THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

AZERBAIJAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS

INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE AND DOCTORATE CENTER

MASTER DISSERTATION

on the topic

"CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC COVID-19: IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICES BUSINESS OF AZERBAIJAN"

Yunusov Ibrahım Elkhan

BAKU – 2022

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Elm andı

Mən, Yunusov İbrahim Elxan oğlu and içirəm ki, “Coronavirus pandemic covid-19: implications for services business of Azerbaijan” mövzusunda magistr dissertasiyasını elmi əxlaq normalarına və istinad qaydalarına tam riayət etməklə və istifadə etdiyim bütün mənbələri ədəbiyyat siyahısında əks etdirməklə yazmışam.

“KORONAVİRUS PANDEMİYASI COVID-19: AZƏRBAYCANIN XİDMƏTLƏR BİZNESİ ÜÇÜN TƏSİRLƏRİ”

XÜLASƏ

Mövzunun aktuallığı: Son onilliklərdə xidmət sektoru iqtisadiyyatın daha sürətlə inkişaf edən sektoru olmuşdur və nəticədə bu sektorun ümumi əlavə dəyərdə payı durmadan artmışdır.

Xidmət iqtisadiyyatının sabit tendensiyası yeni koronavirus infeksiyası COVID-19 pandemiyası ilə kəsildi. Hakimiyyət orqanlarının müəyyən iqtisadi fəaliyyət növlərinə tətbiq etdiyi karantin məhdudiyyətləri və birbaşa qadağaları ən çox xidmət sektoruna zərbə vurdu. Bu gün dünyanın bütün ölkələrinin hökumətləri insan həyatını xilas etmək və iqtisadiyyatı xilas etmək arasında balans axtarırlar.

Tədqiqatın məqsədi və vəzifələri: Dissertasiya tədqiqatının məqsədi koronavirus pandemiyası ilə bağlı böhran zamanı və böhrandan sonrakı dövrdə xidmət sektoru biznesinin böhran əleyhinə inkişafı alətlərinin təkmilləşdirilməsi üçün prioritet istiqamətləri müəyyən etməkdir.

İsdifadə olunmuş tədqiqat metodları: Tədqiqat prosesində statistik, funksional metodlardan və həmçinin böhran dövründə kiçik və orta biznesin inkişafında sistem formalaşdıran xüsusiyyətləri, dominant amilləri, ortaya çıxaran digər metodlardan istifadə edilmişdir.

Tədqiqatın informasiya bazası: Tədqiqatın informasiya bazasının formalaşmasının əsasını pandemiyanın iqtisadiyyata və əhaliyə təsiri barəsində xarici və yerli iqtisadçıların nəzəriyyələri, bu sahədə konfrans materialları, elmi məqalələr təşkil edir.

Tədqiqatın məhdudiyyətləri: Tədqiqatın məhdudiyyəti kimi onu göstərə bilərik ki, mövcud pandemiya şəraitinin yeni yaranması və bu səbəbədən yetərli informasiya bazasının məhdud olması.

Tədqiqatın elmi yeniliyi və praktiki nəticələri: Tədqiqatın elmi yeniliyi böhran dövründə və böhrandan sonrakı dövrdə daxili sahibkarlığın inkişafının yeni istiqamətlərinin formalaşdırılmasına inteqrasiya olunmuş metodoloji yanaşmanın formalaşdırılmasındadır ki, bu da böhran əleyhinə modelləşdirmə alətlərinin müəyyən edilmiş prosesini dəstəkləyir.

Nəticələrin istifadə oluna biləcəyi sahələr: bir sıra sosial-iqtisadi problemlərin həlli üsul və formalarının təkmilləşdirilməsi, xidmətdə böhran əleyhinə proqram təminatının formalaşdırılması üçün əsas kimi istifadə etmək imkanındadır.

Açar sözlər:: biznes xidmətləri, inkişaf, pandemiya, kommersiya fəaliyyəti, iqtisadi böhran.

“CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC COVID-19: IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVICES BUSINESS OF AZERBAIJAN”

SUMMARY

The actuality of the subject: In recent decades, the service sector's share of gross value added has gradually risen. The economy was well-served. This trend was common in wealthy and emerging nations.

A new coronavirus pandemic hampered service industries. COVID-19. Quarantine restrictions and economic activity limits affect the service industry. Governments aim to save lives and the economy worldwide.

Purpose and tasks of the research: The dissertation discusses crucial areas for improving service sector anti-crisis strategies during and after the coronavirus epidemic.

Used research methods: The research process used statistical, functional methods, as well as system-forming features, dominant factors, and other methods of developing small and medium-sized businesses during the crisis.

The information base of the research: The theories of both international and local economists on the influence the pandemic will have on the economy and the people, as well as scientific journals and conference materials related to this topic, will serve as the foundation for the construction of the research database.

Restrictions of research: As a limitation of the research, we can point out that the existing pandemic conditions are new and therefore the sufficient information base is limited.

The novelty and practical results of investigation: The novelty of this study is the creation of an integrated methodological approach to the emergence of new paths of growth of domestic entrepreneurship during and after the crisis, which supports the established process of anti-crisis modeling tools.

Scientific-practical significance of results: Its results and conclusions can be used to improve techniques and forms of handling socioeconomic problems and to create anti-crisis software solutions in the service sector.

Keywords: business services, development, pandemic, commercial activity, economic crisis.

ABBREVIATIONS

BS – Business Services

CRM – Customer Relationship Management

EU – European Union

EY– Ernst & Young

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GRP – Gross Rating Point

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

IT – İnformation technology

ILO – International Labour Organization

SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

US – United States

USD – United States dollar

VAT– Value-Added Tax

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INTRODUCTION

Relevance of the research topic: In recent decades, the service sector has been a sector of the economy that has developed at a faster pace, as a result the share of this sector in gross value added has steadily increased. In other words, there was a consistent servicing of the economy. Moreover, this trend was typical for both developed and developing countries.

In the states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, more than two-thirds of the employed working-age population in 2017 worked in the service sector. For example, in New Zealand, Ireland, Canada, and South Korea, more than 90 % of the working population is employed in the service sector. In 2019, the service sector employs 67 % of Russia's able-bodied population. The contibution of the service economy to the country’s GDP in 2018 amounted to 54 % and this figure can grow by 1-2 % per year.

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has made significant changes to the usual rhythm of life for every person, regardless of which country in the world he lives in. COVID-19 affected more than 1,430 cities around the world.

The steady trend of the service economy was interrupted by the pandemic of a new coronavirus infection COVID-19. The introduced quarantine restrictions and direct bans by the authorities on certain types of economic activity hit the service sector the hardest. Governments of all countries of the world today are looking for a balance between saving human lives and saving the economy.

As already noted, the business of the service sector in the XXI century has taken the form of the largest and fastest-growing socio-economic phenomenon in the world.

Statement of the problem and learning level: Due to the fact that the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic is new, there is little research by local and foreign researchers. However, a number of local and foreign scientists have conducted a number of studies, bunlara daxildir M. Nicola, C. Sohrabi, A. Kerwan, R.R. Shemyakina and others.

Purposes and objectives of the research: The purpose of the dissertation research is to identify priority areas for improving the tools for anti-crisis development of the service sector business during the crisis associated with the coronavirus pandemic and in the post-crisis period. The purpose of the dissertation research required the solution of the following tasks:

1) to study the taxonomy of service business as an object of commercial operations in Azerbaijan;

2) to study the features of the formation of the service market in azerbaijan;

3) to analyze the development directions of commercial activity in the field of services in Azerbaijan;

4) ınvestigate ways to combat the global economic crisis in the service sector against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic;

5) to involve e-commerce and virtual technologies in research as a promising direction of strategic development of the service sector market;

6) to perform a survey of customers and workers of three hotels in the region to examine the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on customer behavior in the service sector, and to evaluate the findings using IBM SSPS Statistics.

Object and subject of the research: Research object is business in the service sector during the crisis and in the post-crisis period. Research subject is the improvement of business development tools in the service sector during the crisis and in the post-crisis period.

Research methods: is statistical, functional methods and some others that complement each other and allow to identify system-forming features, dominant factors, main trends and patterns in the development of small and medium-sized businesses during the global crisis and in the post-crisis period.

Research database: was the core principles and traditional techniques of managing socio-economic systems that were provided in the works of both domestic and international scientists on the issues of public assistance for private enterprise, especially during and after the crisis.

Research limitations: As a limitation of the research, we can point out that the existing pandemic conditions are new and therefore the sufficient information base is limited.

Scientific novelty of the research: lies in the formation of an integrated methozological approach to the formation of new directions for the development of domestic entrepreneurship during the crisis and in the post-crisis period, which supports the specified process of tools for anti-crisis modeling of business processes for all types of entrepreneurship in the service.

Scientific and practical significance of the results: lies in the possibility of using its results and conclusions as a basis for improving the methods and forms of solving a number of socio-economic problems, in the formation of anti-crisis software solutions in the service sector.

CHAPTER I. FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUSINESS SERVICES MARKET

1.1. Taxonomy of services business as an object of commercial transactions

The term "business services" refers to a wide range of different types of services, the majority of which are transacted between businesses. The scope of these intermediate services extends from the creation of software to the operation of temporary-labor agencies, from the leasing of equipment to the provision of legal consulting, and from the administration of complicated engineering projects to translation services.

Services to businesses make up one of the most active groups of economic activity, and during the last two decades, they have been responsible for majority of the increase in employment in Europe. This sector has grown to the point that it now employs the same number of people as or even a greater number of people than the whole manufacturing industry in certain EU nations. Within the realm of economic theory, there has only recently been a surge in interest regarding the business services sector.

The increase in attention is mostly a consequence of structural economic uncertainty. In the past, classical economics such like Smith and Ricardo saw services as a nonproductive endeavor it had more to do with the production and marketing of wealth than its creation. Occasionally, exceptions were allowed for the transportation and distribution industries. With the rise of neoclassical economics from the 1870s forward, the implicit connection between production and material commodities production evaporated. However, over the century that followed, interest to researchers in the contributions that the service sector made to development was not much more than half-hearted. There was a disconnect between the theoretical recognition that value could be generated via both physical and immaterial production, on the one hand, and the empirical research, on the other hand, which continued to place the majority of its focus on material production.

Initially, service operations were incorporated as a component of increasingly vertically integrated production activities. Manufacturing and agriculture comprised service responsibilities such as planning, management, administration, assessment of the quantity and quality of outputs and inputs, product enhancement, labor recruitment and selection, learning and education, marketing, transport, and storage. These functions were already a part of agriculture and manufacturing. The service professions eventually took over a portion of these corporate responsibilities and began operating them as independently specialized and profit-generating businesses. This was in conjunction with product / process advancements that contributed to the expansion of these service roles. Before this specialisation was acknowledged as a new stage in the social division of labor, considerable time had passed. Colin Clark noted in 1938 that at least fifty percent of the British and American labor forces were employed in occupations other than mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and the arts and crafts. He coined the term "tertiary production" to describe this no longer insignificant sector. However, it was still considered as a heterogeneous byproduct of the creation of products.

In the 1960s, the American economist Baumol noted out that the expansion of the service sector may act as a drag on overall economic development due to the industry's limited capacity for increased productivity. The subsequent debate quickly came to the fact that at the very least an analytical difference needed to be established between the services provided by the government, services aimed toward consumers in the market, and services oriented toward producers in the market. The academic community's growing fascination in the producer services industry as a distinct economic sector may be traced back to the 1970s (Bruges European Economic Research Papers, 2007).

The primary recipients of business services are corporations, other producing organizations, and government bodies. Consequently, considered from the perspective of their final destination, services companies are predominantly intermediate inputs, despite the fact that some business services, such as notarial and architectural services, provide a portion of their output to individual customers. Frequently, the business service is made in collaboration with the customer. Using Hill's concept of services as a foundation, we describe BS by their function for clients:

Business services are a collection of activities that, when used as intermediate inputs in production processes, have an impact on the overall quality and effectiveness of those processes. They do this by supplementing or replacing the in-house service operations of an organization (Bruges European Economic Research Papers, 2007).

The term indicates that business-services organizations provide services that the customer could have supplied internally in many instances. Service components are ubiquitous in all production processes, and functional services are at the very core of all production processes. These functional services might be offered by an organization's own workers or purchased from outside vendors. In the latter situation, we refer to business services as just a separate industry.

Figure 1: Defining business services within the context of producer services

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Producer Services</td><td rowspan="3">Business-related services</td><td rowspan="2">Business services</td><td>Knowledge intensive-business services (K.I.B.S.)</td><td>• Software and computer
• services Strategy and management consultancy
• Auditing, tax and legal advise
• Marketing services, Opinion polling
• Technical services, engineering
• Personnel training, headhunting
• Strategy and management consultancy</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operational business services</td><td>• Security services,
• Facility management, cleaning
• Administration, bookkeeping
• Temporary labour recruitment
• Other operational services (e.g. catering, translating, call centres)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• Distribution and trade services
• Transport and logistics
• Banking, insurance, stock exchange
• Telecommunication, couriers
• Energy services
•</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Consumer services partly used by enterprises (business travel, company health services, social insurance services)</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Bruges European Economic Research Papers // http://aei.pitt.edu/58573/1/beer15.

Significantly more statistical categorization problems exist for business services than for services as a whole or for traditional services like banking, trade, transportation, and tourism. Even today, there is a multiplicity of classifications and a lack of criteria for the area of business services due to the novelty of the sector, the continual creation of new activities, the proximity of one activity to another, and the lack of attention shown by statisticians. The fact that the majority of business services now fall under the residual category Other Business Solutions (NACE 74) demonstrates the brief existence of business services as a distinct economic sector.

These empirical findings reveal that the area has a substantial pro-cyclical effect on employment, which is much more volatile than the average for the economy. High integration with the industry and labor flexibility might be two potential explanations. However, the strong sensitivity of business solutions to the economic cycle could also be viewed as a weakness due to the "temporary" nature of business services: when things go bad, businesses lower their costs and cancel numerous BS contracts, whereas when things go right, businesses decide to expand and contract more business services. The cyclical nature of business activities cannot explain the uninterrupted expansion of the industry in relative and absolute terms over the last quarter of a century. The expansion of business services is mostly attributable to structural considerations, which have mitigated the majority of the recession's consequences. This explains why depressions have absolute negative effects on business services in just a few countries and sub-sectors (Bruges European Economic Research Papers, 2007).

There might be a number of explanations for the relatively extraordinary expansion of the BS sector. A review of the relevant research could turn up a variety of reasons that might explain distinct parts of the phenomenon (technology, institutions, social preferences, organizational developments). Different degrees of analysis are used by each of the explanations (micro, meso, macro). Although they may be operating at distinct levels of analysis, several variables may be at play all at once. It's possible that other elements will come into play during certain time periods, for specific industries, or for nations at specific stages of growth. Rubalcaba, Aiginger, Kox, and Miles give extensive literature assessments on the many components that contribute to development.

In this article, we will concentrate only on the two primary reasons for the structural expansion of business services. The first hypothesis, which is supported by a number of people like Rajan and Lewis, posits that the increase is only an optical illusion and that activities and employment in other sectors are merely being replaced by activities that are similar to those in the BS industry. The second hypothesis contends that the increasing structural importance of commercial services represents a new stage of evolution in the international division of labor. It expands upon Adam Smith's traditional viewpoint that specialization and the consequences of scale are at the very center of economic growth. Following that, we will discuss both of these hypotheses.

If the whole expansion of the business services (BS) industry was based on a mere movement of existing in-house services employment from other sectors to BS businesses, we might definitely refer to this as a purely administrative change: a "changing of nameplates." Our definition of business solutions necessitates that many services provided by BS businesses might have been created internally by companies in other sectors. Approximately forty percent of all manufacturing workers are working in jobs that are somewhat service-related.

The contention that the expansion of business services is nothing more than an administrative shift may be analyzed in the same manner as an analogous dilemma in the theory of international commerce. Viner conducted research to determine if the economic integration of nations results in the formation of new trade opportunities (trade development) or whether it just reflects a re routing of existing trade trends (trade diversion) (figure 2).

Following Viner's distinction, two forms of BS growth may be distinguished:

1. When services formerly generated in-house by other sectors are outsourced to BS enterprises without a shift in the type of services, displacing growth (trade diversion) develops.

