practices. Yes, I think the present era has educated the customers so well that they appreciate the holistic approach and prefer companies that follow holistic approaches. When the hotel provides the customers an enjoyable and satisfactory environment, this motivated the customers as well. This also motivate the customers to stay loyal to the hotel. Yes, the approach will help in identifying the gaps for better providing the service and products. It helps in understanding the needs of the customers, which also makes the customers utilize these systems for cooperating with the management of the hotel and putting their suggestions and feedback for the hotel. Also, by understanding the attitude of customers we have replaced some of our culinary utensils from plastic to metal or paper containers. We are also offering gluten free items or keto food for the customers who look for restaurants/hotels fulfilling their dietary requirements. Because I think customers are now very sensitive and they look at the face of a staff. They know if they're happy at work or not. So basically, the customers are moving more towards the holistic approach

		Hostility from Customers		we implemented a waterless manicure/pedicure. We didn't do this to save money. It was a measure to save the vital resource of water. The protocol was efficient, hygienic an extremely professional. However, we experience a lot of opposition from customers who wanted the old way to remain. As with anything, it suited some people and not others. Many customers though have an expectation of more organic/natural products but the concept of recycling and reducing waste is still not of high importance in the middle east.
		Involvement of staff in decision making		So, the management was quite strong in that for any decisions or any concepts introduced would first be given to or explained to the low level of management which is the low-level employees of this is the blue collar and white collar. So, we used to have kind of a discussion a one- or two-day discussion review it according to the aspects of it. So now in 2018 the whole system changed because we don't have the full management anymore, so the holistic approach just left instead it's completely into silo management. Okay. Now if you tell me what happened to the new ones is for the first reason is because of the pressure of export 2020. If the management is deciding on a product decision or an offset, He/she wouldn't let us know. They wouldn't or that the management wouldn't allow us to think or react or give a suggestion if this would be good enough or not. Nothing of this would happen.
		Low staff turnover		So, by giving us these particular criteria for empowerment most of the employees they used to stay longer. Staff turnover was very less. Great. So yeah. So, this is what happened till 2017.
		Adoption of a holistic experience	No	Hierarchical approach to management and leadership. General managers generally are not into operations, so they are there just to make decisions and then there is the executive team to oversee the operations and then each executive member is looking after his/her own area and departments are not very well connected. Spa and recreation are separate division likewise engineering and sales and marketing. So, I think there is a lot actually to learn within the hotel sector since breaking down some of those. No, I would say as it was a traditional approach and the owners were very rigid in the terms and conditions that was drawn years ago when the company was formed so they are not innovative example t's very difficult to buy purely because we have issues bringing in the wine and the beef. As we have traditional setup in our organization, we have hierarchical approach for management and leadership. Our general managers don't take part in the operation. Operations are handled by executive team of the hotel. General managers take decisions and forward them to executives. The current hierarchical approach to management and leadership is what's being sought by our brand owners. Truth be told, our General Managers, who are not involved in operations are the actual decision makers.
			Partially	We aimed to do this wherever possible, but the process was slow. Many customers' expectations are embedded in what they're used to and what they expect. We prefer adopting holistic business practices that prefer development for company's performance. There are notable limitations in terms of

				theoretical and methodological approaches on consumer satisfaction in the hospital context. It's yes and no. Ok. I will have to tell you via a small brief on the history. OK. Before I was into the new management. So apparently till 2017 we had such a management where a holistic approach business practice was complete and used in it.
			Yes	The holistic business practices allow us to retain customers which are effective and important for our sales and performance within the market. The purpose due to which we are adopting holistic business practices is the development in company's performance. Absolutely I mean this is in top of our List, whatever we do we always think about it. We've just recently implemented also a good filtration system for our Swimming pools and showers. So, all the water that comes from showers and everything is we've put a system that gets filtered and then we can reuse it was in our facilities for watering or for different things. We also looking at solar panels to reduce our energy. Yes, being a follower of traditional setup, we ensure to Adopt the holistic approach, we make sure that our decisions are appropriate on economic, environmental and social basis. Our management follow orders from higher to lower. Yes of course. So, the brand that I worked. Mm hmm we had an environmental guard at the guest rooms each of the guest rooms saying that if they would not take the housekeeping turn down service today, they would get at least five points in their account. Yes, in every aspect of our service through to taking away plastic straws are no longer used we have paper straws. Yes, we have adopted the practices for holistic the business for facing the changes Holistic businesses tend to face unique challenges. Yes. Yes definitely. And we've always been as I mentioned earlier everyone was educated and shown the implication of not adopting such practices. We've always ensured that we take guest feedback form very seriously in our properties and that deals with managements objection for many holistic practices that we wanted or want to launch this is the most obvious thing since one can only acquire higher customer count when the holistic practices are adopted. We are offering food items meeting the holistic behavior of customers and so building a strong relationship with customers.
TOPIC 2: Holistic business practices adopted				
	Sub-theme 2a: How long it has been since this approach has been adopted at your hotel?			
		After start of business		Very recently and I would say it's just a revolution that is in its pre-preliminary stage. I think there's really an opportunity for us to think more laterally as opposed to vertically because actually we did not look at our businesses very holistically at all. The changes and approach mentioned in the previous answers were slowly implemented from 2015. I would say for about 10 to 15 years we had this approach and now its traditional approach I mean very silo management. We have recently started this holistic approach in order to develop an accurate and functional

			budget. We have taken holistic approach as a big picture view to include the initiatives of our company, to reduce our cost, to identify significant operations, and to optimize our strategies. I'd say ten years ago one of the main reasons is ten years ago you were still out to smoke in restaurants. OH, and even though you'd have smoking tape was a non-smoking tape was obviously the smoke would be blowing from one table to the next. Yes. We incorporated this methodology for reaching to the level of commercial success. There is a pattern in blended use undertakings to incorporate private to make a live/work/play condition. Albeit recently, one of our directors pointed out during our previous Annual General Meeting, that we had not thought about the business, holistically at all. The term in itself was quite misunderstood by many of our managers. To be very honest, we haven't started our business with this perception but with the time and extensive transformations in the environment of entire globe and also the changes in the society have enforced hospitality industry to adopt such practices or approaches. But I guess in between these changes and execution of practices we have not forgotten our values or framework on which we have had structured our business.
		At the start of business	As I said it is a contemporary very horizontal approach so this is the trend from very beginning so when I took over it was handed in the same way to me so it was very easy for me to implement strategies although we are not 100% there in terms of adopting the complete holistic approach but we will be there and this is in my developmental plan for the business. The hotel chain was sustainable and most of the holistic approach were in place I just grew with it. I think we were the leaders. I've been doing this from long ago, since I've been a general manager from past 16 years I've been brought up with this procedure and I believe that staff and customers should be involved in the development of this process. They should be involved in the processes and then they feel good and proud about it right
		Availability of holistic products in the market	Some of these changes have been influenced by availability of more holistic products on the market and this will naturally influence choice. When attending trade shows and exhibitions then you can say that this approach is taken and adopted from the sheer availability on the market. The approach worked well to draw in the local inhabitants and enliven the street by providing the services 24/7.Also, the strategy implemented for the purpose to sell the right product to the right customer at the right time for the right price.
		Balance between customer beliefs and hotel beliefs	You cannot completely ignore customers' perception on holistic approach but on the other hand, you can also not completely agree with them, if we only give consideration to the customer's preferences and beliefs this could impose negative influence on the progress of hospitality industry. So, you see we have to maintain a balance between our beliefs and customer's beliefs to promote positive attitude towards other businesses

