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## CHALLENGES OF MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION IN HOTEL BUSINESS OPERATIONS

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### **Abstract**

*Purpose* – Hotel managers meet daily challenges when communicating and conducting hotel business operations. Some challenges can be predicted and prevented, while some are ad hoc and cannot be influenced in advance. To address these challenges and convey messages they use communication. Communication is at the heart of every business and a key success factor. The purpose of this paper is to investigate, analyze, present and map the internal and external challenges that hotel managers face when communicating and managing hotel business, based on a theoretical review of previous research. It aims to identify the importance of the role communication plays in hotel operations and how it contributes to them, and to identify future communication challenges that hotel managers will face in hotel business operations.

*Methodology* – This paper uses the literature review as a research method and focuses on reviewed open sources only and published relevant studies in publications about communication, management and tourism and hospitality industry. Desk research was used to search for and analyse papers. The literature review provides an analytical overview of the latest publications and research on the role of managerial communication and hotel business operations. The search for relevant papers was based on the keywords *challenges, communication, management, and hotel business operations*, using the citation and bibliographic databases of DOAB, EconLit, Emerald, Google Scholar, SAGE journals, Science Direct, Scopus, Springer, Taylor & Francis, and Web of Science.

*Findings* – Results indicate that maintaining continuous and targeted communication is of crucial importance in ensuring timely and appropriate responses to emerging challenges. At the core of any business, communication is an element that warrants great attention. Poor communication can be counter-productive and adversely affect overall business performance. The paper highlights the primary challenges in communication facing hotel managers. These are: sending the right message to the right audience at the right time; communicating about sustainability; addressing the environmental and social awareness of consumers, financial, political and health crises, information and communication technology development, social networks, climate-related disasters, armed conflicts, and other challenges.

*Contribution* – The contribution of this paper is that it presents an overview of the challenges that hotel managers meet in communicating in hotel business operations and can serve as a basis for further research in this field and improvement of hotel business operations. Challenges that have appeared over the past twenty years have been analyzed and grouped so that hotel managers can learn which challenges often arise in running a hotel business and prepare strategies to overcome the same or similar challenges in their business. By reviewing the literature, the paper determines what is known about this topic and what needs to be further researched. It is recommended that further studies investigate the current challenges facing hotel managers, given the increasingly rapid changes, globalization, computerization and new world crises occurring today.

**Keywords** challenges; communication; management; hotel business operations

## **INTRODUCTION**

Communication is an indispensable element of living and working, and the outcome of successful communication is the successful execution of management functions. Good communication can help to improve organisational performance, ensure better management and decision making, and contribute towards an organisation's prosperity while boosting employee job satisfaction and commitment. This will help reduce the risk of employees' dissatisfaction with the management, enhance employees' trust in their superiors, and make it easier to address any potential challenges.

The paper highlights the importance of managerial communication in external as well as internal hotel business operations, with special emphasis on maintaining good and effective communication with employees, and it explores the challenges of managerial communication, digitalisation, globalisation, and other aspects. By researching and analyzing previous works, the goal is to answer the question of what challenges hotel managers have encountered in managing hotel business over the past 20 years and which challenges are more frequent. In addition, we want to identify the importance of the role of communication in hotel business and identify potential future challenges that hotel managers will face. Every communication challenge changes the way hotel operations are carried out, given the dynamics and specificities of hotel operations and the interconnectedness of communication and hotel operations. Continuous and targeted communication regarding hotel operations is important for employees, who will be able to respond in a timely and appropriate manner to unforeseen circumstances, as well as for their engagement and motivation at work. It is the task of managers to identify potential challenges, consider the situation from different perspectives, and respond on time.

### **1. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

Communication has existed since the dawn of humankind and developed over time (Pillay and Hoque, 2015). As an information sharing process, it is a vital component of all five management functions – planning, organizing, staffing, leading and controlling (Garača and Kadler, 2011); it is the bloodline of the managerial process, organisation and management (Strukan and Đorđević, 2014); and it is a tool available to every organisation and must be used effectively to accomplish the set goals of great importance (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017). Communication is a coordinated activity aimed at creating a framework to convey salient information, as one of the primary pillars of social life and organisational structure, as well as an activity for building lasting relationships between organisations and tourists (Iwara et al., 2020). Successful communication is the foundation of any business policy or successful business relationship (Bagarić, 2015), and it plays a highly crucial role in ensuring that hotel staff can provide better and more efficient services through a mutual sense for job satisfaction, career development, and service performance (Iwara et al., 2020).