2. Trade creation happens when BS businesses supply client firms with goods that are distinct (higher quality, more specialist) from the in-house services previously supplied by the client firms, or are entirely new. It is an empirical inquiry whether growth type has contributed the most to the recent expansion of business services. Given the diversity of organizations and their internal services, this in reality necessitates a comprehensive survey-based research strategy using microdata at the company level. According to our knowledge, no such research currently exists. Consequently, we use secondary research methodologies depending on sector-level data.

The emergence of business solutions as an industry is a phase in the division of labor. Numerous analyses find that the rise in (business) services production is more attributable to general changes inside the productive process than to a simple allocation of activity between the manufacturing and services sectors. Specialized knowledge-intensive business tasks that were formerly considered core competencies of organizations – and therefore not vulnerable to outsourcing – are progressively outsourced to specialized outside firms, or are continuing in close collaboration with the latter. Over the last 15 years, knowledge-intensive company tasks have grown more outsourcing-eligible. The huge reduction in communication and information costs caused by the ICT revolution facilitated this development by making it simpler to coordinate specialized and geographically dispersed corporate activities. The BS industry has reaped double benefits from this structural transformation. First, the ICT revolution originated in part from the BS sector (software development and IT services). And secondly, the growth in outsourcing has opened new business prospects for other business services divisions. (Bruges European Economic Research Papers, 2007).

Figure 2:Internal service activities and producer services offered externally

Major functions in enterprises	Corresponding xternal producer services
1.Strategy and new markets	Management consultancy,Market research,Organising Fairs and exhibitions
2. Information administration (IT and infrastructure)	Computer services, Information technology advisory services, and Telecommunication services
3.Personnel	Personnel selection and provision, Professional development
4. Manufacturing and technical operation	Services in engineering and technology. Evaluations and quality control Maintenance service and equipment repair
5.Design functions	Development and research, Industrial Design
6.Marketing	Public relations,Direct marketing,and advertising
7.Purchases and sales	Distributional markets (incl.after sales services)
8.Financial resources	Financial services,Insurance,Renting and leasing
9. Management and accounting	Legal services,Tax advice,Accountancy and auditing
10. Logistical transport	Real Estate,Express couriers,Logistics,Transport services (persons),Transport services (goods),Transport services (people)
11. Services for the management of facilities	Environmental services/waste disposal,Energy and water services,Security services,Building maintenance,Cleaning services,Catering,Environmental services/waste disposal

Source: Bruges European Economic Research Papers // http://aei.pitt.edu/58573/1/beer15.

The emergence of "offshoring" since the beginning of the century has added an international component to the intricacy of inter- and interpersonal and inter division of labor. Some knowledge-based enterprises are so specialized that even the majority of national marketplaces are insufficient for them. Sometimes, routine portions of knowledge services are subdivided further such that steps in the process may be performed in less-developed nations, taking advantage of wage-rate variations. It generates new international trade flows in KIBS, or knowledge-intensive business services. (Grossman G.M. and Rossi-Hansberg E., 2008).

Several different kinds of product innovations, increased knowledge specialization, and improved use of specialized inputs are all made possible as a result of the more complicated social division of labor in relation to knowledge services. Because outsourcing makes it feasible to profit from outside scale advantages in certain sectors, scale bottlenecks with respect to knowledge-intensive specializations at the company level become less significant.

Combining internal and external services is a common strategy for maximizing the effectiveness of sophisticated business-related services. The skills and technical experience of external KIBS organizations may be absorbed and optimized more effectively if the outsourced company likewise employs highly qualified individuals.

Between 1979 and 2003, BS employment in Eu grew at a startling annual rate of 4.4%, as was shown earlier in the study. Over time, the knowledge role of the BS sector in the intersectoral division of labor has expanded, according to our results. This raises the issue of whether the improved knowledge density can be directly traced to the (modified) human resource characteristics of the European BS sector. Utilizing information from the European Labour Force Surveys, we examine the features of employment in businesses. First, we determine if BS jobs vary from those in other sectors, and then we examine the human capital characteristics of the BS industry.

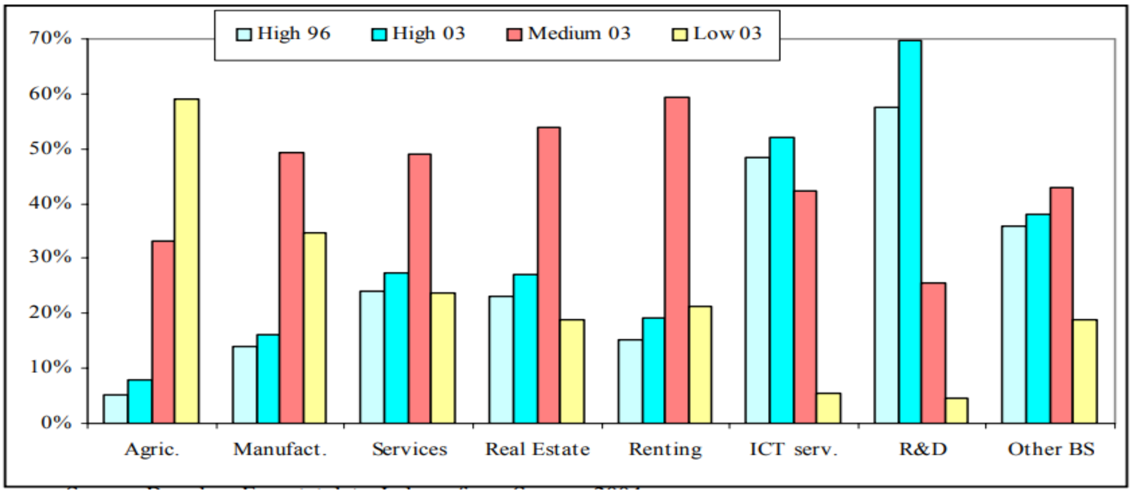
What distinguishes business service jobs? Sometimes, business services are seen as a source of part - time employment, giving new chances for women, youth, part-time employees, teleworkers, etc. In some sub-sectors, such as consulting services and ICT services, all of these assumptions hold true to a substantial degree. However, when business support as a whole, comprising operational support and professional services, are contrasted to other economic sectors, the business services industry is not particularly unique.

The business services sector does not dominate in any of important employment criteria; the only exception is the very high incidence of people working for themselves. Its work profile is fairly comparable to the overall employment profile for the whole economy. When compared to other economic sectors, the business services industry does provide slightly more employment opportunities for women, youths, and part-time workers; however, these opportunities are not nearly as abundant as those provided by hotels, restaurants, and individual and interpersonal service organizations. When compared to businesses that include manufacturing, business services employ a much larger number of women, young employees, and workers with part-time schedules; yet, these findings are comparable to those seen in other service activities.

In terms of temporary employment and the number of working hours, the area likewise offers a scenario that is comparable to that of the whole economy, but it is somewhat "better" since there is less temporary employment and less hours worked. The percentage of self-employment, which really is substantially greater for BS occupations than it is for other main economic sectors, is the single distinguishing feature that is clearly unique to BS jobs. This occurs as a result of the existence of independent specialists in both the fields of professionals and information and communications technology.

Profile of business services education and training. The industry as a whole has a very robust orientation toward higher education, far more so than the vast majority of other manufacturing or service industries. This is shown in Figure 3, as can be seen. Although there are more employees with low education levels, notably in manufacturing, the educational profile is dominated by those with an intermediate level of education. This is the case in both manufacturing and total services.

Figure 3: Business services education levels vs. other economic activity,EU15



Source:Grossman G.M. and Rossi-Hansberg E., (2008)
https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Education-attainment-levels-in-business-services-compared-to-other-economic-activities_fig5_304607067

In conclusion, BS occupations do not seem to have many unique qualities in comparison to other economic sectors. There are two key aspects of BS that might be termed "unique" to some degree. The first is the prevalence of self-employment, particularly in commercial services with a large concentration of professionals and experts.

The second factor is the prominence placed on levels of educational attainment and the relatively high value that is placed on professional training within the industry. The increased number of businesses that provide their employees with ongoing vocational training courses is one indicator that recognizes the significance of know-how in the provision of business services. Another indicator is the larger amount of resources that are invested in these courses. This conclusion lends credence to the data that was shown previously about the part that the BS industry plays in the cross-sectoral division of labor, particularly in light of the knowledge function that it plays.

1.2. Features of the formation of the service market in Azerbaijan

As a rule, the service sector is often overlooked in public discussions on reducing Azerbaijan's sharp dependence on resource revenues. Even in scientifically weighted debates, the expansion of these export potential is largely associated with the growth of material production, particularly in the processing sector and agricultural sector. With the exception of tourism, it is evident from the International Trading Organization's statistics on the worldwide service market that the export of services is largely ignored.

However, the share of tourism in world service trade is at best around 25-26%, and another 25% of service exports are related to transport, 10% to information and communication technologies, and 11% to business services. By the way, according to the latest review of global trade by the World Trade Organization, in 2017, the world's total exports of services (4.8 trillion US dollars) accounted for a third of exports of goods (16 trillion US dollars).

55 percent of all service exports are accounted for by ten nations, including the US, China, S. Korea, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Japan, India, and Singapore. These nations have a dominant stake, particularly in the exporting of intellectual services. We are discussing a vast array of business services (research and development (R&D) services, law, accounting, management consulting, public relations, marketing and market analysis, public opinion research, engineering and architecture, mining, leasing, waste management and transportation, trade, organization-related services, etc.), information and communication technology services (computer, information, and telecommunication services).

In addition, the role of financial services in the international service market (services provided by pension and investment funds, the banking sector, insurance companies) has increased significantly in recent years.

It is important to note that in some countries of the world, the revenues from services in export revenues exceed or are very close to revenues from exports of goods. For example, according to the latest data provided by the IMF database, in 2017, Georgia's revenues from exports of services ($ 3.976 billion) exceeded revenues from exports of goods ($ 3.843 billion). Or 35-45% of the total export revenues of Israel and Estonia are formed from the sale of services to non-residents.

Even in some developed nations, service exports account for a substantial portion of overall export revenues. The export of services accounted for 31 percent of overall export earnings in Sweden, 33 percent in France, 34 percent in the United States, 35 percent in Denmark, and 45 percent in the United Kingdom. The 14 percent export potential for Russian services is relatively low. Last year, Russia's exports of services were 13.7 times lower than those of the United States, 5 times lower than those of France, 4 times lower than those of China, and 2 times lower than those of Switzerland.As for Azerbaijan, in 2017 this figure was around 25%.

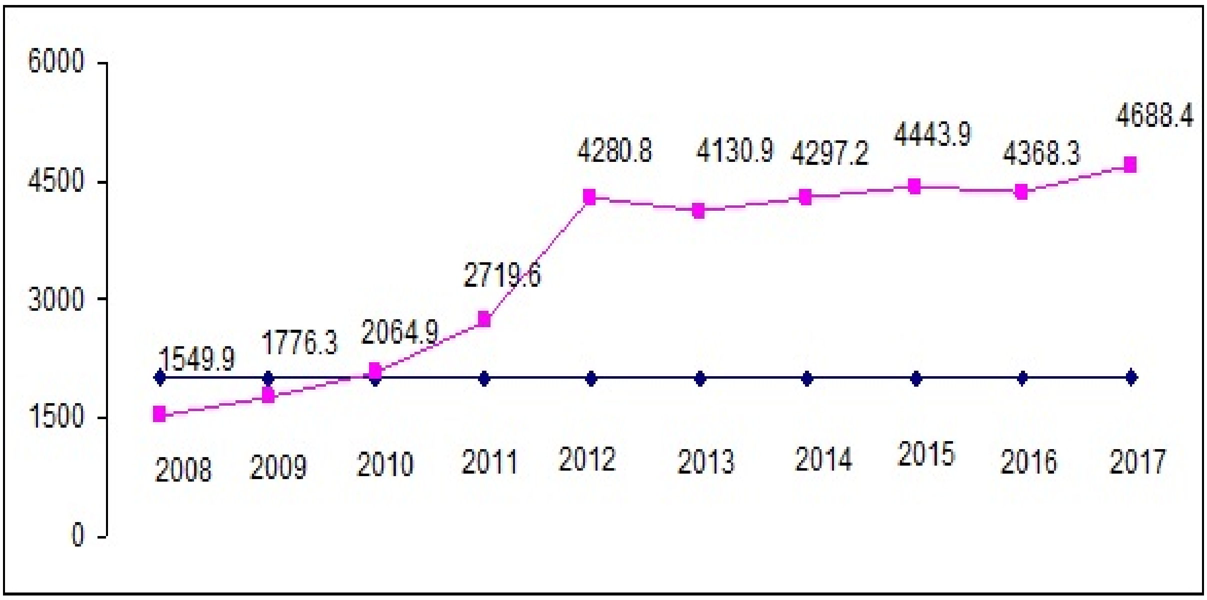
Let's take into account that in developed countries, more than 70% of employment is formed in the service sector. In this regard, the expansion of service exports through this sector plays an important role in sustainable economic growth and ensuring sustainable economic development in the country.

What is the current state of export opportunities in the service sector in Azerbaijan? In general, does the current level of participation in the country's international services market give hope for future growth in this area? On the basis of the balance of payments, a statistical analysis of the current state of service imports and exports of Azerbaijan was conducted.

In 2008-2017, Azerbaijan's service exports more than tripled to $ 1.595 billion. 4,688 billion US dollars. Rose to the US dollar. At the same time, this coincided with a period when Azerbaijan's exports of goods decreased by half. Thus, if in 2008 the country's exports of goods amounted to only 30.6 billion. In 2017, the figure was 15.1 billion US dollars. It fell to the US dollar.

According to statistics, 2008-2012 was marked by a sharp increase in exports of services, and in 5 years the volume of exports increased by about 2.5 times. However, over the next 5 years (2013-2017), the growth rate of service exports weakened sharply. In particular, in 2013-2016, it expanded by only 2%. Only in 2017, a relatively high growth was restored, and the volume of service exports increased by 7.3% compared to the same period last year (Figure 4).

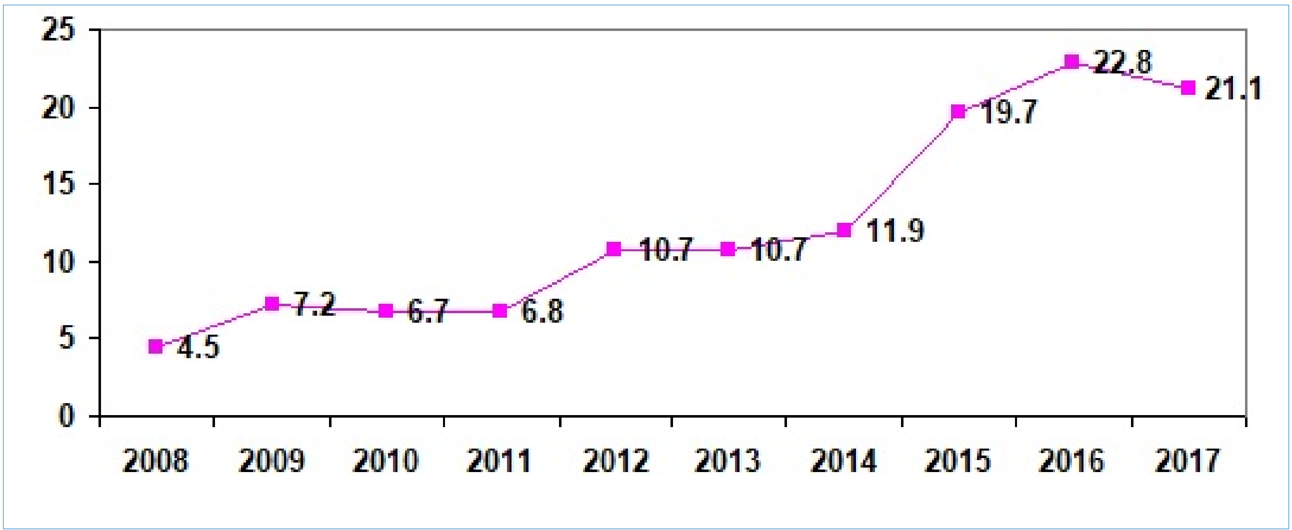
Figure 4: Volume of service exports in Azerbaijan (2008-2017)



Source:https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/az/azerbaijans-participation-opportunities-in-the-global-services-market

Along with the expansion of service exports during the period under review, the share of foreign exchange earnings from this source in the country's foreign exchange earnings within the current account balance also increased significantly.