				According to almost all hotel's legal rules and regulations, it is important to maintain a healthy relationship between each other in this industry only then the businesses could be able to achieve their goals.
		Influence from society and stakeholders		Every development, every success and every improvement start with a revolution. That is for sure the case with us too. You see this revolution in our business practices occurred soon after the shift in market competition. I believe it's a combination of influence from society as well as our own general awareness of market trends, customer demand and the changing face of business. As I said we are in the initial phase of implementing this approach so I would say it was not until last year that the shareholders have realized that to be in competition and sustain we need to shift our approach so yes not long ago and you know it's not always easy for the change as it's a whole culture change. I think that it's a combination of all to be honest moving with the trends understanding what's going on in the world and considering our business has been running 25 story 27 years you move with the times and what's best as you evolve as a business you have to keep moving with the times but never forgetting where you started from and the core values of that company as I said earlier about the family business but moving with trends is very important knowing what's going on in the world. Climate change for example is changing all of us as we speak.
		Not fully implemented		We never implemented this approach completely. Yeah, our CEO was very silo management style. He would micromanage every situation. The founder of the business. He'd run it for 25 years. And we had to respect that. Absolutely. He's run a very successful business and for 25 years to my feeling was that. The trends passed him by a little bit, and he was kind of set in his ways and when he set up the business 25 years ago hospitality has evolved, and he didn't evolve.
	Sub-theme 2b: Role of Technology in implementing holistic approach			
		Procedures adopted	Cloud-based system	It is really the future. But what we've done as well is we've been scratched out with a technology platform. Yes. Called Salesforce. Salesforce is one of them made a cloud-based system For us a cloud-based system was implemented and actually this improved communication across sites and interestingly it also created increased healthy competition across site because they became aware of one another's performance A cloud-based system helped everyone apart from the initial technological hitches.
			Guest Database	So, from a commercial point of view business back in 2016 I was looking for a business partner that could provide me with a simple global database. Is this client. So, what I wanted was to have a single platform in both our regional sales offices no hotels would have a single view of the customer. And in this context when I refer to the customer, I'm talking about how to be part of travel agents once and so we started to partner and what we discovered was that this started to grow and transform our business. So rather than just being a simple database being what we started to do is build out. This now will further evolve so that our guest database to our Web site and in fact all of our

				customer touch points will set within this one ecosystem. This now will further evolve so that our guest database to our Web site and in fact all of our customer touch points will set within this one ecosystem. I believe that's been most efficient in the last five years.
			Introduction of wireless payment	But yes, there are some negative aspects of technology for instance, due to computerized system some positions have been replaced like cash counters are now free of employees; our customers just have to swipe their credit/visa cards to buy food.
		Role of technology in implementing holistic approach	Additional expenses	It has reduced our expenses but yes, we had to hire technical trainers to educate our staff about the usage of technology which caused us an additional expense for the time being.
			Building brand image	In my opinion, technology is important. It can help in building reputation and brand image. Technology plays a major role in contributing towards the development of organizational operations.
			Customer engagement	This was really how I recognized the need for us to remain relevant to and engage with our customers as well as our guests so the technology we really had to embrace technology. In fact, we have installed many different software versions that help us stay connected with the customers. In future it will be vital in engaging customers, gaining feedback Technology is important and effective because it can strengthen the behavior and experience of the customers. if your pool is closed you would have updated your digital system or news displayed in screens or their mobiles to avoid frustration once they are physically here and find out. likewise educating customers on room services, water waste, I think technology is gives an overall experience to our guests, guest can download this app track and they can just put in a request that will come to the back-office operator and then they would engage the housekeeping or instruct them to do the needed within 5 minutes. We have empowered each team member with interpersonal communication tools, that helped us take into consideration what we would have otherwise overlooked previously. We have now started to value opinions, that would have previously seemed impossible to collate, or be altogether ignored due to the barriers and thresholds that we failed to remove, due to the traditional methodologies that we have now simply overthrown. We use various technology which assist us in smoother operation across the board and irons out the communication errors. We do have influential videos on sustainability and how customers can be a part of this eco-friendly campaign.
			Eco-friendly	So now there are a lot of cleaning equipment which comes in a very come back more cleans those kind of areas without vacuuming just pick up only the big pieces of chunk garbage and then you can use the scrub or just move the tables and chairs and just use the scrubbing machine which scrubs and drives at the same time

				Eco-friendly environment including the installation of technology for energy saving, the celebration of the local festivals.
			Improve efficiency	When it comes to technological development in our hotel, I believe that it has significantly contributed towards our service quality ensuring smooth operation The technology is helping in many ways to improve or to speed the processes or to actually streamline the process It doesn't matter what the process is technology simplifies it. Same goes for on the day offers etc. Staff training can be easily done through technology use all those interactive sessions can be done on the go or at their own times. We have deployed technology systems for the technology is utilized for different purposes including check-out and check-in times, room allocation details, management systems for reputation, billing through cards and online accounting. Technology comes in when it comes to training and equipment's when it comes to housekeeping. I have a big space of at least 1000 square feet area has to be cleaned. So, what that general housekeeping practices are they have to vacuum it and then they have to mop it right. This machine would do it in like 20 minutes. So that's a great time management time and the productivity is high. The system will not allow you to do that. But whereas the previous version of Oprah. Oprah's big deal you'll read a lot of steps has to be followed. It's more than three to four minutes of our time. But with upgraded Oprah it is like less than two minutes if somebody was very efficient can do that. This avoids all the delay and staff are more efficient and less physical labor along with bacteria free and safe environment. I think technology keeps traceability it helps you know exactly where you are. In olden days it was all pen and paper and a calculator so to speak with proper technology and pay now you can control your business from wherever you are in the world. The technology is utilized for different purposes including check-out and check-in times, room allocation details, management systems for reputation, billing through cards and online accounting. the implementation of the technology as its utilization has made the operations much faster and easy for the employees. Personalized cloud services have changed the way we interpret incidents and experiences. Technology is merely a means to improve efficiency. If something can be automated, it will be. If something can be replaced by a machine, it will be. Technology is key in implementing this approach. As the client demand is increasing with time the costs that hotel incurs is also increasing. Hoteliers will need to overcome this cleverly by using technologies to overcome pitfalls. We use various technology which assist us in smoother operation across the board and irons out the communication errors.
			Keeping Track of staff and management	I think technology keeps traceability it helps you know exactly where you are. In olden days it was all pen and paper and a calculator so to speak with