It's important that the communication is the core of any organisation, as the organisation's leadership, goals, plans and development depend on effective communication (Gupta, 2011). The task of organizations is to strive to build and sustain relationships with their

stakeholders (Ettinger, Grabner-Krauter and Terlutter, 2018), and one of the first steps to improving business communication is to gain a better understanding of what goes on during a typical day (Brownell, 1991). Communication may be difficult to master but it is essential that every effort is made to do so (Čulo and Skendrović, 2010).

Of the various business functions, the most prominent is the communication process, a fact that underlines the importance of communication in management (Jakovčević, 2000). The communication process, with regard to time spent, could be said to be a new function of management (Garača and Kadler, 2011) and it plays a particular role given that it is indispensable for the success and growth of any organisation and for accomplishing an organisation's goals (Gupta, 2011). Hence, the manager responsible for carrying out management functions will use the communication process to efficiently coordinate business activities, and make decisions and carry them out (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017). The successful execution of management functions is the outcome of successful communication, and if there is no communication within an organisation, management will be very poor or non-existent (Garača and Kadler, 2011). A large and important task that managers face is using the communication process effectively to ensure the organisation's successful performance (Jakovčević, 2000).

It often happens that the communication process is underestimated in some organisations. This is a huge mistake as communication facilitates the efficient transfer of objectives as well as motivation. Hence, it is clear that an organisation that communicates needs to communicate with all its employees across all levels (Melkić, Marković Vukadin and Roknić, 2020). Improved communication is key to ensuring quality, productivity and competitiveness, and in every organisation, it is vital to train employees, managers and leaders in communication skills to enable them to communicate as effectively as possible (Wolvin, 1994).

Open communication can prevent conflicts from emerging and helps to resolve them faster (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017). Managers must carry out about mindful of the communication process and seek to use the many communication techniques available to them in reaching mutual understanding. Data that are incorrect, arrive too late or are completely lost going through the hierarchy will have a negative effect on business performance.

### **1.1. Managerial communication**

Managerial communication is a learned skill that is developed over time (Bell and Martin, 2019), and it is the main and fundamental component of management (Vladutescu, 2015), with managers playing a key role in encouraging communication within their organisations (DeMaria, 2016). Being a manager is not just about driving business but also about coordinating teams, having managerial skills, and foremost, knowing how to communicate (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017). No other managerial competency is so directly linked to success in business as is communication. The daily activities of motivating, influencing, explaining, delegating and training employees depend on the effectiveness of communication.

Although communication has always been a vital part of management, today it is a key and indispensable tool upon which modern management resides. Regardless of the level at which they operate, managers spend between 80% and 90% of their total working hours communicating with others (Luketa, 2021).

Through the most important activity in business operations, modern managers direct, coordinate, and develop cooperation, teamwork and partnerships with employees, with the aim of accomplishing the objective of a given task (Garača and Kadler, 2011). Managers must be the first to build bridges between members of an organisation through careful and effective communication. Through communication, organisational activities evolve correctly (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017). Knowledge of managerial communication techniques helps in understanding the necessity of communication between the functions and levels of organisational hierarchy (Bell and Martin, 2019).

Managers need to be effective communicators regardless of their hierarchy of authority within the complexity of the organisational structure (Chatman et al., 2020). Managers use about 45% of their time for communication in discussions with colleagues on the same hierarchical level; 45%, for communicating with the employees in their organisation; and only 10%, for communicating with their superiors (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017). Managerial communication, however, can have disastrous as well as positive effects (Hargie and Tourish, 2009), and managers should keep in mind to use verbal and non-verbal forms of communication in equal measure and should pay special attention to using them in the proper way (Gupta, 2011).