Figure 5: Specific weight of income from service exports (2008-2017)



Source:https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/az/azerbaijans-participation-opportunities-in-the-global-services-market

As can be seen from the figures, over the past 10 years, the share of Azerbaijan's revenues from service exports in total current accounts on current accounts has increased significantly, from 4.5% to 21.1%. However, one of the main reasons for the rise in this indicator was the fact that the country lost twice as much revenue from commodity exports due to the sharp decline in oil prices and production. However, it is also a fact that in exchange for the decline in exports of goods, services are not considered exportable, and the country's income from this source has tripled. In 2017, the country's foreign exchange earnings from the export of services amounted to about 30% of its earnings from exports of goods.

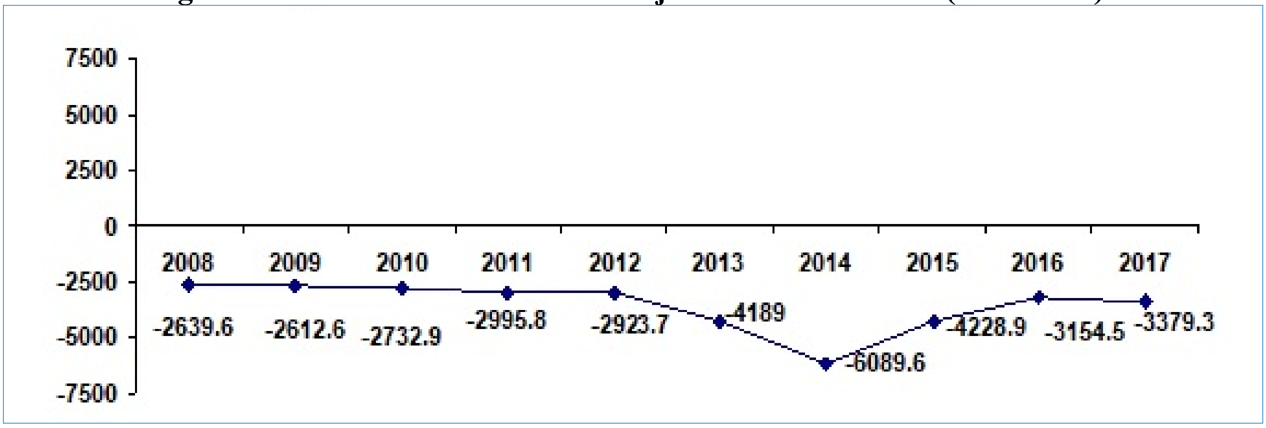
During the period under review, Azerbaijan's demand for international services also increased sharply, and the volume of imports almost doubled to $ 3.9 billion in 2008. USD in 2017 to 8.1 bln. Rose to the US dollar.

According to statistics, the highest level of imports of services was recorded in 2014, when the volume of imports amounted to 10.4 billion. Was at the level of US dollars. In the next 3 years, there was a downward trend in the volume of service imports. Thus, the level of service imports in 2017 compared to 2014 amounted to 2.3 billion. USD or decreased by 22.3% to about 8.1 bln. USD.

In 2008, the share of expenditures for the import of services in foreign currency funds paid to non-residents within the current account balance was 21.9%, but in the period after 2013, the level of this indicator increased to 40%. As can be seen, the import of services is one of the main sources of foreign exchange outflows from Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is a net service importer. Thus, there is a chronic deficit in the service balance. In the last 10 years, there has never been a year when service exports exceeded service imports in Azerbaijan. However, in the following years, compared to 2014, when the balance of services had the highest negative balance, a significant decrease in the overall deficit was observed.

Figure 6: General balance of Azerbaijan business services (2008-2017)



Source:https://bakuresearchinstitute.org/az/azerbaijans-participation-opportunities-in-the-global-services-market

As can be seen from the diagram, the negative balance of services in 2008-2012 amounted to 2.6-2.9 billion. Although it changed in the range of $ 4.2-6.1 billion in 2013-2015. It has risen to the US dollar. In the last 2 years (2016-2017), the negative balance of services decreased again significantly and amounted to 3.1-3.4 billion. It was in the range of US dollars.

The main reason for the decline in the balance of payments over the past three years was the decline in imports of services by 25%. Thus, in 2014-2017, imports amounted to 2.3 billion. While the reduction to USD, the increase in service exports will be only $ 400 million. It was the US dollar. In short, the rate of decline in service imports exceeded the growth rate of exports by an average of 3-3.5 times.

Depending on their economic capacities, national economies may provide a diverse array of services to the global service market. This comprises services related to tourism and travel, communication, transportation, construction, finance, government, and business, among others. These routes also incorporate many service categories.

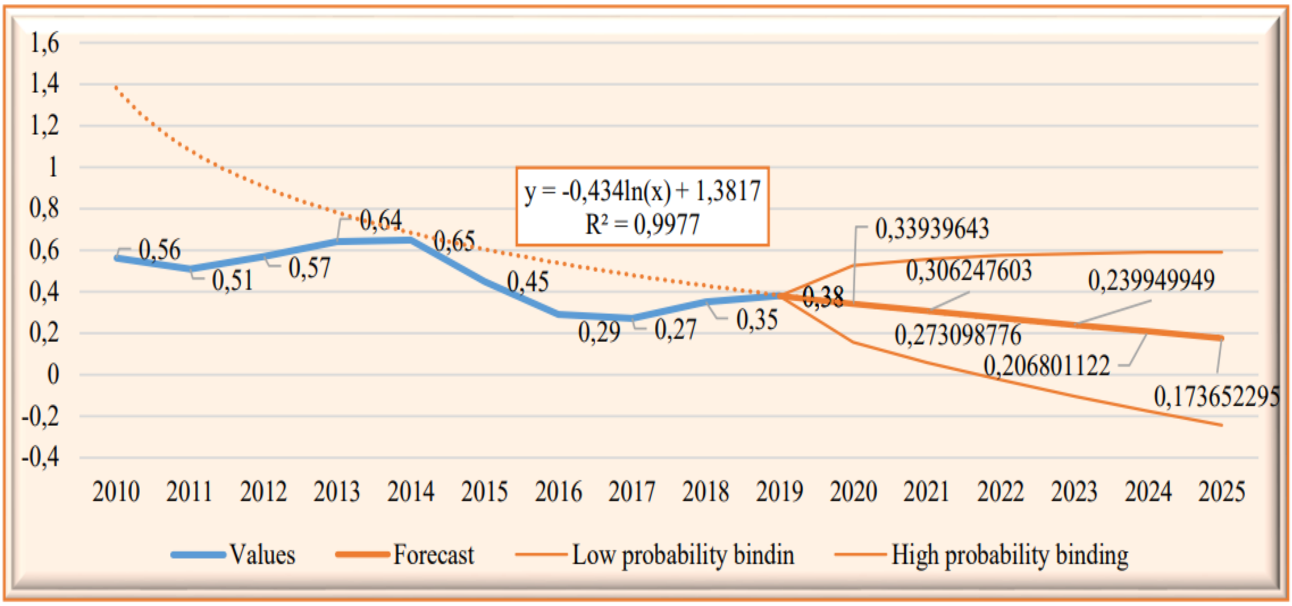
For instance, business services encompass,research and development (R&D) services, legal, accountancy, management consulting, public relations, advertising and market research, public opinion research, architectural and engineering tasks; organization of computer services and software for information and communication technology services, information and telecommunication services; Financial services include services provided by pension and investment funds, insurance companies of the banking sector (deposit acceptance, clearing payments, the most diverse banking operations and services, factoring, etc.).

1.3. Directions of development of commercial activity in the field of services in Azerbaijan

The regulation of economic growth and the application of a fair distribution of money to meet the increasing demand of the population is one of the most key problems facing world economics in modern conditions. This is one of the most important issues facing world economics in modern conditions because worldwide economic relations are expanding. Each state adopts regulatory measures to promote economic development and economic stability in order to maintain the effective allocation of resources among consumption and production and their continued viability. This is done in order to protect the environment. To maintain a state of economic equilibrium, it is of the utmost significance to put into practice the effective distribution of income. In this respect, it should be mentioned that the optimum control of the link between both the distribution of government revenue and macroeconomics factors plays a significant role in the economy. This is one of the reasons why it is vital to notice this fact.

The consequences of increased wealth on inequalities are realized via a range of methods, including changes brought about by technical advancement and structural alterations. By contributing to an increase in the country's overall income, the development of new technologies has the potential to shed light on the connection between employment and unemployment in a given nation. As a result, the development of new technologies is associated with a process that results in an increase in the rate of unemployment. This is because some workers are unable to completely adjust to the needs of their jobs as a result of the introduction of the new technologies.

Figure 7: The graph below shows the projected Gini index prices for the Republic of Azerbaijan till 2025



Source: Yadigarov T.A. Econometric assessment of macroeconomic effects of national income distribution in Azerbaijan during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020).

It regulates commercial activity in the republic with many rules and laws in order to further increase the intensity of commercial activity in a market economy and at the same time to strengthen the competitive environment.

In our nation, there are laws pertaining to the regulation of commercial activity as well as the formation of the right to run, and the control over the implementation of laws is carried out by the government agencies. These laws also establish the right to operate in our nation.

These laws consist of the following:

1) Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On Electronic Commerce",

2) Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On trade secrets",

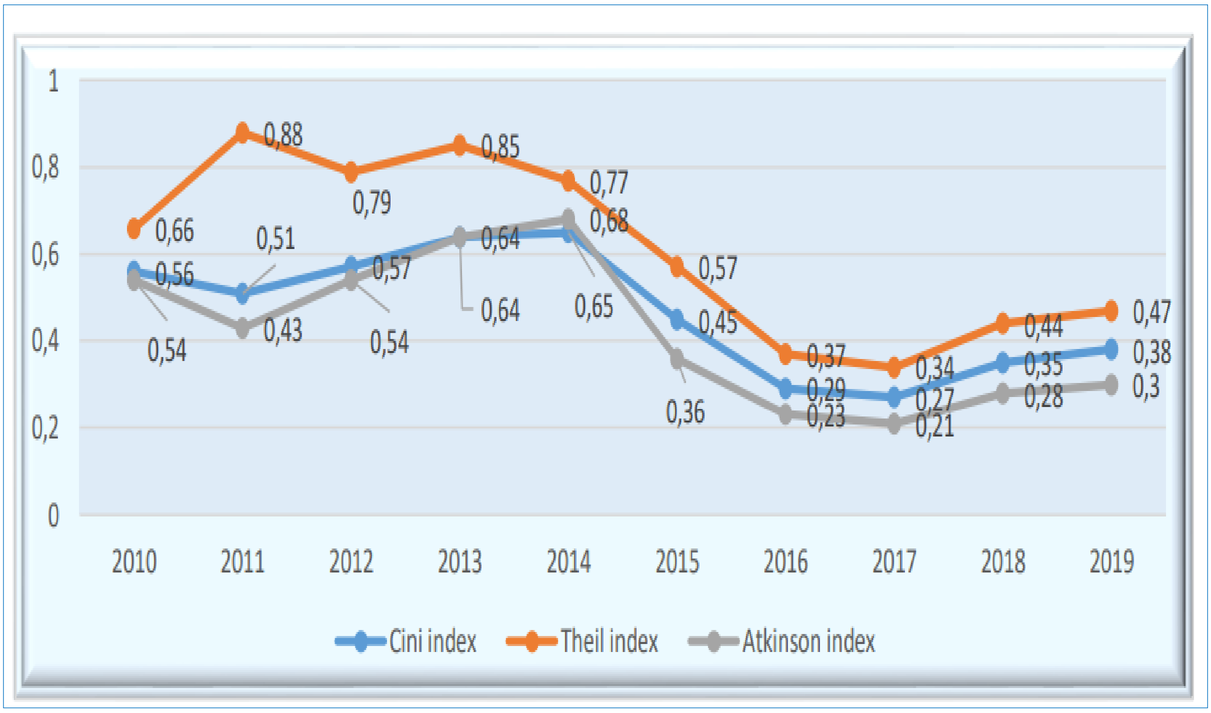
3) Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Banks and Banking Activities in the Republic of Azerbaijan”.

The factors that contribute to the unequal distribution of the national income are as follows: Unfairness in the allocation of government revenue is shaped by a multitude of factors, such as the geographical location of the country, the political events that occur within the country, the growth of the country's population, the burden of the country's external and internal debt, and the fiscal policy of the country. In particular, the rise in the volume of commerce inside the nation also directly contributes to an increase in inequality, which ultimately results in a decline in employment. The Gini index is widely regarded as among the most reliable methods for assessing income disparity.

The Gini coefficient derived by several approaches (Brown method, trapezoid method, etc.), as well as the Thei and Atkinson indices, were calculated using data from the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan using the aforementioned formulas (1), (2), and (3). As seen in the figure, while the Gini index climbed between 2010 and 2011, the Thei and Atkinson indices declined over the same time period. This is shown more vividly in the following chart.

It is clear from the graph that the Gini coefficient will continue its downward trend between the years 2020 and 2025. Therefore, the economic slump in the world economy owing to the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19, as well as the steep decrease in oil prices on international markets, would also have an effect on the economy of Azerbaijan. The value of the Gini coefficient on the disparity in the distribution of national wealth will be 0.174 in 2025 and G will be less than or equal to 0.220, according to the estimates, which suggests that the degree of income disparity may be rather low.

Graph 1: Changes in the Gini, Theli, and Atkinson indices in Azerbaijan from 2010 to 2019



Source: Yadigarov T.A. Econometric assessment of macroeconomic effects of national income distribution in Azerbaijan during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020)

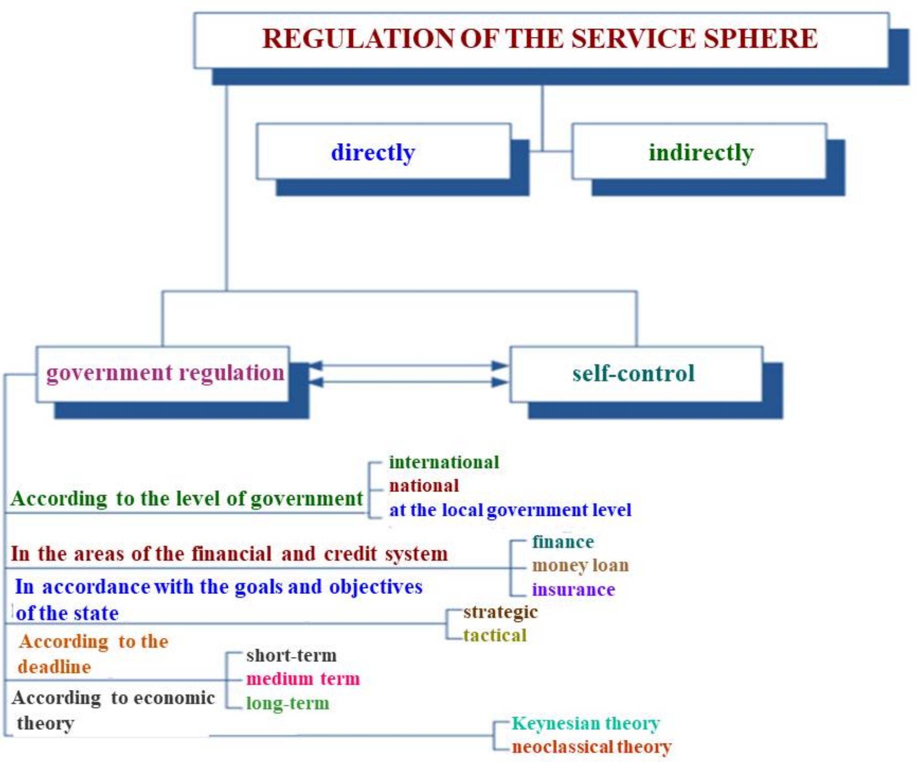
This will result in more efficient regulation of significant financial and economic processes, which will assure the future distribution of fiscal policy, the control of government income and expenditure, the optimisation of income distribution, and a rise in tax revenues.