				proper technology and pay now you can control your business from wherever you are in the world. In all departments from human resources departments monitoring staff turnover is highlighting of people are leaving us to and identifying the reasons. We are using the tools of technology to keep track of staff and management of the hotel.
			Market survey	if you expand globally the press of a button you can get all the reports. We are yet very far from digitalization as it's a very traditional approach, but we do have the necessary technology like staff development purpose and to measure employee satisfaction etc. but as I said we have a long way We use hotel management technology, revenue management. CRM, reputation management system which is a survey system to be ahead of the game.
			Marketing of the industry	And in fact, over the next six months I got Quite a big plan simply to further enhance enhanced risk and further break down some of the barriers separating these commercial functions so the way in which again sales marketing communications are working I'm really working on bringing it together as a single function. The technology which is underpinning all of that. And bringing this transformation. So, it actually a whole philosophy my philosophy is taking the business from being transactional into being content driven. We have boosted our sales and customers with the help of technology The Hotel management told us that they are utilizing the concept of digital systems for satisfying the customers and attract more new clients. Providing technologies to staff that can collect qualitative data of customers in real time. This technology has also provided assistance to companies promotes them and globalize them. In fact, technology has greatly helped us introduce ourselves in the business market and understand our position in the industry.
			No use of technology	The Hotel management are not so much into digital technology as we are still on a traditional approach, so we are very limited apart from online marketing and HR use but as I said it's on our list and depends on our budget. Technology is the key. But as I said we are not innovative enough so I really can't speak from our organization point of view read too much into data and you know sometimes you just got to go with your gut. I think it's The best feedback you can get the best data you can get is actually talking to the guests when they're actually in the restaurants and actually building a relationship with them instead of actually purely just looking at a spreadsheet saying okay let's build a menu purely on what the computer says.
			Reduction of human conflict	somehow implements it without the need of staff member getting involved and avoid any kind of arguments that could arise due to certain process example when we implemented I pads in the rooms to choose room services there was a notice for turn down service .Turn down services increases water usage ,electricity usage and laundry usage and these had videos to educate the customers so they understand that they should be assisting in reducing carbon footprints but usually in a 5 start hotel customer expect run down

				services ,fresh laundry etc. and if a housekeeping staff was to be involved in such conversation with the customer it may not go down that well as the technology did for us . if we use technology as our communication tool it avoids conflicts because a staff member may not be able to spend that time communicating effectively but technology does.
			Reduction of staffing cost	This way, we not just save our time but resource and money too. Likewise, there are many other examples right from check in to check out where technology has not only reduced staffing cost but also has reduced process and procedure implementation time. PDP online portals can assist in reducing staff turnover in many ways. So yes, technology is the key as I said. Like installation of technology systems have reduced our human staff to a great extent that helped us to reduce our costs. But yes, it has threat for our senior staff who are not aware of technical machinery much. It has reduced the cost of operations integrated by humans and made the procedures must simpler. But it has somehow damaged the employment opportunities for the old staff as they do not know about technological operations.
		Reception of technology	Negatively	Like everything, the excess of anything can turn out to be damaging for people. When it comes to technology too, we believe that wrong use can affect our reputation within the market. Yes, any new thing or development that is introduced in the working area has its impact. We have witnessed both positive and negative effects of technology. Like installation of technology systems have reduced our human staff to a great extent that helped us to reduce our costs. But yes, it has threat for our senior staff who are not aware of technical machinery much. Firstly, in the hospitality industry, we need people skills more than ever. There is never a question, let alone a thought, that technology would take away jobs, especially at our hotels. I know there is a fear in the industry specially hospitality that the technology is a threat, but it all comes down to education and creating awareness. As we are very strong on technology our Staff will has never seen as a threat as its simply making their work easy rather than keeping manual records which are suspectable to human error. But yes, there are some negative aspects of technology for instance, due to computerized system some positions have been replaced like cash counters are now free of employees; our customers just have to swipe their credit/visa cards to buy food.
			Positively	I mean that is that's the future. It is really the future. But what we've done as well is we've been scratched out with a technology platform. Yes. Called Salesforce. Salesforce is one of them made a cloud-based system. So, from a commercial point of view business back in 2016 I was looking for a business partner that could provide me with a simple global database. Technology is adopted extremely positively in order to drive efficiency and ensure a smooth operation. When it comes to employees it's never seen as a threat as they can work without the possibility of human error from self-check in to check out, room