Managerial communication should take into consideration the development of certain management goals that are of a lasting nature, other than those imposed by the policies of an organisation (Vladutescu, 2015). The manager is there to eliminate any type of communication barrier, select the appropriate way of operating and communicating, provide mechanisms for feedback, and help define the organisation's structure as a precondition to successful communication (Gupta, 2011). Managers who believed that communication is important in enhancing employee engagement, discussed the results of communication through trust, acceptance, motivation, morale, and job satisfaction. According to those managers, employee engagement was the result of managerial communication (Johansson, 2015). Managerial communication also needs to take into account several conditions: the concise and precise formulation of messages that can be easily and fully understood, the speedy transfer of messages, the fluency and reversibility of communication, the use of a common language of the sender and the recipient, and the need to simplify communication channels and ensure the flexibility and adjustability of communication systems that can be used in any situation (Burnside-Lawry, 2011).

Managers must realise that persistence in learning how to communicate has become their top priority, as communication is the main skill that they need to acquire or perfect if they are to attain the expected outcomes set out in the organisation's objectives (Bucata and Rizescu, 2017). The aim of managerial communication is to effectively and efficiently achieve organisational objectives (Vladutescu et al., 2015), and to establish efficient and effective, vertical as well as horizontal, communication within the organisation to meet internal and external demands as best as possible and in accordance with the established managerial and organizational objectives.

Effective horizontal communication is crucial in ensuring unimpeded operations and effective management (Brownell, 1991). Hence, measuring and evaluating the results of communication is fundamental to achieving efficiency (Álvarez-Nobell and Lesta, 2011). Measuring, however, is still one of the most important yet neglected tasks in internal communication despite its significance in the corporate sphere.

The role and importance of managerial communication can be examined through the fields of internal and external communication. Internal communication focuses on communication processes within an organisation linked to the board, managers and employees, while external communication refers to communication processes outside an organisation and involves guests, suppliers, advertising, marketing, etc.

## **1.2. Attributes of internal and external managerial communication**

Internal communication is a process of communication that takes place among the employees of an organisation and its objective is to deliver a given plan, strategy or assignment (Kahrimanović, 2021). It is the sum of various communication processes (Garača and Kadler, 2011); it implies communication through the internal influence of stakeholders (employees, associates, owners) of related organisations that together make up a strategic network (Luketa, 2021); and it is the process of obtaining information on hotel services and products and on their distribution within the hospitality industry (Iwara et al., 2020). In general, it is defined as the flow of communication among people within the boundaries of an organisation (Mazzei, 2010), it is a complex concept that challenges organisational management, employee engagement and organisational productivity (Zaumane, 2018), and it is considered a vital aspect of confronting change in an organisation (Elving, 2005). As the communication environment is constantly changing, in particular due to new technologies, organisations need to be able to adjust rapidly (Tkalac Verčić and Špoljarić, 2020).

Communication is essential for internal operations as it integrates the management functions. The way of communicating within any organisation largely depends on the structure of the institution in which the process is carried out (Vladutescu, 2015), and the organisation needs to ensure bottom-up communication in which employees have an opportunity to share their ideas and concerns with the management (Wolvin, 1994). It has been noted that high-performance organisations make effective use of internal communication to gain competitive advantages and resolve problems (Omilion-Hodges and Baker, 2014).

Internal communication is a factor that determines, to a great extent, how business will develop and it is an inseparable element of efficient business management (Baginska, 2018). Effective internal communication impacts engagement in business (Saks and Gruman, 2014), can help enhance the level of employees' trust in managers (DeMaria, 2016), and is a vital driver of employee engagement (Parsley, 2006). Effective communication implies providing the information that is needed, in the right format at the right time and with the right effect (Čulo and Skendrović, 2010), and it is clear that effective communication is key to maintaining competitiveness (Wolvin, 1994).

Internal communication satisfaction is a key part of internal communication practices (Sinčić Ćorić, Pološki Vokić and Tkalac Verčić, 2019) and it is important for managers to be able to evaluate internal communication (Ruck and Welch, 2012). Management often fails to provide employees with the right information, however (Petrou et al., 2018).