The Gini index on the metrics of inequalities in the distribution of national wealth on households in Azerbaijan is between 0.29 and 0.68, the Theil index is between 0.37 and 0.88, and the Atconson index while it ranged from 0.23 to 0.65, as indicated by the statistics compiled by the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the period of 2010-2019.

A 1 percent increase in expenses in the Republic of Azerbaijan resulted in a 0.544 percent increase in GDP, a 1 percent increase in the Gini index resulted in a 0.5 percent decrease in GDP, and a 1 percent increase in the Theil index resulted in a 0.28 percent increase in GDP, according to the study. GDP increases by 0.35 percent for every 1 percent rise in the index. According the regression equation that describes the association between GDP and the Gini, Theil, and Atconson indices as well as state budget expenditures derived from the Eviews program software system, the expression is as follows: As a result of the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world economy, it is anticipated that the Gini index will decrease by 2025, resulting in an extremely low level of income inequality.

State regulation consists of a set of forms and methods of purposeful impact on the economy in order to create and maintain a certain regime by creating a competitive environment, setting price conditions.

Figure 8: Service regulation process



Source: http://unec.edu.az/application/uploads/2016/07/Vahabova-Z-beyd-.pdf

The most important measures of national regulation are aimed at establishing and maintaining national standards of services in the field of education, health care and other service areas, protecting the domestic market for services from foreign competitors and regulating the export of services.

As a rule, measures to regulate the internal market of services are based on the political, economic and social interests of the country (using local labor force, supporting local entrepreneurs in key service areas, taking into account the interests of national defense, stimulating the growth of domestic investment, protecting national culture, etc.).

There are 6 main areas of national regulation in the service sector:

1) Measures to limit foreign exchange transactions in order to improve the country's balance of payments: established rules for foreign exchange, restrictions on money transfers abroad, deferral of payments in foreign currency;

2) Public procurement system aimed at expanding the consumer of national production services;

3) Government incentives for the development of national services through the provision of various benefits. Use of subsidies and tax incentives to increase competitiveness in domestic and foreign markets;

4) Local sectors of the economy, including insurance, banking, advertising, accounting, etc. measures to limit foreign direct investment to strengthen services;

5) Restriction of employment of foreign citizens by foreign companies;

6) Application of different taxation for foreign enterprises.

In addition to the above measures, the state may apply special regulatory measures for certain service areas (Vahabova Z.R, 2016).

One of the reasons for the importance of government intervention in the development of services is that the state acts as a natural monopolist in solving many social problems. The state, whose main goal is to solve social problems and provide normal living conditions for all members of society, is based on a socially oriented approach to its activities and implements it in the system of socio-economic management.

Government regulation aims to provide access to basic services for all segments of the population, regardless of income level. State regulation is carried out in various forms:

- targeted allocation of subsidies to consumers;
- state ownership of factors of production;
- subsidy (Vahabova Z.R., 2016).

CHAPTER II. MANAGING THE SERVICE SECTOR MARKET IN A CHANGING ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

2.1. Analysis of local and foreign experience in strategic management of the service sector market

One of the most attractive and fastest-growing segments of the economy is the service industry. This field encompasses a vast array of activities, ranging from commerce and transportation to finance, insurance, and many forms of mediation. Hotels and restaurants, laundromats and hairstylists, educational and sporting facilities, travel companies, radio and television, consultancy businesses, as well as educational and health organizations, museums, cinemas, and theatres are included among the services provided. Almost every organization provides public services in some kind.

The history of nations that have already grown reveals that the complexity of manufacturing processes and the congestion of the marketplace with commodities both contribute to an ever-increasing need for a wide range of different services. In terms of progress, the service industry in our nation is now considerably more advanced than the manufacturing sector, and in addition, we now have a wide variety of innovative and unique service kinds. This course of action involves making an effort to better accommodate the requirements of the market as well as the requirements, wants, and wishes of customers(Əhmədov.M.M.,2015:səh.6).

For service organizations, it is very important to have a deep understanding of the nature and essence of the service and take into account their features in management and marketing. The services market differs from other markets for two important reasons:

➢ Because the service still does not exist until it has been supplied, it is difficult to compare and assess until it is really received. But you are able to evaluate the service based on the advantages you anticipated and those you really obtained.

➢ Since services are characterized by the high degree of ambiguity, this puts the purchaser at a disadvantage that makes it hard for sellers to promote the service. (Əhmədov.M.M,2015:səh.6).

The characteristics of service marketing are determined not only by these aspects of the service market but also by the particulars of services themselves, such as the incapability of maintaining their quality, the wide range of quality available, and the constant cycle of production and consumption.

Service marketing is the process of creating, implementing, and implementing certain services aimed at identifying the specific needs of customers. This process should help the service organization to evaluate the services provided by the customer correctly and make the right choice. The process of realization of the service is very complicated because the customer is sold as an abstract thing that has no material form.

Service marketing is a natural evolution in our country, a way of development and gaining experience. The complexity and specificity of the service sector and marketing activities in this area are now more clearly manifested in the interaction of consulting activities, insurance companies, trade, railways, banks, stock exchanges and industrial enterprises.

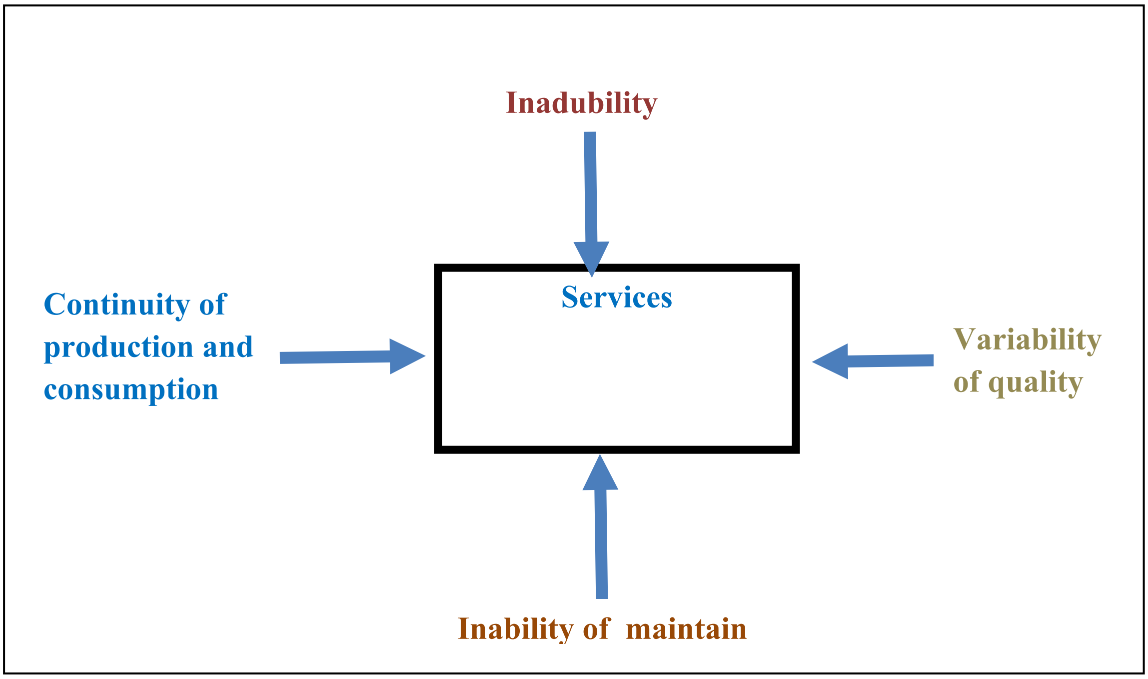
Currently, there is a trend of diversification of services around the world. Previously, separate types of services were combined into one company. By offering a full range of services, such a company can increase its competitiveness in the market and reduce potential risks by diversifying services. For example, banking, exchange and brokerage services are combined into complex financial services.

There is a process of integration of various services within the tourism business. Transport companies offer passenger and cargo insurance services. For example, the largest German airline Lufthansa has been successfully operating in the travel services market for a long time, regularly offering new services. Since the summer of 1995, the company has organized another new service – charter flights for organizing mass events abroad – concerts of famous stars, major sports competitions, etc (Əhmədov.M.M,2015:səh.15).

The service sector has a number of unique features in comparison with the sphere of material production. The import and export of services, according to the governments of many countries, can be a threat to national security and independence. Therefore, the market of services is regulated by stricter regulations than the trade in goods.

Recently, its role and growing importance in the economy has led to the need to conduct research in the field of services, to classify services and to clearly define the characteristics of marketing in this area. Service marketing has recently begun to be applied in foreign countries, and in our country it is not yet fully formed as an independent subject or field of activity. This is due to the fact that the service sector is diverse and their characteristics have a decisive impact on marketing in this area.

Figure 9: Main factors of growth in the volume of consumed services



Source: Ahmadov M.M. Marketing of service areas, 2015.

Thus, a number of factors need to be considered in the development of a service delivery system:

➢ the service provider must be located in or close to the area where the consumers are located;

- meeting the needs and wants, desires and wishes of customers must take precedence over the firm's efficiency considerations;
- scheduling of services should be determined mainly on the basis of consumer preferences;
- the difficulty of determining and measuring the quality of services should be taken into account;
- service staff must be able to communicate well with customers;
- production capacity should be calculated according to the “peak” level of demand, rather than the average level of demand for services;
- it is usually not possible to stockpile a product when demand is low and use it during a “peak” period;
- it is very difficult to measure the efficiency of the service staff, because the low productivity of the service can be attributed not to the bad work of the employee, but to the low demand for the service by consumers;
- the service sector is not characterized by large enterprises and they do not resemble each other (with the exception of airlines and banks);
- in the service sector, it is sometimes difficult to separate marketing and production (Əhmədov.M.M.,2015: s.11).

Thus, the above distinctive features of the services indicate, for example, that they are more difficult to manage than operations in the industry. That is why there are specific aspects of marketing and management in the service sector in terms of ensuring efficiency. Thus, services are always connected to people – customers, and they often act as a problem for the service organization. Customers sometimes ignore the established rules, do not like the services offered, or set higher requirements.

An organization that serves the customer freely and without any subordination is obliged to study the attitudes of consumers, their desires, preferences, requirements and expected results. At the same time, special tricks should be developed to balance supply and demand, and incentive proposals should be made that can have a positive impact on consumers as a whole.

The growth in the volume of services consumed in recent decades is one of the most significant phenomena in the economies of developed countries. The range of factors that ensure such growth is very wide. These include:

- a sufficiently high level of well-being of the population with a special culture of dynamic renewal of the microenvironment, which ensures a steady demand for various services;
- effective forms of service provision both in the situation of their mass production and with an individualized approach (that is, taking into account even small variations in needs and focusing on the needs of population groups with very different income levels);
- development and application of new technologies for the provision of services, and so on (Мудунов А.С.,2013: s.48).

There does not appear to be a need for a detailed discussion of each of the growth factors in service consumption. Of interest are mainly those who firstly, they are related to the functioning of service enterprises; and secondly, in the near future or already can be adapted to the conditions, or should be adopted as a strategic reference. It should be taken into account that these growth factors were implemented in fundamentally different conditions – conditions of a stable economy, a relatively higher level of development of the service sector, its infrastructure, a different culture of consumption of goods, and so on.

Nevertheless, even if it is not always possible to draw the necessary parallels and adapt foreign approaches to modern conditions, such an analysis is extremely useful, since the progressive movement towards a civilized market should significantly reduce the gaps between domestic and foreign businesses in this area.

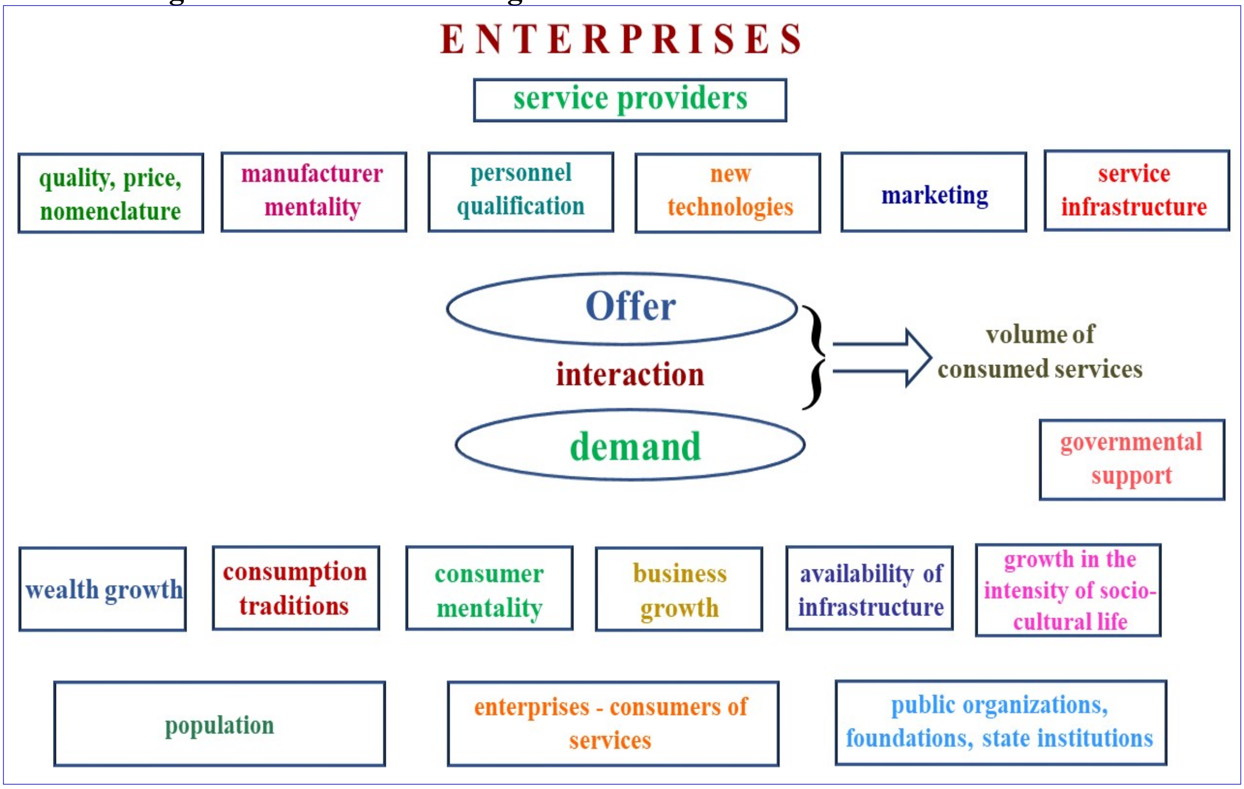
> *"One of the most significant among these factors is, perhaps, the mentality of the manufacturer, his attitude towards the client. In the service sector, where the process of production of a service and its implementation are inextricably linked and where the seller of the service interacts closely with its buyer, the role of this factor is exceptionally high. "Love your customer, please him, fulfill his whims, provide him with all kinds of services, and he will always pay you for your care and attention in hard currency". This advice of Dale Carnegie has the force of natural law in any*

market economic system – whether it be the economy of a prosperous Western state or a country taking the first steps in this direction. (Мудунов А.С.,2013:səh.48).”

Of course, Western standards in relation to the client (“who is always right!”) have evolved over more than one decade. Therefore, this problem is easier to pose than to solve. Moreover, it will have to be solved in the conditions of the existing distortions of the service, the main advantage of which, as you know, is “unobtrusiveness”.

The marketing factor is especially significant in the service sector. By virtue of their specificity, services are goods that do not have a material form; it is a product that cannot be touched and seen, but it can be heard and tasted. In this regard, it is especially important for service marketing that first, advertising and information; secondly, a thoughtful presentation system, and in particular a program of discounts and free services (for new forms of service). Both of these methods of attracting customers are widely used in the West and have proven themselves well (Мудунов А.С.,2013:s.50).

Figure 10: Main factors of growth in the volume of consumed services



Source: Mudunov A.S. Foreign experience in organizing the effective functioning of service enterprises, 2013.

The infrastructure creates the necessary prerequisites for the effective functioning of service enterprises. In the West, the infrastructure of the service sector is the object of state support, especially for services of great social importance – transport services, communications, etc. Thus, in Japan, Internet and mobile telephone services are subsidized by the state; the construction of roads and railways is carried out at the expense of the budget, etc.