				service, leisure facilities etc. and they see this as a sales opportunity as well so it never deemed as a threat. To my believe, the technology is what we focus on. It is what we prefer in adopting and attracting customers for the company. We focused on attracting strategies that can help in enhancing satisfaction of customers. We have boosted our sales and customers with the help of technology. It has reduced our expenses but yes, we had to hire technical trainers to educate our staff about the usage of technology which caused us an additional expense for the time being. No, we are not innovative when it comes to technology. First, he wants to actually categorize the whole segments of the departments before he goes into technology. Well that is really a wrong approach. Understand. And any of our solutions we tried to approach to the management is never listen We were not innovative with technology so it was never become a threat but I know our staff would have adopted easily as they were very educated and even our European customers would have accepted it but not sure about UAE locals although UAE has its own innovation Centre. It was never seen a threat by anyone as we had enough demand for the technology in every aspect but also enough demand on personal service level due to our local GCC clients and some old generation European clients too who liked the personal touch. As I said we are yet to go fully digital what we have are very basic and employees are used to it so they don't see it as a threat so far but it is a fear amongst employee that they will lose their jobs if we digitalize everything but this is not the case. No, it's not threatening directly, the implementation of the technology as its utilization has made the operations much faster and easy for the employees. It has reduced the cost of operations integrated by humans and made the procedures must simpler
TOPIC 3: Relationship between the holistic business practices, sustainability and the employee motivation				
	Sub-theme 3a: Impact of holistic organization design on employee motivation and morale			
		Appreciation of employees' ideas		In our organization we have an idea box at the front of house. Every week we open the box to check ideas and in our head of department meeting we discuss it. If the idea seems to be beneficial and profitable to the organization, we test it for 3 weeks before implementing and the idea will be named after the employee's initials and again this was something I established after few months of taking over the operations and this has been very beneficial in terms of employee motivation.
		Customer resistance		Initially staff felt it was a great idea. However, when we received some resistance (in the beginning only) from customers, staff felt helpless and suddenly opposed the idea. This negatively impacted morale as staff did not want to be in any form of conflict with guests. This is completely understandable and had to be managed through further education and training so that they felt confident to deal with customers. I mean particularly in sort of towards the end. You would see feedback on things like TripAdvisor. Yes. The average rate with rating would go down. We would always rate a good restaurant and four-

			point sixty-four point seven stars. You know we were around four point to four point three.
		Eco-friendly environment	It's actually very positive because the clients are happy when interacting with happy employee and happy employee makes happy work environment. We ensure that we provide them a relaxed environment. The hotel provides its employees with a place to have breakfast, tea, drinks, and smoke which makes them comfortable. It is very important as per my opinion to look at what actually the guests want. Basically, what the guests look into is the eco-friendly environment of the hotel. Water-based laundry systems are implemented throughout the organization to have sustainable and cost-effective practices.
		Employees understand their roles and objectives	I understand their roles or responsibilities and they understand very clearly my philosophy and expectation so there is a clear vision that flows down from top to bottom. They understand what their goals objectives are and then they're just a lot easier to get on with it and so I find that very effective. The way in which I empower my regional offices, my sales organization and commercial organization is such that I understand their roles or responsibilities and they understand very clearly my philosophy and expectation so there is a clear vision that flows down from top to bottom. They understand what their goals objectives are and then they're just a lot easier to get on with it and so I find that very effective.
		Feeling empowered and motivated	The motivation of the employees is dependent on their morale. The higher morale of employees can reflect high motivation levels. You only work from your heart and you give everything. Hundred percent So they're motivated to be motivated and be genuine and be happy. They look after your guest which intern looks after your business if you look after them, So the guest comes back and talks about it better. So overall your business would be much better if you do this. So while I provided a framework maybe that I outlined earlier how each office translates or interprets set rather than to their own markets is really important and I give them complete freedom to innovate and take actions for their particular area and they feel empowered and motivated .So that's how I've enabled more offices to be successful. Our employees are our main resource. We ensure that we provide them a relaxed environment so that they can prosper and grow with Job satisfaction, respect and we also allow them freedom to share their thoughts in an open environment that keeps them motivated. Our cultural background was taken into consideration. It was a platform where everyone could flourish no matter what background they hailed from and this impacted the productively staff were more friendly and comfortable. I think that they just felt valued. I mean that's the big thing isn't it. You know we're asking a lot particularly hospitality is tough. Yes. You know you're on your feet you're running around. It's quite an intense situation because you're ultimately you know you're there to give the guests an experience.

			We believe our employees are our asset, we make sure to provide them their right and an environment that keeps them satisfied and motivated. The hotel provides its employees with a place for recreation and lunch, dinner etc. which makes them comfortable. We offer them rest time and even nap time if need be. It definitely boosts their morale because they become a part of the country eventually after we speak a lot. What I mean to say is that we have to give that comfort to our employees. I think everyone should adopt this approach as employees are the key and happy staff means happy customers as mentioned earlier Employees can freely take actions, and innovate things related to their field, and this way employees feel empowered and motivated which leads them to success. They feel the profitability the results of the organizations are true that they're being rewarded.
		Internal communication.	There should be proper guidance required for the employees which should be provided by the organization and the manager from which the employees engage properly, and the organization can have results as desired.
		Low staff turnover	staff turnover as obvious was very low but revenue was high. For me if we had a more holistic approach to staff retention would have been a lot better but I think it would have felt a lot more valued. And I think they have been happier. In terms of staff turnover, we had less than a percent staff turnover so we can't stop there, and the credit goes to the business approach Of course.
		Support and training	Trainings all needs to pay for by the employee and we are not allowed to use any of the facilities we are strangers to our own workplace. So overall a holistic approach needs to come back for thus business to flourish. The employees got the opportunity to cross train. The hotel believed in investment on their staff, so you are not stagnant you had a vision, and this is the place to be to fulfil it. We take care of our employees and use this approach to support them and train them in every way for Job satisfaction, respect the needs of the workers and right of freedom to share their thoughts in an open environment
		They feel involved and part of the company	each office translates or interprets set rather than to their own markets is really important and I give them complete freedom to innovate and take actions for their particular area and they feel empowered and motivated. So that's how I've enabled more offices to be successful. I think that they feel involved and yeah, I think I was to if I talk about my specific area. Ok. The way in which I empower my regional offices, my sales organization and commercial organization is such that I understand their roles or responsibilities and they understand very clearly my philosophy and expectation so there is a clear vision that flows down from top to bottom. We have Goal setting and this goal setting gave us a personal development plan and our vision was embedded in the company's vision, so we had a say and we had our personal growth. We got staff