Effective internal communication helps boost organisational performance, as it contributes towards creating positive internal relationships by enabling communication between managers and employees. Therefore, the main objective is to ensure that every person within the organisation receives reliable and comprehensive information at the right time (Baginska, 2018). Effective internal communication is a precondition to the success of an organisation (Ruck and Welch, 2012). With regard to the preferred method of communication, management and employees choose to communicate face to face, with consistent communication among management being particularly important (Pillay and Hoque, 2015). Employees need to be continuously informed regarding changes in the organisations that could affect them (Gokula Krishnan and Reeves, 2013). Hence, dialogue is essential in effectively exchanging information. Studies show that business managers are more and more interested in internal communication (Miquel Segarra and Aced Toledano, 2019). Professionals and academics increasingly see internal communication as a key strategic asset for organisations that positively affects engagement, while poor internal communication can be counterproductive and present a threat.

In recent years, the internal communication environment has changed considerably, mainly under the influence of new technologies. Studies have shown that the adoption of new communication technologies in organisations is not a simple matter and that modern organisations tend to use a number of channels to reach their internal audience, ranging from face-to-face communication to printed publications, electronic media and social networks (Tkalac Verčić and Špoljarić, 2020).

Changes in the internal communication environment have brought about changes in external communication, which is equally important for the successful performance of hotel enterprises. External communication is communication that takes place between entities outside an organisation and the members of the organisation. External participants in the communication process may be media representatives/journalists, buyers, contractors, non-government organisations, representatives of state institutions and other interested parties (Kahrimanović, 2021).

External communication refers to the employee-guest interaction and to a hotel's communication with external factors, which are basically anchored in sales and marketing functions and affect external target groups as well as employees as the internal target group. In addition to the importance of external communication with potential tourists, competitors and other external factors also have easy access to salient information about a hotel's products and services (Iwara et al., 2020). External communication involves marketing communication and public relations. Marketing communication consists of communication activities aimed at all influential stakeholders who are tied to the organisation for economic or market-related reasons. These stakeholders are foremost consumers, suppliers and competitors (Luketa, 2021).

The weaknesses of external communication are linked to insufficiently improved modern e-communication tools (Labanauskaitea et al., 2020). External communication is a tourist's first contact with a hotel, based on the content, presented via social networks, travel agencies, public relations, friends and other ways, that helps the tourist create a picture of hotel and decide whether to go there. Accordingly, managers need to stay abreast of the development trends in online marketing, adjust to the new and younger generations, and keep up with the times.

### 1.3. Communication challenges of hotel managers

Communication challenges are one of the greatest barriers that an organisation has to address on a daily basis (Bari, 2020). The lack of communication is the most serious barrier on the road to efficient business management (Baginska, 2018). It can lead to issues because of which employees are not always in line with the management's objectives, and can bring about a gap in communication within an organisation (Pillay and Hogue, 2015). Most respondents in European studies agree that the responsibility for communication lies with the management and in how the process is controlled (Tkalac Verčić et al., 2012). Promoting a better understanding of the management-employee relationship and finding ways for positive improvements to communication levels can lead to better alignment and help close the gap between the management and employees, thus improving organisational efficiency (Pillay and Hogue, 2015).

Modern hotel managers face numerous challenges of management in constantly changing internal and external environments, in which new communication technologies expand the opportunities for employee networking and for greater work specialisation requiring highly qualified employees (Johansson, 2015). Organisations must be aware of an entire range of known as well as potential challenges and need to continuously seek ways in which to mitigate their adverse effects. Previous works were used and analyzed in the paper in order to map the challenges faced by hotel managers in internal and external communication. Each challenge is specific in its own way and overcoming it requires time and strategies.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

Research was focused on an in-depth review of previously published scientific papers in publications about communication, management and tourism and hospitality industry. For the purposes of the paper, the desk research method was used. Research was carried out in 2021 and 2022, by first searching Web of Science and Scopus, databases esteemed in the world of science and research, and then other databases, namely DOAB, EconLit, Emerald, Google Scholar, SAGE journals, Science Direct, Springer and Taylor & Francis.

The search of the databases of papers was based on the selected primary keywords *challenges*, *communication*, *management*, and secondary keywords *hotel business operations*. Papers should mention at least one or two primary keywords, with a mandatory secondary keyword. Strictly limited keywords was used to search for papers that exclusively study challenges in managerial communication, particularly in the hotel industry.



The papers were chosen based on the stated strict criteria, cited in recognised and well-known databases, of open access only, published within the last twenty years, and contained the selected keywords. Researched papers are grouped into two groups: managerial communication challenges in internal hotel business operations and managerial communication challenges in external hotel business operations.