High-quality client experience (useful, convenient and pleasant experience of interaction of potential and current clients with the company at all points of contact), according to foreign scientists and business representatives, is one of the main factors in the competitiveness of companies, the importance of which will increase in the coming years.

At the heart of the impact of customer experience on profits is the willingness of satisfied customers to buy more and more often, leave positive reviews and recommend the company to friends, which is confirmed by a number of studies: customer service is important for brand choice and brand loyalty for 95% of respondents, 61% of respondents reported that they refused to use a brand due to poor customer experience, 86 % of consumers would agree to pay 25 % more if their customer experience was fully considered, 21 % of online retailers' customers post on social media about their customer service (Казаев A.B.,2019:səh.24).

According to a study by Bain&Company, firms with better financial performance use more digital customer experience management tools and rate their effectiveness higher than less profitable companies. The following digital tools for managing customer experience are most widely used by foreign enterprises: predictive analytics, sensors in products and business processes, and personalized experience services. Respondents expect that these methods will be widely used in the future. At the same time, the majority of survey participants declare their companies' plans to place special emphasis on the development of means for personalizing customer experience.

Digital transformation leaders are effectively engaging with consumers through digital customer experience management tools at all touchpoints along the customer journey: search by consumers for a way to solve a problem, feedback, comparison of offers of firms, receive advice on the terms of service, admission record, selection and purchase of a product, technical support, tariff plan change, feedback and complaints.

Modern consumers look for reviews of products and firms and share their positive and negative customer experiences online. Systematic work with customer reviews, assessing customer satisfaction, identifying problems in the quality of service requires the introduction of digital tools for receiving and analyzing feedback, monitoring reviews on the Internet. The condition for a company's competitiveness in Industry 4.0 is either a digital business model or such an outstanding level of service that it will not be devalued by online competitors (Казаев А.В.,2019).

An analysis of the practice of foreign companies, consumer expectations and industry 4.0 trends allows us to conclude that it is necessary to introduce digital tools, first of all, to improve such aspects of service as personalization of customer experience, ease of purchase and interaction through any channel (omnichannel). In addition, it is important to introduce digital tools for the systematic collection and analysis of customer opinions about the level of service, as well as monitoring customer reviews on the Internet.

Figure 11: Features of the strategic management of the company in modern economic conditions

Source: The table was prepared by the author based on the data at Filimonova K.V. Strategic management of service organizations, 2021

Another recipe for the efficiency of the functioning of Western enterprises operating in the service sector is the preferential use of highly qualified personnel. The issues of rational involvement of labor resources in this area in the developed countries of the West have always been in the center of attention of managers, and have recently become especially relevant. For comparison: in our service sector, a significant part of workers are either low-skilled or migrated from other sectors of the national economy and do not have specialized knowledge, work experience, etc. (Мудунов А.С.,2013).

Thus, the service sector occupies an important place in the economy of developed countries, where there are active processes of its integration with production.

The dynamic development of the service sector is due to the action of a wide range of factors (which include a developed infrastructure of the service sector, highly qualified personnel, quality of services provided, the use of new service technologies, the mentality of the service provider), some of which can be adapted to the conditions of Azerbaijan.

Among the important factors that have become widespread in conditions requiring further development is the after-sales service of products, which is in line with global trends in the integration of the service sector and production. An important reserve for the growth of the service sector in general and individual enterprises in particular is also the improvement in the quality of services provided. Although much more attention has been paid to this factor, however, in terms of the level of development of this indicator, there is a noticeable lag behind Western standards.

A number of factors stimulating the growth of the service sector and its various facilities belong to the group of inertial factors that require considerable time for their implementation. These include the mentality of the service provider, the skill level of the personnel working in the service sector, etc.

2.2. Methods of combating the global economic crisis in the service sector market against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, humanity has faced an unprecedented situation. In countries with a high incidence of COVID-19, enterprises immediately closed, demand for everyday goods increased sharply, some goods on the market rose in price – antiviral drugs, medical masks, disinfectants.

Demand for food delivery services has grown significantly due to the reluctance of many citizens to leave their homes during the pandemic and travel bans in some countries. At the same time, there are fears that the coronavirus infection can spread through couriers (Q.İbadoğlu .,2020).

The service sector has been the worst hit by the coronavirus outbreak and the measures taken to counteract it. Catering, fitness and sports, tourism, hotels, cosmetology and spas, duty-free commerce, transportation, entertainment, and major sporting events experienced the highest losses.

The ILO's preliminary assessments of the impact of COVID-19 on certain social and economic sectors and industries have been compiled into a series of sectoral factsheets. The factsheets also include sector-specific ILO tools and measures, as well as policy measures taken by ILO partners, governments, employers and (https://www.ilo.org/ankara/areas-of-work/covid-19/WCMS_742714/lang--tr/index.htm).

Maritime transport, which carries 90% of global trade, is an important area of the service sector and the main vein of international supply chains. Therefore, COVID-19 has a huge impact on employment in the shipping industry, which employs 2 million seafarers. The leisure shipping industry, which employs a quarter of a million seafarers, has been particularly hard hit. The marine fisheries industry, in which massive amounts of fishermen are employed, is one of the primary sources of food, particularly animal proteins. Many fishing boats are still unable to depart port, and the market for seafood has plummeted.

The COVID-19 situation is impacting the safety and health of sailors and fishermen, as well as their working conditions and ability to board and depart ships. Consequently, they are still unable to perform their crucial role in shipping, passenger service, and seafood harvesting. (https://www.ilo.org/ankara/areas-of-work/covid-19/WCMS_742714/lang--tr/index.htm)

Along with a general reduction in fishing activities, a number of new factors have begun to reshape the fishing industry in the current times of crisis, such as increased distribution costs, reduced demand and supply of fresh seafood, or even a complete shutdown in some places, and the complete cessation of small-scale fishing activities in many countries. While the amount of fish caught has generally decreased, the pressure on stocks such as small pelagic species in some countries has increased disproportionately with the increase in demand for processed seafood. In addition, reduced controls at sea bring with it the risk of increased illegal fishing. In many countries, the time and resources devoted to monitoring, control and inspection in hunting areas have begun to decrease.

Like other economic activities, the fishing industry should benefit from public resources mobilized to prevent the loss of employment due to COVID-19 and to mitigate the negative economic impacts. Stopped fishing activities should be compensated with government support to contribute both to the economic sustainability of fisheries and to the regeneration of fish stocks in the seas. In order to prevent ecosystem services from being damaged by this and future crises, stretching the measures taken to revive fish stocks should definitely be avoided. These measures include restrictions on fishing gear, spatial and temporal restrictions, and technical measures.

There is a growing number of reports showing that trade in the fisheries sector is affected, mostly supply chains, on a global scale and across Europe. The crisis has revealed the importance of local production in order to ensure the supply of seafood at the local level under the current conditions. Small-scale producers, in particular, face unprecedented economic challenges as demand in the market has drastically decreased and traditional supply chains have deteriorated.

In May 2021, EY conducted a study to determine how restrictive and supportive measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have affected business activity in Moscow, London, Paris, New York, Singapore, Hong Kong, Madrid, Oslo, Stockholm and other major cities around the world.

The cities that have implemented the lockdown, while achieving relatively low per capita incidence rates, have very different results in mortality rates, from the lowest in the sample, Singapore, to the highest, Paris. The long period of restrictions has led to a significant economic downturn in these cities, which may worsen further if restrictions remain in place(https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/ru_ru/news/2021/06/ey-covid-19-support-measures-web.pdf).

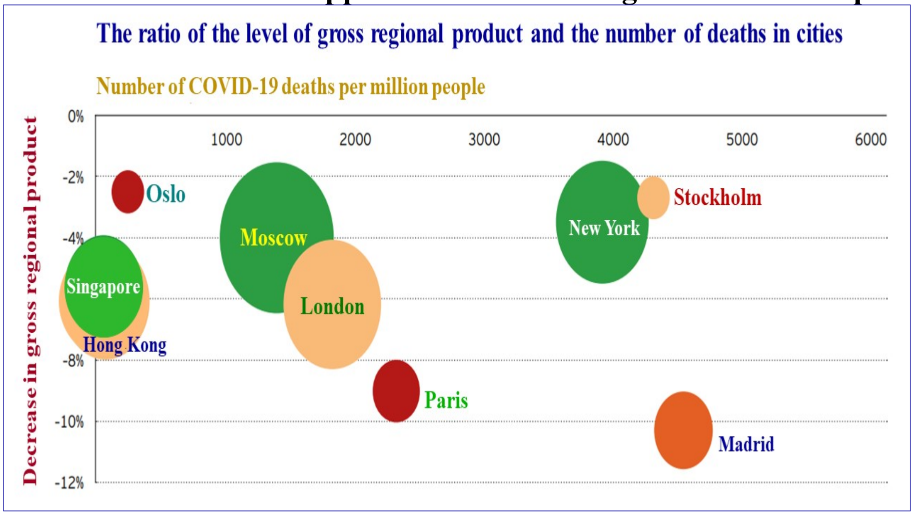
Having overcome the peaks of the incidence, the cities faced the consequences of the pandemic, which affected their economies and especially the sectors related to tourism and services (transport and transportation, trade, culture, leisure and entertainment, the hotel sector).

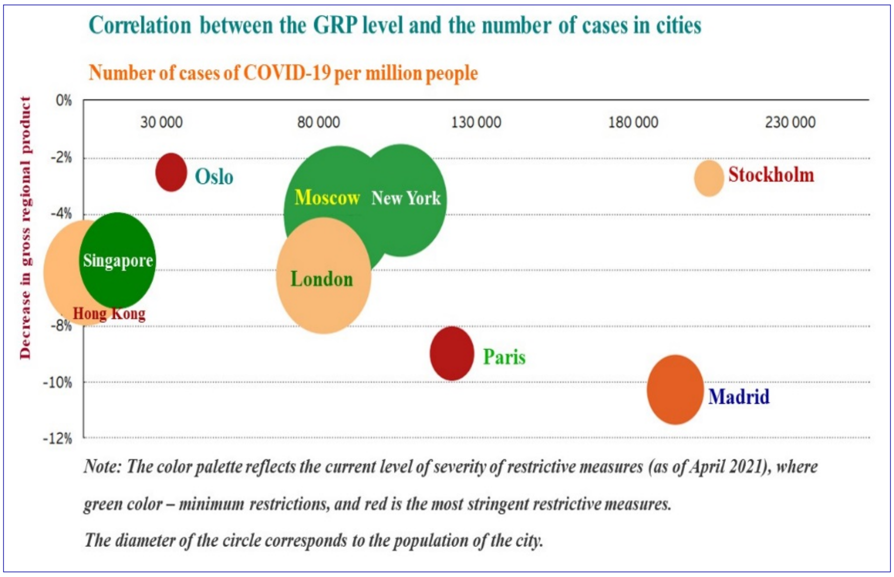
A comparative analysis showed that a significant impact on the level of morbidity and mortality from COVID-19, as well as on the economy of cities, had, on the one hand, the promptness of the introduction and removal of restrictive measures in response to the dynamics of the incidence, their completeness, timeliness and effectiveness of communication, and with on the other hand, the effectiveness and targeting of measures to support the population and business. Thus, in order to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic on the urban economy, a reasonable balance between restrictions and support measures was important. Megacities that adhered to a balanced strategy show lower levels of morbidity, mortality, unemployment, and a drop in gross regional product (GRP) among the analyzed cities(https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/ru_ru/news/2021/06/ey-covid-19-support-measures-web.pdf).

Examples:

- In the UK, public debt is up 14 % year-over-year due to a lot of support measures, while London's economy has fallen by more than 6 %.
- The Norwegian authorities managed to avoid a negative impact on the public debt, as they decided to use $37 billion from the state pension fund to finance support packages for the population and businesses in order to minimize the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.
- In Moscow, as part of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, it was possible to develop an effective epidemiological, communication and economic strategy for interacting with citizens and businesses, as well as measures to ensure the safety of the population, which will minimize the impact of new challenges that the Moscow economy may face in the medium and long term. perspective.
- In Hong Kong, over the past years, an algorithm for dealing with a pandemic (in particular, the SARS epidemic) has already formed, so the city authorities knew how to act in this situation. This made it possible to quickly take measures to protect the population and significantly reduce the spread of infection.
- The authorities of London were aware of the possibility of a pandemic in the city in advance, therefore, in 2018, an action plan was prepared for the city authorities, health services during emergencies associated with epidemics. During this period, there were other challenges that arose as a result of a lack of comprehension of the magnitude of the problem, as well as a lack of cohesion across the various levels of government.

Figure 12: Comparative analysis of the state of urban economies, taking into account the impact of restrictions and support measures during the COVID-19 pandemic





Source:https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/ru_ru/news/2021/06/ey-covid-19-support-measures-web.pdf

In terms of a set of objective indicators (economy, employment, morbidity, and mortality), the most balanced results were shown by the cities of Singapore, Moscow, and Oslo. In the beginning, the Economic Reforms Research Institute under the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan established survey forms defining the expansion of the real sector.

The negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world market of goods and services, as well as the political situation with oil production, resulting in a sharp drop in world oil prices in April, and this process did not go unnoticed by Azerbaijani oil prices. On the other hand, the application of a special quarantine regime in the world, as well as in Azerbaijan, limits the opportunities of consumers and reduces their purchasing power. In January-June 2020, the value of products and services sold to meet the needs of consumers decreased by 6.4 percent at comparable prices compared to the same period in 2019, amounting to 22.0 billion manats (Hüseynova A., Ələkbərov E., və Salifova T.,2019).

Table 1:Macrostructure of retail trade turnover

	In January-June 2020, million manats	**Gross specific weight,%**	**January-June 2020 compared to January-June 2019,%**
Retail trade turnover	18 245,7	100,0	98,1
including: food, beverages and tobacco products	9 729,7	46,7	103,1
non-food products	8 516,0	46,7	103,1

Source: Huseynova A., Alakbarov E., Salifova T. Analysis of the results of real sector monitoring during the pandemic (for the first and second quarters of 2020), 2020

In order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the activities of a number of economic activities have been restricted under a special quarantine regime. In order not to reduce the number of jobs, 215 million manats have been allocated under the financial support program to pay the salaries of 304,000 employees working in areas affected by the pandemic. In addition, 80 million manats were allocated for the financial support program for 292,000 individual (micro) entrepreneurs operating in areas affected by the pandemic. All these measures are aimed at maintaining business activity in the country, including the protection of employment in the country.

As with other sectors, the COVID-19 epidemic has severely impacted the service industry, which is attempting to maintain operations on shaky foundation. During the pandemic, the fall in transport and tourist services contributed to a drop in commerce in services (https://ereforms.gov.az/az/ekspert-yazilari/xidmetler-ixracinin-inkisafinda-perspektivler-movcuddur-13).

Due to the fact that exports and imports of the this industry comprise a significant proportion of these services. Restrictions on involvement in foreign procurement have also had an impact on other service sectors, particularly the construction industry. According to the International Monetary Fund, the European

Statistical Service, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, services exports dropped by 6% in the first quarter of 2020, 30% in the second quarter, 24% in the third quarter, and 18% in the fourth quarter.

The travel and tourist industry, as well as the transportation sector, suffered the greatest amount of damage as a result of the epidemic, with losses ranging from -69 percent to -14 percent, respectively. The number of export support services, which include e-commerce platforms, fell by just 4 percent. In light of the fact that the stimulation of orders via e-commerce has led in a lessening of the sector's drop during the epidemic, The United States, Canada, the European Union, China, Japan, and South Korea all had significant drops in their service trade, but the United States saw the largest drop. As a result, the level of commerce in these nations has declined by an average of 15–23 percent, plunging them into recession.

Minimizing the harm to services trade throughout a pandemic and implementing new technical restrictions are now pertinent. A number of industrialized and emerging nations display foreign trade figures alongside the service sector, in accordance with international custom. True, the turnover of products still surpasses that of services in international commerce. However, in certain EU nations, the service sector contributes more to exports. Leaders in the export of services, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union have developed specialized technical laws for the service industry. This stimulates other importers to use services of superior quality.