			discount vouchers for our performance we were treated as guests not as just employees. Big gap between management and the team. And I think they felt very undervalued in terms of you know their feedback and input and it was very much like you know it's all The staff was given freedom to innovate and come up with ideas although we had traditional approach, but it was not all that bad. We feel that encouraging employees to voice their opinions more freely and giving them an opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process, has vastly made a difference on the way the hotels operate. because these opinions once valued, are truly what's needed to build a better work environment for each one of us. Well they feel proud about it and they feel completely involved that feel connected with the organization.
		Working with premium brands that are sustainable	We work with premium brands like Chopard, who are able to source 100% ethical gold. We work with brands that don't make their products in China, because the workers make as little as 12–18 cents per hour working in poor conditions. Burberry is one of the most sustainable brands out there, and we were happy to work with. This only shows how serious we are when it comes to standing by what we believe is right the right thing to do.
	Sub-theme 3:b Role of employee in implementing holistic practices		
		Carrying vision of the company	The employees in an organization can play a significantly effective and efficient role in driving and improving vision management. The generation of the revenue and the productivity of the company is what interlinked with the management of the vision They carry forward the vision of hotel like Working on the ideas to better solve the issues that occur in any scenario and plans for the management hotel, guests, allocation of room, listing, services and food management and division of teams for the morning shift They play the majority of the part so if they are embedded in the vision, they will transmit it in a positive way. Its only through them that the organization can successfully implement changes or new developments. Well they I mean the employees are the ones that are front and Centre. You know they are your Mini brand ambassadors essentially because they are representing you. You have to you've got to trust these guys because that's what they've been employed to do. And so, I think I think they are critical absolutely critical one from implementing the brand standards but also implementing the DNA of the brand and the core values of the brand and the Grizzlies for instance that would could probably 200 steaks at a night. They are the key players you can't implement anything without them. So, they will be told and educated on our ethos which is which is ongoing and the responsibility to implement our visions as a brand.
		Employees switching roles	we have recently started practicing this, like for a week we assign different duties to employees apart from their actual position such as a receptionist would have to work as a waiter for a

			week and vice versa. Rotational shifts have also been assigned to the employees.
		Focus on satisfying clients	It is the reality that if unhappy staff will lead to unhappy service and staff emotional health is very important for the business Employees are the key assets of an organization. Employees are accountable of running a business and generating revenues because they are the key resources. It is the reality that if unhappy staff will lead to unhappy service They are customer facing and they know more than anyone about the customers' needs and what their dislikes. Even if it's a traditional approach you can't do anything without the willingness of your staff. The employees should focus to satisfy the customers and performing the duties to add value to the business for its growth and success. Employees are most close to the customers starting from front of house to housekeeping. The manager may see them once but the staff may interact with them on several occasions for various reasons so who is your key player it's the employee, so our organizations takes pride in employee care and training which is evident from our business reviews.
		Involvement in decision making	Involving employees in the decisions keep them motivated So yeah, I think they you've got to trust the team and you've got to you've got to. Hope that they deliver on the standards that that we implement. But for me you've got to stand back. You can't stand over every single member of staff and kind to let him just go. Let him do it. So, there was lack of progression because of this interference of the higher authorities hence the vison never filtered down.
		Positive thinking approach.	The role is very key, and it all begins with a 'buy in' from staff and finding ways for the to own the change Without the support of staff, the vision of management is difficult to implement but even more difficult to sustain. There is a strong culture which encourages almost a family feel in the business and this has also been key. Quarterly gatherings on a large scale have encouraged the sharing of best practice and again this has had a very positive impact. Staff or your associates are aligned and understand what we're doing and why are we doing it. So, when did they understand it and they believe in it? The vision of any organization ought to be attached to feasible objectives for workers. Surrounding the organization's vision as such will make it a basic piece of everyday experience. Everybody from the representatives to the head ought to bolster into the framework to push the organization toward its objective. There should be connectivity in the departments and the employees thus working on the ideas to better solve the issues that occur in any scenario and plans for the management hotel, guests, allocation of room, listing, services and food management and division of teams for the morning shift Well yes! I always prefer hiring skilled employees who are naturally talented and are educated enough to handle things and organizational changes. I prefer skilled hiring because employees

			in the future can help in making organizational decisions and can support organizational changes.
		Sound emotional health	It is the reality that if unhappy staff will lead to unhappy service and staff emotional health is very important for the business so we do have special counselling and training programs specially created for staff for cross training and freedom to express in complete confidence what is going on in their mind staff emotional health is very important for the business, so we do have special counselling and training programs
		Support to management	It's important that the vision flows down to each and every person in your department and that's not enough they need to trust and believe in you as their manager and in your leadership. The success of my department is my staff I can say that very confidently. The workers are accountable of measuring the relative price and other costs incurred in the acquisition of the service which can further help in producing revenue. Also employees are very much aware now a days they also contribute to the environment, they are conscious about the competition in the market so they want to keep their Job where they are happy and where they have a platform to showcase their hidden talents and nothing is by force we bring the best in them through them might be that's the right way of putting it. Once they believe in it's easy to transmit it to our customers and there on. It's important that the vision flows down to each and every person in your department and that's not enough they need to trust and believe in you as their manager and in your leadership. The success of my department is my staff I can say that very confidently. They are the customer facing people, they are the ones who interreact with the customers and they get the feedback so it's crucial that the employees understand and are in line with the company's vision. Employees are a part of company. They have very important role in the management. As the structure of the hotel is horizontal so the communication between management is done between peer to peer groups. encouraging active participation of employees in the decision-making process, is a show of how much we are committed to the welfare of our employees. This in turn makes it easier to streamline operations and achieve higher productivity simply because every team member feels responsible for each target or each milestone to be achieved. Whether it is process, system or even change implementation a project is only successful if the employees are in line with it. When we engage them, it becomes their vision we are giving them tools to act on our behalf and in the best interest of the organization
		Undergo training	It is the reality that if unhappy staff will lead to unhappy service and staff emotional health is very important for the business so we do have special counselling and training programs specially created for staff for cross training and freedom to express in complete confidence what is going on in their mind ,If they are happy at work or is something bothering them.

			This can involve a change in culture, training, education etc. The key element which has encourage holistic practice and strengthened it is the training policy and structure. We spend lot pf effort and time in developing our staff and fostering our vision in them We have a robust training program for every individual that joins our firm and our main aim is to foster the vison and mission of our firm in each and every individual Ask my personal opinion this is extremely important and helps the person understand what the other function of the business in the right light is not on theoretically or on the books or any confidence or any meeting in training. we do have special counselling and training programs specially created for staff for cross training and freedom to express in complete confidence what is going on in their mind, if they are happy at work or is something bothering them So, we have a whole training philosophy and employee philosophy around creating joy. We create joy for our employees we completely create joy for our guests and that's what we put in the Centre of our employees training. We give platforms to everyone to enhance their skills via cross training as we are focused on long-term relationship. Its key and we ensure they are embedded in our culture by educating them about our ethos and we want them to transmit it. Cross training is no doubt the most effective approach in strengthening and improving the operations of hotel. It helps us to reduce the risk, improve the engagement of employees, and improve the satisfaction of employees, it also helped us to improve the support of customers for our services and overall performance. Reverting back to our academy as I say our ethos of our business is all taught through that from coffee making to duty of care. To the only yourself as an employee to the guests. Our academy was the epicenter of our evolution of what we do. So, they will be told and educated on our ethos which is which is ongoing and the responsibility to implement our visions as a brand. For our company. And they are well aware of it as well as what their responsibilities are. And that's why a lot of people join us for certain reasons to go through our academy and to be educated on aspects of the business from start to finish really because a lot of companies do not do that. Cross-training is incorporated for the development and learning of the workers, for how to do more than one specific task to be well-rounded professionally. Cross-training enabled the staff member to know the task performing by working with another staff member for some time. During cross-training, the receiving staff member trained the visiting staff member about specific tasks related to their tasks. For us, cross-training simply aims to build the skills of everyone in the company, so everyone better understands exactly what it takes to run the business. The idea is to empower employees to provide support from within the company instead of outsourcing or overloading one group of employees during hectic times.