With a strict and concise approach, the given topic was wanted to be explored more deeply and concisely.

**Table 1: Frequency of papers, by year of publication**

Year	'03	'04	'10	'11	'12	'14	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19	'20	'21	Σ
<b>Chal- lenges in in- ter- nal commu- nication</b>	-	-	-	2	1	1	2	2	-	2	1	1	1	<b>13</b>
<b>Chal- lenges in ex- ter- nal commu- nication</b>	2	3	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	2	3	1	<b>15</b>
<b>Number of pa- pers</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>

Source: Authors' own construction

The papers were analysed by year of publication to obtain a clearer picture of the challenges that emerged during the selected period of time. A total of 28 papers were studied, of which 13 deal with the challenges of internal communication and 15, with the challenges of external managerial communication.

### 3. RESULTS

The aim of the in-depth literature review was to explore the importance of managerial communication in hotel business operations and the challenges faced by hotel managers, over a specific period of time, when communicating and working in the internal and external hotel environment. This made it possible not only to pinpoint the challenges but also to identify the ways in which those challenges have changed up to date with regard to external factors. The target groups of hotel managers and hotel employees were equally represented in the analyzed previously published works through the research of challenges.

The following section provides a detailed overview of the studied literature dealing with managerial communication challenges in internal hotel operations.

**Table 2: Overview of previous studies dealing with managerial communication challenges in internal hotel business operations**

AUTHOR; YEAR	RESEARCH RESULTS
Gupta, D.; (2011)	Importance of verbal and nonverbal communication and the use of communication techniques
Mazzei, A. and Ravazzani, S.; (2011)	Inconsistency of messages communicated by the organisation, in the opinion of employees. The organisation claimed they planned excellent communication and used official instruments. Employees complained of a lack of listening and poor clarity of messages, reproached hierarchical communication, and accused the company of opportunism.
Ruck, K. and Welch, M.; (2012)	The importance of line management and internal corporate communication.
Strukan E. and Đorđević D.; (2014)	A broader scope of communication skills acquired by hotel managers helps them achieve better results.
Hedman, E. and Valo, M.; (2015)	Team meetings where issues of leadership, decision making and participation are discussed.
Pillay, K. D. and Hoque, M.; (2015)	The importance of honest face-to-face communication.
DeMaria, K.; (2016)	Desire for open communication and feedback
Prud'homme, B. and Raymond, L.; (2016)	Decision making by the management at hotel chain headquarters where decisions are centralised and variously connected.
Baginska, I.; (2018)	The preferred form of information exchange is face-to-face despite the efficiency of email. Dialogue is necessary to encourage effective information exchange between employees and management.
Zaumane, I.; (2018)	Daily communication with employees and giving/receiving feedback.

Miquel Segarra, S. and Aced Toledano C.; (2019)	86% of organisations in the study have a department dedicated to internal communication, but the main obstacle to evaluation is the lack of tools.
Tkalac Verčič, A. and Špoljarić, A.; (2020)	The expectations and wishes of employees regarding the use of richer communication channels, foremost face-to-face communication.
Shulga, L. V. (2021)	The ability of hotel managers to adjust communication through meaningful messages and authentic leadership branding

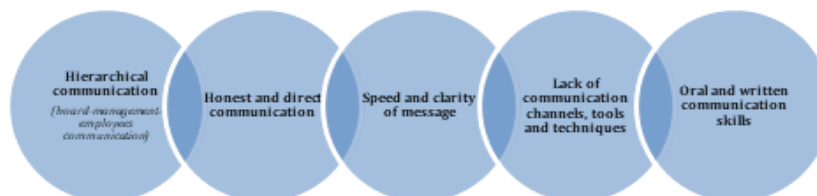
Source: Author's own construction

Previous studies point to the importance of internal managerial communication. For example, studies show that 90% of the respondents communicate daily with their co-workers within an organisation (Brownell, 1991), while 22% of hotel managers communicate with an organisation's board once a week, and over 30%, less than once a week. These results suggest there are significant and substantial difficulties in communication between employees and management (61% of employees), with emphasis being on the importance of acquired verbal and written communication skills (Brownell, 1992). In the period that follows there is a visible change in challenges to internal hotel operations regarding the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication as well as the use of communication techniques and barriers between managers and employees. Also highlighted is the adoption of communication skills, open and honest communication, and, again, the importance of communication between the board and managers. In the more recent period, change is noted in the method of communication, with online channels such as email taking the lead, and in the formation in hotels of organisational departments responsible for communication. Recent years have also seen employees wanting and expecting richer communication channels, and they continue to prefer honest and direct face-to-face communication as the primary way of communicating. Today, in addition to enabling information exchange and the distribution of work, communication is expected to be used to convey meaningful messages and express the brand of hotel operations.