The establishment of new export priorities in the export of goods and services concurrently with the export of goods and products in Azerbaijan's international commerce might be seen as a formidable obstacle. Based on the Central Bank's reported current accounts of the balance of payments, our country's export statistics for services are determined. Azerbaijan's non-oil exports of transport services supported the continuation of macroeconomic stability in 2020 to the tune of $1.3 billion, according to the results of the year. The results were $1.1 billion for freight services, $36.9 million for passenger travel, and $118.3 million for other transportation services. Tourism services exports were $ 47.4

million, construction services exports totaled $ 28.9 million, financial services exports totaled $ 9 million, and other business services exports totaled $ 542 million. (https://ereforms.gov.az/az/ekspert-yazilari/xidmetler-ixracinin-inkisafinda-perspektivler-movcuddur-13).

To boost the proportion of exports from the service sector, we are among the nations with competent and inventive people capital, a growing educational potential, a good geographical location, and a transport hub. An expansion of the initiative ecosystem and associated parameters might lead to a rise in service exports. Tourism, transportation, and logistics dominate the export of services in Azerbaijan, as they do in the majority of nations throughout the globe. In our nation before to the epidemic, these industries were the primary drivers.

Traditionally, the tourism and recreation industry has been adversely affected by external shocks. Due to the inward closing of countries due to the pandemic, travel for tourism purposes has been greatly restricted. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Azerbaijani tourism sector has shrunk significantly, as it is all over the world. Military conflicts, terrorist threats, climate change, natural disasters, sharp changes in oil prices, currency fluctuations, financial and economic crises are among the external factors that especially suppress the global hotel industry.

It is anticipated that there would be a decline of 20-30 percent in the number of international visitors throughout the globe in the year 2020, as stated by the estimations provided by the United Nations World Tourism Organization.This means that the tourism sector will suffer a loss of 30-50 billion dollars. In response to the spread of the epidemic, most countries have closed air traffic and restricted the entry of foreigners. According to the latest estimates of the International Air Transport Association, the total global revenue loss from air passenger travel is expected to be 50% in 2020 (https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1376183).

Hotels and hotel-type businesses in Azerbaijan have been the businesses most affected by the pandemic crisis. In 2006, the number of hotels and hotel-type enterprises in Azerbaijan was 285, in 2016 this number increased to 548, in 2017 to 563, and in 2018 to 596. These numbers are essential for demonstrating the growth of the tourist industry in Azerbaijan. In 2019, the number of hotels and hotel-type enterprises in Azerbaijan increased significantly, reaching 642.The number of hotel rooms, which was 11,403 in 2006, has more than doubled in 2019 to 23,865. When the number of people placed in hotels is examined, it has increased from 291,617 in 2006 to 1,919,765 in 2019. The number of employees, which was 4,338 in 2006, increased nearly three times to 12,481 in 2019 (https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1376183).

When the negative results of the COVID-19 pandemic are evaluated in Azerbaijan, while the income from the activities of accommodation establishments in Azerbaijan was 74.3 million manats in 2006, this figure increased approximately sevenfold in 2019 to 450 million manats. VAT and other taxes paid to the budget by hotel businesses increased every year, and the amount of 9.4 million manats paid to the government in 2006 reached 42.2 million manats in 2019. However, important developments in the field of tourism have been reversed with the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of domestic tourists, which was 841,000 in January-June 2019, decreased to 297,000 in the same period of 2020, and in January-June 2020, tourism revenues decreased by 2.7 times and remained at the level of 532.8 million manats.

According to the research findings, it is understood that the tourism sector in Azerbaijan is facing economic and social problems due to the crisis, and it is face to face with the direct effects of the pandemic, especially unemployment. It is understood that there are concerns that the problems experienced will deepen if the epidemic continues. In addition, it is understood that unemployment resulting from bankruptcies in the sector will cause various social problems. In the research, it was determined that the comfort of life of people decreased not only due to travel restrictions, but also due to economic inadequacies. It can be argued that these results are important in terms of showing the multidimensional effect of the crisis. It is seen that the tightening of the measures within the framework of the strategy of combating the pandemic causes various problems not only economically, but also psychologically and socially (https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1376183).

2.3. E-commerce and virtual technologies as a promising direction of strategic development of the service sector market

The Internet network (henceforth referring to as the Web) has become a fundamental component of conducting business, which may have a substantial impact on the growth of the global economy. Only businesses that continually develop and use new technologies are able to achieve and retain a competitive position in the current market. Utilization of communication and information technology in the service industry has a significant impact on firm growth.

The use of the Internet allows you to quickly promote products in the domestic and foreign markets at a low cost. It is well known that entering international markets allows enterprises to attract foreign capital, obtain modern technologies, equipment, materials, facilitate the search for new markets for products, cheap raw materials, and expand the circle of partners. Today, the following areas of use of Internet technologies can be distinguished:

- electronic commerce;
- promotion of products on the Internet;
- the use of Internet technologies as a means of communication between employees (Кирюхин А.К., Суворов И.А.,2020:s.42).

For service companies, the main tool for increasing competitiveness is Internet technologies for promoting products. Well-known tools are online advertising and e-mail newsletters, but more and more enterprises are reducing the share of such tools in favor of native advertising or the use of brand ambassadors, product placement and other progressive methods of product promotion. However, even if you use long-known Internet promotion technologies, you must follow certain rules that will ensure their effectiveness in the modern world. In particular, among the rules of civilized email marketing, there are the client's prior consent to an e-mail newsletter, the voluntary transfer of his personal data to him, including the use of the so-called double opt-in when forming a subscriber base; the possibility for the client to unsubscribe from the mailing list at any time; feedback from the sender.

Recently, the interactive properties of social networks have begun to play an extremely important role in people's lives. According to Statista Inc., one of the world's leading statistical research companies, the number of social network users in the world is constantly growing. In 2013, the number of social network users in the world was 1.59 billion people, in 2014 their number increased to 1.79 billion people, in 2015 – to 1.96 billion people, in 2016 - to 1.96 billion people. There are already 2.13 billion such users.

According to the forecast of Statista Inc. specialists, in 2020 the number of social network users will reach 2,440,000,000 people. With this in mind, businesses have begun to consider social media marketing as one of the most important areas of their marketing activities. This is evidenced by the results of the 2015 State of Marketing study conducted by Salesforce.com, the world leader in the CRM systems market. According to the company's report, 66% of surveyed businesses around the world consider social media marketing to be the backbone of their business; 66% of enterprises have special units in their structures dealing with social networks; 64% of businesses recognize social media as a critical means of promoting their products and services, and 42% consider social media traffic to be the most important characteristic of social marketing. (Кирюхин А.К., Суворов И.А.,2020:s.44)

For example, social networks are actively used in the hotel industry. In order to attract customers and maintain constant communication with them, which affects loyalty, positive experience, and, as a result, repeat bookings, hotel management posts the best photos of guests on social networks and encourages them to communicate with each other. In addition, 84% of businesses plan to increase spending on marketing activities next year, with 70% of them citing advertising and social media marketing as the main areas for increasing spending.

The global information network offers tourism companies many opportunities in the field of marketing research, while this environment requires operators to possess information competencies, the ability to select and analyze the necessary information. Tourism marketing activities require the interaction of all market entities, the formation of individual events, the creation of popular tourist destinations, the constant search for new and non-standard solutions for tourism services.

The organization of marketing policy is aimed at the development and modernization of its products and services in the tourism industry. On the basis of well-conducted marketing research, tourist programs are formed, which the customer must approve and accept, taking into account the financial and material possibilities for the implementation of this project(Оборин М.С.,2021:s.87).

Modern information technologies are used in the implementation of advertising and marketing activities mainly through Internet advertising. Modern Internet advertising technologies include advertising blocks on web resources to promote goods or services; placement in search directories; raising the position of the search engine site; mailing lists and so on. Banner advertising is the most common advertising medium on the Internet, as it serves as a means of attracting new customers, promoting a brand name, and increasing the position of a search engine site for a travel site. The work of almost all travel sites is built on attracting the consumer's attention to specific and meaningful information about the manufacturer, the product and its characteristics, how to buy goods, or obtaining additional information that is constantly updated.

So, innovations in tourism are of great importance, as they allow the tourism organization to provide an appropriate level of competitiveness. An integral part of innovation in tourism is marketing (Оборин М.С.,2021).

Thus, Internet technologies in all areas of business are designed to bring a number of advantages: saving fixed and variable costs, saving time, focusing on results, and not on the quantitative measurement of time worked, reducing the negative manifestation of the human factor, prompt access to information.

CHAPTER III. THE IMPACT OF ONLINE ADVERTISING ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN THE SERVICE MARKET DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

3.1. Purpose and significance of the research

The economy has been living in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic for two years, and if at first it seemed that the situation would be resolved soon and the pandemic would end quickly, now no one doubts that the world has changed for a long time. The business world has learned to work in new conditions and has even drawn some positive things out of it, such as new ways and methods of working that allow not only to survive despite anti-COVID restrictions, but also to increase the profitability of your business. Consumers have also changed.

In this master thesis, we will present some data obtained as a result of a study on the dynamics of consumer preferences and innovations in the hotel industry of Azerbaijan during the pandemic period. The study was carried out in the form of online surveys between 30 November and 14 December 2021.

Undoubtedly, the hotel industry is facing serious challenges today – hotel occupancy is far from past years. But now we need to focus on the future, study our target audience, understand how the tourism market is changing and what new tools we can use to attract tourists and stimulate the development of the hospitality industry.

Particular attention should be paid to digital services and communities, including the creation of centers and accelerators, as well as tourist safety issues that are currently at the forefront.

The key factor in the successful development of the hotel and hospitality industry is the analysis and consideration of the needs of various categories of tourists, including the youth category, which is characterized by a fundamentally new look at travel – millennials as a rule, looking for unique experiences, authentic experiences and extraordinary travel solutions.

The pandemic has significantly affected people's attitudes towards travel in general and accommodation services in particular.

The emphasis in guests' consumer preferences is shifting towards minimizing contact with staff, which makes hotel stays more comfortable in the face of increasing epidemiological risks. Contactless service technologies are becoming an integral part of the tourist experience.

According to the research, 51% of guests want typical elements of a hotel service, such as room selection or room access, to be offered to them via their smartphones; 58% of travelers say contactless check-in, check-out and room selection are crucial to their hotel experience, and more than 50% of respondents expect contactless check-in to become the "new normal" in "post-COVID" times.

In our view, such market development trends are important and should be taken into account when hotel businesses practice customer orientation.

3.2. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. Among the customers of the 3 hotels – "Hilton Baku Hotel", "Qafqaz Coast Hotel", "Gold Hotel Quba" participating in the research, the number of women is higher. The majority of the participants prefer domestic travel.

Hypothesis 2. Half of the participants prefer to travel with their whole family.

Hypothesis 3. For most of the respondents, the location of the hotel is very important when choosing a hotel.

Hypothesis 4. Most of the participants think that the service quality of the hotel they are visiting has changed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Hypothesis 5. The fight against coronavirus has increased the use of digital technologyin hotels.

3.3. Scope and Limitations of the Research

According to the State Border Service, the number of foreign guests visiting Azerbaijan in 2019 increased by 11.4% compared to 2018, reaching a historical record – 3.2 million. In 2018, the number of visitors from Georgia increased by 18.9% to 725,000, the number of visitors from Central and South Asia increased by 46.4% and 38.1%, respectively, and the number of visitors from the Middle East increased by 34.5%.

The stagnation was a characteristic feature of this development. It should be noted, that the long-term stagnation that started in the summer of 2018 and lasted until March 2019 increased by 6.3 % and reached 256 thousand people.

Table 2: Number of foreigners visiting the country (2020-2019)

countries	total arrivals 2020	total arrivals 2019	change	% change
Russian Federation	225,201	932,984	-707,783	-75,9 %
Georgia	184,228	725,465	-541,237	-74,6 %
Turkey	160,504	316,628	-156,124	-49,3 %
Iran	72,783	255,628	-182,845	-71,5 %
Ukraine	16,953	59,116	-42, 163	-71,3 %
India	12,769	65,118	-52,349	-80,4 %
Saudi Arabia	11,945	107,230	-95,285	-88,9 %
Kazakhstan	8,498	47,551	-39,053	-82,1 %
Turkmenistan	8,257	52,127	-43,870	-84,2 %
United Arab Emirates	7,951	68,346	-60,395	-88,4 %
Total	**795,722**	**3,170,373**	**- 2,374,651**	**- 74.9 %**

Source: The table was prepared by the author based on the data of the statistical committee

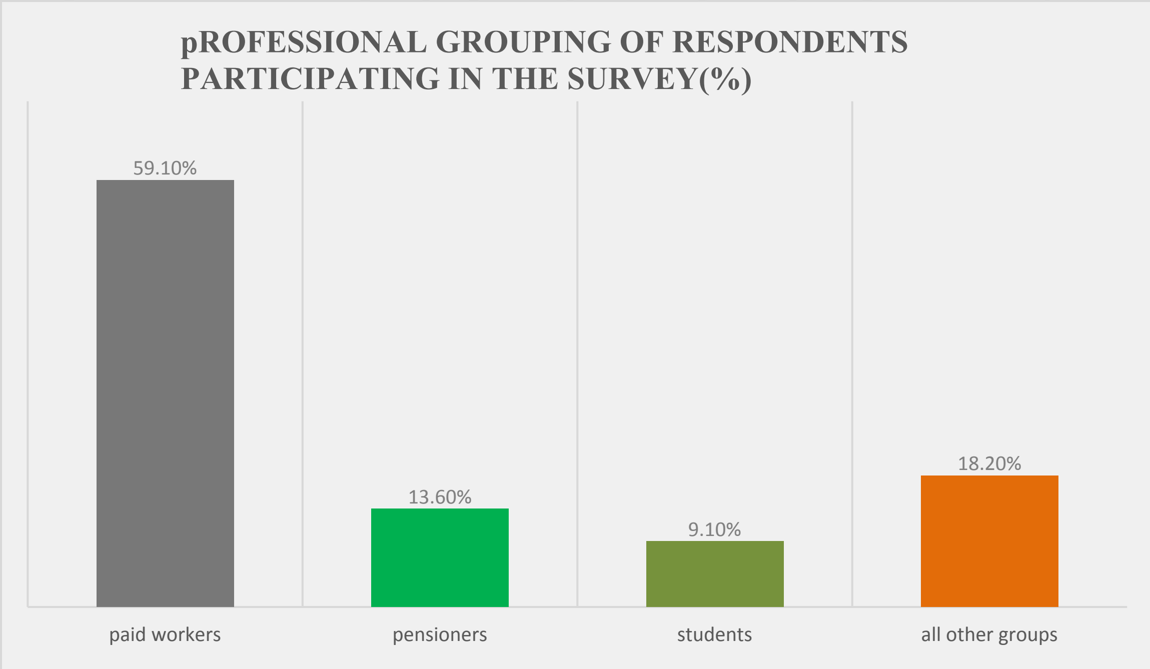
Guest reviews of 5-star hotels in Baku, Guba and Lankaran districts have been determined. Surveys in Google Forms consist of 25 questions. 274 people participated in the survey, 274 surveys were collected. The percentage of female respondents was 5%, while the percentage of male respondents was 25%. In the analysis of the data and “IBM SPSS Statistics” was used.

Independent reference groups were identified to conduct the surveys:

1) by age – young (18–35 years), middle age (36-60 years), old (65 +);

2) by professional and commercial parameter: wage worker, entrepreneur, retired, student, housewife, teacher, self-employed, public servant, hotel staff.

Figure 13: Professional grouping of respondents participating in the survey (%)



Source: compiled by the author, based on the results of the survey in the “IBM SPSS Statistics”

According to the professional parameter, representatives of three groups took the most active part in the survey: wage workers – 59.1 %; retirees – 13.6 %; students – 9.1%; all other groups – 18.2 % (fig. 13).

According to the data presented in the diagram in fig. 14, the majority of the participants – 44 % – prefer domestic travel once a year, 22 % – twice a year; 16 % travel abroad – once a year and the remaining 18 % – much less frequently.