			So training is key again I can't stress enough how important it is to create awareness and then educate the employees in your vision Training is provided to educate and generate awareness amongst the employees about the organizations and how the tasks are handled. It further makes them self-confident.
	Sub-theme 3c: Effect of holistic practices on the overall performance of the hotel.		
		A strong commitment to environmental issues	The company has a strong commitment to environmental issues and in fact is a key player in bringing these into their business through sustainability practices. This is obvious throughout the design, build and consumption. It's very refreshing to see within this industry. .The have a purpose towards the society they care about people and their health so they have organic farming and food is prepared only from organic grown vegetables and products are organic there are many reports in Europe but again UAE is far behind that approach but having said that it doesn't take time for UAE to change anything overnight. It can go completely eco Friendly organic certified resort overnight. This is the future and this approach will become a necessary tool in order to sustain in future market. Environmental: the factor associated with the environment are linked internally relative to the situation, beliefs, practices, and behaviors within the boundaries of business. A business has more control over its internal social environment than it does with its external social environment.
		Achievement of goals	Our management team make sure to keep track of all the four main business elements that is economic, social, cultural and environmental to keep up with the success of hotel. Either it's to take care of growing inflation or growing environmental challenges, even if it's about it providing employees their rights and keeping concern of culture. Our hotel management tries to stay at top. We have been lucky to have analysts who take into consideration, all of these factors. Our Board of Directors have always had a keen eye for figures, and judging by the way we are progressing, I'd say this is how business needs to be done. This could lead us to our destination. A hotel chiefly requires these four vital elements to get highest position in the business market. And obviously, it would take time to reach to that phase.
		Increase profitability	What it means is for us as a business is our profitability will increase and our reach into our market will be much more, it will increase your profitability Financial growth as a result of cost reduction. I said it will increase your profitability Economical: these indicate the trends in the economy which provides the business a platform to achieve its goals. These include consumer behavior, employment factors, interest rates, and banking and inflation and overall economic indicators. There are many offers in place to cater to all kind of client needs and to suit their budget, so the hotel occupancy is increasing due to such strategy.
		Increased customer satisfaction	will be more alive, whether I'm communicating through traditional or online or offline media or

			social or digital. The engagement with our client list should be much more powerful. increase customer satisfaction as you will be meeting the needs of the ultra-luxury market. When it comes to analyzing the organizational design, I would say that the holistic practices of the business and hotel are significantly focused on attracting strategies that can help in enhancing satisfaction of customers. Quality increases as a result of investment in the right direction, increase customer satisfaction as you will be meeting the needs of the ultra-luxury market. Customers are all aware and educated and they know if your staff are happy or not as they communicate and ask lots of question and psychologically, they are more aware so to sustain in such market you need to move with the trend.
		reduce staff turnover	reduce staff turnover It directly impacts your staff turnover
		Social and cultural is of high importance	Social and cultural is also of high importance and local culture, tradition and practices are all taken into consideration and given high importance regardless of the location (and these are worldwide). Cultural: the factors of the culture impact the business a lot as it's an extensive aspect. It influences the values and priorities of the workers, he functional areas of the marketing cluing sales, and the distribution. It also influences the decision making and analyzation power to enter a new market. Social: The factors can impact the attitudes, opinions, and interests of the employees as well as the customers, thus impacting the sales of products and revenues generated. Hospitality is globally customer related industry, so language barriers are very well taken care by having multilingual and multi-cultural employees as well as local festivals are now celebrated globally specially Dubai being so multicultural it is imperative that we adopt this strategy.
TOPIC 4: Gap in the current business practices and measures to be taken to be taken for sustainable business			
	Sub-theme 4a: Current approach and gap in the market		
		Contemporary vs. traditional approach	And from the hospitality industry I believe that it is only valid in small percentages of what turns out to be adopting this approach the rest are just running the hospitality in traditional way. And this is a big gap not only in Dubai but UAE as a whole. We were one of the only few hotels chains here in the Middle East that felt responsible enough to consider such practices. Currently, there has been a shift in how each hotel chain addresses the approach in their own customized formats. They are slowly learning things the hard way.
		Customers have a high expectation	Customers have a high expectation in their own lives. Yes, well that's progress of what their dietary intake spiritually what they do. That's what our customers are expecting particularly at the very high end of the market which is where we're located. Customers have a high expectation in their own lives
		Desire for a greener environment	I think if I look if about past five years It's all about wellness. We're working at the moment with a consultant to really look at the way in which we provide a plant-based diet. Of course, I have a plant based.

			They want to work in natural and greener environment compared to few years ago when employee worked for money under any stressful conditions so yes overall it is changing, and it has to change. Taking the case of UAE, I would say yes. The hospitality industry is actually moving towards holistic approach in UAE. customers are more aligned towards holistic practice and they are looking for eco-friendly resource even in UAE which is very much a man-made country likewise staff are going self-employed as they prefer quality of life against stressful work environment , They want to work in natural and more greener environment compared to few years ago when employee worked for money under any stressful conditions so yes overall it is changing and it has to change. You see our business depends on European and UK customers and most of Europe and UK are into sustainability. It's less observed amongst the locals. If you are not into this sustainable trend your business will become a history in no time. Yes, the industry of hospitality and tourism is vast growing industry in UAE, it has been progressively centered around grasping follow up on the holistic approach, understanding the greatness of the environmental change to achieve the objectives of the UAE National Vision 2021 to advance management development. The industry of hospitality in UAE is moving towards the holistic approach to incorporate sustainability within all its business practices and operations.
		Disconnect between top and bottom management	There are other companies who involve the people a lot of satisfaction levels given to the employees at work. So that's where the gap is. That gap has to be filled by the senior management and the vision has to flow through each and every employee of the company. If the owner is only concerned about the financial results then definitely it's not a sustainable business and unfortunately that's the case in most of the businesses today. Also, when your staff are not motivated, and they are not clear with companies' vision there is a lot of confusion on what messages goes out which impacts the business sustainability
		Financial constraints	Yes and no, the growingly pollution and environmental hazards has made the holistic approach a significant element on one aspect, but the constrained budgets have not allowed many to change their sustainable practices Once again due to financial constrains organization cut corners which ultimately effects customer satisfaction directly reflecting on the sustainability.
		Market is not ready	Where there are many expat and European customers the definitely yes there is an effort but not a wholehearted one. The market is just not ready for it and the demand from customers is not great enough. With an increased awareness of the wider issues such as climate change, environmental issues etc. this will inevitably increase but the process will be slow compared to other markets.
		Organizations are not open to change	No quite a few organizations are focused on just getting what they want then there and not having a long-term vision. They have very strict rules and