The analysis of research on the topic of managerial communication challenges in the internal hotel business environment highlights that employees want open communication and feedback regarding their work, and that alongside email, they generally prefer face-to-face communication. Analysis also underlines the importance of the communication process and the fact that verbal and non-verbal communication are equally represented in the transfer of messages. Nevertheless, the differing views of managers and employees regarding communication messages are a specific challenge in business operations.

The results of the conducted study show that hotel managers experience significant problems in communicating with employees. A challenge they face is how to accurately communicate with all stakeholders, and convey clear and easy to understand messages between hierarchical levels, in particular, with regard to the board's centralised communication with hotel facilities in the hotel chain. The best, simplest, fastest and most accepted channel of communication is face-to-face communication. This is the fastest and most efficient way to transfer a message, and the fastest way to resolve any possible ambiguity or difficulty.

Figure 1: **Managerial communication challenges in internal hotel business operations**



Source: Author's own construction

Chronological analysis of the papers reveals that the challenges of managerial communication in internal hotel business operations have evolved towards using more dynamic, online-focused communication, adjusting communication tools to ever faster changes in communication methods, ensuring the faster transmission of messages and clarity, and realising the importance of personal contact which is largely linked to increasingly rapid changes in the external environment.

Table 3: **Overview of previous studies dealing with managerial communication challenges in external hotel business operations**

AUTHOR; YEAR	CHALLENGE
Miller; (2003)	Environmental and social awareness of consumers
OCDE; (2003)	Financial, political and health crises
Augustyn and Seakhoa-King; (2004)	Globalisation
Rowley; (2004)	Development of information and communication technologies
Skogland and Siguaw; (2004)	Variable demand.
Carrillo-Durán and Nuño-Moral; (2010)	Converting the challenges and strategies of managing an organisation's objectives into communication policies and intangible assets.
Khan et al.; (2014)	Geographical and temporal distances, and socio-cultural differences.
International Hotel & Restaurant Association; (2015)	Climate-related disasters and armed conflicts.

Jones, Hillier and Comfort; (2017)	Speed and scope of an organisation's response in establishing the importance of the hospitality industry's contribution to sustainable development goals.
Malheiro et al.; (2019)	Modification and development level of new forms of communication, speed of transmission, and communication knowledge in a transparent perspective.
Peneda de O.; (2019)	Integrating messages focused on corporate responsibility into communication strategies linked to sustainable business operations.
Iwara, E. E. et al.; (2020)	Using obsolete media communication to market products and services.
Iwara, E. E. et al.; (2020)	Communicating with tourists from different language speaking areas, and from different geographical and cultural diversities.
Labanauskaitė, D. et al.; (2020)	Online communication (social networks, websites, email).
Tiago, F. et al.; (2021)	Online communication (boosting information literacy in different generations, facilitating interaction and provision of information).

Source: Author's own construction

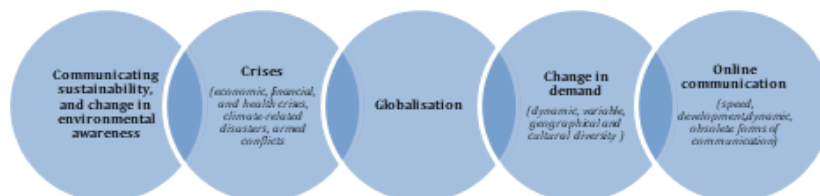
Previous studies dealing with communication challenges from the external environment point to challenges connected to placing *the right message to the right audience at the right time*. With regard to hotel business operations, challenges are linked to market segmentation, and refer to overcoming challenges in marketing communication towards the targeted market niche with a message that will have a positive effect on their decision to stay at the hotel (Wolvin, 1994). In the period that follows, emphasis is placed on communicating environmental sustainability and the development of environmental awareness which have brought about significant changes in tourism demand (Bramwell, Henry, Jackson, Van der Straaten, 1996.). Today challenges are linked to emerging financial and economic crises, climate-related disasters, and tourism demand for different language speaking areas (Asian countries).