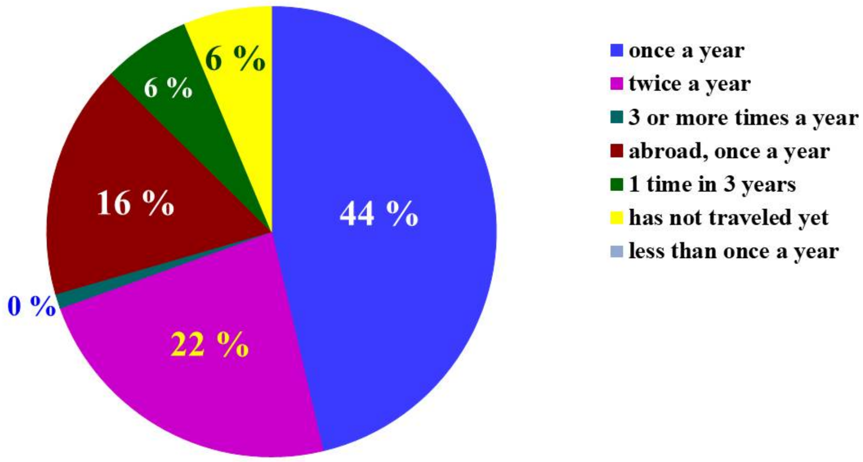
Thus, as shown in the diagrams, the first hypothesis was confirmed – there are more women among the customers of the 3 hotels surveyed. The majority of the participants prefer domestic travel.

It is seen that half of the participants – 50 % prefer to travel with the whole family, 31 % with their friends, 13 % alone, and 6 % with their wife/husband. Yes, so we know that hypothesis 2 is confirmed as well.

The diagram in Figure 15 shows that the second hypothesis is confirmed. In other words, half of the survey participants prefer to travel with their whole family.

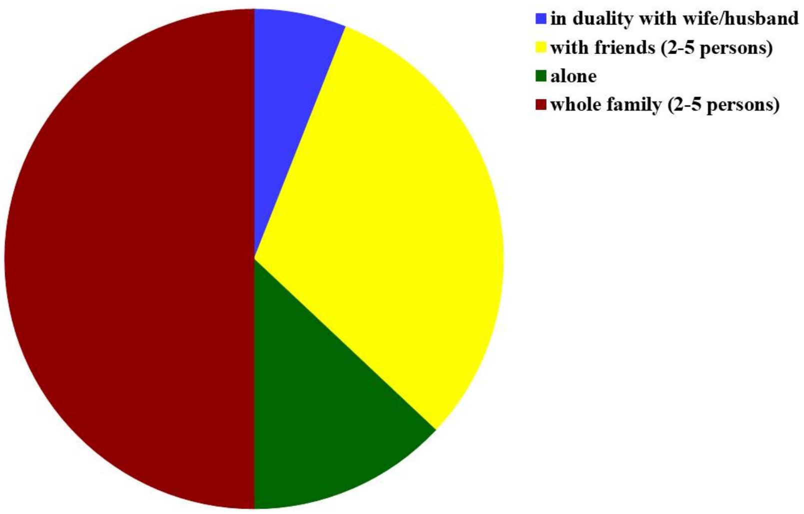
When we pay attention to whether the third hypothesis can be verified or not, we know that the location of the hotel is very important when choosing a hotel for most of the respondents.

Figure 14: Frequency of domestic travel



Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the survey in the "IBM SPSS Statistics"

Figure 15: Passenger composition



Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the survey in the "IBM SPSS Statistics"

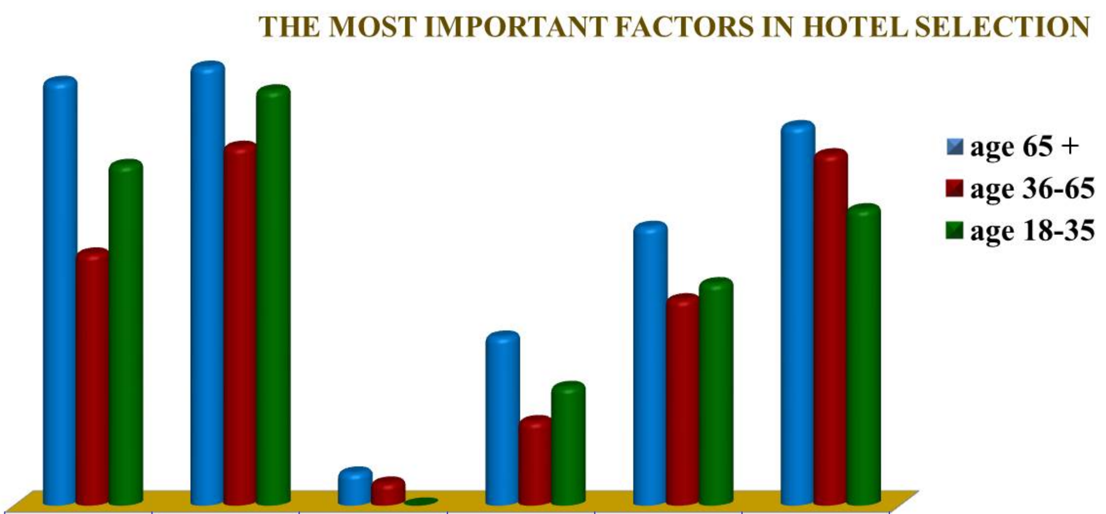
The needs and preferences of hospitality consumers have changed significantly over the past 2 years, as research shows:

First of all, it should be noted that the location is very important when choosing a hotel for every age group. In the young (18-35) and older (65+) age groups of the respondents, the "comfort level" criterion is in the second place and the cost of living is in the third place. In the middle age group, the cost of living is in the second place and the comfort level is in the third place.

Although we expect the "safety" criterion to rise to the top in the pandemic due to the impact of Covid-19, the answers of the respondents show the opposite. Namely, safety is only ranked 4th for all age groups.

According to the safety parameters, life and health safety ranks first for 92-80 % of the participants, depending on the age category. And that's pretty predictable in the pandemic. Depending on the age category of the participants, 70-83% stated that the safety of the property is important when choosing a hotel in the 2nd place. In general, Azerbaijani citizens have begun to pay much more attention to travel safety.

Figure 16: The most important factors in hotel selection



	comfort level	location of the hotel	be a famous brand	availability of additional services	safety	cost of living in hotel
age 65 +	84,1	87,1	6,5	33,5	55,3	75,3
age 36-65	50	71,2	4,5	16,7	40,9	69,7
age 18-35	67,6	82,4	0	23,5	44,1	58,8

Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the survey in the “IBM SPSS Statistics”

The preferences of the majority of the respondents regarding the “star” of the hotel have not changed. Those who started to prefer hotels in different categories during the pandemic period explain this as follows:

- “I started to prefer security and look less at stardom and availability of additional services”;
- “I want to keep the maximum level of comfort” (about the reasons for upgrading the hotel);

➢ “We started to stay in rental apartments instead of hotels because not everyone I travel to has the opportunity to live in hotels because they have not been vaccinated”;

➢ “preferences have changed towards making hotel stays safer”.

Hotel staff (22.9 %) stated that many guests have become more demanding on the quality of room equipment and now evaluate not only the external aesthetic appearance, but also the general condition of the room and its technical equipment, namely TV, air conditioning, cabinets, plumbing. The requirements for cleaning and disinfection of rooms and disposable hygiene items have increased. 51,4 % of the employees think that the guest room requirements have not changed.

The survey among hotel employees on additional services showed that the preferences of the guests in general did not change (60 %). Diverse respondents (40 %) wrote that excursion services are less requested and that those who order prefer to do so at the hotel rather than looking for city suppliers. Individual transfers and room service have become more popular. In addition, some hoteliers have spoken in favor of the significant increase in hotel entertainment demands in connection with the pandemic and the city's periodic closure of restaurants and entertainment venues.

A survey of guests showed that among the additional services at the hotel, the restaurant and swimming pool are the most in demand. It seems that the importance of a service such as “room service” should increase a lot during the pandemic, but respondents in the “youth” category (18-35 years) place it in 2nd place – 72 %. In other age categories, the importance of “room service” remained in the 3rd place for 53 % of the participants aged between 36-60 and 38% of the participants aged 65+.

Has the quality of service in the hotel changed due to the “COVID-19” pandemic?” Most of the participants either answered “no” or found it difficult to answer the question, but those who answered “yes” made the following comments:

1) “got worse”;

2) “prices remained the same, but the quality of service deteriorated”;

3) “too many restrictions”;

4) “staff should wear masks, less contact with customers”;

5) “hotels have become more attentive to the safety of their guests' health”;

6) “it got worse as hotel staff realized that people would choose them anyway because they couldn't go abroad and other hotels were full-time”;

7) “try to minimize contact between people”;

8) “there is more thorough cleaning”;

9) “part of the service has switched to contactless format (this is a plus for me)”;

10) “contactless settlement”;

11) “staff provides masked service”;

12) “communication with hotel staff changed to communication with information technology (for example, reservation)”;

13) “focus shifted to safety, less attention to customers and their needs due to increased sanitation and hygiene requirements”;

14) “people became lazy and began to work worse”;

15) “in my view, it has become more difficult for employees to provide highquality service due to restrictions on personal communication with guests”;

16) “began to pay more attention to protection against virus infection”;

17) “it has become more and more refined, a more attentive attitude to hygiene”;

18) “reduction in nutritional quality”;

19) “during the pandemic, staff pay more attention to guests and their stay” – this is the comments of respondents aged 18-35.

Thus, hypothesis 4^{th} could not be confirmed.

The opinions of the participants in the 36-65 age range are as follows:

1) hotels comply with the rules of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan (COVID-19) on the regulation of hotels during the epidemic;

2) personal protective equipment appeared, more attention was paid to sanitation;

3) problems with food, such as queues at the buffet;

4) I will assume that due to hygienic requirements it has become cleaner, the number of guests has clearly decreased - it has become more loyal;

5) to be well, to heal;

6) The hotels are cleaner, the staff is more friendly, there are more taxi service proposals.

The comments of the participants in the “old age” (65+) category were as follows:

1) there are many restrictions;

2) it has become cleaner, the tasks do their job better;

3) the quality of cleaning has deteriorated;

4) the restaurant may not work during the day and in the evening when people leave;

5) there is a very active building lease, which impresses customers for weddings, holidays, commemorations;

6) everything is simplified.

Hotels have become more popular with local residents. One of the possible reasons is the desire to get some new impressions in the conditions of quarantine and self-isolation. During quarantine, consumers have increased their use of social media to stay in touch with those around them. The usage level of social networks and instant messaging programs is expected to remain high in the future.

Next, we note what changes have occurred in the management of hotels in connection with changes in guests' preferences and needs, and characterize innovations in hotel service as a result of the pandemic.

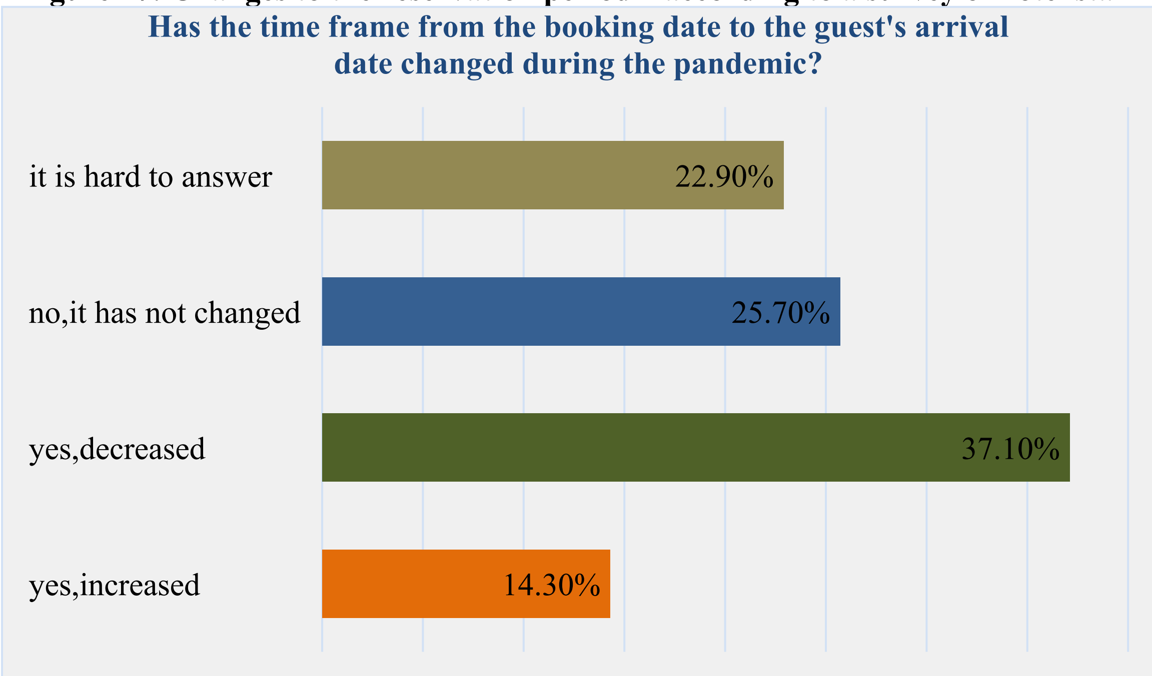
Due to the significant pressure exerted by the COVID-19 pandemic, business processes at most hotels have been disrupted: these relate to employee layoffs, the transition of some staff to remote work, travel restrictions and most of the other changes, room reservations and sales. During the research, hotel staff recorded the following changes regarding the reservation period:

1) 37.1% of the respondents noted the reduction in the time from the booking date to the arrival date;

2) 14.3% – noted the increase in time from the booking date to the arrival date;

3) During the pandemic, the total number of reservations for cancellations increased by 37.1% (fig. 17).

Figure 17: Changes to the reservation period – according to a survey of hotel staff

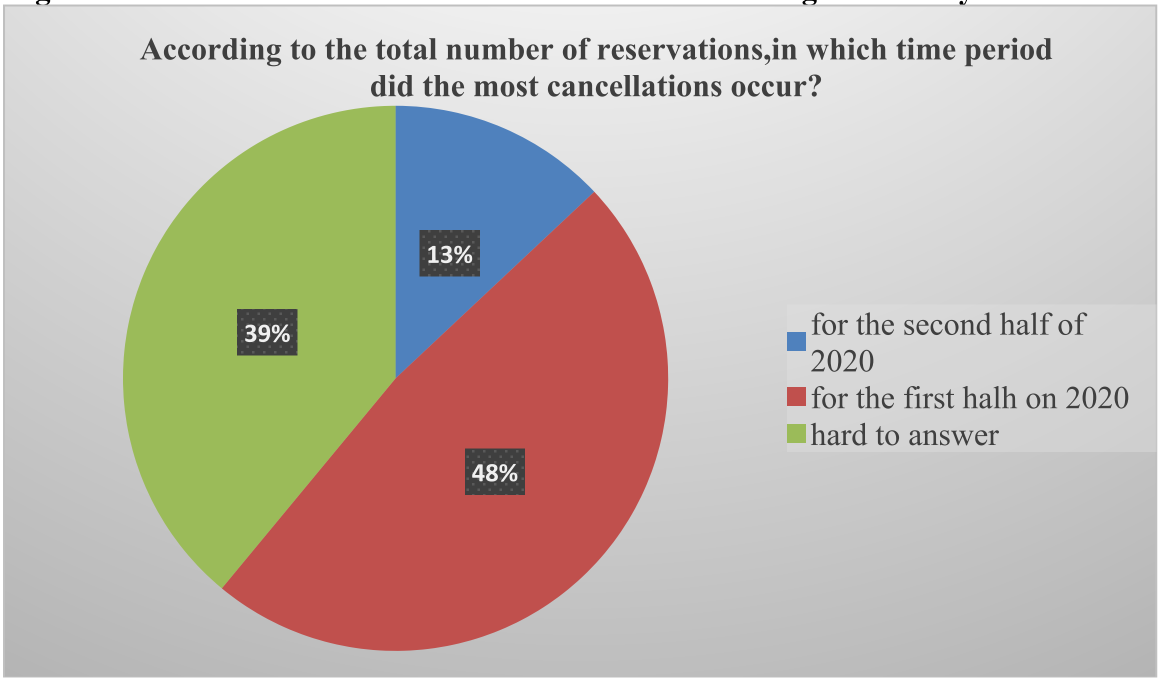


Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the survey in the "IBM SPSS Statistics"

As shown in fig. 18, most cancellations occurred in the first half of 2020. It should be noted that the importance of direct selling accommodation businesses is gradually increasing. The real-time booking option is offered mainly on the websites of major accommodation establishments. Generally, their websites are used mainly for advertising purposes and to a lesser extent as an additional sales channel. Therefore, many hotels have considered creating technical conditions for booking rooms directly on the hotel website and through social networks.