			principles that they want everyone from top to bottom to follow like a Bible.
		Sustainability has not been fully embraced	I don't think so when I say that if the team was supposed to do so it would probably go OK let's not use plastic straws anymore. But if we served a plastic straw and I'm using that as an example because it's a big deal in hospitality at the moment if we sent a plastic straw in London it would be frowned upon and someone would pull the plastic straw out and go No I don't want a straw. Whereas in Dubai they wouldn't mind. It's amazing. Long term I think they'll get there but at the moment I don't think it's a pressing matter for them. Right. I think that. Money rules in. And I think I think it's about the experience and it's about the next best thing in terms it's the biggest the most glamorous. It's a very affluent place. In my opinion UAE is not yet there although they claim to be, but you know we can claim anything as UAE is all about showing off the lifestyle and the luxury. I think many hotels speak about sustainability and holistic approach etc. but very few implement it and that's the Gap for me. Staff turnover for them is not an issue but staff are forced to work overtime under strict rules and guidelines, they don't get their accrued holidays although they promise they will give it back following year but when the following year comes, they say it lapsed. You see employees are not as free as in other countries. There are no rules for COSH Certification in UAE so anyone can get an organic soil certification if you are affluent or belong to someone up there. There is defiantly a large gap before which we can claim that we have adopted holistic approach.
		Use of social media	It is a big one because over the last few years people become much more aware of food due to the success of certain restaurant groups advertising media social media television. People are much more aware of food where taking allergens into consideration as well or these things. From my experience 10 years ago a lot of this wasn't how it is now. Especially with the social media and I know this type of stuff. Well, over the last few years due to the advancement in the field of social media and establishment of restaurants have altered the thinking criteria of people. Customers are now more aware of the foods and latest technology and so yeah.
	Sub-theme 4b: Ways of Improving current Practice		
		Advancement in technology use	Accordingly, we need to bring much more alignment across the way in which our content is distributed so definitely more alignment and innovation is needed in the hospitality sector. Also, the vertical thinking has to be faded and horizontal thinking has to come into play. So, it actually a whole assumption that is allowing us in taking the business from being transactional into being content driven. We can believe that integration of an automated platform can facilitate in changing business performance. We need to be more innovative when it comes to digitalization. We should be able to give virtual experience to our customers and that's one of our plans in pipeline. So, if there was something else that we needed to implement we learn from somewhere else or

			something new technology becomes on the market.
		Being more sustainable	If you ask me, I want to change many things ha-ha. But from an organization point of view we would like to be more eco-friendly resort rather than a hotel which we are but for some reason it doesn't come across like that. We need to more innovative and eco-friendlier and we need to change our approach towards employee as employees are jot employees anymore, they should be a part of the company growth. We should be more culturally aware. We are working on it. Therefore, in this hotel, they are providing environmental sustainability which is on a small scale. I think the gap is more of a luxury because UAE is all about showing off the lifestyle and the luxury. I think we many hotels speak about sustainability and holistic approach etc. but very few implement it and that's the Gap for me. Do what you say you are first and for this you need education and awareness and that's what UAE should focus on to fill the gap and be in competition.
		Customer education	This can sometimes be seen as 'cutting corners' by customers who may not be familiar with sustainability practices. I do think that subtly educating customers in the company's choices and their impact on social/economic/cultural/environmental factors will inevitably increase customer satisfaction as it will attract those customers who are looking for exactly the type of destination which is prioritizing these factors.
		Embracing social media as a marketing tool	So, I think we need an evolution of the commercial function, Yes is to further break down those traditional barriers between sales marketing communication But as technologies and technologies can guess as the way in which people can tell the sun has come the way in which you know our social media our digital world converges. But as technologies and technologies can guess as the way in which people can tell the sun has come the way in which you know our social media our digital world converges. Accordingly, we need to bring much more alignment across the way in which our content is distributed so definitely more alignment and innovation is needed in the hospitality sector We would try to make the company much stronger by giving more importance to the sales and marketing trying to get the high spend customers to know what our property is and to serve it better so that you know it's the it's from the customers. The word of mouth goes I'm one out the tap. I'll be or how that management company as well.
		Evaluate customer satisfaction	To actually improve and strengthen customer satisfaction, I think changing and developing current practices can allow us to manage our brand image. We focused on attracting strategies that can help in enhancing satisfaction of customers. It will help in bringing this transformation. Customer feedback assessment It is easy to evaluate customer satisfaction in terms of a customer's stay at our hotels. But from the standpoint of a hotelier, it's worth pointing out that most surveying and feedback monitoring