Crises create relevant consequences for employees such as uncertainty, low commitment, and dissatisfaction with communication (Aggerholm, 2008). Hence, during a crisis, communication must be consistent, timely and active. Active listening should be at the focus of internal communication in times of crisis. Employees should be seen more as being transmitters, considering that they can have other roles as well and participate in various types of social media in the internal or external environment (Frandsen and Johansen, 2010). Responding and being proactive to economic risk and opportunities and thus deciding on the direction of an organisation's business operations are challenges facing hotel managers (Pillay and Hoque, 2015).

Analysis of the challenges to hotel business operations from the external environment shows that hotel managers constantly come up against a variety of challenges in their work, and to deal with these challenges require considerable knowledge and skills. Today hotel managers are faced with increasingly rapid changes in online communication, more

sophisticated communication tools, issues of information literacy, and momentary crisis situations.

Figure 2: **Managerial communication challenges in external hotel business operations**



Source: Author's own construction

Considering that the attention of the public is fixed on different types of messages, it is a challenge to send the right message to the right audience at the right time, while ensuring that the message is clear, concise, aligned between sender and receiver, adjusted to social media, and so on. Today it is very difficult to foresee the challenges that hotel managers will need to deal with and for which they can prepare themselves. Hence, it is important to provide managers with education and training in the field of communication and in overcoming challenges arising from crisis situations or in other relevant areas.

## CONCLUSION

Aim of this paper was analyze the importance of the role communication plays in hotel business operations and how it contributes to them, and to identify future communication challenges that hotel managers will face in hotel business operations. This paper was use the literature review as a research method and focuses on reviewed open sources only and published relevant studies in publications about communication, management and tourism and hospitality industry. The limitations of this paper are linked to sample size (the papers selected based on the very strict set criteria) and to the period in which the study was conducted.

The results of this study point to the significant and constant change in challenges facing hotel managers. Addressing these challenges shows hotel managers the direction in which they need to focus their business efforts, professional development and learning. To reduce the negative effects of challenges on hotel business operations, it is necessary over time, and before challenges emerge, to achieve mutual respect, trust and coordination between employees and managers and the organisation in which they work, by educating and training hotel managers. Considering that hotel managers spend most of their working hours taking part in oral communication activities with employees while the board is responsible for adopting long-term strategies to incorporate sustainability in business operations, there is a need to strengthen cohesion among employees, managers and the board. This would ensure that clearer and more-needed information from employees is conveyed to the board. In this way, the board would receive ideas on how to improve performance, while managers would communicate more often with employees. The study explored how the internal and external challenges facing hotel managers are

connected to hierarchical communication in the board-management-employees link; honest and direct communication; the speed and clarity of the message transmitted; the lack of communication channels, tools and techniques; and the need to develop oral and written communication skills. In external communication, hotel managers come up against challenges in communicating sustainability and change in environmental awareness, as well as challenges arising from economic, financial and health crises, climate-related disasters, armed conflicts, globalisation, dynamic and constant change in demand, online communication, etc.

Studies show that communication should increasingly be horizontal to ensure more efficient performance and greater employee engagement. Every hotel needs to have a well-developed communication strategy to facilitate rapid and efficient management and to accomplish its desired goals. With regard to this, the authors underline the importance of measuring and evaluating the results of managerial communication (internal and external) in connection with achieving business efficiency.

It is suggested that future research should focus on the opportunities and ways to overcome the challenges that hotel managers face in their work (COVID-19 pandemic; rapid adjustment to new communication tools, variable demand, climate change, and new, dynamic and more discerning young employees) by implementing new knowledge and skills to facilitate preparations in and adjustments to overcoming potential crisis situations and novel challenges. It is also suggested to explore the perspective of hotel managers on the same topic and the ways in which they overcame certain challenges communicating in an internal or external environment.

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