Epidemiological measures have affected staff communication with guests. Approximately 30 % of the respondents pointed out the negative effect of wearing a mask on communication.

Figure 18: Number of reservation cancellations – according to a survey of hotel staff



Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the survey in the "IBM SPSS Statistics"

When speaking, it is important for each of us not only to hear what the interlocutor is saying, but also to follow the facial expressions and movement of his lips. For people with hearing impairments, including many elderly people, the inability to see the full face of the other person makes it very difficult to understand what is being said to them, especially in a non-native language.

Hotel managers experienced the same thing, trying to understand what guests were saying when they didn't speak English very well or had a particular pronunciation. Insufficient understanding causes additional irritation for guests and fatigue for staff. The way out of this situation may be to replace the masks of the staff with individual transparent screens or a common transparent screen that completely surrounds the reception desk.

When asked whether the length of stay and room requirements of the guests have changed, the majority of the interviewed hotel employees (58 %) answered "no". Different respondents noted the following. On the one hand, guests more often began to choose more budget options (low category rooms without meals, junior suites instead of suites, etc.).

On the other hand, guests' demands for hotel security have increased. Guests are asked to clean more often, ventilate rooms, follow other safety protocols (for example, they want to be served by vaccinated employees). Also, guests have become more demanding on the quality of room equipment.

The fight against the coronavirus has contributed to the emergence of digital technologies in hotels: artificial intelligence, automation and robotics, online sales, the Internet of things, contactless service, etc. Most respondents agree to reduce contact with hotel staff through information technology. For teenagers, this is normal, and sometimes even the main option for communication; middle and older generations may choose this form of communication due to safety concerns and minimization of contacts (table 3).

Table 3: Consumer preparedness for the use of information technology in the hotel

Are you ready to reduce the number of contacts you have with hotel staff (for example, using a mobile app)?			
	age group – “65+”	**age 36-64**	**18-35 yaş**
yes	38 %	44 %	30,8 %
no	62 %	56 %	69,2 %

Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the survey in the “IBM SPSS Statistics”

Therefore, from 56.3 % to 69.2 % of the respondents want to reduce the number of contacts with the staff. The most conservative respondents include respondents in the 36-60 age group. Surprisingly, a large percentage (62 %) of the surveyed seniors (age 65+) also expressed their willingness to use information technology. These ideas show that the fifth hypothesis put forward at the beginning of the research is confirmed.

Most of the respondents to the question of how the service in hotels has changed replied that it has become better, that is, it has become more technological and mobile. Additionally, it should be highlighted that the "manufacturability" of the service might be seen as a lack of client orientation, since interactions with hotel workers diminish.

The emergence of new hotel products has become an essential condition for a business to survive the pandemic and fight for the customer. Products such as residences have emerged in the strategic portfolio of many hotel businesses.

“Gafgas Coast Hotel” includes apartments, studios, villas, cottages and bungalows, kitchens and separate living spaces and separate department services, 24-hour support by the department.

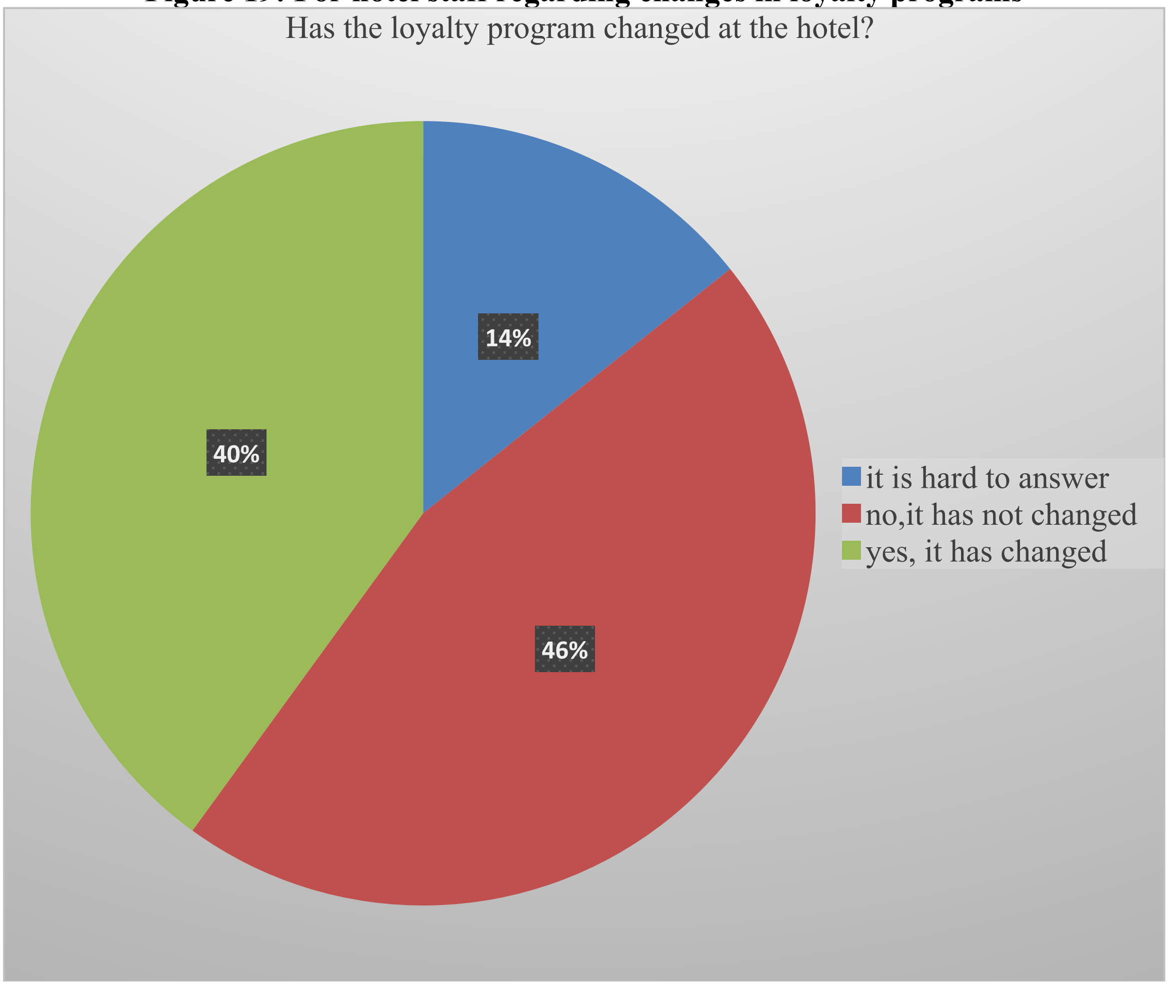
The way they work with corporate clients has changed. The way they work with corporate customers has changed. Many began to opt for a larger hotel room with an ergonomic workspace, good daylight and additional light sources, equipped with a small kitchen and food and beverage storage. Many customers prefer to eat in the room and avoid excessive socializing and visiting common areas of the hotel. They also agreed when the partners began to demand that hotels provide facilities for hybrid meetings (online and offline) that they can use free of charge by making an appointment in accordance with all anti-epidemiological measures.

During the pandemic, hotel companies began offering long-term (sometimes no accommodation, office-only) rentals of hotel rooms for remote working outside the home during office closures and self-isolation. When booking “office in the hotel”, the guest can use the hotel room as a personal office from 9^{am} to 6^{pm}. Hotels located in the airports area have started to provide long-term rental services to healthcare workers involved in the fight against the epidemic, as well as accommodation teams.

The role of social networks in the daily life of consumers has increased during the pandemic process, 86 % and 91 % of consumers in the world plan to use social networks and instant messaging programs with the same frequency in many areas, including hotel reservation, accommodation rental, car rental and buying something in the future. For this reason, many hotels have reconsidered their attitudes towards social networks as a secondary marketing tool. In the long run, this opens up new opportunities for effective communication with consumers through social networks. Social networks have become not only an entertainment channel, but also a means of interaction with consumers through the creation of personalized offers.

The pandemic has led to changes in loyalty (in french – loyal. The customer's loyalty to a particular brand) programs. This is reflected in the survey among hotel employees (fig. 19). In some cases, more package offers, flash sales (one-time discounts or "one-day" discounts), increased privileges for VIP customers, and some hotels have completely redesigned their loyalty programs. For example, a new WELL loyalty program was launched at the "Hilton Baku Hotel", instead of a single 12% discount, three levels of discount system (10, 12, 15 %) and its own privileges for each level appeared (table 3.3).

Figure 19: For hotel staff regarding changes in loyalty programs



Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the survey in the "IBM SPSS Statistics"

Table 4: WELL Loyalty Program – results of hotel employee survey

	Welcome	*Enjoy*	Live
card discount	10 %	12%	15 %
terms of receipt	When registering on the site or hotel	When booking 1000 man.	
restaurant menu discount	10 %	10 %	10 %
level privileges	– free early entry; – free accommodation for children under 18, subject to stay with their parents	– room upgrade; – favorite number; – free early entry; – pillow menu; – free accommodation for children under 18, subject to stay with their parents	– room upgrade; – favorite number; – free early entry; – 30% discount on accommodation on your birthday; - pillow menu; – late check-out until 15:00; – free accommodation for children under 18, subject to stay with their parents

Source: compiled by the author based on the results of the survey in the "IBM SPSS Statistics"

3.4. Research results

In summary, we can say that the main changes in the consumer preferences of the respondents regarding accommodation facilities are related to:

1) reduce the need to communicate with strangers in the hotel, the fear of being in crowded places;

2) preferably personalized service, including room service;

3) increased interest in additional services that compensate for the lack of entertainment outside the home;

4) more attention to safety, cleanliness of the room and the hotel as a whole, serviceability of equipment in the room.

Key innovations in the hospitality industry's response to the pandemic and changing consumer preferences include:

- ➢ increased attention to the safety of the hotel, in particular the safety of life and health;
- ➢ introduction of digital technologies (main aim is to reduce guest contact with hotel staff and make up for staff shortage);
- ➢ development of new hotel products hotel office, hotel self-isolation, hotel party, residences and others;

➢ change in the functional characteristics of the hotel product;

➢ active communication with guests through social networks;

➢ creation of technical conditions for direct booking, including through social networks;

➢ changing loyalty programs – more package offers, flash sales (one-time discounts or “one-day” discounts), increased privileges for VIP customers.

In general, it can be stated that businesses need to create a new behavioral pattern in order for consumers to feel stable and gain confidence in their short and long-term travel plans.

QUESTIONS COLLECTED FOR THE SURVEY

1) Your gender:

a) female b) male

2) Your age –

3) Your education level:

a) undergraduate b) graduate c) doctor

4) How often do you prefer domestic and international travel throughout the year?

a) once b) twice c) once in 3 years d) haven't traveled yet

5) Who do you prefer to travel with?

a) with family members b) friends c) with my spouse d) alone

6) What do you pay attention to when choosing a hotel?

a) location b) comfort level c) cost of living d) security

7) How did you hear about our hotel complex?

a) advertising c) internet e) other

b) through the travel agency d) I had a rest before

8) How comfortable was it for you to log in?

a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4 e) 5

9) When you entered the hotel, were you greeted with a smiling face and joy?

a) yes b) no

10) Evaluate the quality of room cleaning at check-in:

a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4 e) 5

11) Value the quality of daily housekeeping:

a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4 e) 5

12) Evaluate the quality of the cuisine of the restaurant in the hotel:

a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4 e) 5

13) Are you satisfied with the cleanliness of the hotel?

a) yes b) no

14) Has the service quality in the hotel changed due to COVID-19?

a) yes b) no

15) How do you think the price level is reasonable?

a) very expensive b) prices adequate c) pleasantly surprised

16) Overall how much did you enjoy your stay?

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

17) How would you rate the comfort of your room?

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

18) How should we improve the operation of the hotel? Your suggestion:

19) How likely are you to recommend our hotel to your friends?

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

20) How satisfied were you with the additional services of our hotel?

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

21) How satisfied were you with the entertainment and excursion programs offered in our hotel?

a) 1 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4 e) 5

22) Evaluate the comfort and equipment of the hotel's Business Center:

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

23) Evaluate the level of staff performance:

Welcome and accommodation service:

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

Servants:

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

Hotel's bars and restaurant:

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

SPA center and beauty salon:

a) excellent b) very well c) well d) satisfactorily

24) Would you like to be a guest at the "…" hotel again?

a) yes b) no

CONCLUSIONS AND RECCOMENDATION

Short-term diseases, natural catastrophes, political and economic crises are all examples of events that have the potential to have a negative impact on tourist growth, either immediately or over the course of a longer period of time. Out of these, diseases were responsible for a decrease in the amount of tourism in the regional sense even before COVID-19. SARS in 2003 was effective in the Far East, and MERS in the Middle East and Arabian Peninsula was successful in reducing tourism.

After China, the COVID-19 outbreak progressed quickly across the rest of the globe, with Europe and subsequently the United States serving as the epicenters of the disease respectively, in contrast to the SARS and MERS pandemics. The World Health Organization (WHO) made the announcement that it is now a pandemic on March 11th.

Tourism is unquestionably one of the businesses where the negative consequences of the pandemic are most evident. Among the first efforts adopted to control COVID-19 were travel restrictions and social isolation. With the implementation of voluntary and enforced quarantine policies around the globe, travel has ceased and the tourist sector has come an abrupt halt. Against this pause, numerous steps were attempted to combat the tourist issue, and as the number of cases decreased, some flexibility in travel restrictions was introduced. After COVID-19, the tourism business, which involves strong human connection, will definitely undergo some long-term changes. Even if COVID-19 loses its effectiveness, the industry's readiness for this shift will make it more resistant to future outbreaks.

The situation with the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a global and severe recession. Although the consequences and how the pandemic will change human civilization are not known in advance, the threat has caused economic recession, losses and a number of problems in many countries of the world following the socio-economic sphere. The rapid spread of COVID-19 has changed the course and conditions of economic processes in the world, revealed new challenges and realities. The Spanish flu and cholera, two of the worst pandemics in history that claimed the lives of between 20 and 50 million people, did not damage the economy as much as the coronavirus epidemic. On the other hand, according to the forecasts of international organizations, the global scale and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic favorably distinguish it from other pandemics.

As part of the master's thesis, the research included a scientific and analytical investigation of the influence of the service industry on the pandemic, using the tourist and hotel business as an example. The closure of air, land and sea transport links between the countries due to the pandemic, and the ban on tourist travel have negatively affected the services sector, including tourism. It is considered that in the post-pandemic period, it is important to restore the profitability of tourism enterprises as soon as possible. For this, serious attention should be paid to the availability and quality parameters of tourism services.

There will be different tourism conditions in the post-pandemic period. People will have different psychological conditions, they will be more reluctant to travel, and they will pay more attention to security issues. In terms of these factors, it remains important to identify more effective solutions to existing problems in order to improve the development trends and mechanisms of regional tourism in the post-pandemic environment.

In conclusion, the service sector was the most severely affected by coronavirus infection in 2020. The degree of demand shock for the service sector and the extent to which the sector will be economically affected depends on how long the pandemic lasts. It is also impossible to completely prevent losses in the service sector. There are three issues to be addressed in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic:

1) Protecting people: visitors (for example, information, consumer protection) and employees of service sector enterprises (for example, providing income support);

2) Ensuring the survival of the business world: support for small and medium-sized businesses along the supply chain of the services market, and in particular for cash flow support;

3) Involvement of coordination mechanisms (for example, private sector, public and academic cooperation, short, medium and long-term coordinated policy, timely and accurate information).

It is no longer possible for the global economic and political system to remain unchanged. Both perspectives will change completely for both the producer and the consumer. Cleanliness, hygiene, digitalization and the virtual economy will be new trends. In short, new products and new markets must be found to achieve high export earnings. Business models, organizational management and innovation methods need to be reconsidered, and the current situation, which seems unfavorable, needs to be brought to a favorable level.

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