			tools provide nothing but a snapshot of the end result.
		Improve communication	We feel There is a communication gap in the hotel as every executive member in the department is concerned with his or her work. There isn't enough communication.
		Introduction of loyalty programs	Well, we are planning to initiate loyalty programs and working on it so, it's a surprise we cannot disclose it right now
		Involvement in corporate social reasonability	We would like to be contribute to the society in some way I mean giving back to the society through corporate social reasonability program that is not very much popular in Dubai UAE but that's something that we need to focus on.
		Monitoring processes and fulfilling customer demands	Satisfaction of the customers is the most imperative thing that is improving our business. Monitoring the task of every day according to the standards, Staff should be focused on the goals and aims of the business Fulfilling the demands of customers are what could help us increase customer satisfaction.
		Streamlining management and management processes	Also, the vertical thinking has to be faded and horizontal thinking has to come into play. We feel There is a communication gap in the hotel as every executive member in the department is concerned with his or her work. Therefore, they are not well connected with each other and with customers directly. Well since our management is already a silo minimalistic approach. Well if we need to improve bring back our holistic approach and this will bring back the organization to life again the entire management should actually change. The management should listen to what the employees say. New Strategies should be implied depending on how the market works. The management will have to share his ideas. Make trial run and try to implement slowly rather than you know putting the whole process in at once So, if you need to have a most diversified or strong department all these negatives should be actually taken out only through a holistic approach. The gap is what is too big a gap between the management and Front of house. So, as I said there isn't enough middle management that are bridging the gap between the two. you always have the front house, back of House gap because it's happens at every restaurant. The divide between those that are cooking the food and those. Serving it. We should have done more to engage them and actually bring them together socially. But I think it needed to happen from the top and it needed to happen. From the senior management team to actually you know reach out to the to reach out to the staff and actually engage with them. Sharing of knowledge with staff and providing them chances to deliver their ideas in an open environment for motivating them and guiding them with the best knowledgeable details so that they can better guide the guests, which supports and helps in the business growth. The more horizontal it is the easier it is. Being very vertical structure, it can be very time consuming, there can be communication gap, again leadership plays a key role in the organizational design. So yes, we need more vertical structure to be successful in implementing these approaches at every level.

			Streamline the management and maintenance processes We need to fundamentally rethink our business strategy, and this has to come from the board of directors I alone will not be able to sustain this for long.
	Sub-theme 4c: Holistic practice and Strategic goals of the company		
		Being sustainable	We did use eco-friendly products for laundry and our spa although it was expensive, but we had good sales in the spa due to the nature of the products. This was all budgeted for from the financial year, so we were very much in line with our targets. We had to reset your expectations and pleasantly surprised to discover that it's possible when we make a better choice for yourself and the planet, we are indeed making our hotels a wonderful place to stay for our customers.
		Effective communication	They are very much aligned with the activities and the actions taken by each of the regional cells offices because obviously what they offer but my regional offices will have a direct impact on the business success of the hotels Yes, and in the same way the needs of the hotels need to be conveyed very clearly to the regional offices We want to know what their opportunities are what their challenges are and accordingly the regional offices will adapt and modify their strategic plans based on the needs of these individual units A good example of how this is currently happening is the vision of head office is communicated reasonably effectively regionally. A regular head office presence and investment in time is happening and this has to continue. Head office must be visible regionally and although this is difficult to maintain it is crucial. Regional managers/directors must feel they have a say in their very own unique operation and how it fits into the wider goal of the organization. This could definitely improve as many senior managers work in isolated locations. Therefore, in the same way the needs of the hotels need to be conveyed very clearly to the regional offices We want to know what their opportunities are what their challenges are and accordingly the regional offices will adapt and modify their strategic plans based on the needs of these individual units. If there is a flowless connection within these units subsequently this enhances the financial growth of the company leading to sustainability.
		Financial stability	this enhances the financial growth of the company leading to sustainability. It's about Financial stability as a business and you try to align them. You're trying to align them because one is to make money and the other is customer experience and their needs and you need to spend money to get the later. As long as the overall number works then you're in good times to be honest as that's the main thing you need to fit in because objectively as an organization, you're there to make money These practices have a direct impact on the budget. Going eco-friendly is expensive and not that easy but it impacts our marketing, financial and customer and employee aspect in many ways Financial stability,

		Focusing on realistic strategic goals	When it comes to financial goals when our employees, product and services are all in line with the customer expectation we reach our target goal and become a sustainable business. This is imperative as the company grows because the identify and strategic goals/vision can easily be lost/diluted. The company needs to ensure there is a visible career path at all levels and in each area as this will only strengthen holistic practice and remain in alignment with the strategic goals. it's all a money game, these practices can be profitable for us and business like these are structured based on the amount of return which must be two folds than the amount we have invested in the business.
		Increase productivity	From the artful reuse and recycling of original materials in building our hotels, to rethinking dining options with a focus on local goodness, to well-appointed fitness amenities designed to heighten productivity Yeah well as I say again the weighted average of a business is to project your profit overall of how much you need to make and where you'll be. if you're getting your numbers correctly and then you forecast in slight additional costs.
		Increased customer count	These are very much linked example one of our main focus is to make customers feel like home and this cannot be achieved unless your process and procedures are all aligned in harmony our restaurants are fully booked week in advance and this is only because of our sustainable practice and employees so we take care of them and they take care of the business. the other is customer experience We can also expect the returning customers to come back again. Our strategic goals are clearly not aligned it's as simple as that. that holistic experience that you talk about would ensure that the guests actually feel valued because they see happy staff and they go well. This must be a great place to work team look really happy. They're going above and beyond for me. Expanding sales by attracting new customers. if we become successful in acquiring 120 loyal and satisfied customers in a month just by adopting these practices then what else an organization wants except for this customer count to get doubled.
		Involving low cadre employees in decision making	Best things the top management and senior management is to delegate and cascade down the outcome. The results should be expected from the property through employee engagement and through employee involvement. That is the most important things. Organizations must Have a top line to bottom line leadership. You get the top line always lead by example and bottom line follows the same accordingly. No strategic decisions should be taken without involving employees from all departments. The mission, vision and goals it's all to involve the people collectively. It is the team which works along and gets the results, so a holistic approach is important in achieving your organizations strategic goals.
		Low staff turnover	The same goes for employee as is said we had less than 1% staff turnover which actually means we had happy staff

			we invested in technology which was very much in line with holistic branding strategy. I mean retaining staff is another big example to train up another member of staff. Cost a lot of money. So, if you have staff retention overall potentially it works out cheaper than say you're losing 100 staff in a month or retaining 100 staff. Cost speak for themselves often includes the staff training are taken as big factor as well Afterall staff make happy business.
		Maintenance of client database	Maintain the databases of the present clients
		Skills and leadership programs for staff	The company needs to continue to expose staff and senior management team members to other areas, to head office and to overall strategy to increase cohesion and satisfaction. Then we also have new forms of KPI key performance indicators which can be taken either from the travel first or for career you know consultants and educate our employees for the betterment of the hotel. I think you have to invest in your team. You have to ensure that you are constantly training your upskilling your ensuring that you know they feel valued and ultimately if you have a healthy happy team that you enjoy coming to work in and want to be in the business then that's a good thing because I think that will rub off on the guests. It starts with enriching your team and ensuring your upskilling and training and giving them opportunities. Listening to them and feeding back and not ignoring them and making still value to the vision you want to see your soar was clear to everyone. There wasn't enough support for the staff. Skills and leadership programs for the staff